

Mud Sweat & Gears Rd8 – 28th September 2014 - James Murphy KL MTB

Round 8 of the summer series took place at Langdon hills which is down in Essex. After my adventures earlier in the year I had said that I would no longer do the long distance races but I raced here last year and new that the course would be `natural` rather than an msg special so I was comfortable with the journey, plus I wanted the extra points to try to catch up from the earlier missed rounds.

The series requires you to complete at least 6 of the 8 rounds for the championship which leaves me one short due to injury but I`m still hopeful of getting near the top six.

Race preparation was the usual erratic mess helped along by the arrival of a cold the Friday before the race. On arrival I set off on a lap of the course, which was considerably hillier than I remembered!!

It was also a very hot morning so with the help of the cold I was losing plenty of fluid 😊

Lining up for the start I took up my gridded position on the front row and on the whistle set off, keeping calm and checking where the other riders I wanted to keep with were. The start of the lap consisted of one short and two fairly good climbs, I`d fallen back a little further than I wanted but decided to see where I was at the top of the hill. This worked nicely as others fell back and I hit the first decent still in the top 5.

Through the first lap I managed to keep with the first three but a combination of catching the juniors and them being quicker than me I started to lose them a bit so concentrated on maintaining position. Midway through the second lap I was passed by another rider on the fast gravel downhill section, tactically nearly taking my bars on his way by causing me to back off, cheers pal.



Coming round the final lap I passed regular series winner Dan Barford with a mechanical so moved up another place.

That was how it stayed to the end of the race, my old friend cramp returning to my calves on the final singletrack meant that no sprints were possible or needed thankfully. I came through in 4th place. A shame to miss a podium by one place but a solid result to finish the year.

So that was the end of the summer series. In some ways it didn`t quite go as planned but three podiums, a 4th and a 6th were far more than the top tens I was aiming for at the start of the year

The question is what to do now, the plan was to move up to the proper classes, maybe sport or expert. Time to get down to some serious training 😊