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## **King Racing win fourth European Championship**



It was a case of déjà vu for the King Racing team heading into the final round of the prestigious 2008 European Championship at Santa Pod Raceway in England. Once again they found themselves in second place and a mountain to climb after a number of rain-affected events curtailed their chances to make up ground on early championship leader Rikard Gustafsson from Sweden.



*Picture courtesy Ivan Sansom and Rose Hughes*

Following the capture of the 2007 Championship crown at last year's event despite the seemingly greater challenge of needing to win the event, the team knew that the amiable but tough Swedish rider was determined to make the crown his once again, and following his World Record performances the preceding weekend in Denmark it was going to be difficult to gain the necessary points by both out qualifying him by two positions and win one more round of eliminations. In addition, veteran Top Fuel Bike rider Peter Svensson had made a welcome return to the event after impressive early season performances and was also in with a chance of the crown should he make a significantly better showing than the Anglo Dutch King Racing team.

The team's slim chance of overcoming Gustafsson seemed to slip away as the gloomy forecast turned into dark clouds and the inevitable rain on the first day of qualifying. Despite the tireless efforts of the hardworking track crew sweeping the water away from the track from 4 am until 2pm it was to no avail and the Race Director called off the day's activities.

The second day and final day of qualifying was no better than the first and the as the team peered out at the torrential rain from inside the dry warmth of the awning supplied by their primary sponsor it seemed all was lost. The Race Director called an emergency rider's and driver's meeting and explained that the day's activities would once again be cancelled. However, there was a glimmer of hope, a one shot qualifying session was planned for the morning of race day and the weather forecast was slightly better than the previous two day. The team retired to their beds early, sceptical at the accuracy of the forecast due to the well known 'microclimate' that seems to surround Santa Pod but knowing that if they were to have any chance of a fourth crown they needed to be prepared at the 'drop of a hat'.

Sunday dawned... bright and rain free! The Top Fuel dragsters kicked off proceedings at 9.40 am and the Top Fuel Bike teams prepared. Then, disaster... inexplicably the rain came down... The teams returned to their pits and mulled over packing up and taking the long trip home to their respective countries as the track drier and sweepers came back out. However, the ceaseless optimism and hard work of the track crew prevailed and by early afternoon the proceedings continued with the one shot qualifiers.



*Jan King vs. Rene van den Berg – picture courtesy Ivan Sansom and Rose Hughes*

The team made their way nervously to the start line and prepared for their run. King made a strong burnout and went into stage. Conscious that a strong showing was required King let his opponent in the other lane the luxury of leaving first and nailed the throttle... A personal best 6.248 secs @ 212mph was the result. The challenge was back on! The outlook became better for the team when the unfortunate Gustafsson's usual consistency failed him and gearbox maladies saw him roll to the end of the track unqualified and out of the title race. King had qualified in third place out of a bumper entry of 16 bikes and the promise of a first round against Dutch rider Rene van den Berg which he had to win to ensure Peter Svensson could not take the 2008 crown.

In the first round King made sure of his round win with a strong personal best 6.201 secs at 'only' 169 mph after dropping two cylinders at half track. This was enough for King to see off the threat of Svensson and gain a fourth European Top Fuel Championship crown.

The team had defied the odds and all that the European weather had thrown at them in 2008. An ecstatic King said: -

" What a season! After the failure to qualify for the first round of the year I thought we had little chance, but the team and our fantastic sponsors gave me belief that all was not lost and to keep on even after the Norway event was rained off and with it our chance to make up points on Rikard. I'm overwhelmed at the hard work put in by my team of Mick Beaumont, Marius van der Zijden, Chris Powell, Martin Brookman and Gerard Willemse, and the fantastic products and services supplied by our team of associates. I'm just the rider, these are the real difference between success and failure – my thanks to you all!"



*Ian King (centre) at the post race banquet – picture courtesy of Roger Gorringe*

The team rely on only the best parts and services from leading companies in their chosen markets: -

[Portable Shade](#) – The world's premier awning and modular exhibition Product Company

[JE Pistons](#) - The world's premier manufacturer of high performance forged pistons

[Kibblewhite Precision Machining, Inc.](#) - The highest quality valves and components for motorsport.

[Swecomposite](#) - The leading supplier of carbon fiber parts to the racing, performance and custom markets.

[Craft Safety Helmets](#) - The ultimate in safety and unique in design.

[Del West Engineering, Inc.](#) -Pioneers in valve train design.

[Torco Oils](#) – The only oil recommended by engine manufacturers Puma Engineering.

[Goedhals](#) – Precision specialist gear cutting and engineering.

[Mickey Thompson Tyres](#) – The best drag race tyres in the world bar none.

[Goodridge UK](#) – The original and the best in fluid transfer systems.

[Gates](#) – The world's most trusted name in drive belts, hoses and hydraulics.

[Vanson Leathers](#) - 30 years producing the best quality track tested motorcycle apparel.

[Performance Machine](#) – The leader in aftermarket custom wheels, brakes and components.

[Kent Cams](#) - Specialists in motor sport camshaft manufacture, short runs and one -off's.

[Pro Alloy](#) – UK's leader in fabrication of alloy racing tanks, intercoolers and radiators.

[PsycheWorkz](#) – The UK's best custom and race fabricators and innovators.

[House of Kolor](#) – Manufacturers of the world's most stunning specialist paints.

[Kershaw & Co.](#) – The UK's leading manufacturer of turned parts

[Cannon Engineering](#) - Gear cutting and precision engineering services.

[Zodiac](#) – Europe's largest supplier of performance and aftermarket HD parts.

[Pixeleye](#) – Innovative graphic and website design

[MRE](#) – Leaders in trackside support for drag race components and air shifting systems

[Customize](#) – Premier sign makers and vinyl sign and design services

[Turboville](#) – Your one stop dragracing resource

NitroShutter – The combined efforts of ace photojournalists Ivan Sansom and Rose Hughes

Wackyshack – Creators of stunning paintwork and murals.