

# Michelle DiSalvo Race Report: Belgian Road Race Championship Round 2 Croix en Ternois, France



## April 24

Hello everyone

This year I am competing in the Belgian Roadrace Championship in the Monobike class. This is a combined 450 and open class for singles. I am riding a 450 so it is a bit difficult on the long straight against a 700cc KTM. The classes are scored separately but sometimes I have to pass a couple riders not in my class to get to the one I want to compete with. I missed the first round because I was not able to participate in the required school.

As usual my bike was ready the day we were leaving. The school took place on Friday with 90 minutes of classroom and the a bit of track time in between. Sitting in the classroom I remembered why I never did well in school as a kid. I was falling asleep just like I did in high school. As the speaker droned on about which flag means what I think I nodded off a couple of times. On the track I was getting accustomed to the new bike which has gone on a diet weighing in 20 lbs. less than last year. Saturday morning was my first qualifying and a few laps in my cam chain broke. Normally the motor would be ruined but there was no real damage. I couldn't take the chance of running it again I traded motors for the second qualifying. I was dead tired after rebuilding the bike. I went out for practice and after ten minutes I had the fastest time. My time didn't stay and was 5th one second off the best time.

In Race 1 I was trying to feel out the other riders. I had never rode with any of them before and I did not know which ones were the crazy ones. I was 7th or so off the line and started passing one then another. By the last lap I had passed for third place finishing second in my class and third overall.

In Race 2 I had a good start. I was third place out of turn 1. Now was my chance to see what the leaders were doing. I passed the 2009 open champion on the outside then a few laps later I passed the 2009 450 champion for the lead. It had been so long since I led a race I was not sure what to do. I fell back to second after leading just one lap. I tried a couple passes again and failed. The race was 20 laps long so I decided to hang back after the half way point. I knew what I had to do - a surprise attack on the last lap. I set everything up perfectly until I ran wide two turns before my calculated move. Luckily the leader missed a shift and I was back in contention. I made my hail-mary maneuver on the outside, front tire bouncing off the ground and a bit out of control. I had the lead with 2 corners left. But just ahead was a lapped rider and there was no indication he was moving. I had to break early to avoid t-boning him and I lost the lead when the other rider came barreling into the corner knocking the slower rider and I to either side. I lost by just a quarter of a second.

## May 25

### Belgian Championship Road Race Round 3 Mettet, Belgium

After my first race I was feeling really good. Although after qualifying it was clear it was not going to be as easy this time. I was 1.3 seconds off the fast time placing me 6th overall in the field of 20. I was trying to figure out the track. The first turn was a huge left with an increasing off camber. My bike was dragging so badly around the corner I could feel the tires coming off the pavement. In the back section was a 4th gear climb with an incredible crosswind making it difficult to hang on.

In Race 1 I cam off the line in seventh. The leader broke away leaving a six rider group to battle foe 2nd place. The group broke up a bit the first couple laps the everyone came together, wheel to wheel. There was people swerving like crazy trying to protect their lines. Everyone was bumping each other over. I was still sitting at the back of the group watching. I made a plan to get through the group noting each of the riders weak points. The only problem was there was three open bikes between myself and the two 450's I had to catch. I have to make my passes and breakaway on the smaller corners so I can have enough gap to stay ahead on the long straight. I found my place in turn one. The off

camber was so great that I would have to roll out of the gas when on the inside. But at the extreme outside the corner was flat. I started going into turn one way too fast and drifting it to the paint and nearly dragging the handlebars. My corner speed was good enough to make a clean pass. I made my way up to 4th and in front of me was the rider who stole my win from me in France. I pulled my outside move one more time and moved into third. Unaware of the group so close behind me I crossed the line in 3rd with a race time of 18 min 26.1seconds. 4th through 7th finished within 0.7 seconds of my time.

In Race 2 I was thinking I have to get ahead of the group and try to break away if I can. We get a sighting lap and a warmup lap in which there is a practice start. Everyone leaves the line together. I tried my good line through turn one to see if it would work for the real start. In my head I thought I could run around the whole group. Most of the time that never works out. We lined up and before 10 seconds before I let out the clutch I thought to myself - this is never going to work. I was sitting in row 2 and that was already 20 feet back. I took off for the drag race into turn 1 and through the bike as far over as I could. With a shower of sparks I passed five riders. I was up to second and in shock. Now I just have to keep the angry pack of lions behind me. They weren't having it. A 700cc KTM blew by me on the straight but I got him back in turn 1. This went on for 4 laps and I thought I can't keep making this pass for 15 laps. Finally he stayed in front of me then I got hit and pushed off the track where I fell back to 7th. I couldn't get back around the open bikes. By the end of the weekend they were getting wise to my maneuvers. I finished 7th overall and 4th in the 450.

***Michelle***