



Hall claims historic second in front of massive home crowd

PERTH – Matt Hall rode the hopes of Australia to a career-best second place finish in front of a huge home crowd of 140,000 spectators at the Red Bull Air Race in Perth on Sunday with a stunning performance under pressure in the final.

Hall beat everyone but Austria's Hannes Arch in an exciting final over the Swan River, posting his best time of the week when it mattered most to take second place ahead of defending champion Paul Bonhomme.

Hall's time was 1:26.51, just 0.48 behind Arch. It lifted him to fourth place in the overall championship. Even though most pilots struggle at their home races, Hall was determined to tap into the energy at home rather than let the pressure wilt him.

"The energy was definitely there," said Hall, a former RAAF fighter pilot.

"I've been saying that the home town advantage can go both ways. But I deliberately used that, that energy. I had a few people saying 'ignore the crowd, don't worry about the crowd.' But I was feeling upbeat – and wanted to use it.

"As I was walking out to the plane that last time, there was a big crowd of people just lined up near the starting area, and they were all cheering and screaming. So I thought to myself 'there's only one solution here'. I turned around and put my hands in the air before I flew and went off and thought: 'Yep, I'm gonna do this'. So I managed to harness the energy as opposed to letting it be converted to stress. So it worked out."

Hall had been struggling this week through several of the training sessions as the weight of his country's great expectations was clearly draining on him. His voice was hoarse on Saturday after showing some 5,000 Australian fans his plane and team hangar.

He was back in seventh place in Qualifying on Saturday before raising his game in the finals on Sunday with better results in each of his three runs through the 6.6-km obstacle course set up in the Swan River under brilliant blue skies.

"This is what I have been looking forward to and aiming for since I started in the Red Bull Air Race – a great performance in front of my home crowd in Australia.

"My goal is always to improve in everything I do and here at this race I improved almost every run. Hopefully when I come back to Perth next year I can improve again and go one better.

For more information on Matt Hall Racing go to www.matthallracing.com or contact Team Coordinator David Lyall at david@matthallracing.com



“The support I have received has been amazing and to be honest it is what got me through the week, that and the confidence that if I flew safely and smoothly I would be able to contend.”

Ends

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