



Hall ready for more in Rio after coming close to first win in Perth

RIO DE JANEIRO – Matt Hall, still glowing from a career-best second place performance in his home race in Perth, will be looking to get back on the podium again in the third stop of the Red Bull Air Race World Championship in Rio de Janeiro on May 8/9.

The Australian ace, who is in a three-way draw for third place, will have a new technician for his first race in South America and is looking forward to what promises to be a high-speed track.

Hall, who turned the great pressure of racing in front of his home country for the first time into positive energy in Perth, is more confident than ever before that he can get on top of the podium now.

He has reviewed the video tapes of his flying in Perth and noticed a few segments in the track over the Swan River where he might have been able to save the fraction of a second he would have needed to win the race. Austria's Hannes Arch was a mere 0.48 seconds faster. But the former RAAF fighter pilot, who in Perth finished in front of championship leader Paul Bonhomme (3rd) for the first time, said he was still delighted to have done so well in his home race in front of 140,000 spectators.

"The race went as well as I could ever have hoped for and my flying was the best I have done to date in my race career so I'm very happy with the second place," said Hall ahead of the race in Rio. "After reviewing the tapes, I think there probably were places I could have saved another half a second, though I believe Hannes and Paul feel the same way. So hindsight is never very accurate in racing."

Hall, from Merewether NSW, had started the racing week in Perth slowly and gradually improved his times in training and Qualifying sessions before peaking when it counted most -- in the Final Four race. With a third place under his belt in Porto last year and the second in Perth, Hall clearly wants to get atop the podium now and believes he has the right plane, an MXS-R, and the right team, all-Australian for the first time, to get him there.

"I think the race was potentially within reach of winning, though if I had tried any harder than I did there would have been an error, so it was the best possible result," he said.

"If it was not a home race, there may have been potential to push just that little bit harder, as making a mistake and getting knocked out would not have been such a mental hurdle for me. I think a first place result is within reach, though I am not going

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to try specifically for it. I will stick to just trying to improve my own personal performance and team performance at each race.”

Australian Jack Moshovis, 31, is Hall’s new technician, replacing Lenny Rulason after the American resigned. Moshovis, an experienced aircraft mechanic, has worked extensively in Europe. But Hall dismissed concerns the changes could be an unwanted distraction in Rio, where 1 million spectators are expected to watch after that many witnessed the first race there in 2007.

“Lenny has set the plane up ready to race and now moved back full time to his own business in Phoenix,” Hall said. “I think that there will definitely be teething problems with the new team -- not through any fault, just a fact of life. But having an all-Australian team will also carry some extra pride to get the job done. I also think there will be an unspoken language among us all now that can only exist with patriotic pride at play.”

The second place in Perth was also precisely the tonic Hall needed after two somewhat disappointing results between his first podium in Porto last year and then Perth. He said he has learned from the mistakes that cost him shots at the podium in Barcelona and Abu Dhabi. “I wasn’t concerned as I was able to identify what went wrong in those two races,” Hall said. “It was nice, though, to bounce back cleanly at Perth.”

Hall, with 14 championship points from the first two races, is even with Arch and Canada’s Pete McLeod. Bonhomme leads the championship with 22 while compatriot Nigel Lamb is second on 18. There are a total of 10 pilots this year with the speed to get on the podium, which is a distinct advantage to the more consistent pilots like Hall. Last year Hall was third overall, the best-ever result for a rookie.

“The more people that can get podiums, the better for my style of flying,” Hall said. “If we share the podiums around, though I’m always consistent up top, it stops a runaway winner or two.”

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