



Hall gets track time in New York

NEW YORK – Matt Hall got back into the Red Bull Air Race track on Friday with two training sessions even though the Australian ace will not be flying in the New York Qualifying or race this weekend.

Hall was sidelined by the Red Bull Air Race Committee for the New York race after his MXS-R splashed off the surface of the Detroit River in the last race two weeks ago in Windsor, Canada.

Hall said he was pleased with the chance to 'get back on the horse' and fly in the New York track set up on the Hudson River between the Statue of Liberty and the skyline of Lower Manhattan with the rest of the pilots on Friday. He was not flying for times during his sessions on the spectacular and turn-filled course but was instead focused on training as part of the process to return to full competition status.

"The flying was fine," said Hall, who last year was the most successful rookie in Red Bull Air Race history with third place overall.

"I was flying conservatively because that's what you do when the microscope is on you. The track was comfortable. I was comfortable flying between the pylons. I didn't hit any pylons and didn't feel unsafe at any stage. It felt very clean. That was my goal. Obviously my time didn't matter out there. It was more reproofing to myself and my family and everyone that, yes, I can fly this safely."

Hall was not hurt in the incident in Windsor, however, his plane sustained minor damage to an aileron and landing gear wheel cover when its wing and landing gear skimmed off the surface of the Detroit River during a Qualifying session run. Hall and his team worked hard on the airplane this week to make it fly more predictably.

"We set up the aircraft differently," he said. "We've done a lot of work on the aircraft setup this week to make it fly more predictably. I'm now happy with the aircraft. It's flying a lot closer to what last year's aircraft was. I can now start to fly the plane like I flew it last year, which is very smooth. It looks slow but it is actually reasonably quick."

Hall looked and sounded more upbeat on Friday than he did earlier in the week.

"Yeah, 48 to 72 hours ago I was quite disturbed, I guess," he said.

"It was quite an emotional roller coaster the last two weeks. I was able to put that behind me over the last 24 hours, knowing I was going back into the track. I was confident of my ability and so in the last 24 hours it was just a matter of making sure I

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just went and did it the way I wanted to. And I think everyone's happy with what I've done."

Red Bull Air Race Director Drew Searle said he was pleased about Hall's training on Friday. He said that Hall is an excellent pilot who just needed some time after Windsor.

"He flew really well, he flew exactly as I would have expected him to fly," Searle said.

"There's never been any question about his flying. He's a hell of a pilot, a good thinker, and he's mentally strong. We just needed to give him time to get all the various components for his competition plan back into play. As far as his flying's concerned, he proved he's good to go."

Ends

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