

The GAS GAS riders, protagonists at the 5th Indoor World Trial Championship round

## ADAM RAGA AND JERONI FAJARDO (GAS GAS) SHINE IN BARCELONA

Barcelona, 8 February 2005.– It was not like any other Sunday. Not even like any other trial. The event had been in the minds of the GAS GAS School of Champions riders Adam Raga and Jeroni Fajardo for a very, very long time. And undoubtedly this long wait and the fact that they had been looking forward to having a great performance before such an enthusiastic crowd gave them wings as Raga, the clear series leader, collected his fifth win in a row this season, and Fajardo, displaying enormous courage, finished the home event in a historical third place.

12,500 spectators packed the Palau Sant Jordi again. The XXVIII Barcelona Indoor Trial was about to start. The minutes prior to the start were used by the six participants to warm up on their bikes. Adam Raga seemed calm and uneasy at the same time, anxious to find out if he would be capable of achieving his fourth consecutive win in the Barcelona trial. A majestic applause received the double Indoor World Champion when he hit the arena. Everything seemed to be set for yet another top rostrum place for the Ulldecona rider.

The qualifying round consisted on 9 sections to be run in a total of 11 minutes. Adam Raga, completely in control of the situation, finished in the first place with 6 points. His words transmitted a winner's confidence: *"Everything was fine in this opening lap. I only collected a five and I am happy. The bike was perfect, everyone has seen that. We must keep on this line. We will be in the final."*

But the fifth Indoor World Championship round's surprise would come with young Jeroni Fajardo, second on the first lap with only 8 points. The 19-year-old made history, grabbing a place in the final for the first time in his career and, most importantly, winning the crowd's appreciation in the process. Minutes before the start, things were not so clear for Fajardo: *"It is a tough trial, these are sections you can only find in this trial and it will be very complicated."* In spite of his initial nerves, Jeroni cleaned section after section with a dexterity that is rarely associated with his young age, completing his best lap of the championship. *"I am satisfied. Getting into the final is already a great success for me,"* he said minutes later.

### Equality, tension and final lap apotheosis

*"It will be one of the most difficult finals."* Adam Raga's words were most accurate. The three riders put up a great display during the 15-section circuit. As the obstacles were passed, Cabestany, Fajardo and Raga were aware how hard they would have to fight to achieve the most coveted win of the year. The Sant Jordi Olympic stadium's applauses were divided as the riders approached the seventh section with a seven-point draw.

From there, the great Raga of the 2005 season started to shine, in spite of Cabestany's hard competence. Keeping his head cool in the highest tension moments, and displaying a very clever strategy, Adam did not yield in the decisive moments, and collected his fifth head-to-head win in an

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Indoor World Championship event. The crowd from Ulldecona went wild with their rider's domination – four wins out of four Barcelona events.

**Adam Raga: “I don't care about records, only about tackling trial after trial”**

The GAS GAS man showed his happiness on the final podium. He had proved that acting under pressure is one of his qualities: *“The truth is that it is not easy to win five events. I am very happy with my performance and for repeating the win for the fourth time in Sant Jordi. I did not ride perfectly. I made some mistakes, although you can't ride 100% all the time. We fought for the win from the word 'go', but in the final sections, where everything was at play, I responded well. You must work very hard on each trial to continue winning and keep on this line.”*

At only 22, Raga has become one of the best trial riders in Spain. However, he insists that you must tackle each section as if it were the last one. *“I only think about doing my best in each of the trials of the calendar. I don't care about records, we must go slowly and not hurry. I want to enjoy this moment.”* The fittest rider in the indoor series also praised his team mate Jeroni Fajardo's performance: *“He has great talent and I had never seen him so strong as today. He will surely be a more habitual rival in a short time.”*

**Jeroni Fajardo: “I have given it everything and I am very happy”**

The first Indoor World Championship podium for Marc Colomer's pupil in his debut year, a serious hint at what may happen in a close future. Jeroni comments: *“It has been an unforgettable trial. Only getting into the final and in the Palau Sant Jordi is a great success for me, because since I was a kid I have seen all my idols here in Barcelona. It was a very high level event and I went through the sections slowly, getting more and more confidence. This result has clearly given me extra motivation to keep up this level in coming rounds.”*

**Saint Petersburg will be the indoor season's half-point**

The sixth round of the Indoor Trial World Championship will be held in Saint Petersburg, Russia at the weekend, crossing the equator of a season dominated up to now by a rider, Adam Raga, and a team – GAS GAS – that have proven their expertise in the fifth rounds held so far – Sheffield, Marseille, Toulouse, Granada and Barcelona. Raga is the provisional leader with 50 points (5 wins), followed by Albert Cabestany, second, with 38 (4 seconds and 1 third) and Britain's Doug Lampkin (1 second, 1 third) with 27 points. Fifth, with the same number of points as Marc Freixa, is the GAS GAS School of Champions rising star Jeroni Fajardo, with 19 points.

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