

MEDIA RELEASE

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James Cracknell & Jerone Walters forced to abandon 68 miles shy of John O'Groats

Within clutching distance of the 45 year old Land's End to John O'Groats tandem record Olympian James Cracknell and time trial specialist Jerone Walters lay aside their Dolan made tandem, Rocket 2, in the early hours of this morning, forced to concede that the record will stand for another year.

Richard Gorman, crew chief for the attempt run by Project 7 Racing, took the decision to call a halt to the ride at 1.15am when it became clear that sheer mental fatigue was beginning to seriously compromise the safety on the road of both riders.

"It's the most heart breaking and difficult moment you can possibly imagine," commented Gorman, "After 773 miles of riding not a single member of the team or crew want it to come but I had make a call on the safety of the riders and we will just have to come back again even more prepared in the future."

The attempt was run under Road Records Association (RRA) rules and is one of the oldest cycling records in the world. Cracknell & Walters were using Rocket 2, built this year for the David Harmon and Magnus Backstedt RRA 25 mile record challenge.

Setting off in 3am darkness but heading into the hottest October sun ever recorded, James and Jerone made good progress on Saturday 1 October, through Cornwall and Devon, Gloucestershire and the Midlands past just some of the 110 RRA observers stationed along the route. As night fell they travelled north to the Lake District with the clock ticking over the first 24 hour mark into Sunday morning. Reaching Kendal, James and Jerone celebrated the half way and 426 mile point having lost only minimal time. A tough night followed with rain and colder temperatures, the pair did lose time against the schedule but managed to make it up having crossed the border into Scotland early on Sunday morning.

Drama then ensued when the pair broke a crank near the Forth Bridge; having switched to spare tandem Rocket 1 while Rocket 2 was repaired, the duo lost over 20 minutes when Rocket 1 punctured in the middle of the Forth Bridge.

With just 68 miles left to the end of the record run all the calculations indicated that the pair would be within minutes of beating the existing record of 50 hours, 14 mins, 25 seconds set in 1966 by Pete Swinden & John Withers, making the decision to abandon even harder to bear.

"No-one said breaking records is easy. Project 7 Racing has experienced this situation on record attempts before and it never gets any easier," added Gorman, who also masterminded David Harmon and Jez Hastings unsuccessful tilt at the Side to Side record in 2010. "If they were easy to achieve everyone would be attempting them. I'm just so terribly proud of James and Jerone and the whole crew for their ability to get so far."

Notes to editors:

The Roads Record Association was founded in 1888 by A J Wilson, President of the North Road Cycling Club, with the aim of certifying road cycling claims and continues to ratify records today. Records can either be between two places – London to York, or LEJOG – or measure distance over time. The Cracknell & Walters attempt was monitored along the course by the RRA's observers.

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