



2008 MRO CHAMPIONSHIPS DONINGTON PARK, 22nd – 23rd MARCH



Weather what Weather!

If ever a tyre durability test was needed, the opening round of the Pirelli- Metzeler Superstock 1000 Championship at Donington Park would have given the brand new MRO class sponsors a few answers, especially tyre behaviour in sub zero conditions, writes Terry Howe.



Although one or two riders were lost in the opening race the feedback on the Pirelli wets was very positive. There was no dominant rider in these opening two races with six different riders visiting the rostrum. However, in the opener it was lap eight before Lee Hodge (no 14) got the better of Barry Chapman to take control of a race in which he was initially mired.

But Hodge, the 27-year-old builder, had paced the race perfectly powering the HM prepared Enigma Suzuki GSX-R into fourth by lap five. After initial leader Mark Lister crashed out early on

Chapman powered his SDC prepared Yamaha R1 into the lead, but had the close attentions of Peter Baker to contend with. Baker briefly got his Morello K8 Suzuki GSX-R in front but Chapman got the position back at Redgate on lap five.

At mid distance Gavin Hunt had powered the Martin Bullock Suzuki GSX-R into third and the 22-year-old joiner from Douglas now had to fiercely defend the spot as Hodge moved forward with menace. Lap eight and Hodge was on Chapman's case and soon after Chapman saved a highside exiting Goddards the stylish Hodge was in charge. On the final laps former MRO 600 contender Dean Daniels forced his Yamaha R1 into contention, but Ross Connolly just squeezed him out for the third rostrum place.

BMCRC 2007 Rookie 1000 Champion Mark Lister eased out a small advantage in race two creating a ten-metre advantage over Ian Mackman on his Orwell Motorcycles Suzuki GSX-R. First race suspects were well out of contention this time as David Moxon, Orwell Racing Suzuki GSX-R, and fellow East Anglian Sam Bishop, riding the Kester Cunningham John Yamaha R1, were well in the mix with Gavin Hunt. The Manxman eventually overcame Lister to snatch the second spot, but Moxon had been flying and secured a superb victory in race two to add to his first race sixth, which takes the Suffolk ace to the head of the standings.

Remember the top five riders in this championship after rounds four at Silverstone will have the opportunity to enter the BSB Superstock round at Snetterton on 14th and 15th June

Sam Warren powered his Mission Racing Yamaha R6 to a 45-point haul in round two of the Pirelli-Metzeler Stocksport 600 Championship. The Alfreton rider certainly found Donington to his liking as he tailed leader Pat Sheridan, Lancsville Construction Yamaha R6, in the early laps of race one. A teenage battle for third erupted as former MRO Superteen contenders Jon Railton, Yamaha R6, and George Hogton-Rusling, Syd Smith Yamaha R6, locked horns.

Lap seven Warren made a move on Sheridan for the lead stick while Railton got the upper hand on Rusling, but soon after the Cambridgeshire rider Railton was high-sided from his Yamaha at Goddards without injury. In the meantime Steve Smith, the former Triumph Triple Challenge runner, had powered his Triumph 675 into contention duelling with Harrogate racer Ben Lightowler, Suzuki GSX-R. Twenty-two-year-old builder Lightowler missed a few apexes and lost a little time on his ageing Suzuki but when Railton, his closest junior rival, went down he knew more points were coming his way. Warren, Sheridan and Rusling were the top three but a big clash for the fourth spot caught the attention as Lightowler snatched the spot from Smith in a photo finish.

The same suspects headed the second race but when Hogton-Rusling and Sheridan connected entering Goddards for the final time, the complexion of the outcome changed a little as Rusling inherited the lead and the win from Warren, with Railton third and Lightowler fourth. Sheridan was left enraged and having to make do with seventh position.



Manxman Mark Cringle (no 37) has set the Triumph Triple Challenge series alight with some close exciting racing against the mainland's top up and coming talent. Thamesmead teenager Josh Wainwright had already secured 11 points in a Superpole race won by former Superteen ace Reece Rothwell, but in Sunday's opening race former Bemsee club Champion Wainwright calculated the weather and the opposition perfectly and took a majestic opening race victory from Cringle.

Rhalf Lo Turco and Dave Jones led pole sitter Rothwell into Redgate for the start of the opening race with Wainwright at this time mired in a lowly position. By lap three Superpole faller Jack Sim had fired his S&S entry to the front with Lo Turco second. Lap six it was all change as Cringle headed the pack but by now Wainwright had advanced to a challenging position. Mark Cheetham had entered the fray but Wainwright, riding his brother James 2007 machine, felt confident enough to take on all comers and moved in on leader Cringle with two to go. Wainwright secured the position and defended the spot with maturity and style and his season was up and running.

Race two saw Cringle and Rothwell in a two-way battle for the lead. Soon after it became a three-way affair as Jack Sim hooked up with these two youngsters and the experienced Sim eventually overhauled them both. But by mid distance Sim had fallen back to third as Cringle upped the anti and eased clear for the lead and the win.

The final round of this competition at Brands Hatch will now be transferred to the BSB meeting on Sunday September 28th at Silverstone.

Top Scottish racer Liam Lyon (no 18) put in another tremendous performance to capture four from four in the Dyna Pro supported MRO Supersport 600 Championship. Lyon, the Kilcreggan teenager, finished second in last season's championship and he is determined to go one better this time and give sponsor Phil Seton his second title on the trot.

Pole sitter Rob Hoyles got the drop on his rivals in the opening race of the Dyna Pro Championship. Second time around and Lyon was in control, but unable to break free from a marauding pack headed by Mark Cringle, Triumph, Hoyles, Dave Shelvey, impressing once again on his Suzuki K1 GSX-R and Yorkshire teenager hot-shot Billy Mellor, Form-it Construction Suzuki GSX-R. Lap five and 20-year-old carpenter Cringle jammed his 675 down the inside of Hoyles at Goddards for second, and soon after they both nearly succumbed to a back marker situation, but finished second and third respectively behind Lyon.

Whilst going for third in race two Lyon connected with Hoyles exiting Goddards and Hoyles, the Peterborough journalist, was forced to sit out the remainder of race two as Manxman Cringle and Lyon took up the running. Chase Collyer, Mike Smith Tuning R6, and Tim Venables, Turner R6, headed the chasing pack. Midway Cringle appeared to have the race won. But Lyon gradually hauled in the leader and on the penultimate lap just a second separated them. As the pair came out of Goddards for the final time Lyon got the power down very quickly and in a photo-finish squeezed out Cringle for a .013 of a second win.

Cringle, 20, got the hole-shot away in Sunday's opener and pulled out a ten-metre advantage over Collyer. By lap three Lyon was all over Collyer and next lap out-braked him at Goddards for the second spot. Both these riders got past Cringle and in the later stages Collyer looked to have the better of Lyon, but in a close run thing Lyon just got the upper hand for the win. Lyon got a much better getaway in the final ten-lapper and took a start to finish victory. Despite getting a 1.14.2 fastest lap Cringle was unable to prevent a clean sweep for Lyon.



David Pearce, the 14-year-old from Onchan in the IOM, opened up his MRO Superteen account with victory in the opening race of round two of the championship. The former Mini British Motocross Champion led race one after a first lap sort out where Stephanie Waddelow went down at McLean's, then Glaswegian Niall Campbell at Goddards.



Championship leader Jack Blake (no 3) also succumbed to difficult racing conditions as Pearce, Josh Harland and Kingsley Ruddy sped clear for a 1-2-3.

Race two was a different situation with 26 finishers. Pearce once again fired his Chardaid Aprilia into the front racing spots and on lap three out-braked Blake at Goddards to take the lead. Fraser Rogers and Alex Olsen were in the mix as was Josh Harland who, on the penultimate lap became the victim of congestion at Goddards and lost the front end of his Aprilia and was out. Blake got the verdict from Rogers.

Races on Sunday brought more success for young Manx racer Pearce, who got the opening race off to a flier from Danny Hedger and Blake. For a big part of the race Steph Waddelow and Blake were duelling for the podium but Waddelow dropped her Aprilia at Goddards. Pearce from Hedger and Blake was the result. Pearce got the hole-shot away in race two with Jason Douglas and Alex Olsen in hot pursuit. But later as a number of riders fell by the wayside Hedger and Blake got it on again for a 1-2 respectively.

Another good weekend for Blake keeps him comfortable at the head of the MRO Superteen Championship.

The MRO Superteens will run a guest round at a BSB meeting at a date yet to be announced.

Words & pictures Terry Howe
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