



2008 MRO CHAMPIONSHIPS SNETTERTON, 12TH – 13TH APRIL



Home circuit triumph for Baker

By virtue of some seriously disciplined racing King's Lynn racer Peter Baker has propelled himself to the head of the Pirelli-Metzeler MRO Superstock 1000 Championship, mainly due to a superb victory in a soggy second encounter which claimed seven of the championship's leading contenders. Sam Bishop got the hole-shot away in the opening race of round two at Snetterton powering the Kester Cunningham John Yamaha R1 to a slender lead from the Suzuki GSX-R mounted Kierran Blair. This advantage was short lived though as Blair took control at the Esses on lap two and was untroubled thereafter. Bishop in the meantime was producing good track craft in second and even under pressure from Mark Lister, Orwell Motorcycles Suzuki GSX-R, the Norwich youngster comfortably managed the race at the head of a pack of five.



Then, on lap three came the first change to the top six when Fakenham racer Carl Nelson (no 35) fired his Suzuki GSX-R ahead of Donington Park winner Lee Hodge, HM/Enigma Suzuki GSX-R. Peter Baker had maintained sixth spot from the outset on his Morello Suzuki GSX-R and was unable to capitalise and reel in the Nelson/Hodge conflict ahead. With two laps to go and with Blair long gone Lister, the London courier, began to hassle Bishop and on the penultimate lap the 2007 Bemsee Rookie 1000 champion made his move on him into the Esses stick and stayed strong for second spot. Bishop grabbed the podium third ahead of Nelson, Hodge and Baker.

In treacherous conditions Baker executed a great start to race two slotting his K8 Suzuki in behind the fast gating Blair. But Hertfordshire engineer Blair succumbed to the conditions and slithered out of contention on lap two. Baker was well away by now and Bishop was hot on his tail. By lap three Fakenham plasterer Nelson was into third making a complete Norfolk rostrum a real possibility.

However, at mid distance Bishop slid out at the Esses but remounted and rejoined in tenth. Soon after Nelson dropped his Suzuki at Russells, and Lister and Dean Daniels, on board the unsponsored Yamaha R1, were now in the podium positions. For 11 laps Hodge had mixed it up with these two but he too crashed out with a lap to go. Former BMCRC champion Barry Chapman grabbed fourth on his SDC Performance Yamaha R1, while the like mounted Tim Bourne and the returning former BMCRC champion Alex Symon finished fifth and sixth respectively.

Huntington teenager Jonathan Railton (no 71) stormed to the top of the Pirelli- Metzeler MRO Stocksport 600 standings heading both the MRO and Junior championships after a mature demonstration in contrasting conditions. But it was Ashley Chivers, the High Wycombe rider, who powered his Yamaha R6 to a resounding victory in Sunday morning's opener.

He was flying throughout the 12 laps and this result hoisted him into contention for this year's title. But before the start two points separated the top four at the head of the MRO standings and Patrick Sheridan was one of them. So it was no real surprise to see the Essex builder quickly slotting his Lancs ville Construction Yamaha R6 into second place, but any sort of attack on leader Chivers never really materialised. The Yamaha R6 mounted Railton occupied third throughout



and 16 points for him was never in doubt, nor was the fourth place in which Ben Lightowler had been circulating in all the way through. In the meantime Chris Maile, Revolution Signs Suzuki GSX-R, headed a big pack of rivals for the top six placings. Maile, the former Minitwins contender, did well to save a highside at Russells in the early stages and stayed calm to defend sixth from Daniel Watkins, Suzuki GSX-R, and the Yamaha R6 mounted Josh Caygill.

Chivers, looking to double up with a second victory, found Sheridan a different proposition this time as the pair duelled for supremacy early on. Third placed Maile tumbled out of contention at Russells on the opening lap, while Harrogate builder Lightowler moved in to grab the lead, while race one winner Chivers dropped to fourth.

But Chivers soon got third back from pole sitter Daniel Fowler, and Lightowler eased clear of Sheridan. Lightowler, the 22-year-old from Harrogate, had by now got to grips with his new R6 and the win looked on. In the meantime Chivers disappeared from the leaderboard on lap seven and soon after Lightowler lost control of his machine at Coram. This coincided with an incident at the Esses that brought about reds and the race was declared with Railton the winner from Paul Hinchcliffe, Suzuki GSX-R, and Josh Wainwright, Triumph 675.

Words & pictures Terry Howe
April 2008