



2008 MRO CHAMPIONSHIPS BRANDS HATCH, 8th-9th MARCH



Steph makes history at Brands

Despite Jack Blake's stylish quartet of runner-up spots it wasn't enough for him to grab all the headlines in the opening rounds of the MRO Superteen championships at Brands Hatch, writes Terry Howe.

Instead, Cambridgeshire youngster Stephanie Waddelow (No 34) took most of the plaudits after creating history by securing pole position for these opening rounds. To add to this she went on to power her SS Racing Aprilia to two victories over the weekend, and in doing so became the first lady racer within the BMCRC-MRO, and possibly in any other championship in the UK, to achieve pole and double victories in one meeting,



It could have been even better for the 16-year-old Ely City College student but it was the rainy races which undid the feisty teenager, as Blake, Hyside Aprilia, and Danny Buchan, Quest Aprilia, mastered all racing conditions and now leads the way in this season's title race. However, in all four races there was no quarter given by the boys, and it wasn't the opposition that demoted Waddelow into third best point scorer on the weekend but a possible lack of grip and confidence on the slippery surface from this exciting female prospect.

After a race long duel with Blake, Waddelow grabbed her maiden victory in Saturday's opener. But neither rider could get clear of a five-way battle for supremacy and Blake, the engineering student from Romford, tried to detach himself from this by making a move on leader Waddelow at Paddock on lap two. Waddelow defended the position well, but she was required to repeat the performance soon after at Graham Hill Bend. Although Blake continued to pester the young lady she remained calm and recorded her first Superteen victory, eclipsing her 2007 best result of sixth.

Following a sharp getaway in race two Waddelow slithered out of contention on lap three, as Luke Hedger, the oldest of the Hedger brothers from Yate, took up the running. However, by mid distance Danny Buchan had taken control but was unable to drop Blake who looked very menacing. Then Andy Reid and local youngster Alex Olsen wanted a slice of the front running action, but Buchan remained strong and went on to record his first Superteen win.

County Antrim's Andy Reid got the hole-shot away in Sunday's opener, but soon after Blake had got the better of Waddelow and had taken up the running Reid departed from proceedings and the emergence of Kasey Wyatt, who was benefiting from some suspension improvements, caught the eye. But towards the conclusion Waddelow managed to get clear of Blake and record her second historic victory.

In Sunday's final race a rain shower thwarted Waddelow's chances of a third triumph. Instead Buchan, the former Centre Junior Motocross champion, relished the conditions and sped clear for the win from Blake. But it's Essex racer Blake who heads the standings after the first two rounds.

The opening two rounds of the Pirelli-Metzeler MRO Stocksport 600 championship brought about mixed fortunes for the capacity entry. Following two 12-lappers Lingfield's Jimmy Hill goes to the top of the pile after clinching a dry opener then, in this inaugural event, snatched a third in a soggy race two which was won by Pat Sheridan.

Pole sitter Hill fired his Team EMCO Yamaha R6 into an immediate lead and eased out a slender advantage, which wasn't seriously challenged thereafter. However, he was nevertheless mindful of an over the shoulder tussle raging for the podium between Junior contenders Matt Bilton and Jonathan Railton (No 71), both Yamaha R6.



Although these two were squabbling for rostrum positions they couldn't prevent intervention either from Manxman Mark Cringle, who got his Cringle Racing Ltd Triumph 675 into this Yamaha brawl. Two thirds through Railton, the 16-year-old Cambridgeshire racer, powered his Bill Waddington set up R6 past Cringle for third spot; a position he maintained to the finish. After a race long defence of the position Bilton, the Mirfield racer, kept his HB Motorcycles R6 on course for a hard fought second. Thirty finishers was a great result for this brand new MRO class.

The changeable weather prevented a similar outcome in race two as a different set of riders entered the fray. Pat Sheridan, Lancsville Construction Yamaha R6, failed to make the opening race, but quickly made his presence known in a wet second encounter and eventually got the better of former MRO MiniTwins ace Ben Lightowler, Yamaha R6, for victory.

Last season's top Superteen rider George Hogton-Rusling, Yamaha R6, and Railton gave Hill plenty of grief in the tussle for the podium places but eventually race one winner Hill got the better of these two Junior class riders and claimed third, and in consequence leads the series going into the next rounds at Donington Park.

Words & pictures Terry Howe.
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