



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



Ice breaker Hardy!

Ace late breaker Mark Hardy (no 77) stamped his authority on this season's Norfolk Line Yamaha Past Masters Championship with a blistering display in rounds three and four of the series at Donington Park, writes Terry Howe.



Who should be taking the wroth of Hardy's endeavours was none other than brother-in-law Tyler Bacon, the man who assisted Hardy through last season's periods of woe. However, it wasn't a complete family affair as Keith Roissetter scored well throughout; the Surbiton rider enjoying his best meeting for a while and setting himself up as one of Hardy's main rivals for the title.

In an all-Yamaha TZ 250 battle for honours Hardy, from Eye near Peterborough, powered his Graham File tuned TZ to a brace of victories in round three of the series; but how he was made to

work for it! Former champion Tyler Bacon, Yamaha TZ, took him to the wire on both occasions in two thrilling encounters. By lap three in Saturday's opener Hardy had taken early leader Keith Roissetter. Midway Bacon had shown his hand and a scrap for control erupted. As the pair headed into Goddards for the final time Hardy completed a textbook late braking move on Bacon to take the lead and the win.

Boat engineer Hardy got the hole-shot away in race two and this time last season's championship winner Andy Ball was in the frame. But Hardy eased clear, but not from Bacon though. In the meantime Roissetter had got onto Ball's tail. Ball, who had only raced once before at Donington, this in an endurance race, defended the position well and finished third behind Bacon and Hardy. Hardy began round four in confident mood but again had to deal with his relative. But on lap three Bacon, who had snatched the lead, stormed into Goddards far too hot and rejoined in ninth, a position he maintained to the end. Hardy from Roissetter was the result. Hardy zapped the opposition with a very late on the brakes move at Goddards which took the Cambridgeshire rider to victory in race four of the weekend; and four wins from four gives Hardy a comfortable cushion at the head of the group.



It was mixed fortunes for many of the main contenders in rounds three and four of the BMCRC Powerbike Championship, but it was London courier Mark Lister (no 29) who fired his LCS/Orwell Motorcycles Suzuki GSX-R1000 to top points scoring results in round three. Last season's top Rookie Lister leapfrogged a number of riders and placed himself in a serious championship chasing position after Saturday's races.

Michael Neeves powered his Benji Alloys Yamaha R1 into a race one lead, taking advantage of a

mistake at Goddards by the reigning North Gloucester Powerbike Champion Joe Symonds. The Yamaha R1 mounted rider ran in to the right hander too hot, but recovered and got past Peter Baker, Morello Yamaha R1, on lap three. Baker got the better of Lister later on but Symonds, the 41-year-old Salisbury rider, dropped into fourth. Then Lister squeezed out Baker for second, while Neeves eventually took the win from Lister by a comfortable margin.

Mark Parrett fired his C&C Yamaha R1 into a race two winning position early on, but Lister, Neeves and Symonds put paid to a podium result for the TT contender. Baker got ahead of Neeves midway but was unable to haul in Lister who stormed clear for his first Powerbike victory.

Symonds got the drop on his rivals for the start of Sunday's opener, but by mid distance Neeves had taken the lead from Symonds and Oli Henderson (no 20), Easigrass Suzuki GSX-R. Baker had tried a move on Neeves at Redgate early on but Neeves, the motorcycle journalist from Peterborough, was having none of it and sped clear for victory.

After a few running repairs due to a Superstock off, Mark Lister was back for the final Powerbike race and a win never looked in doubt as he got the verdict over Baker and Symonds. Although Lister and Neeves faired well in these rounds consistent results from Peter Baker has elevated the Norfolk rider to the top of the pile after four rounds.

Nick Crowe and Mark Cox powered their A&J Groundworks LCR Honda F2 to a maximum points haul in round three of the BMCRC Sidecar Championship, but just fell short of repeating the feat in round four. Three times TT winner Crowe and regular TT competitor Cox never had it all their own way though, as they became involved in one of the closest sidecar finishes seen by the club for some time during Saturday's races.

Steve Coombs and Gary Partridge came into round three unbeaten and the Ireson Honda mounted duo were determined to keep their record intact. However, pole sitter Crowe and Cox got the drop on their rivals in race one and although Coombs and Partridge kept the Manxman in check the TT team stayed strong for the win. Best F1 team were young Norwich teamsters Ben Bygrave and Sam Ryder who powered their LCR Suzuki to third.

This was the position that Bygrave and Ryder finished in race two, but out front a determined effort almost ended in tears for Coombs and Partridge at Goddards; but the West Country team recovered to eventually take Crowe and Cox. However, the advantage was brief as the Crowe/Cox partnership out-muscled them through Goddards on the final lap for the closest of win margins.

Round four of the Sidecar series brought about mixed fortunes especially for the F2 crews. Coombs



and Partridge remained consistent in the F2 division but Crowe and Cox succumbed to the fast Craner section in race two, however, neither suffered serious injury. A second and third in class for Marc and Rik Vannieuwenhuysen made the trip from Belgium worthwhile for them. However, the race for the F1 Championship was about a weekend long family feud between Ben Holland and Ricky Stevens and John Holland and Tim Worsfold (no 6), who became involved in an LCR Suzuki GSX-R brawl which had a major bearing on the F1 championship

standings. Former Bemsee Champion Holland and Worsfold, campaigning the ex-Jerry Martin LCR, got the better of reigning F2 Champions Holland and Stevens during Saturday's races but the 22-year-old friends from Havant who bought the ex-Holland/Worsfold LCR for this season's campaign, still couldn't master the senior team in Sunday's races, but both crews will now be occupying top positions in the F1 standings as a result.

Reigning MZ 250 Champion Chris Rogers (no 95) is being made to work very hard in his defence of the title. High Wycombe rider Rogers entered round three with a ten-point cushion at the head of the standings and just about maintained this advantage after Saturday's two races. Hertfordshire rider Mark Jones interrupted the usual suspects flow in the opening rounds at Brands, and this speedy contender made his presence known in these latest rounds.

Phil Munday looked like opening up his season's account in winning style, but retired at Coppice on lap three after taking the lead. Jones took up the running but Rogers appeared very menacing. Phil Belenkin eventually got out of fifth into third, while Jones lost out to Rogers in a close run thing.



Cambridgeshire teenager Dean Stimpson got the hole-shot away in race two and despite close attention from Jones his defence of the position was resolute. Then Rogers became involved with Belenkin for second and third, but Phil Munday's blast from the back of the grid caught the eye, and although Jones' fourth was secure, a great top six battle between, Steve Hill and Nick Murton-Jones prevented Munday from progressing into the front bunch. Stimpson opened up his fourth round account with another stylish victory from Rogers and Belenkin but all the contenders fell foul of a shower around Coppice in race two. Escaping and in determined mode it was Munday (no 3) who got clear of his stricken rivals in Sunday's second encounter, but as the pack headed into Goddards on the opening lap leader Munday lost control of his machine on the brakes and slithered out of the race. Steve Hill and Mark Jones took up the running and Hill it was who mastered the storm and took his first victory of the season.



Words & pictures Terry Howe
March 2008.