

SUPERSTOCK SIXTY-SIX

Race Report

Shell Advance Australian Superbike Championship
Round One – Mallala Motorsport Park (SA)
April 11 -13, 2003

14 April 2003

**SENSATIONAL
SIXTH AT FULL
HOUSE MALLALA!**



Photo: Phil Smith

My first national-level race was a huge success. There were no less than 46 entries in Superstock competing for the 40 grid positions. In this, my first visit to the tricky Mallala circuit, I was greeted with harder braking corners than anything previously experienced, but I enjoyed these, often passing into the tight hairpins. The weekend was a significant eye-opener, with broken bones, black flags, protests, mini-tornado winds and even receiving my first autograph requests. I was elated with 6th overall.

QUALIFYING: 14th, Best Lap 1:17.80

Secured in my brilliant new Alpinestars SuperTech boots, I continually improved my times over both qualifiers, from 17th initially (1:18.26), down to a 1:17.80 in the latter, giving a 4th-row slot of 14th.

RACE ONE: 7th, Best Lap 1:17.24 (L8)

The tension on the first grid line-up of the season was very powerful, but resulted in a devastating third corner pile-up just ahead of me, requiring a red flag. In the restart I cleanly took another 4 positions by the completion of the first lap and maintained a consistently fast pace to catch Whalen. After a 4-lap dice, I passed him on the second last lap to take a brilliant 7th in the 40-strong field.

RACE TWO: 5th, Best Lap 1:16.85 (L6)

In fierce winds, a great start saw me shoot past five riders on the grid and carry a consistent pace, soon picking off three more. A thrilling six-lap long battle for fourth place with Browne ensued, complete with regular elbow rubbing, two-wheel drifts on to the ripple strip and ecstatic commentators. I'd have the advantage passing under brakes, but severe right arm-pump meant the transition to throttle was arduous, losing exit drive. I eventually crossed the line 0.23sec behind him for 5th. Oppressive shoulder pain was eased by receiving my first autograph requests!

RACE THREE: 9th, Best Lap 1:17.07 (L7)

A slight bog-down on the start of the weekend's final race allowed me to only gain one place by turn one, however I took two more places in the next two laps, finding myself behind experienced campaigners Tomassetti and Culvenor. With these guys glued together, not missing a beat, and my tyres nearly shot, I couldn't find a safe path through, but was extremely happy with a top-10 place.

THANKYOU!

Huge thanks to Christof Henco, Erin Doyle and Dianne Baker for their exceptional help all weekend!

Shell Advance Australian Road Racing Championship Points (Superstock Class Top 10) After Rd 1:

1st L.McKenzie (Suzuki) 75, 2nd P.Martinello (Yamaha) 49, 3rd B.McConnell (Suzuki) 37, 4th C.Browne (Suzuki) 33, 5th A.Cudlin (Yamaha) 31, **6th D.Bonthorne (Suzuki) 27**, 7th A.Tomassetti (Kawasaki) 25, 8th T.Culvenor (Suzuki) 21, 9th P.Murray (Yamaha) 20, 10th M.Whalen (Honda) 15.