



Race Report

LAPTIMES TUMBLE AS A TOP-10 STAR IS BORN

**KBC Helmets Stars of Tomorrow
Phillip Island (VIC), 15-16 Nov '03**

The racing weekend at the famed 'Stars of Tomorrow' C and D grade national event was a notable turning point in the racing career of Superstock rider Dean Bonthorne. A string of bizarre events that cost him placings in support races were offset by lap times four seconds faster than his previous visit, constituting an astounding Top-10 place among the immense field of 125-1100cc racebikes. Taking the Best Presented of the Meeting topped it off!



SUPERSTOCK QUALIFYING : 6th of 37, Best Lap 1:45.50

Saturday morning qualifying was conducted in 31°C heat, with track temperatures topping the 50°C mark. Even with a best-ever 1:46min time in the first session on supersport tyres, Deano dug deep during second qualifying to reel off two consecutive mid 1:53 laps. Such was Bonthorne's delight in seeing the new time on his pitboard, that exorbitant pumping of his fist in the air unsettled the bike on the 250+km/h straight with reality quickly returning!

SUPERSTOCK PRELIMINARY: 5th of 35, Best Lap 1:46.21 (L3 of 4)

From his second row grid position, Dean made a clean start in the afternoon Superstock race and was the victor of a close tussle for fifth place during the short four-lap sprint, with the front four competitors out of reach.

OVER 400cc FINAL : 21st of 39, Best Lap 1:45.92 (L5 of 6)

Having qualified 17th fastest of the 80+ machines in this open category during a 'Heat' race, Deano made a great start from the fifth row amongst several 1000cc machines on slicks. Working his way up to 10th place he was leading a fierce 3-way 600cc battle on the final lap when a slipping gearlever rubber caught his boot, throwing the bike out of gear over fast Lukey Heights crest. Without any drive, his Suzuki ran wide off the track, Dean miraculously keeping it upright in deep dirt and managing to rejoin the field for the final few corners with 25 seconds and 11 places lost.

SUPERSTOCK FINAL: 8th of 32, Best Lap 1:45.62 (L6 of 6)

With fresh tyres and new-found confidence Dean was greatly looking forward to the Superstock final, but exiting pitlane for the warm-up lap, he knocked his visor clean off whilst attempting to close it. With no eye protection he furiously exited at Turn Four, and raced back to the pits for a replacement visor before the race started. He made it just in time, but was forced to start from pitlane, after the entire field had passed. The ensuing ride was arguably his most determined to date, with an amazing display as he carved through no fewer than 26 riders to cross the line in fifth place!! His absolute delight sank as he was imposed a three-placing penalty for passing one of the many riders whilst under a yellow caution flag.

STARS OF TOMORROW RACE : 10th of 36, Best Lap 1:44.09 (L10 of 10)

At the start of the weekend, Dean had no idea that he would be in the Top 40 of the 180 odd entrants, qualifying him for the highly-esteemed 'Stars' race, let alone be 18th on the grid thanks to his 1:45 qualifying lap. Determined to make the most of this honour he embarked upon a remarkable 10-lap race in continual high-speed battle with two other 600 machines, often passing four or five times each lap. Despite growing fatigue, the tenacity of his final lap delivered an astounding 1:44.09 time, some 1.5secs faster than those prior, and a brilliant top-10 finish!

NEXT MEETING: Interclub Championship, Round Four, Phillip Island (VIC) 23 November 2003.



DUNLOP - NGK - DAINESE - PTR - YOSHIMURA - OHLINS - JAG SIGNS - SPIDI