



Race Report

World Superbike Championship Rd2
Aussie Superstock Support Event
Phillip Island Circuit (VIC)

26-28 March, 2004

SOLID PERFORMANCE AT WORLD SUPERS

In his first nationally-contested ride since the Stars of Tomorrow event over four months prior, Dean Bonthorne put on a strong performance at the huge World Superbike Championship event at Phillip Island. Although a combination of time away from the closely contested Superstock class and less mental focus due to his Suzuki work commitments over the weekend resulted in lap times slightly higher than hoped, he was pleased with a top 15 finish in the lap record-smashing event.



Image:
Stephen Piper

QUALIFYING : 15th of 27, Best Lap 1:46.84

Friday afternoon was Deano's main chance to put in a fast qualifying lap on reasonable track temperatures, though scrubbing-in fresh tyres, brake discs and pads meant that time would be limited. After a few laps he put his head down and each lap came closer to his goal of a low 1.45, but just as the first 1.46 lap arrived, his forearm muscles locked from severe arm-pump. Unable to operate the controls effectively, he pulled in to relieve the pressure, but the session ran out, albeit in 11th place. An under-inflated rear tyre in the 5.20pm evening qualifying resulted in lack of traction and slower times as others improved and he was dropped to 15th in the order.

RACE ONE: 16th, Best Lap 1:47.07 (L6 of 6)

Saturday brought an early start, with an 8.30am race. Struggling to get off the line cleanly, Dean lost several positions on the line and was stuck in slower traffic for the opening laps. Using an advantage under braking worked through four riders and cleared away, gaining speed each lap, though those ahead were long gone.

RACE TWO : 14th, Best Lap 1:47.24 (L5 of 5)

The sun was low in the sky for the 5.45pm Race Two, as Dean maintained his starting position and rode strongly but safely. Conscious of cooling track temperatures and tyre wear (running one set of tyres for the weekend compared to the two permitted), he gapped riders behind him but was unable to gain on the leading groups, crossing the line with some seconds gap around him.

RACE THREE: 13th, Best Lap 1:45.98 (L5 of 6)

Despite the 8.30am race start, crowds for one of Australia's largest motorcycle events (second only to MotoGP) were out in force for the day's opening event, and they were not disappointed. Deano had a fantastic race, gaining several positions in the opening lap and holding tenth place for several more. A mistake, out-braking himself at the tight MG hairpin, allowed the group on his tail to close in and a five-way battle ensued. With brazen passing manoeuvres and more than one shoulder rubbed at well over 240km/h, the group lead changed several times per lap. Three-wide on the super-fast final corner, Deano was pushed wide by the other two, but blocked the pair behind him crossing the line 13th with just half a second cover the five. A celebratory mono for the huge crowd was well received.

NEXT MEETING: Victorian Road Racing Championship, Round One, Winton Raceway, 24-24 April 2004.



PIRELLI - NGK - DAINESE - PTR - WIZ - JAG SIGNS - SPIDI - OGGY KNOBBS