



Race Report

BRILLIANT TOP 10 AT 1ST INTERSTATE ROUND !

**Aust Superbike Championship – Rd 2
Eastern Creek (NSW), 1st May 2005**

Nerves were high in the lead-up to Dean Bonthorne's first trip to Eastern Creek, or any other interstate track, for two years. While the Friday practice and qualifying were very challenging, trying to figure out the circuit and new machine set-up, his performance quickly escalated over the weekend. The outcome included two fantastic top-8 race finishes as his lap times dropped more than any other competitor, and even nudged the lap record.



QUALIFYING: 13th of 36, Best Lap 1:43.71

Deano was admittedly quite lost during the one practice session (1:48s) and first Qualifier on Friday (1:46s). Adjusting to a new bike, first time on new suspension and an unfamiliar circuit saw him struggle, qualifying 23rd in the first session. But a serious overnight re-think and new set-up strategy delivered, with him knocking considerable time off his laps and reaching 13th on the grid, just one spot off the third row.

RACE ONE: 12th, Best Lap 1:43.62 (5 of 7)

A massive, yet simplistic error cost Deano a top 10 finish in the first race. Unlike the 1st round, there was no 'Warm-up Lap' for this event, but many in the Superstock field did not realise this – Dean included. So when they left the grid, he took it very easy, letting several people though and confused as to why some seemed to be going so hard for a warm-up lap! In fact, they were racing! On the completion of the first lap, instead of re-gridding, the field continued though the straight and Dean's visor fogged up from angry profanity, realising his mistake. He was very rattled for the remaining laps and inconsistent in his riding, but still managed to make up a number of places and join a fairing-bashing five-way battle for 9th place, ferocious enough for another colliding rider's footpeg to puncture Dean's boot! Crossing the line 12th was highly respectable... especially given the opening lap confusion!

RACE TWO: 8th, Best Lap 1:42.94 (L2 of 7)

The plan for the two Sunday races was to get a good (race pace!) opening lap and crack the top ten. And indeed the plan worked, with Deano rocketing off the line making up six places by Turn 2, fortunately just missing a first corner pile-up the halted the race. But his attack was just as good from the re-start, reaching 7th place by the completion of the first lap. His challenge for 6th was halted, when trying to find a way passed, another rider slipped through. The pair in front then took up the entire track width in battle, so with a big gap behind and no way past, Dean settled to a safe pace in the closing laps, elated with 8th place and times into the 1:42s.

RACE THREE: 7th, Best Lap 1:42.71 (L7 of 7)

The final race of the meeting was undoubtedly the strongest of the weekend for Dean. Another brilliant start (much to the disgust of the row ahead, who queried if 'launch control' was fitted!) pushed him up to the top six for the first turns, another brave passing move in the tricky Turn 11 had him right among the leading pack for the initial laps. Even when another place was lost to a local, this time Deano kept up with the leading group for several laps with a couple of seconds gap behind. But this did not last as an over-eager throttle twist onto the straight saw the rear loose grip and try to spit him off the bike. Though he stayed on, the straight drive was lost and one rider got through while a second pulled along side. But Deano held him off, even as a rider ahead crashed in front of them, to finish an outstanding 7th by 0.2sec, and with times just a second off the lap record! Not a bad way to end the weekend at all, with points adding up to 9th overall for the round, and putting Dean 9th in the championship.

NEXT MEETING: Stars of Tomorrow, Phillip Island (VIC) 14-15 May 2005.



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