



Media Information
BMW Motorrad Motorsport
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BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team kicks off the 2020 WorldSBK season with a record pole at Phillip Island.

- **Season opener of the 2020 FIM Superbike World Championship at Phillip Island, Australia.**
- **Tom Sykes rides his BMW S 1000 RR to his 50th pole position with a new all-time lap record.**
- **P9 for Sykes in race one, team-mate Eugene Laverty crosses the line in 11th.**

Phillip Island. The 2020 FIM World Superbike Championship (WorldSBK) started with a bang by the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team. In Saturday's Superpole qualifying of the season opener at Phillip Island (AUS), Tom Sykes (GBR) rode his BMW S 1000 RR to a record pole position. Sykes was then leading half of the distance of race one, before dropping positions and finishing ninth. His new team-mate Eugene Laverty (IRL) was 13th in Superpole and 11th in the race.

It was a dream start to the season for the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team. In Superpole, Sykes was the first rider to go out on the qualifying tyre and rode to a stunning new all-time lap record by setting a time of 1:29,230 minutes. In the remaining minutes, no one was able to beat that and so Sykes, who is the WorldSBK pole record holder, celebrated his 50th pole position in the series. Laverty qualified for 13th place on the grid.

Race one of the new season also began perfectly for Sykes on his RR. After a few position changes on the opening corners, the Englishman regained the lead and maintained P1 until the 12th of 22 laps. In the second half of the race, Sykes unfortunately fought with blunt weapons and so had to settle with ninth at the chequered flag. Laverty dropped some positions at the start but then showed great fighting spirit to battle his way back towards the top ten, crossing the line in 11th.



Quotes after race one on Phillip Island.

Marc Bongers, BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director: “We had a very nice starting position today to kick off the season. Starting from the front row with this view here in Phillip Island is just fantastic. Tom Sykes’ pole position is a great achievement that we deserved. Throughout the week we showed, also in the test, that we can be in the mix. It was of course also great to lead the first 11 laps of the race. Handling of the bike looks very good. Then unfortunately Tom got a tyre issue and as a result the performance dropped sharply. So we have to look at our tyre selection again. Many competitors were on a different tire compound. Eugene Laverty’s performance in qualifying was unfortunately not so strong, which resulted in a relatively poor starting position. On the other hand, he had good pace in the race and was sometimes as fast as the top riders. He fought with Davies and Rinaldi for a long time, was then overtaken again and again on the straight because we still lack engine power here. But Eugene was basically satisfied with the chassis and I think there is a lot of potential. We will attack again tomorrow.”

Shaun Muir, Team Principal BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team: “Firstly we are pleased on getting pole position in Superpole with Tom, this gave him a real good chance of a result in race one. Eugene however didn’t make the best use of his qualifying tyre, but he will learn from that and come back stronger. The race obviously was a little disappointing given the great start for Tom who was riding with a lot of confidence and lead for a large proportion of the race. We made a tyre choice which in hindsight wasn’t what most went with, it was the ‘B’ type rear compound tyre which in the latter stages lost grip and that cost many positions. Eugene had a different situation and ran with a few difficulties during the race with engine braking pushing him deep into corners, but he settled into the race well and at one stage was the fastest rider on track. But having starting down in P13 meant he got himself into Davies, Rinaldi and Tom in the closing laps. We will take the information away, work hard over night and hopefully come back stronger tomorrow.”

Tom Sykes: “The day started well and with all things considered I have to say I am very happy with a number of things. Certainly qualifying for me was really controlled and I felt really comfortable. The BMW S 1000 RR was working great with the Pirelli qualifying tyre so I was able to do what I wanted and to get a circuit record along with my 50th pole position is some achievement. In the race, we had a good start. It was unfortunate we had a coming together with Jonathan Rea early on, but I settled back



in and got into a good rhythm for the first half of the race. Unfortunately, my rear tyre drastically dropped off mid race which is something we didn't expect and ultimately cost us in race performance, this is something we will work on overnight and make sure we are there or thereabouts for tomorrow two races."

Eugene Laverty: "We had a difficult start to the race. Obviously starting from P13 meant we had some work to do in the early stages, but I felt it went better than expected as I was worried we didn't have the pace to go with the group. Having said that it was clear that some of the riders around us didn't have such good race pace but for us, that was something we have been working on over the last four days which helped regarding our pace late in the race. We will start again from P13 tomorrow which makes it tough for me, but I will attack and try make up some positions early on."

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