

## CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Media Information

BMW Motorrad Motorsport

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### **First row of the grid and solid race results for the BMW M 1000 RR on a hot WorldSBK Saturday at Navarra.**

- **Tom Sykes finishes third in Superpole to claim a spot on the front row of the grid once again.**
- **Sixth place for Sykes in a hot first race; team-mate Michael van der Mark finishes seventh.**
- **Jonas Folger also in the points, finishing 14th in the first FIM Superbike World Championship race at Navarra.**

**Navarra. The first race day of the debut FIM Superbike World Championship (WorldSBK) event at Navarra, Spain, has come to an end. Tom Sykes (GBR) from the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team gave a strong performance in Saturday morning's Superpole on his BMW M 1000 RR, claiming third place to secure a spot on the front row of the grid. Sykes finished the afternoon's race in sixth position. His team-mate Michael van der Mark (NED) crossed the line in seventh. Jonas Folger (GER) from the Bonovo MGM Racing team was also in the points, finishing 14th.**

1:36.546 minutes was the lap time recorded by Sykes in the morning's Superpole qualification. That enabled him to take the lead for a brief period before finishing the 15-minute session with third place, on the front row of the grid secured. Van der Mark ended the hard-fought qualifying session in tenth position. Folger qualified in 14th place. A special surprise lay in wait for van der Mark on the grid later when BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director Marc Bongers and Shaun Muir, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team Principal, presented the new father with a BMW Babyracer.

Air temperatures had already reached 24 degrees Celsius by late morning, climbing to over 30 degrees by the time the race began. Sykes fell back a little in the turmoil at the start but then maintained sixth position for the duration of the 23-lap race. He was within striking distance of the top five for some time, but the gap then grew larger. Van der Mark was able to get into eighth before moving up to seventh on lap seven, where he remained until reaching the finish line. Folger dropped back after losing ground at the start, however he moved up to 14th as the race progressed to secure a points finish.

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### Quotes after race one at Navarra.

**Marc Bongers, BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director:** "Sixth and seventh in the race – that corresponds to where we are at the moment. Our pace was clearly better in this morning's practice. The temperatures kept climbing though as the race approached. We had already struggled with that in practice yesterday. Tom did very well in qualifying to secure a great third place. He established himself in sixth position relatively quickly in the race and was able to maintain that. Michael had a relatively good qualifying session. He finished tenth but was just a tenth of a second away from fifth. In the race, he lost a few seconds again during the first laps. Our aim for tomorrow should be fifth place instead of sixth and seventh. It is important for us to deliver a strong performance tomorrow in the Superpole race, with the aim of reaching the top five. That is realistic for us this weekend."

**Shaun Muir, Team Principal BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team:** "I was really pleased with FP3 in the morning when Michael set a quick pace very early so he had a good run of laps and was confident going into Superpole. Equally Tom found a good set-up as well and was pretty happy so we quickly confirmed the tyre choice for the rear tyre. In Superpole, Tom as usual did a great job putting it on the front row in the top-three. He made good use of his qualifying tyre. We used a slightly different strategy for Michael; he ran one exit with the 'X' tyre and then changed to the 'Q' tyre. It worked really well and it was a much improved performance compared to Most. Okay, tenth place was not where we wanted to be but it was an improvement. In the race, Tom settled into a race pace which was pretty much where he was at the end of the race. He could not gain much advantage but settled into a good rhythm. Michael got stuck behind a couple of riders and lost four, five seconds on the opening few laps. Once he got by and settled into it, he could not bridge the gap. Both riders struggled with the front in the heat. Overall, we can't be too dissatisfied with sixth and seventh. 20+ seconds off the win is not where we want to be but we will try to close that gap tomorrow."

**Tom Sykes, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team:** "It was not too bad. We had a good qualifying and starting from the front row is always a nice target. Coming off the start, another rider came by me and almost took my handle bar so I had to close the gas and a Kawasaki had gone by. So the first lap wasn't very good and then, to be honest, behind Alex Lowes on the first couple of laps, it was just a bit too steady so I need to have a look at that for tomorrow. I need to try to get a better start and first couple of laps but after that I just settled into the rhythm that we found yesterday afternoon. It looks like everyone was suffering a little bit more today because the times were slower than yesterday afternoon. I really struggled with the front end of the bike with the turning and some of the rear traction

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so for sure it was a difficult race to manage. We had to change the way to approach some corners et cetera and try to find a way to ride around those problems so we've got a lot of work to do tonight and hopefully we can improve the set-up for these hot conditions tomorrow."

**Michael van der Mark, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team:** "To be honest, I was expecting a lot more. This morning, we made a huge step in performance and in lap time consistency. Also in Superpole, we've made a good step. I was tenth but the gap to P5 was really close. I was happy with that, but in the warmer conditions in the race the bike just did not react like in the cooler conditions. It's normal but I struggled too much so we need to find a solution for tomorrow."

**Jonas Folger, Bonovo MGM Racing:** "Our start position in the race wasn't bad. Unfortunately, I didn't make a great start. I had a wheelie and lost a few places. On the second lap, I then went straight on in turn 1 while I was trying to overtake another rider. I was back in 21st or 22nd then, but my lap times were nearly as fast as the riders around tenth. Now we have to analyse what happened, as the wheelie at the start was unusual and has not happened at all during practice. We will carry on working and see what we can achieve from 14th on the grid tomorrow."

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