

## CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

Media Information

BMW Motorrad Motorsport

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### **WorldSBK Saturday at Barcelona: pole position for Tom Sykes, Michael van der Mark battling for a podium spot.**

- **Tom Sykes secures pole position in the ninth round of the FIM Superbike World Championship 2021.**
- **Michael van der Mark completes a good race in fifth place, Tom Sykes crosses the line in eighth.**
- **Jonas Folger claims 19th place in the first race.**

**Barcelona. The Saturday at the Circuit de Catalunya began with pole position for the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team. Tom Sykes (GBR) proved unbeatable in the Superpole on his BMW M 1000 RR as he claimed the sought-after spot at the front of the grid. In race one that afternoon, his team-mate Michael van der Mark (NED) was involved in the battle to reach the podium and finished fifth on the wet circuit. Sykes crossed the finish line in eighth place. Jonas Folger (GER) from the Bonovo MGM Racing Team finished the first race in 19th position.**

Sykes posted a time of 1:40.408 minutes, nearly three-tenths of a second faster than his rivals, to claim his third pole position with BMW in the morning Superpole qualification session, his 51st WorldSBK pole overall. Van der Mark qualified in ninth place. Folger finished the Superpole in 18th position.

The weekend at Barcelona had been dry thus far, but rain set in just as the grid was forming up for race one. The riders chose wet-weather tyres to deal with the conditions around the circuit.

Pole-sitter Sykes endured some bad luck at the start. His rear wheel started spinning on the paint as he pulled away, dropping him back down to 15th place. Van der Mark remained in ninth after the start, before starting to make his move up through the field. He had reached fifth place by lap two and moved into fourth with a great manoeuvre on lap seven. He was now battling for a podium finish and moved to within 0.1 seconds of the top three. When leader Toprak Razgatlioglu (TUR / Yamaha) retired on the 15th lap, van der Mark was able to claim third for a while before dropping two places. Van der Mark then closed up on Jonathan Rea (GBR / Kawasaki) again during the final laps, before crossing

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the line in fifth place, six and a half seconds behind winner Scott Redding (GBR / Ducati). On lap one, Sykes moved up from 15th to tenth place. He then returned to the top eight on the next lap and completed the race in eighth position. Folger finished a difficult race in 19th position.

### **Quotes after race one at Barcelona.**

**Marc Bongers, BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director:** "Overall, that was a mixed day for us. Of course, it was fantastic for Tom to get pole position in Superpole and we are also very pleased with Michael's performance in the race having started from ninth and was then involved in the battle for the podium. Unfortunately, his tyres started to wear during the final laps. But he did cross the line just a few seconds off the podium places. This is good, and means we have one good race in the bag. Unfortunately, Tom had some bad luck at the start and wasn't able to turn his pole position into a result. It was a shame that he fell back so far. Now we will see what the weather tomorrow brings. I will be heading on to Le Castellet where we are competing in the Bol d'Or with the BMW Motorrad World Endurance Team. I wish this team the very best of luck as well, and we hope that regular rider Xavi Forés recovers from his injuries swiftly."

**Shaun Muir, Team Principal BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team:** "Firstly, it was a great Superpole lap from Tom. An unbelievable lap time. Mickey didn't do so bad qualifying for the third row in ninth. In race one, Tom unfortunately fell back to P15 at the start. Mickey did well to break through from P9 and was almost in the podium position, but it's days like today where we need to take our opportunity. We need to speak to the riders and get their feedback, but P5 and P8 isn't such a bad result. But Tom starting from pole; he will be disappointed with that. Let's see what tomorrow brings, hopefully we can go a bit better."

**Michael van der Mark, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team:** "This morning in FP3 I felt really good. I had good pace after making some changes to the bike which I felt comfortable with. In Superpole I was quite happy with my laps. P9 on the grid wasn't ideal, but I knew we had a good bike for the race. The race then was wet. I had an OK start and got into a good rhythm and started to pass people. At a certain point in the race I was feeling really confident but I felt the bike spinning as soon as I picked the bike up out of the corner, especially compared to the other riders. For me it was an enjoyable race but it was also really frustrating as I had the feeling that if I had a little more grip on the exit I could have been up there fighting for the podium. Anyway, this is another race done and we learnt a lot from it. We have to find the solution when it's wet again to get more drive grip."

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**Tom Sykes, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team:** "It obviously was great to get pole position in Superpole but then at the race start, I went from pole position to 15th. In the rainy conditions I got on a lot of paint on the track after half a metre so the bike spun up twice. It was unfortunate because in the early laps we had good speed and then everybody seemed to go quite flat so it was difficult to make the difference, so it was a disappointment but it is like it is. The bike was working very good in a lot of areas, just missing entry grip on the rear. This is something to look after for tomorrow and then we will get our next chance."

**Jonas Folger, Bonovo MGM Racing:** "I had hoped that we would be able to benefit from the rain and move up by a few places. However, the opposite turned out to be the case. I don't know why, but I had hardly any grip. Maybe it was because we did not use the chassis completely for rain setup. We will have to see what the others did but I think that this was the main reason why I had no grip, causing me to lose time lap after lap. Now I hope that it stays dry tomorrow. We had been doing well in the dry and maybe we will be able to score more points tomorrow."

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