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Media Information
BMW Motorrad Motorsport
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Mixed emotions for BMW Motorrad Motorsport at the WorldSBK finale at Phillip Island.

- **Difficult final weekend for BMW Motorrad Motorsport in unsettled weather.**
- **Eugene Laverty injures his hip in an accident in Sunday's race.**
- **Marc Bongers: "On the whole, it was a mixed weekend for us".**

Phillip Island. The final round of this season's FIM Superbike World Championship (WorldSBK) at Phillip Island, Australia, was overshadowed by a serious accident involving Eugene Laverty (IRL). The racer from the Bonovo action BMW Racing Team crashed in race two on Sunday and was hit by another rider. Laverty was initially taken to the Medical Centre. He was stable, responsive and had feeling in all extremities. He then was flown to a Melbourne hospital for further examinations. So far, a fracture in his hip was diagnosed.

Overall, it proved to be a difficult final weekend for BMW Motorrad Motorsport in southern Australia. Constant weather changes made getting the right set-up and tyre selection a real challenge. Having rained beforehand, conditions were dry for the Superpole at noon on Saturday. Scott Redding (GBR) from the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team was the best-placed BMW rider in twelfth, followed by Laverty in 13th. Michael van der Mark (NED / BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team) ended qualifying in 15th place, while Loris Baz (FRA / Bonovo action BMW Racing Team) was 18th.

The track was wet for the start of race one on Saturday afternoon but dried quickly during the race, with the entire field pitting to change tyres. Baz made up nine positions and came home ninth to claim another top ten result. Redding was 16th, while Laverty crossed the finish line in 18th place. Van der Mark crashed twice and had to retire.

Conditions were similar for the Superpole Race on Sunday morning. Redding, who lined up on wet tyres, came into the pits to switch to intermediates after the warm-up lap. This meant he had to start from the pit lane, but the tyre selection proved to be the right one. Starting from the back of the field, Redding had climbed into sixth place by the end of the ten-lap sprint. Baz, again starting 18th, was tenth and only narrowly missed out on ninth

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place. Laverty finished 15th. Van der Mark had to come into the pits during the race to switch from wets to slicks, and eventually came home 21st.

Race two on Sunday afternoon began promisingly with Redding sprinting to the front at the start and running second over the opening laps while Laverty found himself eighth after lap one. However, as the race progressed, both riders dropped back through the field before the race was red flagged after Laverty's accident. Redding came home sixth, Baz tenth, and van der Mark twelfth.

Quotes after the Phillip Island races.

Marc Bongers, BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director: "First and foremost, we wish Eugene a swift recovery. We must wait to see what the further examinations reveal, but we all hope that he is fit again soon. I am so sorry that his final WorldSBK race ended that way. I would also like to thank him for the last three years as a BMW factory rider. However, he will remain with us in a different role with the Bonovo action BMW Racing Team.

"Overall, it was a mixed weekend for us, and the same can be said of the weather. After the races in Mandalika, we arrived here in a positive frame of mind. However, we all struggled to find the right set up on the tyres available on Friday. Qualifying on Saturday was not good either. Michael crashed twice in race one, while the other results were somewhat unsatisfactory. We did however react well to the tricky and changeable weather conditions in the Superpole Race. We didn't want to take any risks with Michael, however the strategy to start on wets did not pay off. Scott came into the pits straight after the warm-up lap which was the right decision and he raced through the field into sixth place, narrowly missing fifth. Loris and Eugene made the same decision as most other riders while they were still on the grid. Loris just missed out on ninth place by 0.2 seconds and had to start race two from 18th again. Scott took good advantage of sixth place on the grid over the opening laps of race two. It was good to see him in second place. He rode superbly, but we knew that we would not quite be able to match the pace of the front-runners. However, we were able to open a gap to those behind and are satisfied with the performance, Scott performed brilliantly. Our focus now shifts to preparations for the 2023 season."

Scott Redding, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team (SP: 12 / R01: 16 / SP Race: 6 / R02: 6):

"Today was a bit different from the previous days, the weather was again interesting. In the Superpole Race, I gambled on coming in on the warm-up lap and switched to the

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intermediates which was not bad idea but meant I needed to work my way back through the field. As I started from the pit lane, I lost a lot of time so was probably not the best option, but it was good enough to claim sixth which gave me a second row start for race two. In the second race it was again raining slightly, but we all started with slicks. I got a very good start and was battling at the front for the first five laps but then I had a few tyre issues and managed to take sixth. The race was overshadowed by Eugene's accident, and I wish him all the best for a speedy recovery!"

Loris Baz, Bonovo action BMW Racing Team (SP: 18 / R01: 9 / SP Race: 10 / R02: 10):

"That is not the party we had wanted for Eugene's last race, but the most important thing is that he is kind of okay. I just hope that he will be back on his feet soon. For me, this Sunday was no better than the rest of the weekend. I was very disappointed after the Superpole Race. The tyre was gone by all the wear. I was in the top nine that determine the grid for race two until three corners from the end but then my front tyre was completely gone. It meant I had to start again from 18th on the grid in race two. That wasn't easy, but I managed to come back through into the top ten. I had good pace, not enough for seventh or eighth, but it could easily have been ninth. I just lost too much time battling with Michael but at least had fun battling in this last race. It is just so sad as we had planned something for Eugene. I had 50 Dollars in my boot to stop after the chequered flag to drink a beer with Eugene somewhere at the track, so we really have to make this happen next year when we are here. I will send him to somewhere at the track with the scooter and we have a beer. I am just thinking of Eugene now and the race is not important. I just want to thank the team for all their efforts, and we will come back stronger next year."

Michael van der Mark, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team (SP: 15 / R01: DNF / SP Race: 21 / R02: 12):

"This Sunday was not ideal. In warm-up this morning, I felt okay but we had a technical issue, so I lost a lot of track time. Then before the Superpole Race, it started to rain really hard. We were on the rain tyres, and I knew the track was drying but I did not expect it to dry that quick. From the first lap I knew it was the wrong decision so changed to slicks and did what I could. In race two, I had an okay start but was in the wrong group. I felt that I could go faster if I could just get past all the other guys. I had some nice battles but towards the end I struggled more and more from the edge of the tyre and couldn't improve. Unfortunately, Eugene then had the accident. I hope he gets well very soon. Overall, it was a season to forget but we will put it behind us and look forward to the start of the new season."

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