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Media Information

BMW Motorrad Motorsport

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Highs and lows for BMW Motorrad Motorsport at Saturday's WorldSBK race in Estoril.

- **Second round of the 2021 FIM Superbike World Championship in Estoril.**
- **BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team: Seventh place for Michael van der Mark and 14th for Tom Sykes in Saturday's race.**
- **Jonas Folger (Bonovo MGM Racing) completes the first race in 16th position, while an outstanding performance from Eugene Laverty (RC Squadra Corse) goes unrewarded as he finishes 18th.**

Estoril. The second round of the 2021 FIM Superbike World Championship (WorldSBK) season is taking place in Estoril, Portugal. It was a Saturday of highs and lows for BMW Motorrad Motorsport. In race one, the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team's Michael van der Mark (NED) worked his way up to seventh place with his BMW M 1000 RR. His team-mate Tom Sykes (GBR) secured 14th position. Jonas Folger (GER) from BMW satellite team Bonovo MGM Racing crossed the line in 16th place. Eugene Laverty (IRL) from BMW satellite team RC Squadra Corse finished 18th, scant reward for the convincing performance he produced in qualifying and during the race.

In the morning, Sykes claimed fifth place on the grid in Superpole qualification. Folger was the second-best BMW rider in 11th place, followed by van der Mark in 12th. Laverty had finished the session in eighth place, but was one of many riders whose lap times were annulled due to yellow-flags. Consequently, the Irishman slipped back to 13th on the grid.

In the race, van der Mark showed a consistent performance and was able to make gradual progress after starting from 12th. He reached seventh position by the halfway point of the race and was able to maintain this until the chequered flag. Team-mate Sykes was in sixth position right after the start of the race, but the British rider started to fall back after the second lap. After 21 laps, he crossed the finishing line in 14th place.

Laverty went off like a rocket from 13th on the grid, moving up to ninth through the first turns. He managed to hold on to seventh place between laps four and nine, before suffering a fall that put paid to his hopes of securing a top result. Laverty did return to the



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track but had to settle for 18th. Folger lost some places at the start and was unable to make any progress thereafter, crossing the line in 16th.

Reactions after race one at Estoril.

Marc Bongers, BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director: "That was a mixed day for us, but nonetheless I am very pleased with Michael's seventh place. Estoril is always a tricky circuit for us and we had some lost track time to make up for. It was pretty difficult to choose between the 'X' and 'SCO' tyres today. We took the safe option with both riders. Ultimately, that proved to be the right choice and we produced a solid race. However, seventh place is, of course, not what we are aiming for. Tom fell back a very long way. Now we have to analyse the reasons for this. He lost three or four seconds during the opening laps. Of course, it is very disappointing to finish 14th, 36 seconds behind the winner. That is definitely not our objective. I was delighted for Eugene at the start of the race, but unfortunately he took a tumble when in seventh place. However, the track was relatively greasy and we saw a few incidents like this. For Jonas, it just was not his day and he would otherwise have recorded a better result. In conclusion: It is good to have recorded a solid race and we can build on this for tomorrow."

Michael van der Mark, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team: "We lost some valuable track time again this morning, so that was not how we wanted to start the day. But anyway, in Superpole I felt good; I improved my lap time and then in qualifying I had really good first three sectors, but then the tyre was gone so I could not gain any time in the last sector. That was a pity because that meant starting initially from P14, which was then P12. I had a really good start and the race was my first long run this weekend. I was surprised by the pace I had and with the consistency of the bike. I am happy with this position, but I am happier with the consistency we had and also when I changed some electronics during the race. We took a really good step forward. I am happy with P7 but even more about the whole pace."

Tom Sykes, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team: "It was a very strange race. I am disappointed. We got a good start and I just tried to go with the guys in front, but every time I opened the gas I lost rear traction. And after a few laps I was losing the rear on corner entry. After making a good start and mixing it in T1 I thought I would get my best rhythm of the weekend, but it wasn't to be. We clearly need to work on these issues tonight and see what we can do but, yes, it was a very strange race from my side. It was not what we have been expecting and I'm quite disappointed."

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Jonas Folger, Bonovo MGM Racing: "Unfortunately, today did not go as I had imagined. It was a difficult race. I struggled to get out of the corners; I had problems with grip. I gave it my all, but I was just too slow. It's a shame, as I was on the pace in practice yesterday, but we could not reproduce that during today's race. Now we have to take a look at what caused that."

Eugene Laverty, RC Squadra Corse: "All weekend has been fantastic. The feeling of the bike is so good and we had a good feeling in every practice and in qualifying. The reality was that I was eighth fastest but then there was this penalty. In the race, I was very happy with my first laps. I gained positions, I was doing really fast lap times, 1:37.8, 1:37.9 and I was really consistent. Then in corner four, I just asked a little bit too much of the front and crashed. It was my mistake, but I am feeling really good with this bike on a track where last year we were not so strong. So I am optimistic for tomorrow."

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