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Media Information

BMW Motorrad Motorsport

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MotorLand Aragón: Highs and lows for BMW Motorrad Motorsport at 2022 WorldSBK season-opener.

- **Ilya Mikhalechuk produces impressive Saturday for the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team.**
- **Loris Baz finishes seventh on Sunday to earn Bonovo action BMW Racing Team its best result so far; top-ten finish for Eugene Laverty on Saturday.**
- **Tough first weekend for Scott Redding.**

Alcañiz. The 2022 FIM Superbike World Championship (WorldSBK) kicked off at MotorLand Aragón. BMW Motorrad Motorsport experienced an opening weekend of highs and lows in Spain. Competing for the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team were newcomer Scott Redding (GER) and Ilya Mikhalechuk (UKR), who was standing in for the injured Michael van der Mark (NED). Loris Baz (FRA) and Eugene Laverty (IRL) were contesting their first race weekend together with the Bonovo action BMW Racing Team.

Mikhalechuk, a BMW works rider in the FIM Endurance World Championship, caught the eye with an impressive Saturday on his WorldSBK debut with the BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team. He was the best-placed BMW rider in both Superpole qualifying and race one, finishing eighth on both occasions. However, he crashed in Sunday morning's Superpole Race and had to settle for 15th place in race two. Redding struggled all weekend. His best result was 12th place in the Superpole Race, before retiring with a technical issue in race two on Sunday afternoon.

The Bonovo action BMW Racing Team came into the season-opener with its sights set on the top ten – and successfully achieved that goal. Laverty finished tenth in race one on Saturday, just ahead of his team-mate Baz. The Frenchman then went one better in race two on Sunday afternoon: seventh place was the best WorldSBK result for the Bonovo action BMW Racing Team. Laverty came home 12th this time. Baz had also set the fastest time in the third free practice session on Saturday morning.

Round two of the 2022 WorldSBK season will take place from 22nd to 24th April in Assen, Netherlands.

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Quotes after the season opener at MotorLand Aragón.

Marc Bongers, BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director: "After testing, which was in different conditions and painted a far more positive picture, the opening weekend was generally disappointing for us. However, there were various individual highlights. They include the strong performance from Ilya Mikhalechik on Saturday, and seventh place for Loris Baz and the Bonovo action BMW Racing Team in race two this afternoon. They are the positives that we will take with us. On the other hand, we still have a lot of work ahead of us – particularly with Scott, but also with Eugene. We must now work hard to understand the causes, and come up with a plan for solving the problem and making sure we are back at the front of the field. We hope to do better in Assen."

Loris Baz, Bonovo action BMW Racing Team (SP: 10 / R01: 11 / SP Race: 13 / R02: 7): "I thought that P7 was our potential. To be honest, I was disappointed with yesterday and this morning, especially after the testing we did on Monday and Tuesday and FP3. So we needed to understand why we were slower in the race than in testing. Why I was slower in the group than alone. So our crew made some changes before race two. I was feeling more comfortable on the bike, I understood more things, I had the bike more in my hand. I know that our potential at the moment is to be behind the three top manufacturers and that is what I wanted to do. I tried to not any mistakes and bring it home. I said from the beginning, that this weekend is the base for our work for this year. And it is exactly what happened. We will build the whole project further from here, and work hard as we did from the first test on. For sure it is not my ultimate goal to be seventh, but the season is long and I am happy that I did a good race and with the work that BMW and the entire team do. So a big thank you to them. Now off to the next one."

Ilya Mikhalechik, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team (SP: 8 / R01: 8 / SP Race: DNF / R02: 15): "For sure, I take more positive than negative points from my first WorldSBK weekend. The main thing was that I replaced Michael and we showed strong results in Superpole and race one. That was especially good as we did not have so much testing before. Today was not our day. I would have liked to continue in the same way we did yesterday. But in the Superpole Race, I was not able to push from the beginning. Then I made a small mistake and crashed. Thanks to the team that built a completely new bike within two hours and we made it to the grid for race two. The feeling of the bike was actually not bad, but the track temperatures were too high and it was difficult for me to find in a rhythm. After a few laps I started to feel better. My pace was good enough for seventh or eighth, but it was too late. I was riding alone, catching the top-ten group. For sure, those results

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did not make me happy after the strong Saturday. But that's racing and every race can be different. Now we have a lot of information for BMW to continue to improve the bike to get it into top positions in the races."

Eugene Laverty, Bonovo action BMW Racing Team (SP: 14 / R01: 10 / SP Race: 11 / R02: 12): "In the Superpole Race, the bike felt really good. I really wanted to be in the top-9 to change my grid position for race two, but I just did not have the pace to beat those guys. But anyway, the performance was good. In race two this afternoon, the temperature was higher and I was in difficulties with the front tyre. That did not allow me to catch the group for seventh position. My pace was more or less the same than theirs but it was not meant to be today, I had lost too many positions in the early laps and was not able to recover. It was great for the team that Loris was seventh. The Bonovo action BMW Racing Team can be really proud of the effort they all put in not just this weekend, but also in winter testing."

Scott Redding, BMW Motorrad WorldSBK Team (SP: 16 / R01: 15 / SP Race: 12 / R02: DNF): "This weekend was not what I expected it to go like, even considering we had two days of testing on Monday and Tuesday. Then we come to the race weekend and we lost lap time. So for me it was hard to accept this. We worked very hard to try and solve our problem, but we really never got anything to help us through the weekend. It was hard. We need to understand why it was different, we need to understand why we are suffering more than with last year's bike. There have been some changes on the engine and the bike so we need to understand why this happening because the potential is more. Then in the last race of the weekend, I just had no grip, the brakes where not working so well and the engine overheated. That is just how it goes. There is not much more to say. We need to work, understand and try to come back stronger because we don't deserve to be in this position."

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