



Phillip Island – Races. Sunday, 26th February 2012.

Weather conditions: Overcast at noon, sunny in the afternoon.
Temperature: Air: 31 – 34 °C, Track: 42 – 54 °C
Number of riders participating: 24 from 14 teams
Fastest lap Race 1: Max Biaggi (Aprilia Racing Team) 1:31.785 min
Fastest lap Race 2: Carlos Checa (Althea Racing) 1:32.846 min

It has been a historic day for BMW Motorrad: Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport celebrated its best ever result in the FIM Superbike World Championship. Factory rider Marco Melandri (ITA) finished second in the first race of the 2012 season opener at Phillip Island (AUS), despite only starting 13th on the grid after Saturday's Superpole qualifying had to be canceled, preventing the chance to challenge for a better grid position. In race two he came in sixth. His team-mate, Leon Haslam (GBR), also put in a strong performance. Only four days after an operation to insert two screws to fix his fractured right tibia, Leon bravely fought the pain barrier, scoring a 12th and a strong fifth place. Overall, Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport collected 45 points this weekend, more than ever before.

In his first ever race on the BMW S 1000 RR, Marco gained several positions in the first corners, working his way further up the field as the race went on. On lap 18 he had improved to second, and defended this position against Sylvain Guintoli (FRA) right to the finish line. Leon had finished 12th in the two qualifying sessions. In race one, despite his injuries, he was fighting for the top ten until the very last lap. At the start of race two Leon catapulted himself up to third, and fought for the top positions over the next laps. Marco meanwhile had a steady start, but improved his position lap by lap. Halfway through the race he found himself directly behind Leon in fifth. From then on, the two factory riders had an exciting inter-team battle, changing positions several times. In the end, Leon was able to hold on and finished fifth in front of Marco.

BMW Motorrad Italia GoldBet SBK Team's rider Michel Fabrizio (ITA) came home sixth in race one, but wasn't able to finish race two. His team mate, Ayrton Badovini (ITA), had to retire in both heats. The races were won by Max Biaggi (ITA) and Carlos Checa (ESP). In the riders' championship, Marco lies in second with 30 points. Leon is eighth with 15 points. In the manufacturers' standings BMW is third with 31 points.

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Marco Melandri:

Result Race 1: 2nd / Gap to 1st: 00:07.104 min / Fastest Lap Race 1: 1:32.224 min

Result Race 2: 6th / Gap to 1st: 00:18.831 min / Fastest Lap Race 2: 1:33.379 min

"I am really happy! Giving BMW its best ever result in only my first race on the RR is awesome. I still cannot believe that. The guys at the circuit and in the factory are working really hard, and they have done a great job. We didn't quite know how we would perform

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in the race as we hadn't done any long runs in pre-season testing. During the race I just tried to keep my rhythm and tried not to override as I knew I would have to look after the tyres. I had to wait for the right moment to pass Tom Sykes and Sylvain Guintoli. In the final two laps Sylvain was pushing very hard again, but I kept focused on my race and defended my position.

Race two was very difficult. It was warmer, so I had to push harder to catch the guys in front of me, and it was not easy. But we finished the first weekend second in the championship, and that is better than expected. Now we have one month to analyse the data and try to make even more improvements. We will go testing in Spain and all the guys are working hard. We all have the same goal and I very happy to see the motivation is high. Last, I want to send my sympathy to the family of Oscar McIntyre who we lost yesterday."

Leon Haslam:

Result Race 1: 12th / Gap to 1st: 00:35.648 min / Fastest Lap Race 1: 1:33.127 min

Result Race 2: 5th / Gap to 1st: 00:18.179 min / Fastest Lap Race 2: 1:33.432 min

"Overall I'm really happy. We had a problem in race one, which I couldn't ride around. Even though just scoring points was the objective, I knew I could have done better. The boys worked really hard between races: They changed engines, electronics and the balance of the bike, and straightaway we were able to fight for a top five position. It's a big credit to all the team and the medical staff who managed to get me out there in the first place! I also want to express my condolences to the family and friends of Oscar McIntyre, who died in that tragic crash yesterday."

Bernhard Gobmeier (BMW Motorrad Motorsport Director):

"Overall the weekend was very positive – Marco's second place means the best result for BMW Motorrad in World Superbike so far. The weekend was a bit of a roller coaster, but in the end we proved that our work over the winter paid off. Still, we are not where we want to be, and we have some areas to work on, and this is what we will do over the next couple of weeks.

I am very happy about the performance of our riders: Leon having finished the second race in the top five is very impressive and makes everyone at BMW Motorrad very proud. Marco's second place in the first race has been the best result for BMW Motorrad in this championship so far. Considering the grip issues Marco faced in race two, which unexpectedly showed up from the beginning of the race, his performance cannot be valued high enough. He did an outstanding job, demonstrated his qualities, and is now lying second in the World Championship.

On behalf of the entire team and BMW Motorrad, I wish to pass my condolences to the family and friends of Oscar McIntyre, who lost his life in yesterday's crash at Phillip Island."

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