

Well, the first race weekend has come to an end with more than my share of misadventure and heartache. 🚫

The weekend started out fairly bad, as we attended our neighbor's memorial after he passed away the week before. Had a shortened life of only about 62 years, cut down by cancer.

Darrel was a great guy. 👍 He was with us last year at Laguna. He loved to watch motorcycle racing as well as ride. 👍 He made it out to the Toyota 200 also. He will be missed. 😞

Saturday night was the Awards Banquet for the 2003 WSMC race season. Had a great time after spending the last three nights working late in the garage to get my 2004 ride ready for the track. It was a 12:30 a.m. bedtime on Thursday night, 🚫 and a 1 a.m. nighty night on Friday. 🚫 Then Saturday after the memorial service, I spent another few hours finishing the 2003 GSXR-1000 for its initial flight on the Big Track at Willow Springs International Raceway. 😞

Sunday morning came quickly. I needed to get one more thing ready on the bike, or so I thought. 😞 I just needed to mount my race DOT's on the new GSXR's rims and I would be riding happily in the morning practice. 😊 Needless to say, the technical inspectors would not allow my gray body work to be the back drop for my racing number, 767!!!

Let me take this opportunity to thank STUMAN, again, for his help. 👍 Without the use of his white duct tape, I may not have been allowed to take out my new pride and joy that fateful Sunday morning. THANK YOU STUART!!! 👍

So, after taping the numbers over with white duct tape, then cutting out the numbers to shine through from behind the white background, I proceeded to pass technical inspection. 😞

My next task was to get the new rubber mounted, balanced, and on the shiny, fully race ready 2003 GSXR-1000 I had just spent the last entire week working on to race this and next season. 😞

I rushed, much to my dismay, to get the bike on the track for the first PRO practice. I gingerly rode through turns 1-4 and then came turn ICE, 🚫 or should I say 5.

Jodie, my wife, commented later, as I arrived in my pits in the back of the crash truck, 😞 cursing every profanity for approximately one half hour straight, that she thought I had been going extremely slowly this first lap. Well, turn 5 had been the enemy of many before, and now had introduced me to it's ugly dirty outside line, or should I say, the rocks and dirt on the outside of the off camber left hand 90° left hand turn.

My once pretty, gray primed, 416 mile ridden, almost pristine race bike, now looked like the warrior it would have looked like at the end of the two years I had planned to race her.

I was outraged at my lack of concentration and complete rider error filled 5th turn on the Big Track. 😡 I would get to race but not on the bike I had planned to race on. Luckily, I brought my old race bike, just in case, not this case, but just in case nonetheless.

After surveying the damage; a broken sub-frame (the same one I just replaced last week), 😞 a slightly bent tank (the same one I just replaced last week), 😞 mangled rear sets (the same ones I just replaced last week), 😞 a bent left clip on and broken clutch mount, 😞 a bent rear rim (the same one I just bought last week but didn't install), 😞 and rashed HotBodies fiberglass (the same ones I just replaced last week), 😞 I made my way to the old 2001 sitting in my trailer, just in case.

I mounted the brand new tires that I had just tossed my bike away on minutes before on the 2001, and used my tire warmers as they were intended. 😞 I missed morning practice, needless to say. I was to race the first race of the day, and notified tech that I would be by right after the morning's rider's meeting to get my old bike teched for the first race. They were waiting for me with anticipation. 👍

The first race had my mind thinking slightly demented thoughts of more carnage, 😡 but then I remembered that my tires had heat in them this time around. The track had not warmed even 1° in the past hour since my crash, but my tires had plenty of heat to compensate for the cold track.

I started this race with last year's points, which had me gridded 5th in the Open Modified Production class race. 👍 There were 20 competitors that had not encountered the same misfortune that I had this morning and I knew this fact very well, once the green flag dropped. 🚫 I had a great start, but mentally I was still chasing demons from the right and left lobes of my cranium. 😞 This race proved to be tough, only because I thought it would be hard, mentally. I pushed through all the anguish of the baseball slide I performed just an hour earlier in turn 5, and managed to finish 13th. 👍 I even put in a couple of 1:29 lap times, 😞 not great but mentally it made me almost fully confident to compete harder the next race out. 👍

The second race is my favorite, 😡 or at least the one race I have the most even playing field, Open Super Stock. I again had a great start from grid position 5 out of 16. 👍 I had a great battle with one of my buddies from last year Anthony Lanzara. He, Anthony had been fighting suspension troubles all last year on his 1000, but this weekend things seemed to be a bit better for him. We swapped places at least 6 times, 🚫 once every lap. He made a final pass on me and used a slower rider to block me from any further attempts to catch and pass him on the final lap. He forced me just out of the money place of 5th, and I made a valiant effort finishing 6th. 👍 This race produced a few laps in the 27's, 😞 making me feel just like I hadn't even laid my brand new bike down a mere hour and a half ago. 🚫 Until I roared into my pit and was confronted with the ugly sight of what I had done to 1000PWR 2.0, now to be 1000PWR 3.0. Almost half way to my BUSAPWR accomplishments. 😡

The third race of the day was Open Super Bike. Again, Anthony and I had a great battle, but this time I came out victorious. 😊 I was running slicks from my sponsor Dunlop. 👍 With the morning races inspiring me to ride to my potential, and a great set of tires under me, I was able to out ride Anthony's more powerful bike and finish

in the 10th position. 😊 Starting 9th out of 17, I was happy to complete another crash less 6 lap battle royal, especially with the phenomenal paint swapping race action Anthony and I entertained ourselves with. 😊

The last race of the day was also on slicks, Formula 1 PRO. I had been waiting for this race all day, but with the anticipation of racing it on my 2003 GSXR-1000, 😊 not the same old 2001. 27 great riders, even those who crashed prior in the day started the 12th race of the day. 😊 I was gridded 17th, and had the daunting task of racing the best WSMC riders on of all days, the one I had crashed my new race bike just a few hours prior to the start of this race. 😊 I watched the pack shoot straight for turn 1 at just about full speed. 🚫 I made my way into the middle of the pack and rode at my level, mid 1:27 laps, for most of the race. I had tried to pass number 51, Mr. Matthias Jezek a few times during the opening laps, but had to wait until about half way through the 12 lap event. He and I had had a few battles during the first two Formula 1 races I entered and competed in at the end of last year. This was just a continuation of those previous confrontations. I made a pass for position, it stuck, and I proceeded to make my way on to the next victim. 😊 I ran out of tire at about lap 10 and that is when Matthias passed me on one of my favorite corners to pass others, except he put his 600 around the outside of my 1000 in turn 2. 🚫 He wasn't using half of his tires compared to the complete obliteration my 135 Hp engine was doing to my now toasted slicks. 😊 I held on to finish just behind what would have been my next victim, 😊 had I saved a little tire for the closing laps. Since I was just inside the top 20, 19th to be exact, I will get my name thrown into the hat at the end of the season for the raffle of a brand new Suzuki RM 125. 🙌 Once I finish in the top ten in Formula 1 PRO, I will then be in the hunt for the Toyota Pickup truck they give away at the end of the season. 😊 I plan on having my name in the running for both of these as well as earning a single digit number plate, or possible the number 10, for the 2005 WSMC Race Season. 😊

Since Jodie is now on the final 9 weeks of her fifth pregnancy, 🚫 I figure I may have one more race weekend, most likely alone, until I have to take the month of March off. 😊 I look forwards to being a daddy to one more child, which we think may be another boy!!! 🙌 I hope to see some of you out at the track soon, if not before the baby comes, then for sure after. 😊

Thank you to all of my family for their support, even in the dark times right after dumping my bike. 😊 Jodie, Josephine, Sebastian, and number 3, THANK YOU, I LOVE YOU ALL!!! 😊🙌

Since today was my birthday, 😊 I figured it was the right day to enlighten you all to my past weekend's events. Turning 35 didn't change my life half as much as the mental challenge I encountered this weekend during racing. The old adage that age is wisdom definitely became real for me this past Sunday. 😊

Next, I want to thank all my sponsors for the first race weekend of the year 2004. 🙌🙌

Suzuki of Van Nuys

Simi Valley Cycles

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Ferodo / Brake Tech

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Willow Springs Motorcycle Club

Puig / Cycle Screens

Graeber Engineering and Consulting

Graeber Family Daycare

Lastly, I hope to see some of you out at the track, but for those of you that can't or don't make it out just keep your eyes on the screen and I WILL post race reports after each event. 🙏 Thanks for reading. 😊

Marcel