

OK, so last month I learned that the start is important. So without further ado, THANK YOU to all that came out to cheer us hard working motorcycle racers. We appreciate all that you cheer for and celebrate with you. 🍷🍷 An extra special *THANK YOU* to my newest sponsor, AMAZING RICARDO RACING!!! 🍷

Now to the second OPEN NOVICE RACE REPORT.

As I said before, the start is very important. So I practiced every time I entered the track on Saturday's practice sessions. I guess the old saying of, "Perfect practice makes for perfection" holds true. I'm not saying I was perfect but I did manage to stay in front of all the guys I gridded in front of and even make up a few spots on both of my race starts.

Yes, I said both.

The first start had me gridded 8th after my 4th place finish last month and a keen sense of business savvy to pre-register early. I was sitting two rows directly behind pole position. A great guy to follow into to turn one, the guy with the most open novice points.

The first start had me about 6th after exiting turn one. A great grid position and a little better start on my part added up to a great first lap, then the red flag waved as we exited turn 2 for the second time. We proceeded to ride back to the grid after being shown the red and yellow. I then noticed I had made my way up to 4th place on that first lap. I knew things were going well, not to mention earlier that day I had won a free Saturday practice along with Vik. A nice little \$70 value. I know it doesn't sound like much, but a privateer will take any freebie or deal that comes his way. 😊

The re-start was just a tad bit different, in two ways. One was, the guy who gridded three places to my left on my row who decided to loop his bike as the green flag waved. And the second was the way my 1000 leapt toward the first turn as if to say, "Watch the fuck out, I'm gonna lead this fucking race!!!" Unfortunately, three or four other guys bikes also screamed the same sentiment.

After we sorted out turn one a third time, I saw a small handful of bikes in front of me, 4 to be exact. I had made up one more spot this start. I had a feeling this would be a great race for sure. After the first lap, someone had passed me and I was now sitting in 6th. It was as I flashed by the start/finish line this third time that I consciously decided to kick some OPEN NOVICE ASS!!!

I charged into turn one with my ass tucked as far back as my rear cowl would allow, for maximum aerodynamics. Thanks again, Jeff. 🍷 Then I slammed on my front brakes with the strength of Hercules. Allowing my rear tire to float magically above the tarmac just inches from near disaster. As I released the seat from my ass cheeks and let the bike's suspension set up for turn one I made my first pass on a quest to claim the number one position.

As was the out come of last month's race, the red flag after lap one caused a shortening of our race to an all out 4 lap sprint. The difference this time was that I had a new plan and that was to redeem my poor start from last month and enter a new level of riding. As planned I had begun the journey with all 130 horses pushing me to the front.

A buddy I had met in the pits just the day before decided to dump his bike in turn 5 and then let it run him over. Luckily Double "D", the professional stunt man from Texas, was okay and only produced a waving yellow in turn 5. They had him cleaned up before we made the amazingly fast 1 minute 30 second lap time that myself and the two other front runners were churning.

As the next lap unfolded, I noticed there were only two warriors ahead of me and they weren't that far ahead. I figured it was time to turn it up a notch and try to reel in the two guys that had managed to not only get a better start than I but also to stay in front of me. I tried valiantly to chase them down. I could make up ground on a few corners, like my favorite high speed turn, number 8. And on my other favorite turn, number 2. But as hard as I tried, they struggled to find a way to keep a constant gap on me.

About half way through what I barely remember as the white flag lap, I had visions of standing on the imaginary third rung of the podium, happy to have battled with all my might to be faster and smoother than the last time I raced. As I entered turn 8 at about 150 M.P.H. and looked to the finish line, I remembered that the race still had a few more dramatic yards until I had actually claimed the last spot on the podium. I tucked in with my ass up and back arched, as instructed, and finished with not a hare nor hide of another rider's wheel being seen as I crossed the line with my 1000's engine hitting about 9500 r.p.m.s.

It was now sinking in that not only had I just finished my second novice race, but that I had claimed a podium spot to boot. My raw emotions came out just milliseconds after I crossed the line with an extremely violent head bob, acknowledging my own personal achievement. Now I set off to meet the two guys that had shown me how to stand one and two rungs higher on the ladder of racing success. I met and complimented Jeff and Tony for their awesome display of riding talent and told them to keep their eyes and ears open for number 767 is the near future. Both Tony, the winner, and Jeff, second place, were moving up to probationary expert next month and I would do battle with a new crop of novices in June.

And now for the best part of the weekend, racing wise, anyway. 😬 As I had let my emotions unfurl, I managed to speed in the pits, which happened directly in front of a crash truck. I was then escorted to meet with Danny Farnsworth, director of the races. He and I discussed my fatal error in emotionally charged actions, and I was relegated one spot to fourth. Matching my first ever race result. The good news was, that since I had finished 4th, Willow Springs decided that morning to announce that they would be bestowing a free practice day to any and all 4th place finishers. I worked hard all race and in my mind I finished 3rd, but to make my day complete and allow me the luxury of saving another \$70 for practice, Willow Springs Motorcycle Club rewarded me even greater in the big picture. 😊

I just want to thank everyone who made an appearance to support all of us racers. 🙌 We can only hope to have such great support for as long as everyone will come out and endure the desert hospitality. 🍷 I look forwards to seeing everyone again next month.

Marcel