

Who knew a racetrack could have 20 turns actually and only 11 labeled. Infineon is just that track.

From my track day back in February, I knew what this track had in store for me before I laid one black strip of rubber upon its back in Friday morning's practice. The only new kink would be just that, literally, a chicane at the end of the front straight.

My track day initiated me well to all the other track undulations, and there are many of varying degrees of difficulty, but not for the most abrupt of chicanes right where we had been hauling the most ass during our late February adventure up North.

I made my way around the track after the first lap of our morning practice with only one concern, how to go faster everywhere.

My bike was working well, my mind was clicking like a grandfather clock, and my muscles twitched each time I vigorously applied maximum front brakes for all of the 20 turns of Infineon Raceway.

The roller coaster like track made for an awesome wake up call on Friday afternoon, as I perused my best lap time of a high 1:50.

Knowing that the best lap time posted by the young Mr. DiSalvo of a 1:37.415 would most likely be bettered the following afternoon during qualifying by close to one second, meant I would need to again ride out of my leather skin to qualify for my second AMA Super Stock race.

As I sat in our RV, changing my 14-month-old son's diaper, I began to remember the only major incident I had at the end of my Friday morning practice, no coincidence that the poop smell brought up the moment vividly to my mind.

About three quarters through our 1 hour practice, as I wheeled over the small bump between turns labeled 3a and 4, and immediately applied the front brakes heavily, setting up for the right hand, down hill turn 4, I recall the thoughts I had.

My mind wandered just for the briefest of milliseconds, but enough to just enter the turn too hot, for this time of the day, tire wear, and mental abuse I had endured up to this point, trying to go FAST!!!

Split seconds before realizing what was occurring, I was slamming on my back brake, standing the bike up, and running extremely off course on the outside of turn 4.

Unfortunately, I had already initiated the right turn, but was never going to be able to complete the corner as anticipated, so instead of dumping my brand newly painted body work in the grass, I consciously made the decision to save my now off-road two-wheeled vehicle.

I stayed on the rear brake, sliding the bike completely sideways until I knew I would have to let go of the rear brake and trust that my now Super Moto slicks would hold up to the grassy, dirty racetrack runoff surface.

The bike and I made a swooping right hand turn in the grass at a speed much higher than most desert racers would have even thought of attempting in the same situation, and pulled back onto the track.

Narrowly missing the very hard retaining wall to my left and keeping the inside of my leathers poop free, I made my way back to the pits to end my slightly abbreviated morning practice session.

Most of you know by now that just a few feet farther down the track is where our racing compatriot, Vincent Haskovek, had not such a pleasant encounter with a similar retaining wall covered by a few tires.

All of us racers, motorcyclists, and heart carrying humans want to wish Vincent the quickest and most complete recovery.

Anyone that has ever risked life to enjoy competition or any sport for that matter know that the out come of our adventures always have a 50/50 chance of ending one way or the other.

Vincent is a warrior, as we all are, and he will overcome injury to once again do battle, if not on the track for sure in life itself.

Good Luck my Czechoslovakian racing buddy!!!

Although I have yet to have any lengthy conversations with Vincent, since I am half Czech, due to my dad being 100% Plzner, I feel a very slight bond of heritage to Vincent.

We will meet again in the near future and I hope to wish him the best in person.

Since there are always crashes and near crashes on the racetracks where we compete, it is always a bittersweet time when we have to wish those that have fallen the best of luck in recovery.

As with any sport that has to witness such occurrences, everyone acknowledges them, then move on.

Saturday morning practice brought about another minor sliding incident for number 767 on the exit of turn labeled two.

This turn is at the top of the hill just after turning left off of the front straight.

Most of the accidents at Infineon happen in this blind, fall away, right hand turn, either due to pushing the front or loosing the rear.

My slide was that of the latter, as I applied generous amounts of throttle, and thus power to a fairly beat up rear tire.

As the bike began to slide out from under me, I again decided to use skill and technique to save my also new leathers.

I kept the throttle fairly neutral, adding just a bit more of gas as the bike exited the turn and slid into the flat plateau between this corner and turn 3.

I made sure my bike was in a controlled slide out of turn 2 but also kept the rear wheel spinning up enough so that it wouldn't catch and spit me high side into the grass on the outside of turn 2.

Knowing that you have the ability and then acting on that knowledge is always a fantastic feeling of accomplishment, especially if you recover and can explain what you did without the use of the word "CRASH"!!!

My qualifying cut off time was almost predetermined when Mr. Mladin turned a 1:36 flat on Friday afternoon.

Since at California Speedway, Jason DiSalvo turned in a qualifying lap of just a mere ½ second slower than Mladin's Super Bike qualifying time, I could assume that he would do the same this weekend.

Working out the math associated with a 1:36 flat at 112% gives a cutoff qualifying time of 1:47.52 for Super Bike; therefore Super Stock would only be a few ticks behind.

As time would tell, all I could do during our abbreviated qualifying session Saturday afternoon, due to another helicopter landing on the track, was a 1:50.498.

I still don't know whom the rider was that crashed on the outside of turn 6 in our qualifying session, but I wish them the same good luck in their recovery as Vincent.

Since I am a beginner in the AMA this year, I made the mistake of going back to our RV to get some air after they announced the red flag would take about 15 minutes to clean up.

After just about 10 minutes, with about the same amount of time left in qualifying, I heard my neighbor come over to the RV door to let me know he thought he had

heard bikes on the track again.

Since Brad had already turned a low 1:47, quicker than the Super Bike qualifying cut off time, he was in the pits for good, and so was I unfortunately.

Due to my mistake of leaving the hot pit, I didn't hear the announcement that we could reenter the track to finish our qualifying session.

As I made a mad dash to pit lane on my little JR 50, the sounds emanating from turn 11, the last turn on the track that dumps you onto the front straight, sickened me.

The timer that let riders know how much time was left in that particular session read 2:33 and counting.

I returned to my pit wondering if I could have dropped the 1.957 seconds needed to qualify due to Jason DiSalvo's 1:36.912 qualifying time posted just a mere 40 minutes later.

I learned a valuable lesson from that red flag incident, but plan on doing everything in my power to race in the AMA, hopefully sooner than later.

Sunday was an awesome day of race watching with family and friends.

Thanks to Gregg and Kim for making the ride up, another great time was had.

Next time will be the "BIG ONE", Laguna.

I met some great people this weekend and had a spectacular time with those who I met at the prior AMA race in my backyard, California Speedway.

Next month we plan on returning to Willow to see how my skills have made me a smoother, faster, more experienced rider, on a track I am already fairly quick on.

I still have Chuck Graves Super Stock lap record in the back of my mind, a 1:23.2.

My best lap of a 1:24.7 is just like my prior attempts to qualify for the AMA events, less than 2 seconds off the pace.

My plans for the June WSMC event will be to ride well and gain even more confidence for my final AMA competition at Laguna, this year anyway.

Goals are being reached for each time I straddle my bike, and hopefully soon I will be able to ride and compete on a new 2005 or 2006 GSXR-1000, thus equaling most of my competitions' ride stature.

This 2005 race season is turning out to be exactly what I had hoped for, a learning experience, a test of my riding and racing skill against the best American riders, and a traveling adventure of meeting and partying with great new riders and their families.

Since I have proved to myself, without any doubt, that I can compete at this level, with just a bit more track experience and new equally competitive equipment and support, I plan on attacking next year with the full intention of racing most if not all of the 2006 AMA season.

Keep your eyes peeled for number 767 making a full assault on the Super Stock class competition in the 2006 AMA season.

I have to thank my pit crew / family, for another awesome, supportive, long weekend on the road between our home in Simi Valley and a bit more than 400 miles away Infineon Raceway.

Jodie, I love you and your very supportive attitude towards me living out my dream and now a reality of racing.

Josephine, Sebastian, Valentino, and now also our 4 month old Chow-Chow "Rocko", thank you for your support and love also.

I appreciate getting up earlier to walk you for your morning dog poop, and stopping

lunch to change your diaper, again filled with baby poop.  
Thank you for letting me help you study your first grade homework, due to taking a couple of days off school so daddy can pursue his life ambition of racing motorcycles. Lastly, thanks for letting me teach you how to use the right tool for the right job, a cordless impact gun takes rear wheel axle nuts off in just under 2 seconds, even in a 4-1/2 year-olds hands.

Next, I would like to thank my sponsors who are also helping me to compete at this top level of professional motorcycle racing in the USA.

Thank you to all of you!!!

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I have a few last thank-yous to those that helped without many others knowing of their assistance.

Gregg and Kim, just for being such wonderful friends, especially when willing to travel over 600 miles to watch racing with me, instead of watching me race.

You two are great people.

Ryan, only you would watch my qualifying live on the net and call minutes after I exited the track after giving it my all to make "THE SHOW".

Thanks for your support; in conversation as well as actions, they definitely speak volumes of your stupendous character.

Alan thanks for entertaining the thought of getting me some spotlight time on the big tube.

I look forwards to rewarding you in turn, as I have in the past, and plan to do in the future.

T.J., it was a pleasure meeting you and I hope we have a bright future relationship, making the engineer's / racer's / dad's / husband's / dog walker's / diaper changer's / dreamer's dreams a reality in the very near time frame.

I hope to see some of you out at Willow in June, and even more of you in Monterey in July.

Wish me luck in acquiring a "new" 2005 GSXR-1000 in time for a charge to the front in the AMA Super Stock class at the MOTO GP / AMA weekend at Laguna Seca.

Thanks for reading and just imagine what the write-ups will be like when I qualify and race!!! J

Marcel