

Half of 130 mph Still Hurts / Another Asphalt Dance!!!

Wera West has not treated me and my bike well at all. Last month, as most of you have read, had me involved in a slight bike altering get off at the top of 4th gear. This month I was again involved in a slight bike bending and body bruising asphalt slide.

Unfortunately, my buddy Anthony Lanzara was also much more seriously hurt, and even though he crashed into me, high siding into turn 5 on the first lap of our first race of Sunday, I want to wish him all the best on healing. I have been extremely lucky while tumbling in the dirt and on the track, but Anthony broke a few ribs and may have poked a small hole into his lung. Definitely not a good thing to have happen, ever. Get well soon buddy, we will battle once again.

Saturday was less than action filled, as most of us thought there would be practice, but we were definitely surprised to find out there would be only one session this day. I suited up after spending many hours rebuilding my crashed plastic from last months adventurous DNF race in Vegas. I attacked the track I had once ridden a year ago during a track day. After a short 7 laps, I had gone faster than I had one year ago after a full day of riding the track on my 2001 GSXR-1000. My new bike and a years worth of riding experience had me turning lap times in the 1:42 time frame, as compared to last years best lap of a 1:43 something.

Sunday was not much better for practice, as we only got two practice sessions in before joining our racing competitors on the track just after the riders meeting for the first race, A Super stock. I had managed to drop my lap times down to the 1:40 flat range in just a mere 14 lap's time. I looked on the window of the office we had held our riders meeting in to see I was gridded on the outside of row 5, 11th out of the 26 filled grid positions.

The race began almost as fast as the green flag dropped. I made my way to the middle of the pack with only one mind set playing its tune in my head, FINISH THE RACE!!! As we entered the first turn, turn 3, an odd first turn number, but since we were gridded in pit lane we never had the opportunity to go through the front straight chicane making up turns 1 and 2. The group of riders that had not previously raced with each other up to this point, had a few bodies and bikes bumping and colliding as we all entered the first left hand turn. I watched four sets of two bikes crash into each other, luckily without a single one of them hitting the ground. As we all exited turn 4 and made our way towards turn 5 at about 120 - 130 mph, I made my way to the outside right of the track to set up for the next left handed turn. I planned on late apexing the turn, and as I initiated my entrance into turn 5 my bike was abruptly slammed to the ground by a high sided GSXR-600, #114, my buddy Anthony Lanzara.

Since our race bikes don't have mirrors, and I never look back when I am racing, my body was immediately slammed to the track as quick as my bike. I slid like a baseball player sliding into home plate to win the game, and before I came to a rest, my bike slammed me in the back. Then, I saw Anthony's bike slide past me, and I began to get aggravated. I couldn't believe I was not going to finish this race. I got up after sliding a while and noticed Anthony wasn't doing so well. I made a few jokes to lighten up the situation, but Anthony was hurt bad and I could tell. We both were transported to the Emergency facility at California Speedway. Anthony was then taken to the hospital, which is where he stayed until yesterday, hopefully. I will

definitely know if he is home yet when I send this report to you all and Anthony. Get well buddy, I need you to race with, so I have someone pushing me to go faster.

Before we could even be transported to the Emergency facility, the race was red flagged. Another incident occurred on the front straight in the chicane. Apparently a guy went down, tucking the front at about 130 – 140 mph in the turn 1 area. When we saw him in the doctor's office, his hand was a little minced, like the toppings of an all meat pizza. Get well buddy, my bruises are nothing compared to the hand injuries you sustained and the internal injuries Anthony received.

Jeff, Amazing Ricardo, came to visit us while we were being inspected in the make shift hospital, thanks for the support man. You are a great friend!!! He went to relay the news that I would be okay this day to all that wanted to know.

Before I could even make it back to my pit, a few of the LABUSAS crew had my damaged bike prepped to be repaired for further battle on this Sunday race day. My first thank you has to go to the one and only HOWLIN MAD MARK!!! You are the man, and I owe you. Thank you for your complete generosity and encouragement to re-enter the racing battle field. I must also thank Greenie, AR, Biggar, Mr. Bear, Purplehaze, Flea, Lotafun, Mrs. Lotafun, and whoever Mark got the rear set from. They all made my instant recovery and second race of the day possible. THANK YOU ALL!!!

I was tweaking on my bike to make it just good enough to pass technical inspection and not get me killed in the second race after my impromptu pit crew rebuilt my slightly damaged 2003 GSXR-1000. I also duct taped my leathers so I could mentally challenge myself on the awesome California Speedway Infield AMA race track.

To my dismay, the adrenaline I expected to enter my battered body during this second race never showed up and I just rode my own pace to finish the race. Eight laps, at just about 2 seconds slower than that morning's practice speed was all my mentally charged, physically broken body would let me do. I didn't crash, I didn't get lapped, and I finished 17 out of the 19 who finished the race, of whom 26 started. I know it isn't up to my personal standard for racing, but under the circumstances, I was ecstatic just the same.

First I want to say THANK YOU Mark for you help with getting me back on the track. It was good to finally see you again after all the time between now and the last time we met. Purplehaze it was great to finally meet you, too. Greenie and AR, thanks for the help in the pits, with not only my bike, but the kids, the food, and a great afternoon of friends hanging out. Biggar and Flea, great to see you and the new toy. Thanks for making another race event an event. Lotafun and Mrs. Lotafun, sorry we didn't make the party, but thanks for coming out to the track to make it a second day of festivities for the birthday boy, if a 40 year old fart can be called "BOY"!!! Mr. Bear, I am pleased to know that you make it out of the cave every once and a while and look forwards to seeing you each and every month soon at "our" track.

Since my bike needs just a few minor bits and pieces, and my body just needs a few more pills to be good as new, look for another race report next week. WSMC is on the calendar for this coming weekend, and I plan on being there in the hunt for Super Stock podium points. Hope to see some of you there.

Special thanks goes out to my wife, Jodie, who finally got to see me in action, or at

least the first crash she has witnessed, for not getting worried and just riding the highs and lows of racing with me. Thank you, I love you!!! Also, thanks to my kids for always making sure to let me know they love me before every race, and for reminding me not to crash each time I go on the track. Thank you Josephine, Sebastian, and Valentino.

Lastly, I would like to take this time to acknowledge a thank you to all of my sponsors, who have and will continue to help me with my racing endeavor this race season. Thank you:

Suzuki of Van Nuys - www.suzukiofvannuys.com
Simi Valley Cycles - www.simivalleycycle.com
Motul - www.motul.com
Galfer USA - www.galferusa.com
Lockhart Phillips USA - www.lockhartphillipsusa.com
K & N Engineering Inc. - www.knfilters.com
Fuel Cel - www.eti-fuelcel.com
Hot Bodies Racing - www.hotbodiesracing.com
Engineered Racing Products - www.engineeredracingproducts.com
Race Tech - www.race-tech.com
HyperCycle - www.hypercycle.com
Suzuki - www.suzuki.com
Dunlop - www.dunloptire.com
WSMC - www.race-wsmc.com
WERA - www.wera.com
Performance Unlimited - www.kellybakers.com
Puig Screens - www.cyclescreens.com
Graeber Engineering and Consulting
Graeber Family Daycare

Soon I will post pictures, and for those that have some, feel free to add them when you can. See you in a few days at WSMC this coming weekend. Thanks for reading.

Marcel