

Well, let me just say, I can now confidently state that I am part of the elusive 28 Club!!! 🙌 My lap timer screamed the result of my last lap of my last race of the day yesterday as my best lap yet, since starting the adventure we call Motorcycle Racing. The slight tear that welled in my eyes was directly attributed to the viewing of a

1:28.99!!! It might not seem like much to those that have not touched a wheel on the almost perfect asphalt of a track, but 1/100 of a second is **HUGE**. I will do my best to continually improve my positions in the races as well as decrease the amount of time it takes me to perform the magical sliding and spinning tire rotation needed to circumnavigate the Big Willow Race Track.

And now, the race report as promised.

My Saturday practice started just as the others with one exception. I had made the purposeful effort to speak with the Dunlop salesman prior to this weekend with regards to my advancement in the sport of racing. I had the good fortune of being in the right place at the right time and made a tire swap deal. 🙌 I got to try out an almost brand new 208 GPA Great Brittan front in trade for my 3/4 used 208 GPA USA front. Dennis Smith, THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!! I guess my weekend had the makings of a great weekend right from Saturday morning before practice.

I took no extra time from my day than to rush to my awaiting beat front tire and yank it off for the great chance to try a *better* tire. Before practice even started, I was all ready for great things to happen.

I went out and turned my normal first session 1:32-1:34 lap times. I thought nothing more or less of the new front tire until I ran my second practice session. I ran a few 30's then I said to myself, "Let's try and go FAST!!!" Low and behold, I pulled into the pits with a 1:29:65. 🚫

The rest of Saturday I was just playing around with my newly acquired front tire, newly remapped fuel injection, and newly changed rear sprocket, a 44 instead of the stock 42.

By early afternoon, my practice ended when my rear tire showed complete lack of stickiness and a propensity to slide rather far when put into even the least amount of throttle duty. I sat out the last couple of practice sessions 😞 with high hopes for the next days racing events.

Sunday morning and I watched who I now know was my buddy Carlos, wad extremely hard in turn 9. 🚫 I watched his body; looking for movement, for a short time before having to commit to making turn 9 myself. I unfortunately didn't see any motion and by turn 2 we had been given the red flag. Obviously this was a very bad accident, just moments before the beginning of our race day. We heard that Carlos had broken his leg, but we didn't know who it was yet.

Racing started shortly after the clean up and a brief couple of other practices that morning. I was racing in the 3rd, Open Super Bike, 6th, Open Modified Production, and 11th, Open Super Stock races.

My first race had me gridded 13th out of 18. As I had learned in my first Novice race, starting is extremely important. Even more so now that I was racing against the fast

guys. I didn't get a good start; all due to my lack of starting prowess. I feather too much clutch and don't let the gears do their job properly. On to the race.

I watched almost all the others pass me into turn 1. Then I decided to make my charge to the front, well at least to my finishing position of 11th. 😊 I made a few good line choices and passed a few of the guys that had gridded behind me. Then came the challenge of not only catching the faster guys, but also trying to pass them. I turned a few really good consistent lap times but as I crossed the finish line a fifth time, I could see that I was as fast as the few guys at the back of the first pack, but my lack of good starting coupled with the work done to pass the slower guys, I would be in a position of following at a small distance. 😞 I made the best of the last lap and at least caught up slightly, enough to gain some insight into how to enter different turns and exit those same turns with more speed. By the end of the day, I got to use my much-learned techniques from following faster riders.

First race done with an almost top ten finish, but still faster than last month's lap times. I placed 10th last month, but went slower, so I was happy with my improvements, plus I had made a few changes to my bike and they were making positive actions in my ability to go faster. 👍

Second race had me gridded 12th out of 18. If you remember from last month, this is the race I tried a new strategy out, putting brand new, unscrubbed tires on just before the race. I didn't use this rather ignorant technique again. I also tested out a better way to launch at the start. It worked better than my first race and I managed to stay closer to my competition right out of the gates. This race produced a few 29's with me finishing where I should have last month, 9th. I now began to see the pattern of my races for the next few outings. Start well, race fast, well for me at my level, and finish well, but behind the faster guys that are about 1-2 seconds faster a lap. I again learned even more about how to enter and exit some corners faster than I had been.

Now came the final outing of the day. I got the best start of all three races, almost flirting with passing a few guys. 😊 Griding 15th out of 19 made me yearn to claw my way forward as fast as I could. I was extremely happy to know that I could launch decently if I put my mind and body to the task. I used less clutch and more gas, not only did I take off faster but the bike rocketed forwards with almost no effort but the tight twist of my right wrist. It is an awesome feeling of accomplishment to try to improve and in a matter of hours actually see the positive results.

As we exited turn 1 I knew the feeling well. Just as when I won the last Novice race, I entered turn 2 with more than my share of riding confidence. I knew I could ride fast and now I was in the hunt with the crowd of competitors that previously had left me in the not so distant dust. I gassed it hard out of turn 2 and set up for my newly acquired attack line of turn 3. With my recently changed gearing I was able to squirt out of turn 3 and even wheelie a little up to turn 4a. 😞 I was in about 13th place by turn 4b and I decided it was time to show myself and the other Open Super Stock warriors what me and my white beauty could do. I put my head down and proceeded to rip the throttle off of the handle bars. I began to enter turn 8 at a much faster pace than I had entered it all day long. Soon I began to drag a knee, then a boot, and finally I made my way up to about 11th place. All of this happening in about 1:37 from a dead stop start. The second lap had me turning a 1:32 passing a few people and weaving thru the accelerationally challenged others. The next few laps

were me and my #767 machine blowing up gasoline and oxygen 🚫 to produce extremely consistent 1:29 lap times. First a 75, then a 66, and finally a 58. 🍊 The night before, as I changed my used tires for a set of previously only mold touched rubber, I had met a fellow rider, #124. He had told me he turned solid 1:28 lap times. As I rounded turn 8 for the second to the last time, I got a glimpse of #124 just mere inches in front of me. He was passing another passenger on a rocket ship with wheels. He, #124, may have had a slight glancing blow with the other rider's vehicle, because I saw a part of the other guy's space ship get sent into orbit. 😊 I made a pass on the other rider to avoid any further bumping and grinding and proceeded to follow James, #124 for our final lap. I had only one goal for this weekend and that was to obtain the next level in my riding career. Turning a lap time in the 1 minute 28 second time frame. Following James made it quite easy, actually. I didn't think about how fast I was going, I just thought about being smooth and following some one who was faster than I am. I noticed only a mere parade lap after finishing 9th in my final race that I had indeed reached the next level. I was

now the proud owner of a lap time that read **1:28.99!!!** I could only cheer for myself with screams in my helmet, as if I had just won the race. To me the small battle of the lap timer and my mind was won this time by me. Next month I have similar goals, and after I achieve them, I will share the results with all of you.

Thank you all again for indulging my wandering mind as I recap the weekends events. 😊 I have to thank a few people for their help and support and I hope to be able to thank more of you when I receive your help as well. First and foremost, Jodie, Josephine, and Sebastian. Family is Everything. 🍊 Next, thank you Pranav, you have hooked me up to no end. 🍊 Dennis, thank you for the Dunlop front tire. I do believe I have a good tire set up now that you have shown me what a quality tire can do. 🍊 And lastly, those that have come out to the track and cheered for us gladiators of the asphalt, thank you. 🍊 I hope to see more of you at the track soon.

Marcel