

Season finale promises fireworks for BMW Motorrad Motorsport

On Sunday 7 October, the 2012 Superbike World Championship comes to an end, with the final two races of the year taking place at the Circuit de Nevers in France. Whatever happens at the 4.441 km 'Magny-Cours' racetrack, everyone is in agreement that this year's championship has been one of the best ever, with thrilling entertainment, amazing skill and high drama on offer ever since the 2012 series kicked off almost nine months ago in Australia.

With the title race still to be decided – and possibly even going down to the very last race – Superbike fans the world over have been enthralled by the multitude of track battles and close racing provided all year, where the established stars of WSBK have been taken on, and often beaten, by the 'young guns', hoping to make a name for themselves in what has undoubtedly been the best racing series on the planet this year.



From a BMW Motorrad Motorsport perspective, 2012 has been a tremendous success, with 15 podiums achieved (including six wins) and 394 points awarded to date in the Manufacturers' Championship. Even with two races still to run, this is an amazing improvement over 2011, where just three podiums were recorded and 275 points the total in last year's Manufacturers' Championship.

Statistics don't tell the whole story of course, as Marco Melandri can testify. The amazing Italian has fought hard in his debut year for BMW Motorrad Motorsport, enjoying victories, rostrums and fastest laps, but also finding himself in the gravel trap and at times, also in the medical centre. Always a hard racer and undoubtedly exciting to watch on his S 1000 RR, no one can accuse Melandri of playing it safe in his 2012 championship campaign.

Even with this final round approaching, Marco is focussing on returning to winning ways after four races without scoring any points. He has been in and out of hospital

following his heavy crash in the first race at Portimão two weeks ago, and while he has no internal injuries, he does have cracked ribs and painful contusions on his back. This may well present a challenge to his being able to ride his RR at 100 per cent at the French circuit where he enjoyed a double podium last year. However expect the Italian to ignore the pain and give it everything as he aims to get back on top of the rostrum again.



“I spent the time since Portugal back home taking a rest and recovering from my injury. It still hurts, but I am feeling better with every day and now I cannot wait to head to Magny-Cours,” said Marco. “The last two race Sundays were difficult, but we left them behind us and are motivated as always to fight. For sure the final round of the season will not be an easy one as the top is closely fought. For us it is important to work hard from the first day on in order to best prepare for the races.

“I like the Magny-Cours circuit. Last year I raced there for the first time and had two very good races. It is a difficult but interesting circuit which offers a combination of everything. When I first rode there, it took me some time to find the best way of braking for the slow corners, but then I found a good feeling and was riding pretty fast. I also like it because the surface is very smooth. I had a lot of fun there last year and that is my target for this year, too. I want to enjoy the final round and finish the season with the best possible performance and the best possible results.”

This is exactly what team-mate Leon Haslam will be trying to do, as he contests his final race weekend for BMW Motorrad Motorsport. It has been a tough year for Leon, right from the very first race weekend, where he fractured his right femur after a heavy crash in practice. Dogged by injury throughout the year – and at the receiving end of more than his fair share of bad luck – Haslam has been a true pro, braving the pain barrier to put in some impressive performances and working extremely hard for his team throughout what will be remembered as a challenging season.

“The recent race weekends have been difficult for me so hopefully now my luck will change,” he said. “I know we’ve had the pace to win races over the last three or four rounds. It is my final race weekend for BMW Motorrad so for sure I want to finish strong and if possible with a win. We will give 110 per cent, as usual. The Magny-Cours round is always late on in the season so it is normally pretty cold. The track has a lot of hairpins and tight corners but it also has a very fast back straight. It is quite technical and the weather is always a key factor there because the temperatures are often low.”



For Head of Race Operations, Andrea Dosoli, it is important for the team to end this year on a high, especially after such a rollercoaster ride of a season:

“At Magny-Cours, the best ever season for BMW Motorrad Motorsport will come to an end,” he said. “It has been an amazing and difficult championship with ups and downs. Our clear target is to finish it with great races and the best possible results. The racetrack is a technical one and lacks a natural riding rhythm. It is a combination of everything: fast and slow corners, one of the slowest hairpins, chicanes and a fast straight. It will be demanding for the riders and difficult for the team to find the best set-up. Another characteristic is its smooth surface, which is sensitive to the weather conditions and temperatures. Considering how quickly the weather could change at this time of the year, this could be a key factor, so we must be ready for any conditions.

“Marco is facing the most difficult time of the season; he is working very hard to recover from the injury he suffered in Portimão. We are confident that he will be fit and ready to fight with the top guys. He is very strong and this difficult time will give him extra motivation. He likes Magny-Cours, where last year he narrowly missed out on two victories by just a few seconds. All the team is supporting him. For Leon, Magny-Cours will be his last race with BMW Motorrad Motorsport. We’ve enjoyed our time together and we really would like to part ways with an important result. We all know what he is capable of achieving and he has nice memories from Magny-

Cours where he got a fantastic podium last year. We all are confident that he will be able to fight for the podium again and the whole team will work hard to help him in achieving this target.”



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