

Oulton Park

For round 9 we headed to Cheshire for Oulton Park. In true British fashion the weather played havoc in the opening part of the weekend. Through Thursday night the heavens opened making the track damp for the free practice sessions.



Free Practice- there seems to be a pattern forming for the Free Practice sessions...a damp and iffy track. The conditions for this session were very iffy with wet patches dotted around the drying circuit. In addition, having this damp track meant we couldn't test anything as the lap times were around 6

seconds off which means the bike wouldn't be working to its full potential, this makes any changes to the bike useless for the when the track dries out. Therefore, we didn't do many laps in this session as it was non beneficial to us.

Qualifying 1- with track conditions now much better it was time to get straight to it and rattle the laps off. However we treated part of this session as free practice seeing as we missed out on dry laps in FP. So I spent a lot



of my laps analysing what the bike was doing, like what my rear grip was like and how the bike turned etc. in the 25minute session I only done 10 laps as I done two pit stops where we made lots of suspension adjustments to the bike which took up majority of the session by testing them followed by another pit stop to make further adjustments. With only a few minutes to go I had one lap to bank my fastest time of the session. I ended up the session with a 1:41:8 which put me 7th for the provisional grid.

Qualifying 2- again in typical fashion we were left with a damp track for this session. Although this time there was only 2-3 corners with damp patches therefore I could concentrate on other areas of that track in

the opening 15 minutes. In this session I was struggling for rear grip so me and my crew chief, John Crockford, worked hard to solve this issue. With the track drying lap by lap the lap times began to drop in the last 8 minutes so it was time



to produce the lap times. As my pace increased I stumbled across a few areas where we could improve the bike. I posted my fastest time on lap 11 of 11 laps with a 1:41:5 which put me 8th overall. This wasn't the best session but after further investigations by the team we found a rear shock fault which answered all our set up woes.

Race- so now with a correctly working shock my crew chief had to make bit of gamble with setup as all changes to bike throughout the weekend where useless as now the bike was much more firm. As the lights went out I got a great launch, at the end of lap 1 I was 5th from 8th on the grid. In the early stages of the race the bike seemed to be working great and I fought my way up to 4th. After lap 5 my lap times began to drop off as I began to struggle for rear grip again. It became apparent that the bike was great on new tyres but with wearing tyres it was hard to ride. Therefore I finished the race in 7th. I was disappointed with this as I felt we had the pace but due to a failing shock that cut out set up time massively, this then hampered our race set up.

Donington Park

For round 10 of the British Superbike Championship we head for Leicestershire to the famous Donington Park. With the weather looking sketchy for Friday but dry and bright for the rest of the weekend we were set for all weathers.



Free Practice- Surprisingly the weather forecast was correct, it was wet! The rain had fallen around 2 hours before this session commenced making track conditions somewhat slippery. The aim for this session was to get some laps under our belts and get my eye in. I

headed off and immediately I was feeling comfortable and feeling my way to the grip. After one flying lap I went for another, I tipped in to McLean's which is a right hander about 60mph. I tapped on the gas

and held a neutral throttle to settle the bike and without asking for any more power the rear came round on me then gripped leaving me flying through the air. Luckily for me the bike was hardly damaged and I was ok too. I was baffled how I crashed but as I was walking off another rider done the exact same. After speaking to other riders they all agreed how slippery the circuit was so that put me mind at ease.



Qualifying 1- fortunately the track had dried out and conditions were ten times better than free practice. Similarly to Oulton, we had to treat part of this session as free practice due to me crashing and it also being wet. So these were our first dry laps. In my opening run the bike was feeling great and there were only a few areas where I felt I was

struggling. After a 7 lap run I posted my fastest lap on lap 5 with a 1:34:8 which at that point put me fastest. After a few minor tweaks to the front a rear suspension I headed out. After an out lap I could tell the changes were worse as we adjusted the front in a way that had taken a bit of weight off the rear which left me spinning out of the turns. Once we had found we went the wrong way, we then went the other way. By the time we had sorted all this I was almost out of time therefore I didn't post a faster time. This saw me finish the session 6th, this was ok as I felt we had a lot more to give in the second qualifying session.

Qualifying 2- with a few degrees cooler air temperature it was feeling more like autumn than summer. The track was dry and we were all set for 25 minutes of track time. With the changes we made to the bike there was still some fine tuning to be done to get the full potential from the bike and myself. After 20 minutes



of lapping and two pit stops it was go time for the last 10 minutes. In our a last pit stop the team put in a new rear tyre, I was pushing to better my lap time from qualifying 1 and although I felt was pushing a lot harder I only bettered my time by 0.2 of a second. The bike was

working well in the fast areas but then in tight turns I found the bike didn't want to track around the turn which then affected my exit speed. With one last lap in the remaining seconds I put in a 1:31:3 which was 0.5 of a second quicker than qualifying 1 but put me 9th on the grid. Of course I was disappointed as I had dropped back, after a post session debrief we found I wasn't all of my travel which meant the front end was too high in the corners which would explain my turning issues. Therefore we came to the conclusion we needed to soften the bike off which meant a change of front springs. After a brief warm up before the race the bike was feeling a lot better and I felt much more comfortable.



Race- as always the plan was to get a good launch especially as I was starting from the 3rd row. As the lights went out I got a great launch, the best of the season, and found myself up to 4th then after an overtake I exited turn 1 in 3rd. This was the perfect start but by the end of lap 1 the safety car was out in which we followed for 2 laps.

Once the Nissan GT-R safety car had went in I had 9 laps remaining to have a good race. The changes to the bike where working great and I was feeling much more comfortable. In the first 7 laps I had some good battling for 2nd, after lap 8 I decided to try and follow 2nd place to stop tripping ourselves up meaning we could claw the leader back who was about 1 second ahead. Lap 11 of 12 and I was charging after 2nd place but as I entered the old hairpin, which is turn 4, I wanted to select 3rd gear from 5th but as I went to back shift the gearbox fell into a false neutral leaving me with no engine braking meaning I rushed in to the turn. The gearbox then selected 2nd which sent the bike a bit sideways, this resulted in me running off track and dropping back to 7th which is where I finished. This was a frustrating result as I was on for another podium but a mechanical failed us of this result. We take lots of positives from this race and move forward to Brands Hatch for the last round.

I would just like to thank all my sponsors for their help and support, it is hugely appreciated!