

## Oulton Park Round 2

FP,

Free practice was a session with very iffy conditions, some parts dry and some parts wet even with spray coming up. With conditions like this we decided to run a wet front tyre and a dry rear tyre, this is a combination that me and the team thought



would work best. As pit lane opened I planned to just do a few laps to see what track conditions were like and see if they would suit our tyre choice. After 3 laps I didn't feel confident enough that the dry tyre was going to give me enough grip therefore I came into the pits. I went back out for a few laps but I soon re-entered the pits as I concluded it was too wet for dry tyre. It was a shame to lose this session but at least we already had a good set up at this point.

Q1- Again conditions were not great, although this time it was clear full wets were needed. After my out lap the bike felt good, as my pace increased I found a few niggling problems with the set up. After 10 minutes of defining these problems and I entered the pits and discussed with my crew chief, he then went on to make a few changes which left with just over 10 minutes to set a time as at this point I was 14th. Immediately the changes were an improvement. I built up to my best lap which was the last lap to go 4th with a 1:48:03. This was a good start to the weekend and we still had room for improvement, roll on Q2





Q2- With qualifying 2 just around the corner we were all staring at the sky trying to judge what the weather was going to do. This was very hard but about an hour and half before my session it started raining, the drizzle lasted about 30 minutes which was enough to wet the track. One of Oulton

Parks trademarks is that some parts dry quick and others dry slowly therefore a tyre choice for this session was a massive gamble. As the session started the track was drying. Each lap I did became dryer and dryer which meant this session was going to make a difference to the grid for the race. With 12 minutes of the session left I entered the pits and got a new rear wet tyre fitted. This gave me around 4 laps to put a time in, my first two laps were quicker than previous in the session but still around 0.6 of a second off my best from Q1. My last two laps of the session were slower as I struggled to get rear grip and I thought I had shredded my new rear wet tyre but after further inspection from the team they concluded that we ran the tyre pressures too high meaning the new rear tyre got too hot and lost most of its grip. This left me in 7th for the race which wasn't too bad but I was still disappointed with it, so I decided this meant I needed to get my elbows out in the race.

Race- About 2 hours before my race the heavens opened and stayed open until 30 minutes before my race, this made an easy decision on tyres. So we set off on wet tyres for our warm up lap and it was pouring with rain again. Spray was bad making it hard to see the riders in front. After the warm up lap the organisers delayed start by 10 minutes to wait for the



rain to stop and allow the standing water to drain off the circuit to reduce spray. So after the rain stopped we were all go. The red lights went out I got a good start and headed for turn 1 were everyone was tentative on the brakes. I wanted to finish this race and take each lap as it came. After the opening laps I was in a battle for the podium which was a great place to be and swapping positions backwards and forwards was great fun. Mid race and I was battling with a rider for 4th and by swapping positions this allowed riders behind to catch, I slipped back to 7th with a few laps remaining so I needed to drop the hammer and attack the riders in front. Last lap and I was on the back of the group for 3rd place, I was pushing on now and wanted to gain positions. 2nd to last turn and I made a pass for 6th so it was full steam down into the last corner, called lodge, were I just got piped on the brakes meaning I crossed the line in 7th. This wasn't a bad result as in conditions like that it was easy to lose a load of points. In addition on the last I put in the second fastest of the race with a 1: 51:9. So some good positives to take away plus I am now 2nd in the championship but only 4 points off of 1st.

This season is setting out to be a close one which is very exciting for me and everyone else. I am now continuing to knuckle down with training in preparation for Brands Hatch on the 20th, 21th, 22nd of May. I can't wait and I am aiming for a podium spot to taste that champagne once again



I would just like to say a massive thank you to all my sponsors for making this year possible, massively appreciated!

All photographs courtesy of Kerry Rawson Photography

If you missed the race TV, here is the link to it on YouTube-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecLMRqk-A7E>

<http://www.bradjonesracing.co.uk/>