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**HYPERCREATIVE**

### Oulton Park Round 3

For round 3 of the Superstock 600 championship we headed to the countryside of Cheshire which is the county of the well liked Oulton Park circuit, personally one of my favourites. With two free practices, a qualifying, a warm up and race it was set to be an exciting weekend.

**Free Practice 1-** with the forecast set to be dry for the free practice sessions we had to work through some final few things that we didn't get to try at the test nearly two weeks ago. One very important thing



was the gearing; I needed it taller so I could use the punch of the engine to get me off the turns. Amongst a couple of few minor suspension tweaks I had plenty to think about. After 10 minutes of the session I could tell we made the right choice with the gearing. In no time I was in to the low 1:41's which wasn't far off my time I done at the test so it was feeling good. Once I had a good feeling with the bike I just wanted to do a series of laps and get a good understanding for the bike. With the 25 minute session completed with a lap time of 1:41:4 which made me the fastest rider of the session. So a good start to the weekend which got the team atmosphere off to a buzzing start.

**Free Practice 2-** The sun was out and it was set to be another good session with just a few minor suspension changes this time out, with the suspension it is all about getting the right feel and another thing to remember is it can never be

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perfect. By this I mean it is always a compromise, changing it to get one corner right can typically lead to making the bike worse at another section, so you have to just get the correct balance. Again I wanted to string some fast laps together and find a race pace. This time I was in to the 1:40's and feeling comfortable. The bike was getting somewhere handy to what I needed for qualifying. My final lap time of the session was 1:40:6 which again put me fastest in the session. Two great practices sessions set us up well with a few further adjustments to be made.



**Qualifying-** with my eyes only on one thing after two successful practice sessions, it was time to put what we learnt to use. Standard procedure for us with coming in half way for a new rear tyre. However, at the half way

stage of this session the red flag came out so we had to pit anyway. So whilst the session stopped we put our new rear tyre in to give me optimum grip allowing me to put in that hot qualifying lap in. The session re-started and it was 15 minutes remaining giving me a small window to find some clear track and post a quick time. In those 15 minutes I did catch a lot of traffic only allowing me to post a few quick times of 1:40:4 which was good enough, by 0.3 of a second, to put it on pole. It was great to get my first pole of the season and having a nice gap over second topped it all off.

**Race-** unfortunately the rain had come in, it was intermittent making the conditions very changeable. This was gutting for me as I knew I had good race pace and was hoping for a dry race. However, it wasn't meant to be so we had to get on with it and ride the conditions we were



given. As we went to the grid I had full wet tyres and a wet set up in the bike meaning soft spring's front and rear. On my lap to the grid it was dryer than I thought but I thought we could get away with it. On my warm up lap the track had dried out a lot, at this point I knew we were in trouble. I lead the opening lap and then dropped to 2<sup>nd</sup> as the safety car came out for two laps. By this stage I had done 4 laps and the tyres were beginning to overheat and spin up a lot which took chunks out of the rear wet tyre. As the race went on the bike became very hard to ride and even riding along in a straight line became difficult as it bucked and weaved, this was due to it being soft on the suspension as we expected it to be a lot wetter.

Finishing the race in 15<sup>th</sup> was far from what I had in mind but the changeable conditions caught us out and we made the wrong decision with the bike meaning I could only salvage one point.



So we will put that result behind us and move on as we know I had good pace and a bike that works well in dry conditions.

My next round is at Donington World Superbikes on the 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> of May, I hope to get back on the podium and collect some valuable points.