

## **RT Motorsports team back on top**

Round 3 of the ONK Dutch Superbike championship was shaping up to be a tough weekend for the RT Motorsports team. The Assen venue, which was host to the World Superbike Championship, was not only a points scoring weekend for the ONK championship but the team and rider Gareth Jones had been successful in their application for a wildcard ride into the fiercely competitive FIM European Superstock 1000 Cup. This meant changes had to be made to the bike to encompass Superstock technical regulations and also substantial suspension alterations to accommodate the Superstock control tyre rather than the slick tyres used in the ONK. This certainly meant a lot of work for the team if they were to bring home good results.

For those riders racing in both the World event and the ONK championship, the regulations stated that the teams could not take to the track for any practice or qualifying for the ONK event until after the Superstock wildcard race on Sunday. This meant the total track time with the ONK settings would consist of a ten minute warm up before the 14 lap race Sunday afternoon.

Friday and Saturday was devoted to the Superstock 1000 Cup practice and qualifying. The team got off to a great start and with some dramatic suspension changes managed a solid 10<sup>th</sup> in the first practice. After revising the suspension settings, the team headed into second practice where Jones improved to 5<sup>th</sup> fastest. This was a fantastic reward for the work everyone had put in and Gareth felt confident going into the Saturday afternoon qualifying session.

With another revised setting Jones managed to improve his time but so did the rest of the field and despite putting in a very competitive time Jones finished the qualifying session in a commendable 13<sup>th</sup> place. The times were extremely close and positions were decided by the smallest of margins which of course would make for an extremely exciting race. Jones stayed focused knowing that with a good start, a top 10 placing was still achievable.

The Sunday morning race was greeted by sunny weather and a very enthusiastic RT Motorsports team that were ready to race. Jones got a brilliant start and despite locking elbows with several riders on the way into turn 1 managed to gain a few places on the first lap. Then in a fantastic display of tyre management and controlled aggression, Jones battled his way through the field eventually crossing the line in 7<sup>th</sup> place ahead of many front running championship regulars. The fine display from the RT Motorsports team and Jones went a long way to show how well the team is working together and has proven beyond doubt that they are a force to be reckoned with.

**Quote from Gareth Jones**

“What a race. It was an absolute battle from the second the lights went out. I was extremely pleased with the outcome. I feel that I can be right up there competing with the best riders from all over the world. The wildcard event was a big undertaking for the team and the final result is a credit to everyone involved. I would like to thank the RT Motorsports team for all their hard work and for giving me the best possible chance to bring home valuable points. Also thank you to all the team’s sponsors, friends and family who showed their support throughout the weekend.”

**Quote from Rob Vennegoor**

“An amazing weekend overall and a very impressive FIM SST race shows that Gareth belongs in this paddock. I hope we can sort out another wild card for the Nurburgring later on in the season. After a few team changes, everything is working great and also after a few necessary bike changes, Gareth is quick back on his level. It was a stunning race that saw him bring home 7<sup>th</sup> place, his best result overall in this very competitive championship. A big congratulations to Gareth and the whole RT Motorsports team for working together to achieve such a great result.”

Nevertheless, after all the excitement, the day was still not over as the ONK Dutch Superbike race was still to take place late that afternoon. The team were flat out preparing the bike, almost all the way back into complete Superbike trim.

The FIM Superstock qualifying times determined the grid positions for the ONK race. Starting from 4<sup>th</sup> position, Jones managed to execute his plan of pushing hard from the start, and lead the race from flag to flag, pulling out a 6.5 second lead by the chequered flag, claiming a convincing win and extending his championship lead to 16 points.

**Quote from Gareth Jones**

“This has been such an awesome weekend for me and the RT Motorsports team. We have a fantastic crew who have put together an excellent bike, and I can’t thank them enough for all their hard work in preparation for this weekend. I know we can build on these results and there is much more left to come”!

**Quote from Rob Vennegoor**

“Gareth has shown that he has a lot of experience with the RT Motorsports bike after racing this model for 2 years already in New Zealand. Together with the help from Mobu Tuning, Gareth’s knowledge about the bike and the hard work from the suspension engineer and mechanics have shown that our package works very well.

Again an impressing win from Gareth! However we have some big challenges awaiting in the coming few weeks with the IDM at Oschersleben and 2 events at the street tracks, Hengelo and Oss. There are a lot of points scoring rounds left and the season still has a long way to go but the team focus is winning and to be consistent. A great weekend and impressive results, many thanks to all the people that are involved in whatever way with our team to make this happen.”

After 3 weekends on the trot of solid results, the team now has a well deserved 2 week break before heading to Oschersleben in Germany to compete in the German IDM championship.