

MotoGP facts & figures

■ **Valentino Rossi** has finished on the podium seven times from his nine premier-class starts at Sepang, including five victories.



■ **Jorge Lorenzo** won the 250cc race at Sepang three years ago and in 2007 finished third to clinch his second world title. Last year, in his first race at Sepang on a MotoGP machine, he crashed out on lap twelve whilst in sixth place.



■ **Casey Stoner's** victory in the MotoGP race at Sepang in 2007 gave him the record of being the only rider to win in all three Grand Prix classes at the Malaysian circuit. Last year in Malaysia he finished sixth in MotoGP race, struggling with a broken scaphoid.



■ **Dani Pedrosa** had two victories in the smaller classes at Sepang; in 2003 he won the 125cc race to clinch his first world title and in 2004 he won the 250cc race. He finished third in the MotoGP race in 2006 after a nasty crash during practice. In 2007 he was the first Michelin rider across the line in third, after qualifying on pole. Last year he was second, after again starting from pole.



Valentino Rossi set to take MotoGP title at Sepang

With a 38-point lead at the head of the MotoGP championship standings following his second place in Australia, Valentino Rossi is in a position to clinch the title with a good ride at Sepang. Only Jorge Lorenzo can stop Rossi taking the title in Malaysia and the following scenarios would give Rossi the world title:

If Lorenzo wins the race, then Rossi needs to finish 4th or better, to win the title

If Lorenzo is second, then Rossi needs to finish 9th or better

If Lorenzo is third, then Rossi needs to finish 13th or better



■ **Andrea Dovizioso** has twice finished on the podium at Sepang in the smaller classes; he was second in the 125cc race in 2004 to clinch the world title and second in the 250cc race in 2006. Last year he was third – his only podium finish in his debut year riding a MotoGP machine.

■ Sepang has been one of **Colin Edwards'** least successful tracks and his 8th place finish last year is his best finish from six starts at the circuit.

■ **Alex de Angelis** finished on the podium at Sepang in 2005 and 2006 when riding in the 250cc class. Last year, on his first race at Sepang on a MotoGP machine, he finished down in 14th after qualifying 17th.

■ **Randy de Puniet's** fourth place finish at Sepang in 2007 when riding for Kawasaki equals his best ever dry weather result in the MotoGP class.

■ **Loris Capirossi** has had considerable success at Sepang, having won the 250cc race on the first visit to the circuit in 1999, finishing second in the 500cc race in 2001 after qualifying on pole, winning in 2005 from pole and finishing second in 2006 after a race long battle with Rossi.

■ **Marco Melandri's** second place finish in 2007 at Sepang is the last time he has stood on a Grand Prix podium in a dry weather race.

■ **Toni Elias** had three podium finishes at Sepang when riding in the 250cc class, including a win in 2003 from pole position. Since moving up to the MotoGP class his best result at Sepang was a sixth place finish in 2007.

■ **Chris Vermeulen** continued his record of being the only rider to score points at every MotoGP race in 2009 with his 11th place finish in Australia.

■ **Nicky Hayden** has finished fourth five times from his six visits to the Sepang circuit.

■ **Gabor Talmacsi** has won the 125cc race at Sepang for the last two years

■ Sepang is one of just three circuits, along with Donington and Valencia, at which the 990cc machines still hold the record pole position time.

Valentino Rossi Records

If Valentino Rossi wins the MotoGP title this season, it will be his ninth world championship, which will equal the number of world titles achieved by Mike Hailwood and Carlo Ubbiali. The only riders with more world titles are Giacomo Agostini with 15 and Angel Nieto with 13. This will be yet one more achievement to be added to his long list of records, the most notable of which are listed below:

Rossi has never missed a GP since making his debut in the 125cc class at Shah Alam in Malaysia in March 1996. Following the Australian Grand Prix he has started 225 successive GP races across all classes; 165 of which have been in the premier-class. Both of these are records.

When he won the 500cc world title in 2001 he became only the third rider to win championships in three different classes, after Phil Read (125, 250 and 500) and Mike Hailwood (250, 350 and 500).

Rossi and Giacomo Agostini are the only two riders to have won premier-class titles on both 2-stroke and 4-stroke machinery.

His win at the 2004 season-opening GP in South Africa made him the first rider to take back-to-back premier-class victories on different makes of bike.

In 2004 he became only the second rider to win back-to-back premier-class titles on different makes of machinery. Eddie Lawson was the first, winning on a Yamaha in 1988 and a Honda in 1989

Rossi is the only rider to have scored five successive premier-class victories on a Yamaha.

His eleven wins in 2005 is the highest number of premier-class victories in a single season by a Yamaha rider. He is the only rider in history to have won five or more successive races on two different makes of bike.

He holds the record for successive premier-class podiums, scoring 23 successive top-three results from the Portuguese GP in 2002 to the South Africa GP in 2004.

Rossi had the honour of scoring the 500th victory for Honda when he won the Japanese 500cc GP in April 2001. He finished on the podium at all 16 races in 2003, a record for number of podiums in a single season which he equalled in 2005 and 2008.

Rossi's 373 points total in 2008 is the most points ever scored in a single season.

He is the only rider to win the premier-class title on four different types of motorcycle: 500cc 2-stroke Honda, 990cc 4-stroke Honda, 990cc 4-stroke Yamaha, 800cc 4-stroke Yamaha.

He is Yamaha's most successful rider of all-time with 44 race victories on their bikes.

His 77 race victories in the premier-class is more than any other rider in the 61-year history of Grand Prix racing.

He is the only rider to have stood on the podium in the premier-class on more than 100 occasions.

He has been on the podium 162 times across all classes, which is more than any other rider.

Valentino Rossi is the only rider to have won at least one GP in 14 successive seasons.



250cc facts & figures

■ **Hiroshi Aoyama** has an excellent record at Sepang; he qualified on pole and finished fifth in 2005; he won the race from pole in 2007 and was second last year after again qualifying on pole – equalling his best result of 2008.



■ **Marco Simoncelli** finished third at Sepang last year clinching the 250cc world title.

■ **Alvaro Bautista** did the clean sweep in the 125cc race at Sepang in his world championship winning year of 2006 – he won the race with a new lap record, after qualifying on pole position. Last year he set a new lap record in the 250cc class on his way to winning the race.



■ **Hector Barbera** did not race in Malaysia last year due to injuries suffered in a crash at the Japanese Grand Prix. He finished second in the 250cc race at Sepang in 2007 after qualifying in seventh place on the grid. Barbera is the only rider, other than championship leader Aoyama, to score points in every race so far in 2009.



■ **Raffaele de Rosa's** third place finish in Australia was his first Grand Prix podium finish in his 81 GP starts in the 125cc and 250cc classes.

■ **Karel Abraham's** sixth place finish in Australia is the best result by a Czech rider in the 250cc class since Frantisek Stastny finished 4th at the Isle of Man TT races in 1966.

Hiroshi Aoyama could clinch the world title in Malaysia

Even though his points lead at the head of the 250cc championship standings was reduced to twelve following his seventh place finish in Australia, Hiroshi Aoyama could still take the world title at the Malaysian Grand Prix. The following scenario would give Aoyama the world title at Sepang:

If Aoyama wins the race and Simoncelli finishes no higher than 5th.

If Aoyama finishes second and Simoncelli finishes no higher than 10th and Bautista does not win the race.

If Aoyama finishes third and Simoncelli is no higher than 14th, Bautista does not finish either first or second and Barbera does not win the race.

Final race 250cc championship showdown

Although it is possible for Hiroshi Aoyama to win the title in Malaysia, it is more likely that the championship battle will go to the final race of the year in Valencia. Since the scoring system was changed in 1977 to having all races counted towards the championship, there have been twelve other occasions that the 250cc title has been decided at the final event of the year:

1978 – Kork Ballington went into the final race of the year at the Rijeka circuit in the former Yugoslavia leading Kawasaki team-mate Greg Hansford by eleven points. Hansford won the race but Ballington finished third to take the title.

1982 – Jean-Louis Tournadre (Yamaha), who had only taken one victory all year but had scored points at every race, was leading the Championship by eight points going into the final race from Toni Mang (Kawasaki) who had already had four wins. Mang won the final race at Hockenheim but Tournadre finished fourth to take the title by a single point.

1988 – Sito Pons (Honda) was leading his fellow Spanish rider Juan Garriga (Yamaha) by six points going into the final race of the year in Brazil. Pons coasted to a comfortable third place in the race after Garriga had run off the track on lap two and could only work his way back up to fifth place by the end of the race.

1990 – Carlos Cardus (Honda) went to the final race of the year at Phillip Island leading John Kocinski (Yamaha) by five points. Kocinski won the race and the title as Cardus was forced to retire two laps from the end with a broken gear lever.

1993 – Loris Capirossi (Honda) was leading Tetsuya Harada (Yamaha) by ten points going into the final race of the year at Jarama. Harada won the race and the title with Capirossi finishing in fifth place suffering from tyre problems.

The 1990 and 1993 Championships are the only two occasions listed here that the rider going into the final race leading the 250cc Championship classification has failed to take the title.

1994 – Max Biaggi (Aprilia) was leading Tady Okada (Honda) by eight points going into the last GP of the year at Catalunya. Biaggi won a close race and the title, with Okada finishing in fourth place.

1996 – Max Biaggi (Aprilia) went to the final race of the year at Eastern Creek, Australia leading Ralf Waldmann (Honda) by a single point. The two riders battled it out in the early part of the race before Biaggi pulled away to take the race win and the title.

1997 – The same two protagonists as the previous year together with Tetsuya Harada (Aprilia), all went to the final race with a chance of the title, with Biaggi (now on a Honda) leading Harada by six points and Waldmann one point further adrift. Waldmann did all he could and won the race at Phillip Island, with Biaggi following him home in second place to take the title by just two points. Harada finished back in fifth place suffering with injuries from a crash during qualifying.

1998 – As in 1993, Loris Capirossi was leading Tetsuya Harada (both riding Aprilia) going into the final race of the year in Argentina, this time by the slender margin of four points, with Valentino Rossi (Aprilia) a further 14 points further back still having an outside chance of taking the title. Rossi won the race and a last lap collision between Capirossi and Harada resulted in a non-finish for Harada, with Capirossi taking the title by finishing second.

2000 – Olivier Jacque and Yamaha team-mate Shinya Nakano went to the final race of the year separated by just two points, with Jacque having the slight advantage. Daijiro Kato (Honda) was also in with an outside chance of taking the title, eleven points behind Jacque. The fight for the Championship went right down to the last corner of the last lap at Phillip Island, with Jacque finally taking the race victory by just 0.014 sec from Nakano, and with it the title.

2003 – Manuel Poggiali (Aprilia) arrived at the final race of the year with a seven point advantage over Roberto Rolfo (Honda). Rolfo was never in the hunt and Poggiali cruised to a comfortable third place finish to become 250cc world champion in his first season in the class.

2006 – Jorge Lorenzo (Aprilia) had a thirteen point advantage over Andrea Dovizioso (Honda) arriving at Valencia for the final event of the year. He did enough by finishing fourth to clinch the title with Dovizioso finishing a disappointing seventh after he had been leading Lorenzo early in the race.

125cc facts & figures

■ None of the riders starting the 125cc race at the Malaysian Grand Prix have previously won a GP race at the Sepang circuit.



■ **Julian Simon** finished fourth at the Malaysian GP 2006 – the last time he raced in the 125cc class at the Sepang circuit.



■ **Bradley Smith** finished second last year at Sepang – one of his four podium finishes of 2008. If he secures 2nd in the final championship standings, it will be the highest finish by a British rider in any of the solo classes since Barry Sheene finished second to Kenny Roberts in the 1978 500cc world championship.



■ **Sandro Cortese** has finished on the podium at the last two races, having had only a single podium finish in his previous 78 Grand Prix starts. His fourth place finish last year in Malaysia equalled his best result of 2008.



MotoGP racing numbers

200 – Marco Simoncelli's win at Phillip Island was the 200th Grand Prix victory for Italian riders in the 250cc class.

149 – Valentino Rossi's second place finish in Australia was his 149th point scoring finish in the premier-class. Only three riders have had more premier-class point scoring finishes; Alex Barros with 195, Loris Capirossi (153) and Carlos Checa (150).

28 – 250cc championship leader Hiroshi Aoyama celebrates his 28th birthday on race day at Sepang.

19 – Casey Stoner's victory in Australia was his 19th MotoGP win making him the second most successful Australian rider of all-time in the premier-class with one more victory than 1987 Champion Wayne Gardner. The only Australian with more premier-class victories is Mick Doohan with 54.

19 – Casey Stoner has won 19 races since the introduction of the 800cc capacity limit – equalling the number of race wins achieved by Valentino Rossi over this period.

19 – This will be the 19th Malaysian Grand Prix which was first held in 1991 and has taken place every year since. Three different circuits have hosted the event; Shah Alam for seven years from 1991 to 1997, followed by a single visit to Johor and this will be the eleventh year since 1999 at Sepang.

10 – On the day of qualifying in Malaysia, it will be exactly 10 years since the 1999 Rio Grand Prix at which Alex Criville became the first Spanish rider to win the 500cc world title and Valentino Rossi won the 250cc world title.

5 – Valentino Rossi is the most successful rider at the Sepang circuit with five premier-class victories – two on Honda and three on Yamaha.

4 – Since the four-stroke MotoGP formula was introduced in 2002, Yamaha have been the most successful manufacturer with four victories at Sepang, Ducati have won twice and Honda once.

