

2012 AT A GLANCE

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FEBRUARY 26
-  **2** **IMOLA**
ITALY
APRIL 1
-  **3** **ASSEN**
THE NETHERLANDS
APRIL 22
-  **4** **MONZA**
ITALY
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-  **5** **DONINGTON**
EUROPE
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SAN MARINO
JUNE 10
-  **8** **MOTORLAND ARAGON**
SPAIN
JULY 1
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-  **10** **SILVERSTONE**
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PORTUGAL
SEPTEMBER 23
-  **14** **MAGNY-COURS**
FRANCE
OCTOBER 7



RAIN MASTER SYKES CLOSSES GAP AT TOP

Tom Sykes will head to his home round of the eni FIM Superbike World Championship in buoyant mood after picking up his first win of the season at Monza last weekend.

The Kawasaki rider was the only winner in Italy as the first race was cancelled due to terrible weather conditions, while the second race was only run over eight laps before the weather again intervened, meaning only half points were awarded.

But success for Sykes means he closes in on championship pacesetters Max Biaggi and Carlos Checa, who are now just six and four points ahead respectively.

Sykes' performance in Italy was stunning, establishing a winning margin of more than nine seconds in those eight laps to cement his reputation as one of the series' rain masters.

"There has been a lot of commotion at Monza, but to get the win for Kawasaki and the ZX-10R is great for

us," said Sykes. "The bike was awesome in the race. There were a lot of damp patches, but I had such good feedback I was able to get my head down and go about business in a good way.

"It's a shame the race couldn't go two-thirds distance [and therefore be awarded full points] but hopefully now we can move on to a very sunny England and have some consistent weather for a change."

Monza proved to be a great weekend for the British contingent as Sykes' compatriots Leon Haslam and Eugene Laverty rounded out an all-British podium on their BMW and Aprilia respectively, although the pair were just glad to have got through the race in one piece.

Haslam said: "I think we made the best of a bad day – 14th on the grid wasn't ideal. It was quite difficult to overtake coming off the dry line, but it worked out perfectly.

"We managed to get second, Tom was too quick from the get-go, and by the time I got second he had already gone. A big credit to BMW, I'm happy to just get back onto the podium."

At the head of the standings, Biaggi increased his advantage over 2011 champion Checa to two points after they finished fifth and seventh respectively at the Temple of Speed.

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INFRONT MOTOR SPORTS (IMS)
Via di Tor Pagnotta 94,
001543 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 509 661
F +39 06 509 66350
www.infrontsports.com



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SUPERSPORT
FIM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Sam Lowes hopes to bounce back in his home round of the FIM Supersport World Championship at Donington Park after seeing victory slip through his hands at Monza. The Bogdanka PTR Honda rider fought a close battle with eventual winner Jules Cluzel in Italy, but two errors ultimately cost him the victory. He said: "I made a mistake at Ascari. I had a chance to take him back at the last corner, but I went in a bit deep."



SUPERSTOCK 1000
FIM CUP

Lorenzo Savadori heads to Donington this weekend as the new Superstock 1000 FIM Cup leader after creating history at Monza. The Italian took the victory for the Barni Racing Team Italia at the Milan circuit to give the Ducati 1199 Panigale its first ever win. Sylvain Barrier led the championship going into Monza but fell late in the race and now trails Savadori by three points. Savadori's team-mate Eddi La Marra is a further two points back in third place.



SUPERSTOCK 600
UEM EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Ten Kate Junior rider Michael van der Mark may have lost the lead in the Superstock 600 European Championship but is still upbeat heading to Donington. Van der Mark's fourth place in a rain-shortened race at Monza meant Riccardo Russo went top with his victory, but Van der Mark said: "Unfortunately the race was shortened, otherwise a podium finish was possible. But fourth in the conditions is good."



GALA SEES PARADE OF EX-CHAMPIONS

World Superbike celebrated its 25th anniversary with a gala evening and dinner at the Palaghiaccio in Milan, a special venue for a unique event offering the 600 guests present some splendid memories.

Maurizio and Paolo Flammini, the Rome-based entrepreneurs who have promoted and managed the series almost from its start, did the honours as hosts, thanking all those who have helped to create the success of Superbike over the years.

Then it was the turn of the 'Magnificent 7' – seven world champions whose names are etched in Superbike history – to appear on the stage. The parade of champions featured Fred Merkel (1988-89), Doug Polen (1991-92), Carl Fogarty (1994-95, 1998-99), Troy Corser (1996, 2005), Troy Bayliss (2001, 2006, 2008), Max Biaggi (2010) and Carlos Checa (2011).

GADEA'S MONZA DEBUT DERAILED

Excitement turned to disappointment for Sergio Gadea in last weekend's round of the eni FIM Superbike World Championship at Monza. The Spaniard was drafted in by the Kawasaki Racing Team, but had a Monza debut to forget.

Gadea fell in the first race as it was aborted soon after the start because of heavy rain, and his Kawasaki machine was damaged to an extent that he could not make it to the grid for the second race, which was won by team-mate Tom Sykes.

A multiple winner in 125cc Grand Prix racing and a podium finisher in that class as recently as last season, Gadea had been called up as a replacement for Joan Lascorz, the regular Kawasaki rider who is continuing his recuperation in hospital in Spain after suffering serious injuries in a testing crash at Imola last month.

MORE INJURY WOE FOR UNLUCKY JOHN

Crescent FIXI Suzuki's John Hopkins was in the wars again in last weekend's round of the eni FIM Superbike World Championship at Monza. The American suffered a broken right foot when he crashed early in the abandoned first race. It is the latest blow for Hopkins, who missed the opening round after injuring his hand in testing at Phillip Island. That came just a month after having part of a finger amputated on the same hand. The team were waiting to make a decision on his fitness for Donington.

Hopkins said: "That was not a good weekend. I got pretty banged up in the first race crash and damaged my left hip and broke a bone in my right foot. I don't know what happened, because the bike suddenly let go without any warning."

LEADER MAX HAS MOOD DAMPENED

Aprilia Racing Team were left trying to take the positives from a difficult weekend at rain-lashed Monza. Max Biaggi finished fifth in the shortened second race to extend his narrow championship lead over Carlos Checa from one point to two.

The 2010 champion said: "Without the rain everyone would have had a lot more fun – the riders first and foremost, as well as the fans. It's true that we're ahead in points, but not with the margin that we could have been on a track that is so favourable to four cylinders."

Team-mate Eugene Laverty, though, was looking on the bright side after getting on the podium, and the Irishman said: "I'm pleased with the third place – my second podium in a row – and now we'll head for Donington where I hope to continue my positive trend."

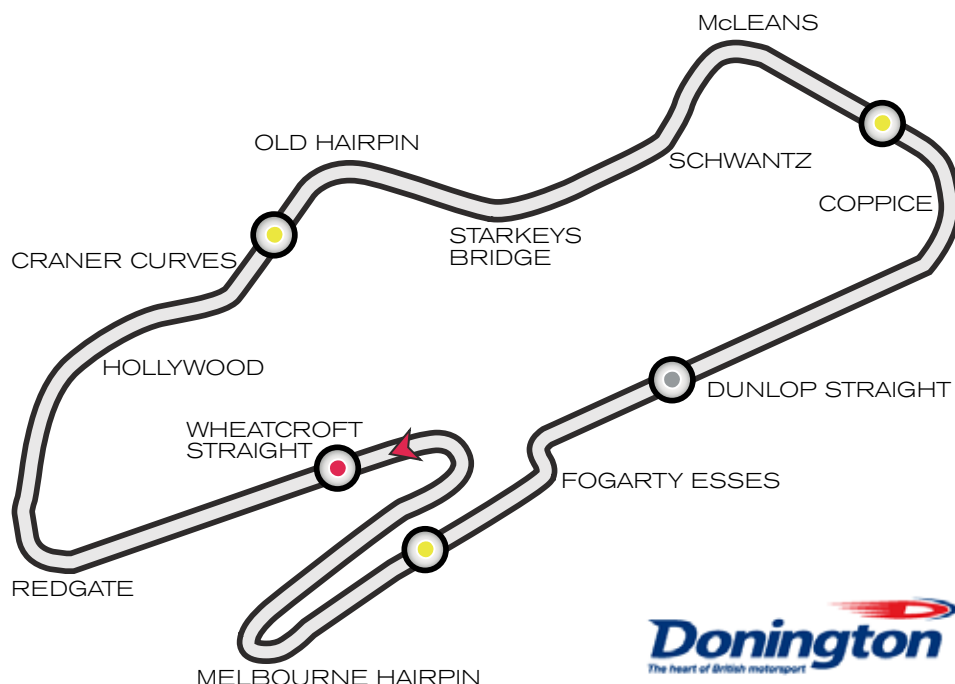
TOSELAND READY TO CALL THE TUNE

Former double World Superbike champion James Toseland is set for a busy weekend at Donington Park. The talented musician will be playing a special gig with his band Crash at the circuit's Exhibition Centre on Saturday evening, and he is also to be inducted into the SBK Hall of Fame during the weekend, along with another former favourite with British bike fans, Roger Burnett.

Toseland won the 2004 title on a Ducati and then took the championship again in 2007 for Ten Kate Honda, making him one of only two men to have won the Championship for two different manufacturers, the other being Troy Corser.

Tickets to James's gig will be £10 on the door on a first come, first served basis, and you will also need to show your circuit admission ticket in order to get access into the live gig.



CIRCUIT GUIDE: DONINGTON PARK

LAST TIME
MONZA 06.05.12

MONZA BLIGHTED BY HEAVY RAINFALL

The opening eni FIM Superbike World Championship race at Monza last week was halted by heavy rain with only a couple of laps completed, and the attempted restart eventually had to be abandoned. After a track inspection as rain continued to fall, it was deemed unsafe to carry on.

Race two was halted at half-distance due to fresh falls of rain, meaning half points were awarded.

RACE TWO

1	T Sykes	Kawasaki Racing	14'08.800
2	L Haslam	BMW Motorrad	@9.709
3	E Laverty	Aprilia Racing	@10.119
4	M Melandri	BMW Motorrad	@10.294
5	M Biaggi	Aprilia Racing	@10.527
6	J Rea	Honda	@10.638
7	C Checa	Althea Racing	@10.899
8	D Giugliano	Althea Racing	@12.195
9	J Smrz	Effenbert Liberty	@13.199
10	A Badovini	BMW Motorrad	@19.372
11	H Aoyama	Honda	@24.551
12	C Davies	ParkinGO MTC	@24.655
13	M Berger	Effenbert Liberty	@24.662
14	L Zanetti	PATA Racing	@24.668
15	L Camier	Crescent Fixi Suzuki	@24.810
16	L Mercado	Team Pedercini	@24.935
17	N Canepa	Red Devils Roma	@25.278
NS	M Fabrizio	BMW Motorrad	
NS	S Guintoli	Effenbert Liberty	
NS	S Gadea	Kawasaki Racing	
NS	M Aitchison	Grillini Progea	

CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS
WORLD SUPERBIKE

1	Max Biaggi	ITA	Aprilia	97.5
2	Carlos Checa	ESP	Ducati	95.5
3	Tom Sykes	GBR	Kawasaki	91.5
4	Marco Melandri	ITA	BMW	72.5
5	Jonathan Rea	GBR	Honda	70
6	Leon Haslam	GBR	BMW	68
7	Sylvain Guintoli	FRA	Ducati	66
8	Eugene Laverty	IRE	Aprilia	64
9	Jakub Smrz	CZE	Ducati	42.5
10	Davide Giugliano	ITA	Ducati	41
11	Maxime Berger	FRA	Ducati	26.5
12	Michel Fabrizio	ITA	BMW	26
13	Hiroshi Aoyama	JAP	Honda	24.5
14	Lorenzo Zanetti	ITA	Ducati	21
15	Niccolò Canepa	ITA	Ducati	20

WORLD SUPERSPORT

1	Kenan Sofuoglu	TUR	Kawasaki	61
2	Sam Lowes	GBR	Honda	51
3	Fabien Foret	FRA	Kawasaki	49
4	Jules Cluzel	FRA	Honda	48
5	Alex Baldolini	ITA	Triumph	34

SUPERSTOCK 1000

1	Lorenzo Savadori	ITA	Ducati	53
2	Sylvain Barrier	FRA	BMW	50
3	Eddi La Marra	ITA	Ducati	48
4	Markus Reiterberger	GER	BMW	35
5	Loris Baz	FRA	Kawasaki	30