

RACING REVIEW

For those of you who did not attend Daytonas 50 mile Production race here is an article taken from one of my favorite motorcycle publications CYCLE NEWS. The article was written by John Ulrich.

MCLAUGHLIN SCORES COME FROM BEHIND WIN

Steve McLaughlin came from 34th on the starting grid to win the Superbike Production final by a wide margin with the Yoshimura Research and Development Suzuki GS1000 on a cold and blustery Friday afternoon. McLaughlin's Suzuki blasted a connecting rod through its engine cases while leading one heat race earlier that day, but Yoshimura's were able to repair the motor with just 10-minutes to spare. The race marked the Suzuki GS1000's first Superbike appearance.

But while McLaughlin shot from 34th to 20th before the first turn, and up to 12th by the second infield turn, first Shohei Kato, (Pops Yoshimura's son in law from Japan) on the Yoshimura 944 Suzuki GS750 and then Wes Cooley, on the Yoshimura Kawasaki KZ1000, led the field.

By the second lap, McLaughlin was fifth behind Cooley, Kato, Reg Pridmore (Racecrafters Kawasaki KZ1000) and John Long (Udo Geitl/Todd Schuster BMW). California club racer Billy "The Bullet" Addington held sith on a Yoshimura Kawasaki KZ1000 he tunes himself.

Kato lost second place when his bike's CDI ignition failed on the third lap. McLaughlin shot into second place on the next lap, and passed Cooley for the lead at the start/finish line on the sixth lap.

Cooley repassed into the lead at turn one, and the race for the first was on. Both riders had already left a ferocious back-and-forth duel between Pridmore and Long behind, which was in turn trailed by a lone Mike Baldwin (Reno Leoni Moto-Guzzi Lemans) and the infighting stuffing and wrestling pairs of Paul Ritter (Aero Union Ducati)/ Addinton and David Emde (Escargo 950cc Suzuki GS750)/ Eric Buell (Tesone Ducati).

The two Yoshimura racers--Cooley and McLaughlin--flew around the track with startling differences in cornering and straightaway speed compared to the rest of the 37 starters. Both McLaughlin and Cooley reached lap times of 2 minutes, 15 seconds, about three seconds per lap faster than the best time turned by 1977 winner Cook Neilson (who retired from racing and sold his bike to Paul Ritter sponsor).

Then on the sixth lap--with McLaughlin leading--Cooley disappeared with a rock-caused oil cooler leak. McLaughlin was home free, periodically glancing back at the continuing, but distant, Long/Pridmore battle of infield versus straightaway speed. Ritter's Ducati suffered a crankshaft failure on lap seven, Buell retired on lap 10, Emde's Suzuki started leaking oil from the left crankcase, and the finishing order was set. Only the Pridmore/Long dice continued among the front runners.

"I made the wrong choice of tire compound. I thought it would warm up," said Pridmore after finishing second, ahead of Long by about a length. Spectators looking closely at Pridmore's bikes slick rear tire could still see the marks from a rasp used to scuff in the new tire before race time--it had hardly worn in 50 hard miles. "The bike was too skitterish. With the wind blowing and the tires slipping, it felt like the two wheels were never on the ground."

"It was like Pridmore had an extra gear," Long said after the finish. "But my bike got out of the corners better and every lap I could catch him by the last infield corner. I tried to cut him off every chance I had. He got away from me once, but I caught him again when he made a mistake in traffic."

McLaughlin, feeling vindicated by his victory in front of his critics, said "I let Wes by. I was gonna make a race of it. The Yoshimuras wanted us as close as possible, just like when I rode a BMW".

At a special weigh-in to check for compliance with new AMA Superbike minimum weight rules, McLaughlin's Suzuki weighed 425 pounds without gas, 18 pounds above the GS1000 minimum weight.



Club Member Malcomb Tunstall from Syds Cycles in St. Pete Florida maneauvered his Ducati Sport to 11th place ahead of many bikes which were more sophisticated. photo by Russ Bellew

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