

Levi #57 Day RACING

We made the trip up North to Darwin's Hidden Valley Raceway on the 13th of April for round 3 of the ASBK, competing in the 600 supersport championship. I rode there for the first time last year on my 125 and had my first Australian championship win there at that time. The track is really well set up with good facilities and a good layout.

I got Thursday and Friday practice which was good as I could take a little more time to really work on fine tuning each corner and work on feeling confident on the bike and working on some different set ups, to see how that would make the bike feel. Struggling with tire wear early on, it was a symptom we found most people were suffering from just because of how hot the track was. Still we gradually found a better set up that got the tires working better for longer as we had two 17 lap races and did not want the tires going off early on in the race. I was happy after the two days practicing we had made some improvement, I was finding it difficult getting it set up for the exit of corners, when trying to follow the faster riders, I would find that I was running much wider on the exit which wasn't allow me to get on the throttle as early as them.

With the 3 sets of tires allowed in supersport throughout qualifying and races, our plan is always to use one set for the two qualifiers that way we save a brand new set for each race. With the two qualifiers on Saturday, and the weather good early on I decided to do quite a few laps in the first qualifier that way we could see how the tire wear was looking for race conditions. I dropped my times from Fridays practice by .4 of a second from a 1:14.7 to a 1:14.3. In the second qualifier I went out to try and follow some of the faster riders to learn some of their lines, but with the temperature and humidity get much higher now they didn't do many laps, but I improved my time again getting down to a 1:14.1. This put me in 15th on the grid. I was a little disappointed I wanted to get into the 1:13's as the next group of riders were doing those times. At the first two rounds I was unable to ride with the next group of riders, but I felt come race day I could step it up here and mix it with them.

Sunday, Race day was here. Morning warm up was wet I went out to get into the groove and felt really comfortable. I was really looking forward to the race, the main straight is 1.1km long and I new if I can get off to a good start I could pass some of the riders before turn 1. I got off to a really good start and was in 11th on the first lap. I tried as much as I could to follow the faster riders as much as possible. Dropping back to 12th by the main straight getting dragged by some of the quicker bikes. I held off another rider for a few laps until a desperate move by him pushed me out wide. I stuck with the bunch for the whole race and passed them back a few times but in the end came home in 13th. I was really happy with the race as I was mixing it the riders who had been beating me by a lot more at the first 2 rounds so I felt like I had made a good step forward today. I also improved my time down to a 1:13.5! I was pumped for the next race and really wanted to mix it with the faster group, but it wasn't to be. I got off to another great start, but got pushed out really wide on turn 3, which pushed me right back in the field. Struggling from losing the tow from the leading bunch I worked my way to 14th position but could not get close enough to the next group to be able to stick with them. But I was happy to come home with two top 15 finishes again, and no crashes or major problems! The next round of the ASBK in at Queensland Raceway in 6 weeks time.



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