

MotoGP - Perfect opening day for Fiat Yamaha in Jerez

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Nakajima - Rossi

The traditional season curtain-raiser in Jerez looked in danger of being declared a washout this morning, but the sun eventually came out and allowed Jorge Lorenzo and Valentino Rossi to put in a brilliant afternoon's work, finishing first and second respectively. The day's results bode well for tomorrow's 'qualifying' shoot-out, which will see the fastest rider take home a new car. With all riders now on Bridgestone tyres and qualifying tyres resigned to history, the session will have a slightly different feel to previous years and promises to be an entertaining show.

Lorenzo began work quite early, braving a damp track to get some laps in before lunch. Once the track came dry this afternoon he immediately found his rhythm and went on to clock consistently fast laps throughout, finishing well under lap record with a time of 1'39.791.

2008 World Champion Rossi took it easy this morning, preferring to wait until the track had dried out before getting started. He finished the day just 0.070 behind his team-mate and a tenth of a second ahead of Stoner in third, and is confident of putting up a good fight in tomorrow's qualifying competition with a few small refinements planned for tomorrow morning.

Jorge Lorenzo - Position: 1st Time: 1'39.791 Laps: 99 "I am very satisfied because I have improved through every hour of the day today. In the beginning it was quite difficult because there was rain this morning and the track was wet, but after lunch I was able to improve and was fastest for most of the afternoon and able to put in a great performance. I rode many laps – the same amount as my new number in fact – and I was able to confirm the good feeling that I had on the last day in Qatar, when I was second. We still need to keep working, this is just the beginning, but I think we're going in the right way. Tomorrow I want to make one more step, but I am not thinking about winning the car. With regards to the Bridgestone tyres, I think the front is very different and you are able to go faster into the corners. I hope the sun shines again tomorrow!"

Valentino Rossi - Position: 2nd Time: 1'39.861 Laps: 65 "It's been a good day. Unfortunately this morning it rained but in the end it didn't matter so much because the grip was good this afternoon with the new asphalt and we were able to do some important work. I had a good feeling with my M1 in November and it was the same today and I was able to do a lot of laps in a good rhythm. In the end we used the softer of the two Bridgestone tyres to try to improve the time and I was able to do a 39, but I was fast with the harder tyre as well. We tried a lot of different things on the bike and I am feeling confident and happy; already today we've got through half our workload so hopefully tomorrow morning the weather can be good so we can get through the other half and then be free to focus on winning the car in the afternoon. There are one or two places on the track where I'm not at 100%, but we will try to fix that in the morning."

Daniele Romagnoli - Team Manager "We had a good test here in November and also Malaysia and Qatar were good, so today it seemed that the trend is continuing. We are now at a very important stage because this is the last test of the season, because of the new rules, so tomorrow is going to be crucial! Today the team did a great job to refine the set-up and give Jorge the confidence he needed to be fast. Tomorrow will be an exciting day because it is almost like a qualifying session, with a prize, and we hope to finish in the same way as today! Of course at the same time we will continue to work on our bike to ensure that we're completely ready for the first race."

Davide Brivio - Team manager "A good day, especially since it rained this morning. Luckily the circuit came dry and we were able to get through all the jobs we had scheduled. All the Yamahas seems to be going very well and this is a sign that our engineers have done a very good job; it is very encouraging. Tomorrow we have some small adjustments and tests to do, and then we will try for the award. I think it will be quite a special session because it's the first time without qualifying tyres and therefore it will be a real rehearsal for the season. We're looking forward to it!"

Colin Edwards

Monster Yamaha Tech 3 make positive start in Jerez

Colin Edwards and James Toseland ended the first day of the penultimate MotoGP winter test session in Jerez with the fifth and 11th fastest times respectively.

After a delay caused by heavy early morning rain, Edwards and Toseland were able to complete 140 crucial development laps together on their Monster Yamaha Tech 3 YZR-M1 machines under sunny skies this afternoon.

Texan Edwards continued his impressive winter testing form by setting the fifth quickest time as three Yamahas finished in the top five. His best time of 1.40.579 was just 0.007s off fourth position as he gained vital data on Bridgestone tyres on the new Jerez track surface.

British rider Toseland had a positive day too, ending 11th on the timesheets. He set a best time of 1.41.122 to finish just 0.073s outside of the top ten, though on his best day yet on the new 2009 YZR-M1, he was consistently running inside the top ten until the closing stages.

Today's session also gave MotoGP fans the first chance to see Toseland and Edwards riding in the new eye-catching Monster Yamaha Tech 3 livery, which was unveiled on the eve of the Jerez test.

Colin Edwards 5th – 1.40.579 “Today was a good day once the track dried out and I'm happy with my times. I'm not taking any risks so close to the first race, so to be challenging up in the top six is a bonus and I was feeling good out there. I've got to say that Yamaha has done a great job with the new chassis. You can enter the corner so hard and so fast and I don't think I've found the full potential of the Bridgestone front tyre yet. I'm a front-end guy so the combination of the new chassis and the Bridgestone front tyre is really helping me and I'm really confident with the package. It also felt good to be out there today in the new Monster Yamaha Tech 3 livery. I like it and I'm sure the fans will do as well.”

James Toseland 11th – 1.41.122 “I felt much better today and the old confidence was coming back. I was back in the top ten for most of the day and I'm back within a second of the guys running at the front. That's encouraging because I've been much further back than that in the previous tests after the big crash I had in Sepang. It is nice to know that the competitive times are coming back again. I did over 80 laps today as well and that was the time on the bike I needed. The development rear tyre Bridgestone is really good and there's a lot more I can get out of that, so that's another positive from today. It was also good to be out riding the new Monster Yamaha Tech 3 colours. I'm sure we are going to have a good season together and the bike looks unbelievable.”

Test Times 1. Jorge Lorenzo (SPA) Fiat Yamaha Team 1'39.791 2. Valentino Rossi (ITA) Fiat Yamaha Team 1'39.861 3. Casey Stoner (AUS) Ducati Marlboro Team 1'39.906 4. Chris Vermeulen (AUS) Rizla Suzuki MotoGP 1'40.572 5. Colin Edwards (USA) Monster Yamaha Tech 3 1'40.579 6. Loris Capirossi (ITA) Rizla Suzuki MotoGP 1'40.650 7. Andrea Dovizioso (ITA) Repsol Honda 1'40.821 8. Alex De Angelis (RSM) San Carlo Honda Gresini 1'40.900 9. Nicky Hayden (USA) Ducati Marlboro Team 1'40.987 10. Toni Elias (SPA) San Carlo Honda Gresini 1'41.049 11. James Toseland (GBR) Monster Yamaha Tech 3 1'41.122 12. Marco Melandri (ITA) Hayate Racing Team 1'41.160 13. Randy De Puniet (FRA) LCR Honda MotoGP 1'41.168 14. Mika Kallio (FIN) Pramac Racing 1'41.226 15. Yuki Takahashi (JPN) Scot Racing Team 1'41.362 16. Sete Gibernau (SPA) Grupo Francisco Hernando 1'41.737 17. Niccolò Canepa (ITA) Pramac Racing 1'41.851

Jerez: Record Lap D. Pedrosa (Honda) 2008, 1'40.116

Jerez: Best Lap J. Lorenzo (Yamaha) 2008, 1'38.189Stapleton's Tower Ledger