

## 2009 MotoGP - Laguna Seca Preview

Contributed by YRC\_news@yamaha-network.com  
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The Fiat Yamaha Team arrives in the United States this week in stunning form with Valentino Rossi and Jorge Lorenzo lying first and second in the championship, separated by just five points. Rossi, who clinched his 100th career victory in Assen on Sunday, has three wins to his name so far and Lorenzo has two, while both riders have finished on the podium in six out of seven races this season to leave Fiat Yamaha leading the Teams' standings and Yamaha the Manufacturers'. The Italian and the Spaniard will make a short stopover in Los Angeles for a visit to Yamaha US on Wednesday before heading north to the coastal town of Monterey and the spectacular Laguna Seca track.

Before last year Rossi had just one podium to his name at Laguna since MotoGP returned there in 2005, but he produced one of the performances of his career in 2008 to win an important victory, which went on to prove one of the key turning points of his season. A race-long battle with Casey Stoner threw up some nail-biting moments between the pair but the Italian prevailed to take his first win on American soil. After two wins on the bounce he is heading stateside in flying form and will be hoping to extend his championship lead this weekend with another great result. Thursday sees the now traditional Laguna Seca Superkart race and Rossi this year will make a few display laps in a Superkart before Yamaha legends Wayne Rainey, Eddie Lawson and Kenny Roberts Senior take centre stage for the real thing.

Lorenzo was a Laguna Seca first-timer last year and a promising showing during practice came to nothing when he high-sided on the first lap. The 22-year-old went on to taste American success later in the season with a podium in Indianapolis and he is determined that he will get to grips with the tricky Laguna track this time around. The youngster has had a brilliant season to date and will undoubtedly be in the mix once again this weekend as he seeks to better his team-mate with a return to the top of the podium.

Laguna Seca is an all-American track where the intense dry heat, unpredictable asphalt and anti-clockwise layout reward the loose and aggressive riding style of the US dirt-trackers. The track boasts some of the most dramatic elevation changes on the world championship circuit as well as fast, sweeping corners, the most notorious of which is the world-famous 'Corkscrew'. Machine set-up is relatively straightforward, with throttle connection a much more important factor than top-end power and a well balanced chassis the key to those elevation changes and diverse corners.

Valentino Rossi - "Back to normal!" "The wonderful memory of the 100th win is still fresh, but now we have just a few days to recover before the next race, which is hard for everyone. We have to try to relax as much as possible and recharge the batteries a little, because Laguna is always a tough weekend and often very hot. Last year I had a great battle with Stoner and for me it was for sure one of the turning points of the championship and a very important win; I have some good memories. I think this year it will be hard again because Lorenzo is in brilliant form and I am sure Stoner will also be back to his best. Laguna is a great place to race and an exciting track, I also have a little trip to Los Angeles and Yamaha US first which I am looking forward to. The championship is very open at this point so we need to keep focus, get back to normal after Assen and try to get another good result this weekend."

Jorge Lorenzo - "Looking forward to the challenge" "Last year Laguna wasn't good for me but I don't think about this. It's the only time I've been there but I don't see that as a problem - until 2008 I'd never won in Portugal before and I won my first race there in MotoGP, and then again this year I won in Motegi where I'd never won before, so I don't consider any track 'bad' for me - the past doesn't matter. We are feeling very strong after the last races and everyone is very motivated to continue in the same way so I am looking forward to the challenge and learning more about the track. I will do my best and hopefully that will mean we can run at the front again."

Davide Brivio - "Focus on the championship" "We still have great memories from Laguna Seca in 2008 and we're happy to be arriving there after two wins and leading the championship. It's a great place to race and the American fans are always brilliant so we hope we can give them another good show! Our package is working well everywhere now so hopefully the case will be the same again this weekend. Now that the 100 target has been reached we can focus on the next target - the championship! Now we race for that."

Daniele Romagnoli - "A consistent package" "After the last great race in Assen this is a very short break for everyone but we have to move straight on to the US for the next round! The high motivation in our team continues after another strong performance from Jorge and we are looking forward to having the chance for another good result. This year our package is much more consistent and we know that we can put up another good fight, despite Jorge's inexperience at Laguna. Everyone in the team enjoys going to Laguna - it's a great place - so we're looking forward to another exciting weekend."

Valentino Rossi : Information Age: 30 Lives: Tavullia, Italy Bike: Yamaha GP victories: 100 (79 x MotoGP/500cc, 14 x

250cc, 12 x 125cc) First GP victory: Czech Republic, 1996 (125cc) First GP: Malaysia, 1996 (125cc) GP starts: 217 (157 x MotoGP/500cc, 30 x 250cc, 30 x 125cc) Pole positions: 53 (43 x MotoGP/500cc, 5 x 250cc, 5 x 125cc) World Championships: 8 Grand Prix (1 x 125cc, 1 x 250cc, 1 x 500cc, 5 x MotoGP)

Jorge Lorenzo: Information Age: 22 Lives: Barcelona, Spain Bike: Yamaha GP victories: 24 (3 x MotoGP, 17 x 250cc, 4 x 125cc) First GP victory: Brazil, 2003 (125cc) First GP: Jerez, Spain, 2002 (125cc) GP starts: 118 (24 x MotoGP, 48 x 250cc, 46 x 125cc) Pole positions: 33 (7 x MotoGP, 23 x 250cc, 3 x 125cc) World Championships: 2 (250cc, 2006/7)

Laguna Seca: Record Lap C. Stoner (Ducati) 2008, 1'21.488

Laguna Seca: Best Lap C. Stoner (Ducati) 2008, 1'20.700

Grand Prix Results: Laguna Seca 2008 1. V. Rossi (Yamaha) 44'04.311 2. C.Stoner (Ducati) +13.001 3. C.Vermeulen (Suzuki) +26.609

. J. Lorenzo (Yamaha) NF

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