



Metzeler Racetec National Superstock Championship - Round 4 Oulton Park

Oulton Park delivered drama throughout the Superstock event this weekend, which culminated in a maiden victory and twenty-first birthday present for Howie Mainwaring on the MV Agusta. Championship leader Glen Richards added to his points tally for the season and extended his advantage to twenty-nine points at the head of the table on the Embassy Racing Yamaha. The round became a tale of three parts: Qualification, race and a restart after rain interrupted proceedings earlier today, Bank Holiday Monday, 7 May.

Glen Richards missed free practice and Q1 as he travelled back from Albacete having competed in an endurance event. Hudson Kennaugh continued his rich vein of form posting the fastest time in the dry session ahead of an improving Kieran Murphy, followed by Steve Brogan and Luke Quigley. Howie Mainwaring, on new 2007 spec MV Agusta machinery, rounded out the top five. As Sunday arrived, so did the showery weather preventing any of the competitors improving their positions. Richards posted a time, which qualified him in a lowly thirty-ninth spot for Monday's race, unable to improve, as the rain began to fall.

The rain threatening skies held off as the race started in dry conditions. Steve Brogan took advantage of an impressive start on his Tengo Honda CBR1000RR, to set the early pace ahead of PDM Suzuki's Luke Quigley and Raceways Yamaha rider Hudson Kennaugh. Ben Wilson became the man on coming through to second place by lap three on the Windmill Suzuki GSXR 1000, with a perfectly executed pass on Quigley through Old Hall Corner. Wilson repeated the same move a lap later, this time displacing leader Brogan with the same manoeuvre. Brogan was determined to regain the lead and did so, braking hard for Shell Oils hairpin on lap five. Glen Richards meanwhile was scything his way through the field, already up to eighteenth position from the back row.

The race appeared to be shaping up as a contest between Brogan, Wilson, Kennaugh and Howie Mainwaring on the X-Bikes MV Agusta, when Victor Cox crashed heavily at the hairpin on lap seven, bringing out the safety car. Cox was stretchered away without serious injury as the field bunched up behind the safety car for the restart. Brogan retained his lead but as the Fireblade rider powered through Island Bend he raised his arm signalling caution at the onset of rain at the furthest reach of the circuit. Wilson seized the opportunity to go under the local hero, which would cost him dearly as he promptly binned it at the hairpin seconds later, to the bemusement of the field as it cautiously thread its way past the Suzuki as it lay beached mid corner, rider unhurt. Race Director Stuart Higgs intervened calling for a restart after Superbike Race Two had been broadcast live.

Glen Richards and Ben Wilson were the greatest benefactors, as they lined-up in tenth and second place grid positions respectively for the seven-lap restart. This time however, South African Hudson Kennaugh, back from an appearance for Virgin Media Optoma Loans Yamaha replacing the injured James Haydon in the Superbike event earlier, would be dealt a sprinkling of the drama dust. As the crews were signalled to leave the grid, oil was spotted in the belly pan of Kennaugh's bike and was promptly removed from the grid. As the field toured the warm-up lap, the spare Raceways Yamaha was hurriedly fitted with the dry tyres from his race bike, allowing him to start from the pit-lane.

Conditions were dry but Brogan did not get away to the start he would have liked as a near vertical Honda pitched away from pole, down to fourth position as Wilson, Quigley and Mainwaring came by into Old Hall Corner. Brogan was to retire from the race as he exited Lodge, a couple of laps later, with a transmission failure. At the head of the field, Ben Wilson was unable to stave off Howie Mainwaring who capitalised on a great start on the MV as he gapped the field by the second lap leaving five riders to fight over second position. Mainwaring set the early fastest lap but then ran off the track at Hizzys (without gaining an advantage over the field). He gathered himself and settled down into consistent 1m40s laps to win the race.

Further back the frenetic pace continued as Quigley, Wilson, Murphy, Richards (now fifth) and Lee Jackson fought to seize the runners up place. Quigley finally succumbed to the pressure as Richards finished second and Lee Jackson took the last step on the podium with a new lap record of 1:40.051 on the Krystal Racing/Space Air Yamaha YZF-R1. Hudson Kennaugh lost valuable points to Glen Richards finishing in nineteenth place, compromised by the wet setup of the spare machine.

The series has a two-week break before Round 5 at Snetterton in Norfolk, 18 - 20 May.

Metzeler Racetec National Superstock Race Result

1 – Mainwaring (MV Agusta), 2 – Richards (Yamaha), 3 – Jackson (Yamaha), 4 – Wilson (Suzuki), 5 – Quigley (Suzuki)

Championship Points

1. Richards	90
2. Kennaugh	61
3. Quigley	50
4. Mainwaring	49
5. Brogan	47