



Metzeler Racetec National Superstock Championship – Croft

The 2007 Championship continued this week at Croft with Ulsterman Marshall Neill taking a popular victory. Raceways Yamaha's Jon Kirkham and Alastair Seeley on his NCT/Vanfit Yamaha occupied the remaining podium steps after another highly entertaining and eventful race as the weather conditions, yet again, continued to upset the formbook.

The weekend began with Championship front runners Glen Richards and Steve Brogan involved in separate heavy crashes as they worked to dial in their bikes into the North Yorkshire circuit's mildly abrasive track surface. Neither rider was injured but lost valuable track time as Hudson Kennaugh topped the timesheets with the fastest ever Superstock lap (1m 23.240s) to claim pole.

Race day saw the clear sunny weather give way to overcast skies as the riders formed the grid. With five minutes to go, the rain spots began to fall and teams hedged their bets for tyre choice. As the precipitation intensified, a wet race was declared by the organisers, reduced to fourteen laps. The three-minute board went up as the teams cleared the grid, it was anyone's guess as to whether come the end of the race, and with the exception of a few riders, wets were the rubber of choice. Glen Richards' Embassy Yamaha was pulled off the grid as the Australian Championship leader made a last minute gamble on a change from his dry tyres to wet and sacrifice his grid spot with a pit-lane start – a move he would later regret.

As the lights went out, Hudson Kennaugh made a flying start, leading Laverty and Brogan through the first few circuits. Track conditions out at Sunny were wet and beginning to dry as Buildbase Ducati's John Laverty piled the pressure on Kennaugh. Further back Marshall Neill was beginning to tear through the field up to two seconds a lap faster than his peers thanks to an inspired performance and dry tyre selection for his Suzuki GSX-R.

By middle distance, riders that had opted for the wet compound rubber were powerless to protect their positions from the likes of Neill, Kirkham and Alastair Seeley. Neill duly passed a dismayed Kennaugh as the pair crossed the line on lap eight, to be followed by Kirkham and Seeley on the tenth and twelfth respectively. Kirkham closed to within two seconds of the lead but Neill responded to the challenge, crossing the finish line 2.4s ahead of the Raceways rider. Alastair Seeley, with his first podium of the season, came in third.

Hudson Kennaugh finished fourth, Laverty fifth, Lee Jackson finally sixth, after a last lap dice with Brogan (seventh). Series leader Glen Richards finished in thirteenth place, no doubt rueing his last minute decision to opt for wet rubber.

After much media attention, delighted winner Marshall Neill, praised the efforts of his team and in particular wished to thank Robert Ekins, Andy McKeown, Stuart McConnell and Willy McDonald for their continued support and added *"I actually had my spare bike set with wet tyres but after the sighting lap the bike felt pretty good - and the fact that I've had so much bad luck this year, I decided to gamble on a dry setup and it worked"*

The Championship continues in two weeks time at Cadwell Park in Lincolnshire, 25-27 August.

Metzeler Racetec National Superstock Race Result

1 – Neill (Suzuki), 2 – Kirkham (Yamaha), 3 – Seeley (Yamaha)

Championship Points

1. Richards	138
2. Brogan	105
3. Kennaugh	94
4. Jackson	83
5. Wilson	77