

Well, as most of you know, the California Winter weather has been awesome. This past weekend was no exception to that statement, as the temperatures during the desert days hovered in the mid - 70°'s. The wind was also almost non-existent, but for a few light breezes on Sunday.

This past week, as I waited for the government to allow me to start my new business venture, I prepared mentally and physically to race my still unfinished 2006 AMA Super Stock race bike.

Since I knew I hadn't installed a full race suspension on the bike, I knew it would be more practice, but not perfect practice to make me a better racer, as "perfect practice makes you perfect", no the old saying "practice makes you perfect".

My race bike now had over 3400 miles on it and would be competing with modified gearing, exhaust, race fuel (new special blend), and full race brakes (braided lines and pads).

The final pieces need to complete my perfect race bikes will be the front and rear suspension bits that I will hopefully acquire in the following month, hopefully with a little help from Santa himself.

I desire the best, so I can push my talents with equipment to back it up, and suspension modifications will definitely allow that.

I would be arriving and staying at the track all weekend by myself, only the second time since I began this journey to achieve my life goals, since Jodie had to work Sunday.

I am very fortunate to have the loving support of my family, and to only spend two weekends alone in the past almost 3 years racing is definitely something I can handle.

As I drove the now 4 hours to the track, I had a few moments to reflect on where I had been and I where I plan on going.

The past few years racing have been just about the greatest time spent as a family, and as a dreaming Dad.

I only look forwards to what is around the next corner, as I step up to compete at the top level for an entire season in the 2006 AMA Super Stock series.

I had memories of each weekend of the 2004 WSMC season, where I put my mind to competing in every race I could and being rewarded with a 2nd place overall in the Open Super Stock class, not to mention the three other classes I competed in and finished well in.

I knew my hard work was showing, slowly but surely, and anticipated another great November weekend of competition.

Unlike last year, when our races were "snowed" out, I knew this California Winter weekend would have a dramatically different outcome, I just didn't know how different at that time.

Fortunately or unfortunately, however you look at it, I got to meet Dan and Pete, their lovely wives, and two young children at the beginning of our race weekend. I say that, only because I was reminded that my weekend would be family-free, but in turn, I got to make two new family friends.

Great meeting you two and I look forwards to seeing you and your families again, with the addition of my family in tow next time.

Saturday morning began with a very brisk early morning awakening to low 40°

temperatures.

I knew this weekend was one in which funds were low, so I had planned on doing the entire race weekend on some of my "old" race take-offs.

These are tires I have raced on prior weekends but still had some rubber left to race again, or practice on as well.

Since I now owned two race bikes, I also had extra wheels to mount tires to which allowed me the opportunity to run more sets of tires for less time.

This situation, which was a positive to begin with, led to a negative as the weekend wore on, but more on that later.

I skipped the early morning practice, only due to the compound of the tires I had chose to bring out this weekend, and the sub-mid-day expected temperatures the tires would like to run during.

I ran two practice sessions before lunch, but soon found out, my tires would not make the rest of the day, as the temperatures were climbing a bit higher than ideal for the compound.

I flipped the rear and got in two more practice sessions that afternoon.

My times never dipped into the normally "faster" times I like to practice at, but no worries, as I still didn't have the suspension set up farther away from the completely stock 2005 GSXR-1000 components would allow for, compared to a full race suspension set up.

I made the decision to just run conservatively this fine winter day and wait for the races tomorrow to make my mark in true competition.

Saturday night had the biggest affect without my entire family being there, as I had to fend for myself for dinner.

I then retired to a very quiet RV with the television sound lightly crackling over the RV's furnace, as temperatures quickly dropped to near freezing that night.

I also noticed the eerie soundlessness, as my head hit the pillow just before dozing off to sleep without our 20 month old talking himself to sleep, as he does each afternoon and night.

I missed my family immensely.

I awoke Sunday morning to again, down right cold temperatures.

My bike was to be taken around the track only twice this morning, to scrub the "new" slicks I had mounted the night before, in anticipation of this day's three races which allowed for slick tire use.

I managed a 1:40 lap time on my cool down lap, which was the faster of the two, and was fully satisfied the tires would perform as I had expected they would.

My only concern now was that they would last for not only the two 6-lap sprint races, at race pace, but also the 12-lap Formula 1 race.

Time told the story fairly quickly, and my willingness to abuse the tires without the perfect suspension settings made my decision to pull out of the Formula 1 race before I even made it off the track after my second 6-lap sprint easy.

The first race was Open Super Bike.

Since I had not raced much with WSMC this past year, due to trying my hand in the AMA, I was gridded 8th out of 13 competitors.

I knew my starts this day might be a little off, also due to not racing as much as I had practiced during the past 10 months, but I did what came instinctually.

Just before the race started, I remembered my start to the Toyota 200, just one

month earlier, how I had gone from 34th on the grid to 12th in one lap, as my inspiration to do well.

The green flag dropped, and I gassed the new bike like I was on the drag race circuit, trying to beat a top fuel dragster to turn one.

I may have felt fast, but time away from the track had me going slowly backwards in the field of Open Super Bike competitors.

As we entered turn 1 I made my way around a couple of bikes and proceeded to ride the sharply candy striped painted 1000 cc monster towards other bikes in front of me.

I knew my tires were working well, as I made pass after pass to work my way to the front of the race pack.

I looked up the track ahead of my windscreen after the first lap and noticed I still had a few more bikes to catch to be where I normally race at, in the Open Super Bike field.

I made a pass for 6th place on the second lap, and followed a pit mate, Gary #722 for the next two laps.

I eagerly awaited the prime passing spot to pass #722 after watching his few minor imperfect lines on a few of the 9 turn racetrack.

Immediately after passing Gary, I had the opportunity to pass rider #756 as well.

I am not bashful when given the task of racing to the front, so I made the most of the time I had, this only being a 6-lap sprint race, and passed Shawn as well.

There were now just a few laps left to attack any moving bike in front of my machinery and me.

I made sure to keep a level head as I was now on the prowl to tackle rider #500 and put myself into the Bronze medal position of 3rd place.

As my body and mind focused on making up the slight time difference between our two race bikes, the clock told the story.

My fastest lap of this first race was over a ½ second faster than his, and I mentally had him beat, but this race was only 6 laps long and at the line he finished a mere 1 second ahead of me.

On the fifth lap, I had a lap time of just over 1.1 seconds faster than Christopher Gibbs, but with only one lap to go, time was not on my side.

I was extremely happy to finish in 4th, but as I am a true competitor, every position matters.

The second race was Open Modified Production.

I was gridded 7th out of 19 riders.

Since I had already used my good start up, I would either get a better start or a worse start.

This race was playing on my mind, as I knew my tires were taking a beating in the middle of the day, as temperatures reached almost Summer-like heights.

As opposed to the first race, my lap times slowed a bit and it was mainly all in my mind.

My start was decent but not spectacular, and after the first lap I stayed in almost exactly the same spot I started, down a spot to 8th place.

My buddy Reno, #59 was also out on his "new" 2005 GSXR-1000, and on the 3rd lap he made his move on me.

I tried to answer, but my mind wouldn't let my wrist twist the throttle any more than to stay near but behind the other GSXR-1000, ridden well by Reno.

I was frustrated at myself after that race, because I never felt more than the normal

sliding, wiggling, and writhing that my bike produces through the tires on any given race day, yet I couldn't go any faster.

Now came the toughest decision of the weekend, even after having to feed myself the night before and that was to race Formula 1 on the same tire I just settled into 9th place on or not.

My decision was an easy one, once I looked at the now completely beaten down, totally destroyed, might last two more laps tire from the past two race adventures of Sunday November 20, 2005.

I headed over to the WSMC office to collect my carry-over for next month's races and got ready to battle the other Open Super Stock racers in my final race of the day.

After changing tires on my race bike from slicks to DOT's, I thought of the possibility of doing better on my last race of the day.

The weather was great, and my confidence on a good set of tires had me lapping the track at a 1:26.471, roughly the exact same time I had qualified the month prior to this one, minus a few milliseconds for the Toyota 200, so I made the positive mental choice to do well.

The last race had me gridded 2nd, and I made the most of my starting position.

As I and the rider of bike #532, Terry Heard, entered the battlefield in turn 1, I let him set the pace for the first couple of laps.

Sitting in second place, or behind anyone for a few corners isn't always that bad, as a good rider will decipher the other rider's cornering proficiencies or deficiencies as they may be.

I made sure I followed #532 closely, and observed his weaknesses, that I would exploit when the time was right.

I made mental notes of each of his corner's entrance speed, brake points, turn in locations, line to and through the apex, and amount of track used on exit, all determining where I would pass for the lead.

After consciously making my mind up to pass the rider of bike #532 in turn 8 of the third lap, I never looked back, and proceeded to win the race by over 4.7 seconds.

My opinion has always been to not look back after making a pass and to ride as hard as I could to just past the start / finish line, and this race had me doing just that.

I knew I had the tires to ride hard in the last race of the day, and staying on the gas after the pass, put me out in front by a few seconds.

It was a very rewarding finish to a great weekend, with the exception of not having my entire family there to enjoy the victory as well.

I can now send out my thank yous to everyone that helped out with my racing endeavors to help me achieve another major racing goal, winning an expert race this season.

To my family, even in their absence, thank you for your support, morally this month mostly.

Thank you Jodie, Josephine, Sebastian, Valentino, Joe, and Joann.

To my sponsors, with the most recent additions Chris Thorsen and the entire Thorsen Motorsports crew, and Bill Hunter and Agentware, thanks to all of you that had a hand in on me and my efforts.

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I have a bit of sad news, as we, the entire WSMC group lost a fellow rider to a street accident this past month, Magoo Fidanian #491.

My first year out at WSMC, I met Mateo Herreros, his pit and team mate, and on Sunday just after the rider's meeting, the gentleman that rode a couple of hot laps in Magoo's memory.

It was very emotional for most, and I am very pleased to say I knew and was touched by Magoo, and Mateo the same.

We will miss a great guy and we wish his family the best in this rather difficult time in their lives.

I look forwards to next month's races, as long as my bike gets the needed upgrades to compete at the highest level, and only wish the weather stays just as nice as it has up to this point in the year.

Thank you for reading, supporting, and hopefully staying in contact with my family and me.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!!

Marcel