

Brad JONES
TWELVE

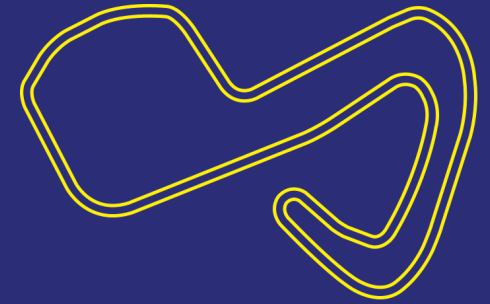
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ROUND 4 //
BRANDS
HATCH





Round 4 of the British Superbike Championship was headed to Brands Hatch in Kent, a circuit I love and has been known to hold many famous battles. 6 right handers 3 lefts makes up the 2.5 mile circuit with the very well known, paddock hill bend!



Free practice 1- with my changed style and better pace from the 2018 season, our set up which we used last season was of no use. We started with something similar to what Keith Farmer used with the team back in 2017. With the forecast looking a little unsettled across the weekend, we had to really capitalise on our dry track time. A 30-minute session, the plan to make one stop mid-session and get two decent runs in to allow me to see what areas we needed to work on. First run done and the first feelings were positive. The biggest area we needed to improve was rear feeling and grip. Lots of movement and lack side grip was the issue. Mid-session we knew what would solve it, but time was against us, so we had to run the session out with what we had. 16 laps complete, best time of 1:29:1 which placed me 3rd fastest but only 0.045 from Seeley in front of me. Positive first session to kick start the weekend with plenty of potential to work with.



Free Practice 2- de-brief from FP1 complete giving us clear direction going in to FP2. Dry conditions with a track temperature of around 27 degrees which is the optimum. For this session, we opted for a heavier rear spring. We went from a 9.5kg spring to a 10kg spring. This would give me more support however we had to make sure we could still get the bike to sit on the exits of the turns and give me grip. We done this by tweaking the compression to allow to it go through easier and cope with the bumps, which can be vigorous around Brands Hatch. On the opening laps of the 30 minute session I could feel this was the right direction. More support and better side grip was improved with the spring change. However, we still had to work to do to allow the bike to ride the bumps better. Furthermore, when I first touched the throttle I was getting a slide from the rear Pirelli Supercorsa tyre. This was down to the rear shock being to stiff at the top of the stroke and not allowing the bike to sit through initially. 15 minutes of the session remaining, sitting P2 at this point and we stuck in a new rear tyre for final run to see what times I could get down to. Getting into a good rhythm on the new tyre and hitting out consistent 1:28's. Session complete, P2 overall and a best time of 1:28:6. Productive end to the opening day of the weekend!



Qualifying- going into qualifying it is a gamble to make any changes because there is a lot at stake. We kept the geometry of the bike the same but we did adjust the compression and rebound, which is a minor change, to allow the front to adsorb the bumps better when trail braking into the turns. We used the same strategy as normal. Start on a new set of tyres, then pit halfway to take another new rear tyre. Whilst taking the tyre we generally always make a small adjustment.

This second tyre is where I always put everything into it and dig deep for a fast lap time. Jack Kennedy, my teammate, had set the fastest lap at this point of 1:27:8 so that was the target of course. Making the most of the new tyre one of my first flying laps was a 1:28:4, P3 at this stage meaning I needed to dig even deeper! 2nd to last flying lap I made sure I hit all my marks and apex's. Crossing the line with a new PB of 1:28:1 which put P3 narrowly missing out on 2nd by 0.085...close to say the least! Front row which put me in a great position to fight for the win in the 12 lap sprint race.

Sprint Race- 12 lap sprint race starting from the front row and feeling confident for a strong result. However, whilst sat on the grid the sky was looking menacing with black clouds. Lights out, a great start by me and charging into turn 1. Exit of turn 1 sat in 2nd but wanting to make an attack very early on to stay clear of any mayhem. In the opening laps I could see the clouds closing in. With this in mind, I wanted to make the most of the first few laps. In typical Supersport fashion there was lots of paint being traded but on the start of lap 4 it began to rain meaning the race was red flagged. During the red flag the rain never really come of anything, but the restart was declared a wet race meaning it would go the full distance without being stopped because of track conditions.

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**THE SKY WAS LOOKING
MENACING WITH BLACK CLOUDS**

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Every rider on the grid started on dry's as it was only mental rain. 3 laps into the restart and it began to rain a lot heavier...this brought an interesting concept into the race, a greasy track with dry tyres! The pace dropped off by 20 seconds, this showed how slick the track was. I dropped back to 6th and was playing it safe as the rain was still falling.

Lap 6 of the 8 lap restart, at this point the rain has eased and I told myself I'd rather crash pushing to get back to a podium position than finish 6th. In 1 lap I pushed through to 3rd and was carrying some great momentum latching myself back on to Seeley and Kennedy who were battling for the win! At the beginning of the final lap I could taste the win, I pushed hard but couldn't get passed them meaning I had to take a 3rd place.

Another great podium and points for the championship!



Feature Race- P2 on the grid for the 16 lap feature race, with the longer distance the pace normally starts off hot, drops by a few tenths then stays consistent. My plan was to get the jump off the start and lead out the first turn. Lights out, full gas in to turn 1 but I couldn't quite grab the lead and had to defend my line in to turn 2 as I knew either Seeley or Kennedy would be snapping at my heels. In the early laps I was feeling very strong and feeling capable of fighting for the win till the end.

Lap 6 I was sitting in 4th but the leader was just starting to edge away, at this point I knew I had to get by Ryde who was in front of me and chase down Seeley and Kennedy. However, I found it difficult to get passed Ryde as I was suffering for rear grip. I had a lot of spin which was really affecting my drive meaning it was hard to line up any passes.

Lap 8 as I charged up into Druids I knocked it through the gearbox from 4th to 2nd, but as I knocked it through I got a false neutral which made it very hard to stop and I ran very wide losing around 2 seconds to Kyle Ryde. 8 Laps left to claw Ryde back, I just hit all my marks and tried to manage the spin. Pushing hard and still doing some decent lap times I manage to pull Ryde back in and pass him, once I had made the move I had to defend and make sure he couldn't beat me to the line. My defence worked, crossing the line in P3 after 16 laps with a best lap time of 1:28:4. Another podium which is great. However, there's some areas I need to work on, and we need to see why I had a lot of rear wheel spin.

Overall, another solid weekend with 32 points on the board which is great for the championship! We now have full focus on Knockhill in Scotland on the 28th-30th of July!



**THANKS
FOR
ALL
YOUR
SUPPORT!**

**NEXT UP
ROUND 5 //
KNOCKHILL**

