

Road Race
Newsflash

Sykes Flies As New Season Gets Ever Closer

Joan Lascorz and Tom Sykes enjoyed three days of good weather during their unofficial tests at Phillip Island, with Sykes frequently heading up the time sheets against his many competitors.

On his Ninja ZX-10R Sykes was fastest on day one, then went second fastest on day two and on a race tyre setting he was only a tenth of a second off reigning champion, Carlos Checa, on the final day.

Sykes was particularly satisfied that the bike's base settings, which he has been perfecting over a few winter tests sessions, worked at a warm Phillip Island with only minor tweaks and adjustments as the temperatures changed. Today was the hottest of the three, but track action was interrupted many times during this test in general, because of crashes and several forms of wildlife that strayed onto the track quite frequently.

Joan used the fact that this is an unofficial test to run two bikes, each with its own distinct set-up philosophy, in his efforts to find a final base setting to start the season with. He improved his best lap time today and jumped into the top five in the final combined time sheets.

For both Tom and Joan two more days of testing remain before qualifying begins. These final two days will give both the chance to evaluate the race tyres that official tyre supplier Pirelli have brought for the PI race weekend. That factor alone makes it an important two days of testing, which will take place between 20th and 21st February.

Tom Sykes: "Day three went pretty well. We tried out a lot of things again, in the hot conditions this time. We had good consistency and found a bit of a better bike balance for me. Through all our tests we have explored a lot of areas, gathered a lot of information, but finally it looks like our base setting from winter testing is pretty good. This is the third or fourth race circuit, in a wide range of temperatures, that it has worked at. We did some fine-tuning and managed our lap times quite well. It is difficult to see exactly where our competitors are at in terms of set-up but ultimately we have had a successful test and have set ourselves up nicely for the official tests next week. Hopefully we will have two days of decent weather and that will prepare us for the beginning of the season."

Joan Lascorz: "I have not decided my final settings and I need to test more at the sessions next week. We have two days to make a decision in which direction to go. I have two basic bike set-ups, both work well, but they are very different. One gives us a longer bike and one a shorter bike, so I need to make the decision which way to go. We only get to use the real race tyres at the official tests, not this test, to help me make the final decision. We have two more days on track next week and they will be very important."

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