

Road Race
Newsflash

Kawasaki Enjoys Global Success On Track

With preparations for the 2013 season already underway, now is the time to catch our breath and look back at some of the truly stellar international successes enjoyed by the Kawasaki Ninja range.

For Kawasaki as a whole 2012 will be long remembered as the season that the Ninja ZX-10R and ZX-6R took another leap forward in terms of competitiveness in virtually every major championship around the globe. From top world level to respected domestic championships, from the full race-spec World Superbike machines to lightly modified Superstock machinery, Ninja ZX riders have been on a winning spree in the past season.

In the top level of production-derived machinery, in the Superbike and Supersport World Championships, both Tom Sykes and Loris Baz ended up winning races, with Sykes scoring four wins and a whopping nine Superpole bests. Most importantly of all, Sykes came within 0.5 points of winning the championship outright.

Baz, having his first experiences of a full World Superbike machine after the serious injury suffered by regular KRT rider Joan Lascorz early in the season, won a race at Silverstone, and put in three podium finishes in total. Had Joan not suffered his spinal injury in testing, the massively talented Lascorz would almost certainly also have won races in 2012.

In the Supersport World Championship Kenan Sofuoglu and the Kawasaki Lorenzini team earned the title in a convincing fashion. A superb first time effort for Sofuoglu as a Kawasaki rider, he found the 600cc ZX-6R a willing companion on the winning trail, taking four race victories and nine podiums in total.

Kenan's team-mate Sheridan Morais also raced to a podium while Fabien Foret (Kawasaki Intermoto Step Racing) won two races on his way to a strong top four finish. The mould-breaking Indian-backed MSD-RN team, which adopted Kawasaki machinery and only joined the 2012 series at Brno, also scored a podium success when Dan Linfoot was awarded third in the final round at Magny-Cours.

The Superstock 1000 FIM Cup offered many opportunities to Kawasaki riders in 2012, with Bryan Staring taking three wins for Team Pedercini and the Ninja ZX-10R and making himself a genuine championship-winning candidate as the season drew to a close. An unlucky final round for Bryan saw his one-time Pedercini team mate and eventual MRS Kawasaki rider Jeremy Guarnoni a joyous occasion for the French youngster, as he scored a win on home ground to go third in the championship standings, one ahead of Staring. The Ninja ZX-10R proved so effective all through 2012 that Kawasaki won the coveted Manufacturers' Championship.

World Endurance was also a fertile ground for some top Kawasaki Ninja ZX-10R riders, with the French SRC team putting in a record-breaking win in the Le Mans 24-Hour race, setting a record distance on the way. Kawasaki won the race for the third time in succession, in 2012 with Julien Da Costa, Grégory Leblanc and Freddy Foray. The same team had also won the prestigious Bol D'Or race in 2012, a remarkable record for a squad that was not even a full-time entry in the series.

The Louis Moto 33 team took their Kawasaki Ninja ZX-10R Superstock class machine to the win at Le Mans, proving the track capabilities of the stock machine as well as the full Superbike specification version.

In BSB, arguably the biggest and best domestic championship in the world, Kawasaki also scored huge success with the Ninja series. Shane Byrne, a rider of vast experience in many racing categories, joined the Rapid Solicitors Kawasaki squad for 2012 and duly won a tense and exciting Superbike championship in a final weekend show of bravado and brilliance. He won all three of the races at the final round and ended up as a convincing championship winner. He scored race 8 wins in all, part of his podium total of 18. In the Superstock 1000 British Championship class Keith Farmer won for the Rapid Solicitors Kawasaki team, by a margin of 50 points. Vincent Cox (ILR Kawasaki) was third in the final rankings. The Superstock 600 category was also won by a Kawasaki rider with promising talent, Lee Jackson scooping the title on his Chris Walker Racing School Ninja ZX-6R.

The French Superbike Championship is another important domestic series and another in which the Kawasaki machines had the best results of all. Masters of more than one discipline, the Kawasaki SRC Racing Team saw Julien Da Costa win 10 victories and take 5 second places in 16 races in the Superbike class, while Gregory Leblanc won ten races to secure the Supersport class crown. To adequately underline its level of dominance, the Kawasaki SRC team has won every endurance race and championship it took part in.

In Italy, the Team Puccetti duo of Stefano Cruciani and Mirko Giansanti finished second and third respectively on the Ninja ZX-6R in the CIV Supersport class. In Germany Daniel Sutter was runner up in the Supersport class on his Kawasaki Schnock ZX-6R. Hugo Martinez also placed second in the Portuguese Motorsport Open class on his 600cc Kawasaki.

Carmelo Morales (LaGlisse Kawasaki) won the Spanish CEV StockExtreme class, with Marcos Solorza scooping the privateers' title on his PLRacing Kawasaki. Horst Saiger on his ZX-10R and Pascal Nadalet on his ZX-6R won the Swiss championships in each respective Superstock class.

On the roads, Isle of Man TT riders Michael Dunlop and Ryan Farquhar finished a close second and third respectively in the Superstock 1000 race on their Kawasaki Ninja ZX-10R machines.

The 2012 season was a vintage one for Kawasaki racing teams throughout Europe and everyone is now looking forward to 2013 to see what further successes a new year will bring for competitors on the potent Ninja ZX-10R and ZX-6R.

High resolution images are free to download at press.kawasaki.eu.