

Road Race
Newsflash

Valencia Offers Testing Opportunities For KRT Riders

Kawasaki Racing Team Superbike World Championship duo Tom Sykes and Loris Baz will soon be heading to Valencia for more winter testing, on Monday 29 and Tuesday 30 October.

The short and very twisty circuit near the east coast of Spain was once a venue for SBK racing but its multitude of tight corners and compact nature have always made it a favourite test venue for not only Superbike racing, but many motorsport classes.

Since Sykes was last there for testing purposes the circuit has been resurfaced, which will make comparisons with previous test data for Tom and his team slightly more complicated in some regards, although changes to the technical regulations will make more of a difference from previous Valencia tests.

The team is already using the new-for-2013 17-inch alloy wheels, required by regulation, as opposed to the lighter 16.5-inch magnesium wheels used in previous seasons. So far results on the bigger wheel sizes have been very positive, with Sykes fastest of all his peers at a recent test in Aragon.

Teenage rider Baz arrives at Valencia knowing he has made more laps of the track in Spain than any other, in his previous Superstock 1000 and 600 career. Now he looks to this test on his Ninja ZX-10R as an opportunity to make more progress with his machine set-up, and continue to make his impressive transition from Superstock competitor to full SBK factory rider. Already a race-winner in SBK, in the wet at Silverstone, Loris will be hoping for good weather and track conditions at the Valencia tests.

New race-spec machines have just arrived from KHI in Japan, ready to be tested by the riders and fettled by the Spanish-based Kawasaki Racing Team set-up. A full programme of winter testing has been planned to give everybody in the Kawasaki Racing Team the best possible chance of success in the 2013 season.

Tom Sykes: "Valencia is not a circuit we race at any more and the circuit has also been resurfaced, I am led to believe. So lots of our old information is irrelevant, but we will still be turning the wheels in readiness for 2013 and we have some new things to try. We have the rule change of the 17-inch wheels for the new season so I am sure we will be working to make the package even stronger on 17-inch tyres. We will have the usual suspension tweaks and so on to try, probably the kind of testing we do not like to risk doing during race meetings. I spoke with Guim, my team manager, about the test plans and if we have two days of good weather that is plenty of track time to get up to speed early on day one, then try some things later on and carry that work on to day two. I am just looking forward to getting more track time and it always helps to be able to ride the bike regularly."

Loris Baz: "I think we will have a lot of things to try at this test again. I always like to ride at Valencia because I think it is the track I know best in the world, as I did so many laps there on my 600 Superstock bike. It is not a very interesting track on a 1000cc bike, as it is so compact, but it will be good for me as it is a slow track with slow corners, so I can work on my style on the bike. I now feel more relaxed than I did at the end of the season and physically I feel much better than during the Aragon tests."

Team Manager Guim Roda: "These two days at Valencia are a kind of pre-test to prepare for the Jerez test we will do later this year. We have just received new bikes from Japan to meet the new 2013 rules about starter motors, and they have a new specification, so we have to check all goes well. We will bring our existing bikes to compare with new versions and some technical staff from KHI are also coming to follow the test and see how their new 'babies' get on. The forthcoming Jerez test will be important because more of our rival teams will be there and between us we can check the performance of the bikes on a new track surface. Loris and Tom are fast riders at Valencia so let's see the feelings we get back from those two days."

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