

Road Race  
Newsflash

## Sykes Sets New Class Best At Aragon As Kawasaki Teams Complete Testing

**While KRT Superbike riders Joan Lascorz and Tom Sykes enjoyed a two-day test in Spain other top Kawasaki teams also took to the track recently to prepare for the Imola meeting on April 1st.**

With a fastest lap of 1'57.2 around Motorland Aragon Sykes beat the previous best SBK lap time at the Spanish circuit, and was fastest on both days of testing, 18th and 19th March. His class-leading lap will not stand as an official record time as it was not set during a race weekend but it was a full second faster than the next best riders could manage at these tests.

One of the fastest laps of the Motorland test was set by Kawasaki Racing Team rider Joan Lascorz, who made real progress with the set up of his own Ninja ZX-10R at his home track. Lascorz was able to push harder towards the end of the second day after he had found a more comfortable base setting to push on from.

Conditions at Aragon were cool and occasionally windy, but otherwise the dry track surface allowed each rider to get on with their usual intense workload. Sykes lost some time on day one when he fell while changing gear, which makes his subsequent gritty display over both days, and the eventual new unofficial track best, all the more impressive. He has a stiff neck and several bruises after his crash but is confident to be 100% fit for the next round at Imola on Sunday April 1.

The Pedercini Superbike team, supported by Kawasaki, were also at Aragon, giving Argentine rider Leandro Mercado a chance to run after he was forced to miss the opening round in Australia and the off-season preparations through injury. Although only now settling into his new role in Superbike after riding in Superstock last season, Mercado set a respectable lap time of 2'00.9.

His Pedercini team-mate David Salom did only a few laps to see if his recently injured wrist is making progress and all the signs were positive for the talented Spanish rider, who rode through the pain barrier for points in Australia.

In the Superstock 1000 FIM Cup, Pedercini Kawasaki supported riders Jeremy Guarnoni and Bryan Staring each rode at Motorland Aragon, in preparation for the first round of that particular series at Imola, also on April 1st. Guarnoni was instantly faster than he has been on his 2011 machine, while Staring had to make the adjustment back to Superstock after riding the Pedercini Superbike at the opening SBK round in his native Australia last month.

Fabien Foret and Romain Lanusse from the Intermoto Kawasaki WSS team also tested at Aragon, in readiness for the next round in Italy.

Tom Sykes: "I think we can be very pleased because we improved the feeling with the Ninja ZX-10R and I was able to manage my lap times a little bit easier. We improved the performance on race tyres at this track so hopefully that will improve our race times at the other tracks. We found better feedback and front traction at this test. I did a 1'57.2 on race tyres today. The weather has been kind to us through this test, even if it was a little cold and quite windy, but conditions were quite consistent. I was a bit sore after my early fall, so my physical condition is not the best and that did not help me on the bike. It was a small mistake as I caught the gear lever on a fast downhill left. I am fine, just a bit stiff in my neck, shoulders and hips, but we still put in a good performance today and I will be fine for Imola. The team have been working fantastically well and Kawasaki has been progressing forwards, so big thanks to them. We used two bikes in the garage at this test and that saved us a little bit of time. Both bikes feel identical and the overall feeling is great. If we can keep working like this hopefully we can have a nice season."

Joan Lascorz: "Our test was good and better than in Australia last time. We improved our race pace and then we could push a little bit more once I felt comfortable. We have started to be in a better position where I want and need to be. My best lap was better than most riders at this test so I am feeling positive for the Imola race."

Leonardo Mercado: "I worked a lot on the electronics and today I found a good feeling with the bike and I am starting to understand the electronics enough to use them. Of course the season is only starting for me now as I have been out with an injury for quite a long time."

Superstock 1000

Bryan Staring: "It was difficult to find the right feeling with the Superstock bike after riding the Superbike version at Phillip Island and I was only able to ride it today. This morning was cold and in the afternoon we had some issues on the bike but it was good to ride again before Imola."

Jeremy Guarnoni: "I am very happy. My today best lap time is one second better than my best 2011 time on a different bike. It's amazing if we consider that today was very cold and we were riding in a strong wind."

Imola WSS Test – 16/17 March

Shortly before the Motorland tests Kawasaki's factory supported DeltaFin Lorenzini Supersport World Championship team tested in Italy alongside several other riders, at Imola, the venue for the next round in the series.

Sheridan Morais got through a lot of work with chassis geometry and electronics as he continues to make the transition to Supersport in 2012. He set a best lap of 1'53.1 after he encountered heavy traffic when trying to go for an even better lap time.

Unfortunately for Philip Island race winner Kenan Sofuoglu a fall early in his first day of action stopped him from having a meaningful test. He fell hard and was eventually diagnosed with a displaced bone in his left knee. A small surgical procedure to insert a screw into the knee to was deemed a success and the Turkish rider fully expects to line up ready to race at Imola, a circuit which he particularly enjoys racing at.

Kenan Sofuoglu: "I had a hard crash at Imola and was a bit unlucky to only set a few laps. It was obvious after a while that something was not right with my knee. I had a lot of pain and I could not ride a bike like that. I have had a screw inserted into my left knee and the operation was a success. I wanted to be ready for the race at Imola, even if it will be painful for a while. It will not disturb my season. We had this problem in testing but hopefully we will be good on race weekend. I cannot wait to get on my bike again in Imola."

High resolution images are free to download at [press.kawasaki.eu](http://press.kawasaki.eu).