Italy – Imola.
Preview.

30th March – 1st April 2012
2nd of 14 race weekends

Munich/Stephanskirchen, 26th March 2012. Having made a successful start to the year at Phillip Island (AUS), Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport now returns for the first European leg of the 2012 season. The second of 14 rounds of this year's FIM Superbike World Championship will be held in Imola (ITA) this weekend (30th March to 1st April). The venue is the iconic "Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari", which this year welcomes the Superbike World Championship for the tenth time.

Going into the second race weekend of the season, factory rider Marco Melandri (ITA) is second in the Riders' Championship with 30 points. His team-mate Leon Haslam (GBR) is currently eighth on 15 points. The duo picked up 45 points for Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport at the season-opener in Australia. In the Manufacturers' Championship, BMW currently lies third with 31 points. Only the best result from each race counts towards this championship.

Last week the team spent two days testing at Motorland Aragón (ESP) in preparation for Imola. The team successfully tested a new engine spec for the BMW S 1000 RR and worked on the chassis and electronics. The test also confirmed that Leon has almost fully recovered from the broken tibia he suffered on 20th February at Phillip Island whilst testing ahead of the opening race weekend.

Imola from the riders' point of view:
Marco Melandri:
"I am excited about racing so close to my home. Imola is a beautiful track and I really like the layout, so I am looking forward to it. I am particularly confident after the good test we had in Aragón. I know that we took a step forward with the bike. The track is very technical, because it has slow and fast chicanes as well as up and down sections.

After the successful season opener in Australia, our target is to fight for a podium again. We do not have too much time to practice before the race, so it is important to get the weekend off to a good start. One thing is certain: the team and I will be giving 100 percent again."

Media Contact

BMW Sports Communications
Benjamin Titz
+49 179 7438088
benjamin.titz@bmw.de

Media Website
press.bmwgroup-sport.com

Leon Haslam:
"Between the test in Aragón and the race weekend in Imola I have nearly two weeks of resting and healing, so the leg is going to be even stronger for the race. Imola is a good test for me and the bike. The track has a lot of fast chicanes and you need a bike with a

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lot of low down power to push you out of the corners. It is a circuit with a lot of characters and always enjoyable to ride.

Last year we had a little bit of misfortune in the first race, but in the second race we were fighting in the top 5 positions. With the improvements we have made, I am confident that we can fight for a podium again."

Imola from a technical point of view:
Andrea Dosoli (Head of Race Operations):
"Imola is a racetrack with a stop-and-go character. It has a few bumps and the grip level changes several times over the course of a lap. After the positive test we carried out in Aragón, we are going to introduce a new engine spec, a new swing arm and updated electronics for Imola. With these latest changes to the bike, we are confident we will be competitive in Imola, and we think that the layout will suit our RR well.

Last year, Marco struggled a bit in Imola, but back then it was a new racetrack for him on a Superbike. We know that he now has the experience to be among the front runners there. As far as Leon is concerned, we are sure that he will be almost fully fit for Imola, so we expect a good race from both riders and think that both are ready to fight for the top positions."

Imola from Pirelli's point of view:
For the Imola race, the first European round of the Superbike World Championship, Pirelli will be bringing two SC1 solutions for the front, one in a soft compound and one medium, along with three solutions for the rear including a completely new one that falls between the SC1 medium-soft and the SC2 hard. The solutions for the front were both already used by the riders during the first round at Phillip Island a month ago with good results. For the rear, on the other hand, Pirelli decided to provide this fresh new solution in addition to the reference SC1 and SC2 compounds. If this new solution turns out to be as efficient as Pirelli thinks it will be, it could be used in various European races throughout the spring season.

Also, on the Monday after the Imola race, riders will be able to test a new tyre for the front and three new compounds that fall between the SC1 and SC2 for the rear. In fact, this time of year is ideal for testing new solutions as the temperature range is wide enough to allow the tyres to be tested at low and medium temperatures during the same day.

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Background:
Imola is located in the Northern Italian region of Emilia-Romagna, about 40 kilometres south-east of Bologna. The town has a population of about 70,000. Motorsport has played a major role in Imola for many decades. The first races in and around Imola were held on public roads in the 1940s.

In 1950, work began on a permanent race track on the southern outskirts of the town. This was opened in 1952. Imola hosted its first race in the Motorcycle World Championship on 7th September 1967. The Superbike World Championship made its debut there in 2001. This season sees the series return to Emilia-Romagna for the tenth time.

When the circuit was opened in 1952, it was named the "Autodromo Dino Ferrari" after the son of Enzo Ferrari, who died at an early age. Following the death of Enzo Ferrari in 1988, it was renamed the "Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari". The most difficult weekend in the history of motorsport in Imola came in 1994 when Formula One drivers Roland Ratzenberger (AUT) and Ayrton Senna (BRA) were both involved in fatal crashes during the San Marino Grand Prix. As a result, the circuit was modified in the same year.

In 2006 the site was the subject of extensive renovations, during which the layout was altered and the facilities were modified to meet the latest safety standards. A new pit lane building was erected, as well as a media centre and a tower, which houses the race control. Over the following years, various sections of the track were resurfaced at different times – most recently in 2011. As such, the riders are now faced with four different surfaces.

The chances in surface are just one reason why Imola is particularly challenging for motorbikes. The many bumps are also characteristic of the circuit. Several chicanes, the first coming directly after the start-finish straight, disturb the riders' rhythm. Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport must ensure that the bike is set up to allow excellent braking, turning into corners, and acceleration out of turns. The chicanes are lined with perilous kerbs, which unsettle the bike as the riders cut over them, meaning stability is key. It is also important for the RR to handle well over crests and in the fast, flowing section with the two "Acque Minerali" corners. Overtaking is difficult in Imola, as the track is very narrow in parts. The riders must be very aggressive if they wish to improve their position during the race.

Imola is a home race for BMW Motorrad Motorsport factory rider Marco Melandri, as the Italian lives not far from the circuit.

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Facts and figures:

Circuit/Date	Autodromo Enzo e Dino Ferrari / 1st April 2012
Start time Race 1 (local/CET)	12.00 hrs / 12.00 hrs
Start time Race 2 (local/CET)	15.30 hrs / 15.30 hrs
Lap/Race distance	4.936 km / 103.656 km (21 laps)
Corners	10 left-hand and 6 right-hand corners
Winners 2011	Race 1: Jonathan Rea, Castrol Honda, 38.03,396 min. Race 2: Carlos Checa, Althea Racing, 38.04,538 min.
Fastest race lap 2011	Carlos Checa, Althea Racing, 1.47,934 min.
Data 2011:	Top speed: 283,0 km/h (Marco Melandri, Race 1) Longest section at full throttle: 5.55 sec / 378 m Fastest corner: Variante Tamburello, 3rd gear, 150,4 km/h Maximum deceleration: 277 km/h – 96 km/h

Riders	Marco Melandri	Leon Haslam
Date of birth	07.08.1982	31.05.1983
Place of birth	Ravenna / Italy	London / Great Britain
Nationality	Italian	British
Residence	Ravenna /Italy	Smalley / Great Britain
Marital status	Engaged	Married
Height	1.66 m	1.73 m
Weight	60 kg	67 kg
WSBK debut	2011, Phillip Island (AUS)	2003, Brands Hatch (GBR)
Race starts	28	114
Pole positions	1	1
Wins	4	3
Podium finishes	16	23
Fastest race laps	3	3
Best World Championship placing	2nd (2011)	2nd (2010)
WSBK points 2012	30	15

Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport	
Founded	01.01.2009
Locations	Munich and Stephanskirchen (GER)
WSBK debut	2009, Phillip Island (AUS)
Race starts	82
Pole positions	1
Wins	0
Podium places	6
Fastest laps	1
WSBK placings	4th (2011), 311 points 6th (2010), 201 points 6th (2009), 141 points
WSBK points 2012	31 (Manufacturer) / 45 (Team)

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Press contact: Benjamin Titz, BMW Sports Communications, Email: benjamin.titz@bmw.de, Telephone: +49 89 382 22998, Mobile: +49 179 7438088

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