Great Britain – Donington.
Preview.

11th– 13th May 2012
5th of 14 race weekends

Munich/Stephanskirchen, 7th May 2012. Without time to draw breath in the FIM Superbike World Championship, following a dramatic race weekend at Monza (ITA), "Donington Park Circuit" (GBR) is the venue for the fifth round of the 2012 season (11th to 13th May). The races take place on English soil, but are held under the European flag. Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport is determined to continue its progress to the very top and to fight for the top positions with both factory riders, Leon Haslam (GBR) and Marco Melandri (ITA).

Donington is something of a home race for both of them, for Englishman Leon as well as for Italian Marco. No rider knows the circuit as well as Leon, who grew up and still resides close to the track. Marco also lived just a few kilometres from the circuit for several years, and still feels at home there. The Italian celebrated his first victory in the Superbike World Championship in race one at Donington last year, and went on to finish runner-up in race two. Leon just missed out on a place on the podium, finishing fourth in both races.

In the current 2012 season, Marco lies fourth in the Riders' Championship with 72.5 points. Leon, who claimed his best ever result on the BMW S 1000 RR with second place in Monza, is sixth with 68 points. Together, the pair has already scored 140.5 points for Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport this year. In the Manufacturers' Championship, BMW is fourth with 96 points. Only the best result from each race counts towards this championship.

Donington from the riders' point of view:
Marco Melandri:
"I really like the track. Last year I had my first win in the Superbike World Championship there. The track is very good fun. The first section is very fast and smooth and the last part is all stop and go and requires hard braking. It is good fun because you have to change rhythm. I think we can enjoy a good race there on our RR, but a lot depends on the weather. I just hope that it will be dry and good weather for us.

Donington is kind of a home race for me. I used to live just a few kilometres from the track, so I have many friends there and good memories. I am looking forward to returning there. I was back there for last year's race, but have not lived there since 2009, so I miss the place."

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Leon Haslam:
"I really enjoy Donington. Last year we had a tough time, as we nearly had a big crash in race two and the conditions weren't great but I think this year, with the improvements that we have made at BMW Motorrad, I can look forward to racing in front of my home crowd. We will have to wait and see what the weather will be like, but hopefully it will be a lot warmer than last year.

Donington is renowned for being one of the heaviest braking circuits. You have the first section, which is all fast and flowing with lots of undulations. Then you have the last three or four corners of the track with real heavy braking, tight hairpins so you have a mix of all the different aspects that you need from a circuit. It always produces good races, so I am looking forward to it."

Donington from a technical point of view:
Andrea Dosoli (Head of Race Operations):
"After two race weekends with really unpredictable weather we are now facing the next round where we do not know what conditions will await us. Donington is a very special race track. The first part is flowing and the last part has stop-go characterteristics. We are confident that our RR can perform very well there. We are working in the right direction and which we have shown at the last rounds. In the standings, we are not too far away from the top guys so we will do our best to try to be on the podium again at Donington.

For Leon it will certainly be a special race. He will not only have the usual full support from the team but also from all the fans. Marco likes Donington as well. He used to live nearby and celebrated his first victory in the Superbike World Championship there. We expect that both our riders will have good races there and are sure that we can perform well. We just hope that the weather will be stable and that we will not experience another lottery that prevents us from collecting all the points that are possible for us."

Donington from Pirelli's point of view:
For the Donington round, Pirelli will provide the Superbike riders with three solutions for the front and four for the rear. For the front there will be SC1 and SC2 compounds available, including the P1280 which was found to be an excellent tyre during the tests held on the Monday after the Imola round. For the rear, on the other hand, in addition to the harder SC2 compound solution, Pirelli will have three tyres in an SC1 compound, including the R302 that was tested at Imola, developed to combat cold tearing and wear. The Donington circuit has some downhill curves where the rear clearly has less load. Precisely for this reason Pirelli will bring the new SC1 compound tyre for the front, capable of providing better grip and all of these solutions, developed from the SC1, provide better cold performance compared to the standard SC1.

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Background:
The “Donington Park Circuit” is located close to the town of Castle Donington in the English county of Leicestershire. The nearest large city, Nottingham, is about 25 kilometres away. The circuit was opened in 1931 and was the first permanent racetrack in England. During its 80-year existence, the iconic circuit has been the subject of numerous modifications, the most recent of which came in 2010 when the operators submitted a bid to host a Formula One race. For financial reasons, however, the construction work could not be completed as planned and the British Grand Prix remained at Silverstone. Donington is a permanent fixture on the Superbike World Championship calendar: the series has been coming to the iconic circuit in the heart of England since its debut season in 1988.

Most riders really enjoy the circuit at Donington. The layout predominantly requires a flowing riding style, but a number of stop-and-go passages provide a technically demanding combination of very fast and very slow sections. Some points require harder braking than almost any other circuit in the Superbike World Championship. The fast sectors include the “Craner Curves”, which are named after the former motorcycle rider and founder of the circuit, Fred Craner. The bike must be stable in this fast left-hander. Among the slow passages is the “Melbourne Hairpin”, a tight chicane taken in first gear, and the left-hander “Goddards”. One unpredictable factor in Donington is the weather: it can just as easily be cold and wet as it can nice and mild there in May.

Donington is a very special circuit for BMW Motorrad factory rider Marco Melandri (ITA): he celebrated his maiden victory in the Superbike World Championship here in 2011. His team-mate Leon Haslam is a local boy in the truest sense of the word. The Brit was born close to the track and still lives nearby today. As his father Ron Haslam ran a racing driver school in Donington for many years, Leon has completed countless laps of the circuit, including on production bikes.

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Facts and figures:

Circuit/Date	Donington Park Circuit / 13th May 2012
Start time Race 1 (local/CET)	12.00 hrs / 13.00 hrs
Start time Race 2 (local/CET)	15.30 hrs / 13.30 hrs
Lap/Race distance	4.023 km / 92.529 km (23 laps)
Corners	5 left-hand and 10 right-hand corners
Winners 2011	Race 1: Marco Melandri, Yamaha WSBK Team, 34.33,189 min. Race 2: Carlos Checa, Althea Racing, 34.21,537 min.
Fastest race lap 2011	Carlos Checa, Althea Racing, 1.28,988 min.
Data 2011:	Top speed: 273,0 km/h (Marco Melandri, race 1) Longest section at full throttle: 5,6 sec / 336 m Fastest corner: Craner Curves, 4th gear, 195 km/h Maximum deceleration: 260 km/h – 83 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	33	119
Pole positions	1	1
Wins	4	3
Podium finishes	16	26
Fastest race laps	3	3
Best World Championship placing	2nd (2011)	2nd (2010)
WSBK points 2012	72.5	68

Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport	
Founded	01.01.2009
Locations	Munich and Stephanskirchen (GER)
WSBK debut	2009, Phillip Island (AUS)
Race starts	87
Pole positions	1
Wins	0
Podium places	9
Fastest laps	1
WSBK placings	4th (2011), 311 points 6th (2010), 201 points 6th (2009), 141 points
WSBK points 2012	96 (Manufacturer) / 140.5 (Team)

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