Assen – Free Practice & Qualifying Practice 1.
Friday, 20th April 2012.

Weather conditions: Cloudy with rain in the afternoon.
Temperature: Air: 14 – 16 °C, Track: 8 – 16 °C
Number of riders participating: 23 from 13 teams
Fastest lap Free Practice: Marco Melandri (BMW Motorrad Motorsport) 1:37.582 min
Fastest lap Qualifying Practice 1: Sylvain Guintoli (Team Effenbert Liberty Racing) 1:37.600 min

Team BMW Motorrad Motorsport had a positive start to the third round of the 2012 FIM Superbike World Championship at the "TT Circuit Assen" (NED). In the first free practice this morning, factory rider Marco Melandri (ITA) was fastest on his BMW S 1000 RR. His team-mate, Leon Haslam (GBR) finished the practice in sixth. Times from the first qualifying practice held this afternoon fell quite short due to rain showers. Only a few minutes after the start of the session it started to rain and all riders returned to the pits after having completed just a couple of laps. It continued to rain throughout the session so it was not possible to improve on lap times. Marco's time was the eighth fastest, while Leon qualified a provisional 14th. Marco and Leon both did their laps on used tyres while many of their competitors went out on fresh rubber. If it also rains for tomorrow's second qualifying session, both will have qualified for the Superpole. Marco and Leon used the rest of the session to put in some laps for testing settings and tyres for the wet.

BMW Motorrad Italia GoldBet SBK Team rider Michel Fabrizio (ITA) finished the first qualifying practice in sixth in front of his team-mate Ayrton Badovini (ITA), who was seventh.

Marco Melandri:
Fastest lap Free Practice: 1:37.582 min (P1)/Fastest lap Qualifying Practice 1: 1:39.127 min (P8)
"Today's conditions during the qualifying session were difficult. It was dry in the beginning, but we expected the rain to come very soon. We knew we had to get a good lap time right at the start. I went out with a used tyre, and the bike felt quite good straight away. As expected it started to rain after a few laps, and I am happy that we are safely qualified as of now. I went out in the rain to get a feel for the bike in wet conditions. It was the first time for me on the BMW in the rain, but I got more and more confident after a couple of laps. Overall, we have got good data for Saturday, no matter what conditions. I am looking forward to tomorrow. The team is very focused and working well thanks to everybody."

Leon Haslam:
Fastest lap Free Practice: 1:38.188 min (P6)/Fastest lap Qualifying Practice 1: 1:39.770 min (P14)
"These were the changing conditions that are normal for Assen. In the first qualifying, we went out on a hard tyre and only got one lap on it before it rained so I was quite lucky to be in the top 16. After that we rolled out on the wet tyres. It was the first time we used the new bike in the wet, so we gathered some important information. We did have a few issues; some things did not work, but I feel things are good and we know which way we need to head. I am looking forward to tomorrow. In Imola we were already close to the top and we made some more improvements at the test at Mugello this week. Hopefully we will have stable conditions and can progress further."

Andrea Dosoli (Head of Race Operations):
"Overall this was a very positive day. All the hard work that the guys in the workshop and at the track have put in during the last few weeks seems to be paying off. The days following the races in Imola were busy – we tested a further day there before heading to Mugello for another test this week. It seems that the set-up solutions also work well here on this track. In the dry our riders were at the front. Of course, the set-up has not been perfect yet, but we are heading the right way. In the afternoon's session both riders qualified provisionally for Superpole. In the wet we gathered important data as well. Leon unfortunately had a small crash this afternoon but this should not affect our programme for tomorrow. We are confident that we are in good shape for the weekend. The main target is to be ready under all conditions."

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