

Rossi wins Laguna Seca epic, Stoner and Vermeulen on podium

Round 11: USA – Race

Laguna Seca Raceway – Sunday 20 July 2008

Fiat Yamaha rider Valentino Rossi has today scored a magnificent victory at the Laguna Seca Raceway after an epic 32-lap US Grand Prix which saw Ducati's Casey Stoner and Rizla Suzuki's Chris Vermeulen complete an all-Bridgestone podium for the second race in succession.

Rossi and Stoner were involved in a tight tussle at the front for much of the race, building up a massive 22 second gap to third-placed Vermeulen in a thrilling encounter. Stoner endured an off-track excursion on lap 24, but recovered his bike to rejoin the race still in second position with a comfortable cushion to Vermeulen. Rossi went on to win by 13 seconds to claim his fourth win of the season, which extends his lead of the championship to 25 points.

Stoner's twenty points for second place lift him to second in the championship meaning two Bridgestone-shod riders are at the head of the classification leading into the traditional summer break after a competitive weekend for the tyre manufacturer. Vermeulen's third place marks his second consecutive podium result this season and his second consecutively at Laguna Seca to strengthen his seventh place in the championship.

There were other notable performances from riders using Bridgestone tyres this afternoon with Alice Team's Toni Elias taking his best result of the year in seventh, beating Suzuki wildcard rider Ben Spies into eighth on the final lap of the race. San Carlo Honda Gresini rider Shinya Nakano finished tenth ahead of Kawasaki replacement rider Jamie Hacking who took eleventh place and five points in his first ever MotoGP event. Sylvain Guintoli (Alice Team), Alex De Angelis (San Carlo Honda Gresini) and Loris Capirossi (Rizla Suzuki) also finished in points-scoring positions this afternoon.

Hiroshi Yamada – Bridgestone Motorsport – Manager, Motorcycle Sport Unit

"What an amazing race! Valentino and Casey's battle for the lead was incredible and it is fantastic to see another all-Bridgestone podium with Chris in third. This is the second Laguna Seca race in a row where we have seen three Bridgestone riders fill the podium positions and I think we can be pleased with our performance this weekend. Valentino, Casey, Yamaha and Ducati must be commended for such competitive performances today, and I am happy that our tyres were capable of sustaining such a pace. Chris also rode excellently and intelligently to third position, so well done also to him and Suzuki. We head into the break before Brno with two riders leading the championship, and what promises to be an exciting final third of the season."

Tohru Ubukata – Bridgestone Motorsport – Manager, Motorcycle Race Tyre Development

"This weekend has been a very complicated event from a tyre point of view with some quite cool mornings followed by warmer afternoon sessions, so I am satisfied with our tyre performance in this range of conditions. Producing tyres to cope with the demands of Laguna Seca over 32 laps is quite tough and, for this reason, I am pleased to see such consistent lap times during the race. Well done to Valentino for the victory; his and Casey's lap times were incredible today. Casey set the fastest lap of the race with a 1m21.488s, 1.1s quicker than last year, and four Bridgestone riders were at the top of the fastest lap classification which is a great achievement. To see three of our riders on the podium for the second race in a row is fantastic, but our tyre development will not stop because we expect a competitive final seven races of this season."

Valentino Rossi – Fiat Yamaha Team – Race Winner and Championship Leader

"For me, this race was fantastic. It's my first victory at Laguna Seca and the race was unbelievable. We made some modifications with the team before the race and I was able to get a better race pace. I was very fast and, after a good start, I had a great battle with Casey with a lot of overtaking. It's an important victory. It's emotional to win for the first time at Laguna. Now we have the summer break and we'll take some holidays and relax because this championship is so long."

Bridgestone-shod Riders' Race Results and Tyre Choices

Pos.	Rider	Team	Race Time	Gap	Front Tyre (all 16.5")	Rear Tyre (all 16.5")
P1	Valentino Rossi	Fiat Yamaha Team	44m04.311s	Winner	Slick-Medium	Slick-Hard
P2	Casey Stoner	Ducati Corse	44m17.312s	+13.001s	Slick-Medium	Slick-Hard
P3	Chris Vermeulen	Rizla Suzuki MotoGP	44m30.920s	+26.609s	Slick-Hard	Slick-Hard
P7	Toni Elias	Alice Team	44m45.940s	+41.629s	Slick-Medium	Slick-Medium
P8	Ben Spies	Rizla Suzuki MotoGP	44m46.238s	+41.927s	Slick-Medium	Slick-Medium
P10	Shinya Nakano	San Carlo Honda Gresini	44m48.702s	+44.391s	Slick-Medium	Slick-Medium
P11	Jamie Hacking	Kawasaki Racing Team	44m50.569s	+46.258s	Slick-Medium	Slick-Hard
P12	Sylvain Guintoli	Alice Team	44m59.584s	+55.273s	Slick-Medium	Slick-Medium
P13	Alex De Angelis	San Carlo Honda Gresini	44m59.832s	+55.521s	Slick-Medium	Slick-Hard
P15	Loris Capirossi	Rizla Suzuki MotoGP	45m12.518s	+1m08.207s	Slick-Medium	Slick-Hard
P16	Marco Melandri	Ducati Corse	45m15.273s	+1m10.962	Slick-Medium	Slick-Medium
P17	Anthony West	Kawasaki Racing Team	44m34.872s	+1 lap	Slick-Medium	Slick-Medium

Weather: Dry – Air 16°C, Track 41°C (Bridgestone measurement)

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For further information please contact

Chris Hughes – MotoGP Press Officer Mob: +44 (0)7917 352511

E-mail: chrish@bsmotorsport.com