

Barber & Superbike at Birmingham Trip Report



On April 23 and 24 the Superbike Competition made its stop at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Alabama. Several of our members and friends attended and enjoyed the carnival like atmosphere that goes along with the Superbike and Formula Extreme Races. All of the usual competitors were present including Miguel Duhamel, the Hayden brothers, the Bostrom brothers, Jamie Hacking, Jason Pridmore and last but certainly not least, Matt Mladin. Likewise, all of the factory-supported teams were present, including Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, Yamaha and Ducati, which is represented by the local team, Austin Ducati.

Another reason for going to this race, at least for some of our attendees, was the opportunity to see the magnificent collection of motorcycles in the Barber Museum located on the same premises as the Motorsports Park. At last count, Barber has some 900 or so bikes available



for viewing with 400-500 on view at any one time. Most of the bikes are low mileage and are rare, and are in absolutely superb condition.

For those of you who have not yet had the chance to see the Motorsports Park and the Museum, the whole experience is one you will likely remember. The entire facility is landscaped with beautiful trees, bushes and grasses, and it looks like something out of travel brochure. There is no permanent seating, with the best places terraced for setting up chairs and stools which is facilitated by a system of constantly moving people movers that allow you to move around the track to another location if you see this need. From the place where we sat Sunday, you could see at least half of the track, and the racing was a sight to see.

Ken Korn, Del Grosenheider, brothers Larry and Gary and Jerry Mark from Kingsland, made the trip. Ken left

a little early, on Thursday, and the rest left Friday morning. We met Ken that evening at the motel in Birmingham and were surprised by the weather report that said



that it was going to be in the 30's Saturday morning. That brought out most of the clothes we brought with us, and while the weather was brisk on Saturday, it did not rain and we stayed comfortable. The races were outstanding and moved along with apparent good organization, as you would expect from the AMA. Brother Kevin Grosenheider, who is presently living in Alabama, met us at the motel Saturday and attended the races with us.

Matt Mladin and his Suzuki made the race look easy when the Superbike race finally ran on Sunday. I think my favorite bike, however, had to be the Ducati's of Eric Bostrom and Neil Hodgson, which you could hear coming from a long way off. Their sound was very distinctive compared to the four cylinders of the other bikes. While the Ducati's did not win, they made a respectable showing, and I believe that Neil Hodgson finished on the podium for the AMA Superbike race. We had paddock passes and I had the chance to get close to Miguel Duhamel on one occasion as he was going out for practice and /or qualifying. Unfortunately, I don't think any of his talent rubbed off on me

Sunday afternoon we left when the races were over and got a head start on the long ride home. We made it to Meridian, MS that night and came on into Austin Monday arriving around 5 PM. A good time was had by all and I added a little over 1700 miles to my mileage for the BMWMOA Annual Mileage Contest. I rode Whitey, the 84 R100RS, and I think it was feeling a little stressed staying up with the rest of the bikes, but we all made it without tickets for outstanding achievements from the law enforcement community. Whitey is a lot more comfortable at 4000 than 5000 rpm. If you get the opportunity, see the Barber Museum, for it is a sight to behold and the grounds are also worth a look, even if there is not a race, because there are few Parks that look as nice as the Barber Motorsports Park.

~ Del Grosenheider
Sergeant at Arms / Road Captain
'84 R100RS & '95 R11RSL

And more on Barber...



Over the weekend I went to Barber Motorsports Park near Birmingham, AL for the AMA Superbike round.

The facility there is outstanding. The museum is quite spectacular... both the building and its contents. There are about 400 bikes on display at any one time out of a collection of 900... also some racecars, primarily Lotus cars. I've attached some pictures of a couple of bikes and the building. The north side of the museum overlooks part of the track... their version of the Laguna Seca Corkscrew.

The track is very challenging. Riders interviewed said that they had no time for relaxation with the many turns. Spectator views are great... we watched the Sunday Superbike race from a hillside that allowed us to see I'd guess about 70% of the track. The picture of the Saturday Superbike start was taken from another viewpoint near turn 2 on the north side of the track. There is a tram system running around the perimeter road with trams arriving every few minutes. That made it very easy to park the bikes in one place and go anywhere quickly.

The ride from Austin to Birmingham was interesting. Instead of riding with the group from Austin on Friday (over 800 miles in one day), I decided to ride about 500 miles to Jackson, MS where I had motel reservations. My plans went astray when I made my first gas stop in Waco, about 100 miles north of Austin. I reached in my jacket pocket and realized my wallet was on the dresser at home :- (So I had to return home, get my wallet, and start again. My 500-mile plan turned into 728 miles... the longest one-day ride I can remember. I left Jackson on Friday morning, got to the track mid day and spent most of the time at the museum and checking out viewing points for the races. The weather had started to look nasty and I got caught in a thunderstorm complete with small hail and lightning on the way to the motel.

The storms preceded a cold front passage. Saturday morning it was about 42 degrees, cloudy, and very windy. It was a difficult day for the spectators and the racers I'm sure. Sunday morning's low was 37 degrees but at

least the sky was sunny. The wind continued. The races were great. Mladin is nothing short of spectacular. He had set a new motorcycle track record in qualifying and ran away with both races. The Suzuki's are very strong. Hodgson was also very competitive on the 999... I think quite amazing since he has never seen the track. Eboz just didn't seem to have things together but finished 5th I think on Sunday.

We left the track after the Superbike final and headed to Meridian, MS that night. That left about 650 miles for Monday's ride home. We had very strong southerly winds all the way home... cross winds for most of the way, then head winds when we got to Interstate 35 in Waco for the last 100 miles. My hands are quite sore from the constant steering inputs and throttle adjustments (even with my Throttlemeister). The Caponord performed great. We were cruising around 80-85 most of the time and I got around 40 mpg until heading into the headwinds when it dropped to 36 mpg.

This was the first bike trip I've taken since my head injury in 2001. I'm now encouraged to head up to Springfield in May, and maybe a longer trip in the fall... who knows...



One other thing...

I had programmed our DVR to record the races on SPEED so I could watch them again when I got home but Time Warner Cable did it again... dropping SPEED from my account through some screw-up so no races were recorded (including MotoGP).

~Ken Korn
