

MotorGP Lineage and the Upcoming Weekend's Motegi

Valentino Rossi, who races under Fiat Yamaha, was seen at the grand podium in Portugal last weekend, returning after missing four consecutive races. He won Estoril by a scant two-tenths of a second over runner-up Repsol Honda's Dani Pedrosa. His winning turned him closer to championship leader Casey Stoner, with 76-points gap.

Rossi said, "Portugal was a great, great race and it was fantastic to win again after so long... Now we go straight to Motegi and the motivation and confidence within the team is very high. We know that our rivals are always very strong in Motegi and we expect the same from Stoner this year, but I've never won there with Yamaha so I will be doing my best to change that this week."

Rossi reflected over AMA Superbike runner-up Yoshimura Suzuki's Mat Mladan's championship thoughts which hopefully won't foreshadow Mladin's 2007 season results, they say. He said, "We're not thinking of the championship, we know it's probably out of our reach, but we can do the best we can to try to keep it open for as long as possible and this will be our goal next week."

Riders of the Repsol Honda squad did well enough in Portugal, which eventually took their hopes surging for consecutive top finish at Honda's track.

Dani Pedrosa commented, "Portugal has given us a boost and so I'm really looking forward to going straight to Motegi and hopefully picking up where we left off at Estoril."

"Of course, tires are going to be critical to this and Motegi is a circuit where our tire rivals (Bridgestone) have gone well in the past. But we'll certainly give it everything. I like this track and it seems to have suited me in previous years so I hope that's going to be the same with 800s," he continued.

"We had a decent weekend in Portugal so I'm looking forward to this weekend," Nicky Hayden of Repsol Honda said, as his race went well at Estoril.

"Japan is always an exciting GP because it's in the home country of most of the manufacturers, including Honda, which definitely adds a bit of an edge to it. Plus the Japanese fans are pretty cool and they're always really good to me. The track has a lot of straights and our bike has been running better lately, especially in cooler conditions so hopefully the weather will be kind to us and give us cooler temperatures. It's really important to have a bike that's stable on the brakes and lately that's been one of the strong points of the RC212," he added.

The Marlboro Ducati squad is also hoping for a win in Motegi, after winning the Japanese Grand Prix of 2005 and 2006. Loris Capirossi said, "My 2005 and 2006 wins at Motegi will always be very special memories for me... For Ducati to win a MotoGP race in Japan is great but to win two in a row is incredible! I hope we can have another good result this year because the last few races have been pretty difficult for me."

Casey Stoner, Capirossi's teammate and championship points leader, aims to obtain his 8th win this year that would make him the 2007 MotoGP world champ. He said, "Motegi is Bridgestone's home race and it's in Japan, so I know Ducati always likes to do well there! Ducati has taken pole position and the win the last two times we've been to Motegi, so it would be nice if we can do the same... I really want to try and win a few more races before the end of the season. And if we focus on winning races, then the championship should come."

Marco Melandri and Tony Elias, the Gresini duo is assumed to hold the biggest advantage riding Honda and Bridgestone rubber. This was more like a [Honda header pipe](#) working well because it is placed into a Honda car. Melandri said, "In Japan I should be 100 per cent fit... Motegi requires lots of acceleration. I'm very motivated. I'd like to score a good result to thank Fausto Gresini and the team for their great job. The feeling with the bike is improved and also Bridgestone tires should work very well. Bridgestone tires dominated here in the last three years, so I'm confident."

On the other hand, Elias said, "Motegi is a track that I like and where I have got good results with two wins in 250cc class. I hope that we can finally get some good results and turn positively this season complicated by a bad crash at Assen that injured my left leg. The team is doing a great job and my feeling with the bike is improving."

For the Kawasaki ZX-RR green team, Former World Superbike star and current All-Japan Superbike and Kawasaki development rider Akira Yanagawa will be the pilot. He said, "The first time I raced the Ninja ZX-RR was also at Motegi, when Kawasaki made their long awaited return to Grand Prix racing after an absence of more than two decades. On that occasion I crashed out of the race, so I'm really looking forward to the opportunity to finally finish what I started five years ago. I'm under no illusions about how tough it will be, racing against the very best riders in the world, but I hope that I will be able to finish in the points and also provide important feedback for Kawasaki's development engineers."

About the Author

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