

So here is a rundown of the race this weekend:

Couldn't keep the bike running, so finally I got to tearing into it to look for a pinched fuel line, when my wife says this hose is torn, do you think it has anything to do with it? Being as it supplies the vacuum to the diaphragm operated petcock, yes. Repair that and it starts and runs good (after we jumpstart it).

On to first practice:

Chaz goes out there with all the similar class bikes, and is doing alright. Not pushing it, getting familiar with the bike and track feel. I comment to my wife how difficult it is to ride a "vintage" bike fast, noticing one smoking as it comes by. At the time, I didn't know that Joe also noticed it was smoking heavily as well. He called it in, but was told that vintage bikes do that. They are loud, smelly, and they smoke. Point taken. Fast forward a few laps later, when Chaz starts getting up to race pace. He comes up behind a vintage bike in turn 3 and instantly goes into the dirt. He tells the corner worker that there is oil there, and the guy says I don't see any, you just tucked the front. Joe calls it in again about the smoker, and they decide to check it out. Yep. Oil on the track (and Chaz' front tire). The safety guys let me meet him partway so I could push the bike back into the pits.

I start looking at the bike and notice the broken clutch lever, and realize we have no spares! Otherwise, not much damage – sliders did their job, and so did his gear. I send Chaz out to try and source a part, but nobody has one. Finally a guy comes up to ask if Chaz got in the oil, and says he has a lever that might work. No dice (off a Ducati), but I am at least able to tear off the clip on and use the entire perch assembly. Clean the dirt out of the plastics, re-tech, and all is good. Race is back on again.

No official qualifying, since I guess they go by order of registration, or practice times. He starts 4th, and pretty much holds position for the entirety of the race. He had a couple of good battles with some guys on vintage bikes, and another on an SV. He pretty much either wore them down with pace, or they decided it was the last race of the year and didn't feel the need to push it. The expert guys got away quick, so he couldn't take advantage of their lines like we had hoped. We were told he was the first amateur racer across the line, but it turns out he was 2nd. Not bad at all, and we later found out the guy he was battling all race was an expert racer. We are all pretty happy, all things considered. Pretty hard to complain about that.

Race 2 he starts in 8th or 9th – I couldn't tell, but he was pretty far back. Pretty much the same scenario as the first race. Really fast guys are gone, leaving the 2nd group guys to battle. There are a couple of guys out there who either have mechanical or confidence issues. Noticeably slower than the rest of the grid. After a few laps Chaz is in a battle with a guy on an SV (it turns out his son is the really fast guy Chaz was trying to chase). They are coming up on traffic, and the guy blocks Chaz in the corner to where he has to go off road. No fault situation as far as I am concerned, as I saw it developing and kind of knew either he would lock them up and go in on the brakes, or realize it and go in at speed. The other guy didn't have much of an option either, as there was a guy parked in the corner. He chose option 2, and went from like 4th or 5th to dead last in a hurry. Navigated the sand traps and got back on the track. After that he just put his head down and tried to make up as much ground as he could. Starting reeling guys in one by one, and was making decent progress, when it happens again. A vintage bike in front of him pops a motor, and blows oil on the rear tire. Man and machine are sliding around the track, in a cloud of oil and rubber smoke. He made it through that then really started to turn the screws. Only a couple of laps remained, but it is my understanding that he made it all the way back up to sixth before it was all said and done. He didn't quite make it all back up, but he didn't get too discouraged and throw the towel in either. So in the span of about 10 hours, he got his first crash, his first big mistake, and his first podium on the "big bike". All in all I would say it was a pretty good outing. I have some confidence for him going into next season, as I was timing and observing certain sections of the track. He is as fast through the tight stuff as all but the fastest 2 guys out there in his class. He is currently lacking the power / speed on the straights. Luckily this is easier to correct than most other things.

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