

Consistency wins the 2010 Barry Sheene Festival of Speed

Once again the Barry Sheene Festival of Speed Easter race meeting at Eastern Creek proved to be a big success. Organised by the Post Classic Racing Association of NSW, the weekend proved some fantastic racing over a range of classes.

Anticipation in the pits was high with twice World Endurance Champion Warwick Nowland, getting set to take on "Mr Superbike" Robbie Phillis. Warwick aboard the Keith Higgs P&M Kawasaki and Robbie on his mighty Mick Hone/QBE Suzuki GSX1100. Both riders set very impressive lap times during Saturday morning's qualifying with Phillis taking a ½ second advantage and drawing 'first blood'.

With big prize money at stake in the 'Barry Sheene Memorial' feature races, Robbie decided to preserve his bike in the first Forgotten Era Unlimited race and Warwick had little trouble winning the heat. Craig Morris came in 2nd on the Ray Berry Suzuki RG500 and Laurie Fyffe 3rd on his 1100 Suzuki. Although Warwick suffered some mechanical problems on Sunday, he was able to hold off the ever consistent Laurie Fyffe to win the Unlimited Class ahead of Laurie and Leo Cash.

The first leg of the Barry Sheene Memorial feature race finally gave the crowd what they had come to see. Warwick Nowland and Robbie Phillis showed what a class act both riders are with an exciting race, which saw the lead change a number of times before Warwick took the honours on the last lap. Lap times came down to 1m39s, fast enough to be competitive with modern day Superbikes. This proved to be the race of the weekend, as both riders would later suffer from mechanical problems.

On Sunday, the second leg of the 'Barry Sheene Memorial' feature race ended in controversy as problems with Warwick's bike caused a change of bike on the warm up lap. The race itself began with Phillis getting a good start with Warwick down to 4th place and in hot pursuit on a bike he had never raced before. Warwick quickly settled into the race and worked his way through the field. Unfortunately, after 4 laps Robbie suffered a mechanical problem with a rapidly flattened battery & was caught on the line for second place by Laurie Fyffe. Warwick, who had no idea what was happening behind him and raced hard to take the chequered flag. As the celebrations began in Warwick's garage, it was announced that Warwick had jumped the start giving him a 20 second penalty. A protest had also been lodged about the late change of bike disqualifying Warwick from the results. So it was from hero to zero in an instant. The amended results would now show Laurie Fyffe first ahead of Robbie Phillis with Leo Cash third.

The final rankings gave Laurie Fyffe top honours and the \$5000 winners cheque in the 2010 Barry Sheene Memorial with Robbie Phillis just one point behind in second and Leo Cash in third place.

With more than 25 classes of bikes competing over the weekend, there was something to please everyone with a number of close battles being fought on the track. One such contest was Kiwi international racer, Paul Dobbs riding a Norton Commando 750 and young Robert Young on the 1000cc Ducati. These two riders constantly pushed each other to the limit throughout the weekend often leaving large multi cylinder Japanese bikes in their wake. In the end Paul Dobbs won the period 4 F750 'Unapproachable Norton Challenge' ahead of Steve Cutting (Norton 750) and young Sam Muldoon on a 750 XS Yamaha. Ron Young proved again that he has the combination of rider and machinery to continue to dominate the period 4 Unlimited Class with son Robert taking the overall honours ahead of Luke Johnson & Stephen Wood.

Another historic class that gave the fans some very close racing was the Jones XL Classic 500 class. This class was hotly contested by three exceptional riders who left nothing behind. In the end, consistency proved the difference as Glen Kelleher on a Norton 500 finished ahead of young gun Levi Day on a Honda 500 who missed the last heat due to a mechanical problem. Kiwi rider, Sam Smith also a hard charger and riding a Norton ES2 500 suffered mechanical gremlins throughout the weekend. As a result, third place was taken by the evergreen Laurie Turnbull on his Norton 500.

In the Jones XL sponsored 'Premier Classic 500' feature race, Sam Smith got his revenge over Glenn Kelleher and Laurie Turnbull to take the chequered flag.

Winners of other classes over the weekend include: Victor Vassella (Classic Unlimited), Martin Pearson (Ken Lucas Championship Challenge), Craig Keenan (Classic 250), John Imrie (Classic 350), John Simms (Post Classic 250), Glen Hindle (Post Classic 350), Michael Murray (Post Classic 500), Steven Kairl (Forgotten Era 125), Lech Budniak (Forgotten Era 250), Grant Boxhall (Forgotten Era 350), Mitchell Mulligan (Forgotten Era 500), John Rickard (New Era F1), Jason Brett (New Era F2), Brett Cooper (New Era F3), Paul Grant-Mitchell (Pre Modern F1), Steven Green (Pre Modern F2), Dave Abbott (Pre Modern F3) Horner & Dinuzzo (Forgotten Era Sidecars), Morgan & Morgan (Modern F2 Sidecars) & Souther & Rowe (Modern F1 Sidecars).