

MAGsport

A disappointing end to a promising season.

Alex Gault, the MAG supported motorcycle racer has had an eventful 2008. His first year of competition in the National Super Stock 600 Championship, held as support to the British Super Bike Championship. This is the report from the last two rounds of the championship

Silverstone Round 10

There were 52 riders entered for this round, all fighting to make the grid for Sunday's race, only 40 would make it!

It is no secret Alex has had very little time round this circuit but from his first outing in free practice on the Friday he looked very racy, setting the 12th fastest time and again first Kawasaki over the line. In front of him were nine Yamaha R6's and two Triumph 675's.

In Qualifying 1

This was held on the Friday evening and Alex improved up into a provisional 7th for Sunday's race with a lap time of 1.32.985. So strong is the opposition in the class, the top 40 were separated by only 3.3 seconds. His team could not believe how well he was going. Before they arrived they'd hoped for Alex to qualify in the top 15 and perhaps even scrape into the top ten in the race.

Q2

Gault dropped down the leader board to 10th position. This was expected as they had used the session as a race simulation, sending him out on the tyres he had used previously rather than new ones which is usual for Qualifying. It was a gamble that payed off as the Scotsman went almost half a second quicker with the bike in race trim on used tyres, setting a stunning time of 1.32.51 and reporting no problems with the bike.

Morning warm-up

On the Sunday the warm up went without a hitch, posting an 8th fastest time of 1.32.96 it did however set the scene for what was to be a spectacular race! The top 27 riders were separated by less than two seconds!

The Race.

Alex held station from his start position of 10th on the opening lap but was promoted to 8th place as they crossed the line to end lap one. This was due to a collision between championship contender Robbie Brown and Northern Ireland racer Jamie



Hamilton both ending up off track but both managing

to rejoin at the back of the pack.

Up front the pace was ballistic. Luke Jones and Jimmy Hill had set a furious 1.34.1 out lap compared to Alex' 1.37.2. The crash between Brown and Hamilton had happened just in front of Gault and had slowed him down. By lap seven of the 14 lap race Alex had made it into 7th place but by now things had settled. Luke Jones (Yamaha) was out front with Lee Johnston(championship leader on a Yamaha) and Jimmy hill (Yamaha) in close

eventually taking 6th place as the finishing flag fell.

Rounds 11 and 12

Two weeks later and it was the final two rounds of the championship which took place as a double header on the Brands Hatch Indy Circuit in Kent. For the first time this season the weather was glorious; temperatures reaching 23c on the Saturday. It had also attracted the biggest entry since the start of the year with 61 riders vying for 36 slots on the grid. The organisers for the first time had to split the riders into two groups A & B. Alex was in group A. It also attracted the

a massive 'Highside' rounding 'Clearways' threw him from the bike at over 100mph

pursuit. This was another race where Alex just failed to tag onto the lead group, however it can be put down as a spectacular ride by him, again setting very close to leader lap times with a 1.31.9 the fastest he has ever gone round the Silverstone circuit.

Again he was the first Kawasaki home and one of only six riders to get under the 1.32second lap time, the MAG Sport rider

biggest spectator audience as well. It would have been great to go out on a high but unfortunately a huge crash in free practice meant it was a disappointing end to what I hope you agree has been a fairly successful season.

Free Practice

This was held on the Friday morning and saw Gault make a promising start nearly

MAGSport's Alex Gault wraps up the year with a brave recovery from an awesome crash



topping the leader board until the 14th lap when a massive 'Highside' rounding 'Clearways' threw him from the bike at over 100mph.

The crash damaged the bike badly although Alex, remarkably, seemed to have escaped relatively unscathed. However damaged ankle ligaments and a badly bruised and swollen elbow were to plague him throughout the weekend. It is a tribute to the quality of Alex' Forma F1 Boots, Shoei Helmet and Weise Leathers that he escaped more serious injuries!

Alex said "This was the fastest 'Highside' I've ever had! I knew I wasn't saving it when I looked down and saw the whole bike on its side below me"

Qualifying 1

This was held that afternoon and proved to be just that little bit too soon for the team who struggled to repair the damaged bike in time. Although they got it built, it was not in time for the start of the session. Gault joined half way through with only four laps completed when the bike threw its drive chain and his machine rolled to a halt at the side of the track.

Q2

This was held early on the Saturday morning and was Alex' chance to improve on the proceeding day's performance,

which because of events the previous day saw him scrape onto the back row of the grid for the races. With the bike now almost perfect it was the track which let him down. With the Stock 600's second qualifying session being held in the morning, the track was still covered in dew and very slippery, especially where the trees shaded it. To make matters worse another competitor's engine blew up midway through the session, spreading oil on the surface.

Again Alex was setting some of the fastest times of the session, but had to retire early with his ankle problem making changing gear extremely difficult. By the time group B took to the track, it had dried and was almost perfect to put in a good qualifying time. In the end Gault's lap time of 49.544 was only good enough for 25th place on the grid, the 24 riders in front of him only separated by 0.9 of a second.

Race 1

It was no surprise that Alex had to withdraw from the race with the pain he was in. The possibility of an accident happening was too great to take the risk. Medical advice had indicated that the injury may be better the next day for race two so his team postponed the journey home to see if he could take to the grid for race two on Sunday.

Morning Warm-up

This was held on the Sunday morning and despite the lack of time on track and the pain from his injuries the MAGSport rider looked good, setting the 9th fastest time with a 49.536 lap.

Race 2

This was a brave effort but after only four laps Alex hit a false neutral under heavy braking, couldn't make the corner and went onto the grass. By the time he had recovered he was at the back of the pack. To make matters worse the gearbox would not select another gear, Gault had no choice but to retire.

So the end of another season and even though he scored no points in five of the 12 rounds, Alex ended up finishing 10th overall in the main championship and 4th in the David Jeffries Award for riders under the age of 19.

There are very exciting plans for next year in the process of being finalised, more information on that in the next issue of The Road.

If you would like to be part of the action please contact Alex through his web site