

GSX-R1000 K2 SUZUKI



With TAS Racing not involved in BSB at the time, pre-season preparation was limited to 2-3 days private testing at Kirkistown. Final machine preparation was last minute as normal, with former Suzuki factory mechanic Nigel Everett joining the team in preparation for what would become the foundation year for TAS Racing. The new relationship started positively with a race win in the opening NW200 Superbike race and a hard fought podium in the Production 1000cc race, 11.59sec behind Bruce Anstey in wet conditions. If there was one downside with the DJ/TAS/GSX-R combination, it was a fragile clutch set-up, which ended our second Superbike race before the conclusion of lap one.

TT practise presented some challenges, as always, although despite these small number of technical issues, the pace of DJ and the GSX-R was always evident. A resounding win in the opening Superbike race was the early indication of what was to come. DJ went on to record his second win of the week in the Superstock event, challenged impressively by TAS Racing team-mate Ian Lougher; then went on to cap a memorable return to the TT winner's enclosure for TAS owner Hector Neill, with another resounding victory in the Senior TT.

LEFT

DJ over Ago's Leap and on his way to a famous TT victory for TAS Racing during a memorable 2002 season

In fact the TT Formula 1 result could easily have been very different, as is sometimes the case at the TT. With a 64 second lead entering the final lap the result looked automatic, however as the gap began to shrink between DJ and John McGuinness, the team quickly realised the 'Big Man' had a problem. Without any detail in pit lane, the clutch was our immediate concern, however post-race feedback from David revealed the GSX-R was stuck in third gear from around the Ramsey Hairpin section. Sometimes it seems results are meant to be, however on this occasion the result was secured through a sizeable lead coming onto the last lap and without any doubt, the mechanical knowledge and quick thinking of DJ to diagnosed the problem and re-set the brain to 'don't touch that gear lever again' mode. His victory at the end was reduced to 36.5sec. DJ set a new lap record of 126.68mph.

Just for the record. In the Production 1000cc Race, DJ defeated team-mate Ian Lougher by 15.5sec and set a new lap record at 124.31mph. In the Senior, DJ again defeated team-mate Lougher by 22.1sec and set a new outright lap record at 127.29mph.

The UGP delivered a Superstock race win, although an uncharacteristic crash in the Superbike race followed with a day hampered by clutch trouble on the big Superbike.

PHILIP NEILL - TEAM PRINCIPAL:

“ The one that started it all off: DJ and the 2002 GSX-R1000 was simply an unbeatable combination at the TT, and although success was perhaps to be expected with arguably the best bike and rider combination, it was still early days for TAS Racing as a team. The joy at what we achieved together is unlikely to be matched by any racing achievement.

Although my Father and I had both enjoyed past relationships with Suzuki, our pathway to success was clearly set in place by the support we received from Suzuki through General Manager Nick Barnes – after a door opening opportunity from former Suzuki racing team manager Rex White.

▶▶ SPECIFICATION:

Superbike

▶▶ BHP:

192 [Akrapovič exhaust]

▶▶ TYRES:

Pirelli

▶▶ SUSPENSION:

Öhlins front & Techno-Flex rear

▶▶ RIDER

David Jefferies [Eng]

▶▶ MAIN SPONSORS:

Suzuki/Temple Auto Salvage/Putoline Oil/Pirelli/E.J Tractors

▶▶ RESULT HIGHLIGHTS:

2002 International North West 200 Superbike Race: winner

2002 Isle of Man TT Formula 1 Race: winner

2002 Isle of Man Senior TT Race: winner