

Sonnex Team Yamaha

Race Report – Hartwell club Championships Round 2 MacPark Mt Gambier
11-13 March 2005

While sitting on the Sonnex Team Yamaha R1 for his first race, team rider Paul McMenamain, realised that it had been 25 years since he last raced a Yamaha.

In 1980 he rode a TZ350G and a TZ250F at the Australian Grand Prix at Bathurst. He finished ninth in the 250 GP against the best in Australia.

That was then, this is now.

The R1 was to have been ridden by Dorothy Tuchyna, but a last minute call up by the owner of the Hong Kong based Arlen Ness leathers, saw the team's number one rider attending marketing duties, with Russell Holland, in Hong Kong.

Friday was spend finishing the testing we had started two weeks earlier and performing suspension setup for the new large profile Dunlop 195/70 KR108 tyres.



Testing indicated that the R1 turns well but needed more rear ride height. Measurements were taken and it was decide that the suspension dog-bone could be shorter than the original to improve the suspension action.

The Victorian racers are nuts, and the meeting turned into a demolition derby of sorts. The Non Expert or “B” grade championship was run at the same time as

the Expert “A” grade championship with the result that most laps were run under a yellow flag at some point round the track.

On Saturday Paul was placed 6th on the grid based on revised results from the first round held at Phillip Island.



Various suspension settings were tested on Saturday, with everything pointing to softer compression damping on the front, while the spring rate and rebound damping seem OK.

Allan Rigby has been commissioned to modify the suspension, continuing a working relationship that has endured over the last ten years.

Paul’s personal best time at the MacNamara Circuit was a 1:18.5, set last year, on a fully sorted Kawasaki ZX10R. Paul achieved a new personal best of 1:18.33 on the R1 with standard suspension. The additional length in the R1 swing arm produces a much more comfortable ride than the ultra nervous Kawasaki and makes it easier to get off the line.

By the time Sunday’s championship arrived, Paul was able to finish in fourth place, less than a half a second behind the Championship leader Donny Biddle. Yellow flags from Pit Hairpin to Pine Tree corner interfered with any last lap heroics and a podium position for the “Black Betty” Yamaha.

Paul has consolidated his fifth place in the Hartwell Non Expert Championship and is in striking distance of a top three finish.

Over 600 N/Expert	R1	R2	Total
Donny Biddle	25	20	45
Shane Clarke	13	25	38
Chris Williams	20	15	35
Craig Domaschenz	18	16	34
Paul McMenamin	15	18	33
Ben Anderson	14	14	28
Brendan Greene		22	22
Lee Slocombe	22		22
Graeme McLaren	16		16
Dale Ireland		13	13
Peter Rhodes		12	12
Andrew Cairns	12		12
Sandy Ellul	11		11

Allan Rigby will fit an Ohlins' race shock and re-valve the front forks before the team returns to MacNamara Park for the Easter Cup. Dorothy will then take the R1 to Mallala on Easter Monday to participate in the Yamaha Tribe ride day.

