



The first round of the 2017 Australian Moto3/125GP Championship was held at Hidden Valley in Darwin on the 7th – 9th July. I had never ridden the Hidden Valley track and I had two days of practice to get used to it.

On Thursday there was two 25 minute practise sessions that were not timed to get use to the track and to learn the lines. I picked up the lines pretty good and I felt comfortable on the track by the end of the day and moved onto the Friday timed practise.

There was three sessions on Friday and they were all timed so we had a good idea where we would be in the races. I was running third for most of the first practise session. The top three were all within a second of each other and I was 0.100 seconds behind second place. The other two practise sessions I continued to drop time and ended up with a quickest lap time of 1.16.918.

On Saturday there was two qualifying's and one race. In the first qualifying I used it as a warm up and then in the later stages of the qualifying I pushed so I would have one good lap time in. In the second qualifying I pushed early on to try and get a good lap in before I got caught up in traffic and because I would not be as worn out. Because the qualifying was 20 minutes long there was people going in and out of pit lane all the time and that would make it hard to get a good lap in if you got stuck behind someone. I finished both the qualifying's with a 1.15.486 putting me in third 0.740 seconds behind the leader and 0.300 seconds behind second.

The first race of the weekend was the best one for me because I got my quickest lap time and I had a 50 second gap over the rider in fourth position. I got a good start and was right with the top three and out of the corners they pulled a little bit on me but under brakes I caught back up. On the fourth lap the leader had a gap and I was behind second place until lap five when he started to pull a gap. I was unable to stay with him because of the torque his bike had so I had to settle for third place 9 seconds behind the winner and four behind second place. I got my fastest lap of the weekend with a 1.15.274.



Photo courtesy of Richard Fly Wills

On Sunday there was a 5 minute warm up and it was the best time to be on the track because it wasn't hot yet. I felt good on the bike and I didn't push too much because it was only a 5 minute warm up. I was second fastest and then we moved into racing with two races left for the weekend.

In the first race I was staying with the top two until I run into the dirt coming on the straight and I lost a good four seconds down the straight because I got a slow run coming onto it. I then knew I had dirt on my tires so I backed off in turn 1. Then I had lost about ten seconds and I just tried to not lose any more time. I was getting a lot of rear slides coming out of the hairpins due to the hot track temperature. I finished third again and did consistent 1.15's all race.

The last race of the day was the worst of the weekend. I got a really good start and was right on the top two but their bikes pulled on me up through turn 2 and 3. I was slowly falling behind but I was still close enough on the third lap to get the slipstream. I was starting to drop off second position and on the sixth lap coming up to a lapped rider I got sent off the track coming into turn 4. Heading straight toward the tyre wall I luckily managed to get the bike turned before I hit it. I lost 20 seconds and fell back to fifth. I moved into third again in two laps and pulled a 5 second gap. I finished third again and I was third in every race and having the top three stay in the same order all weekend means that I'm currently third in the Australian Championship with two more rounds left.

All of the top three Moto3's went under the existing lap record by almost a second. There was a lot of front and rear end slides due to the hot track temperature but the Dunlop tyres held in. The bike ran flawlessly in the hot conditions thanks to the Penrite Gearbox MCGO and Engine MC-4ST oil. I like to say a huge thanks to Dad and Richard Fly Wills for driving 6800km to Darwin and back. I would not be racing if it wasn't for all the preparation Dad puts into the bikes and everything behind the scenes. Also a massive thanks to my sponsors that keep me racing and allow me to go all around Australia racing motorbikes:

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