

Superbike School

Level Two

Monday morning and another 5am wake-up call. 'Wonder what the weather is like outside? I hope it's going to be the same as the weekend – nice, dry cool days, sun out just enough to warm through the leather...'

Making my way down to Phillip Island the fog was so thick you could only see a few feet in front. I was hoping it would become windy to clear the air, not my luck! When I got down to the track the fog was still very thick, so much so I almost ran past the entrance! 'Come on sun, wind, anything!' I was starting to get a little nervous.

I once again took my beloved Trumpy off the trailer and pushed her straight to scrutineering. After that I signed in and then headed off to the classroom for day two of my training. I was a lot more relaxed this time – it helps knowing the layout of the day, where to be and when to be there etc.

Entering the classroom we (the class) were introduced to all members of staff and what their roles will be. This helps a great deal as it gives you direction if you have a problem and or a question that needs answering throughout the day.

The first class was titled 'Reference Points'. When I went around the track on my first training day we were given marked turn-in points for each of the 12 corners on the track. This helped by showing when to turn in and limited my decision making requirements, making it easy to concentrate on turning the Trumpy. This time we were told to look for different reference points around the track, something that stood out, and use it in place of the marked turn-in points.

It took a few laps but the more I went around the track the more I started to notice things, little things that you wouldn't normally think twice about, which could be used as reference points. It could be a skid mark on the track, maybe a tree, or as my coach Warren pointed out for turn 2, the dirt road on the inside of the track. Once I found the reference points that worked for me I found that I could set up for the corner quicker and easier, and I felt more comfortable and relaxed. The thing to keep in mind is that the reference points which work for others might not work for you – this is something you need to discover for yourself.

The second lesson for the day was called 'Changing Lines'. The exercise consisted of riding around the track three times. The first lap I was told to stick to the left side or the inner side of the track for the completed lap, the second lap I was told to stick to the right side or the outer side of the track and the last lap I was told to ride in the very middle.

Until I had completed the drill I had no idea that the track was so wide. When I was riding around the track previously it seemed so small on some of the bends and I felt as if I had very limited space. This lesson was a big eye-opener for me – it showed that there was more room than what I first imagined and until you go out of your comfort zone you cannot see this. When I found the extra space it was a lot easier to find different reference points to use and it felt like the track doubled in size.

The third lesson of the day was the 'Three step'. This is the next stage from the Two Step that I found very helpful in Level One. The Three Step consists of finding the turn point (step one), looking into or through for the apex of the corner (step two) and then picking an exit point (step three).

I had some trouble with this drill. The entry point was ok as I had already marked out most of my reference points for the turn in, but after I found the apex of the turn, from that point on I found it hard to pick the exit point. It took me a few laps but when I relaxed and started the next turn I tried something different. Once I had entered the corner I glanced at where I thought the apex was and then looked at where the track seemed to end (the vanishing point) and that's where I found my exit point. From the Three Step drill I discovered I had been fixating on my reference points, meaning I was not allowing myself to see the next point in time, and was therefore rushing the turn.

The forth lesson of the day was called 'Wide View'. This drill is to help cure target fixation. When I was going through the turns and around the circuit putting my new found knowledge to the test, sometimes I found I had a very narrow and targeted view of the track. It's funny I did not realise that I was doing this until Warren, my coach, around turn 9 gave me the hand signal to open my view and take in the whole track. At that very moment when Warren made that sign it was as if I stopped squinting and looked with both eyes open for the first time. I always found that turn 9 was one of the turns that I concentrated on the most because it is at the top of a hill and you need to wash off a lot of speed for turn 10. It seemed so tight before Warren told me to take it all in and in a moment I found the track was double the size again. I had heaps of room, I don't know what I was so worried about? This drill I need to practice a lot more but I'm just glad I have experienced that moment when the whole track came in to focus.

The fifth and last lesson for the day was the 'Pickup'. The Pickup was great fun and a lot different to the way I normally ride. The Pickup consisted of going through a turn and on the exit of the turn pushing on the handle bar to stand the bike up while you are still leaning through the corner, then moving your body back to your normal riding position. I know it sounds weird but it works really well and you will be surprised how much speed and momentum you can get on the exit of the turn. What this does is shortens the turn so the bike is not lent over for as long and you can get back onto the gas a lot quicker. I noticed the first few times I tried to do this I was not pushing the Trumpy back up as much as I could but a few laps in and I was getting more and more comfortable with the new riding technique. I

found that the Trumpy felt more stable and because of this I was able to lean into the corner more than I had been doing in the previous drills.

The Level Two day I found to be just as fresh and informative as Level One. I can't wait for Level Three!

Everyday Joe.