

## CARLOS CHECA AND ALTHEA RACING TAKE THEIR MOST EXCITING WIN OF THE SBK SEASON TODAY AT IMOLA AS THEY CLOSE IN ON THE WORLD TITLE

Imola (Italy), Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September 2011: Carlos Checa and the Althea Racing team came extremely close to securing the World Superbike title today at the Autodromo di Imola. Thanks to a third place finish in race 1, followed by a memorable win in the second race, Carlos now has a 97-point advantage in the classification, with only 100 points still to play for.

In Race 1 Carlos, starting from pole, was in second position through the first corners. Over the first laps he fought first with Rea and then Laverty, holding fourth position for the best part of the 21-lap race. In the final stages, positioned right behind Sykes, Checa decided to make a break for third, choosing the best moment to do so and getting past the English rider on the penultimate lap. The Spaniard thus closed race 1 in third position.

Sandi, wildcard with the Althea Racing team this weekend, was lying in 15<sup>th</sup> position at the end of the first lap. Over the course of just a couple of laps, and thanks to a strong race pace, he was able to make up four positions to find himself eleventh by the third lap. He fought against Aitchison for tenth position but, losing a little grip in the final stages of the race, he unfortunately lost a couple of positions and crossed the line in thirteenth place, earning his first championship points.

Fifth in race 2 after the first corners, Carlos was hot on the heels of Sykes in fourth. Sandi was once again 15<sup>th</sup> at the end of the first lap. During the first few laps Checa passed Sykes then Camier to take third on the seventh lap, behind Haga and Rea. During the following laps the Althea Racing rider gave it all he had to close the gap that had built up between him and Noriyuki. On the thirteenth lap he made the fastest lap of the race, 1m47.934 (giving him his eighth Pirelli fast lap award of the season) and two laps later he got past Haga for second. Just a few laps from the end of the race Rea stopped due to technical problems and Carlos took the lead. He built up a 4.6 second lead over Haga to take his twelfth win of the season in spectacular style.

Sandi made up some positions in the first half of the race, to then fight hard with a tight group of riders until the finish line. He made another step up in the final stages of the race and closed in twelfth, gaining another three points for the standings.

At the conclusion of the eleventh round of the championship, Carlos now holds 417 points and leads with an advantage of 97 points over Melandri in second position. Ducati continues to lead the manufacturer's championship with 441 points to Aprilia's 376.

Carlos Checa:

"Race 1 was really exciting, I battled hard with Sykes and it was a clean, fun race. In the end I was perhaps a little faster than him and I closed in third, an already very satisfactory result. Then Race 2 was even more thrilling! I'm sorry for Rea who had the pace to win, and for Melandri who was perhaps a little unlucky this weekend but of course I'm extremely happy to have won here at Imola. The championship is not yet over but we are very close to the title. We go on to the next round and what will be, will be. It's been a perfect weekend, I'm over the moon and want to thank the entire team, Ducati, the sponsors and of course all of the fans."

Federico Sandi:

"I enjoyed myself today and would say that I made two good races. I'm happy to have finished in the points zone in both races although it would have been nice to say I had finished inside the top ten. Anyway, this was a great experience, to ride in the World championship at Imola, and I thank my team and of course Genesio for providing me with this important opportunity."

Genesio Bevilacqua, General Manager of Althea Racing:

"We are of course extremely happy with the final results today. Carlos stayed calm and knew exactly how to manage both races. Now we move on to Magny-Cours where we hope that we will be celebrating but, as we all know, anything can happen in racing and so we'll be keeping our feet on the ground for now."

**RESULTS: Race 1** – 1. Rea (Honda); 2. Haga (Aprilia); **3. Checa (Ducati)**. **Gara 2** – **1. Checa (Ducati)**; 2. Haga (Aprilia); 3. Camier (Aprilia)

**CLASSIFICATION: Riders** – **1. Checa (Ducati)** 417; 2. Melandri (Yamaha) 320; 3. Biaggi (Aprilia) 281; 4. Laverty (Yamaha) 256; 5. Haslam (BMW) 187; 6. Camier (Aprilia) 171; 7. Guintoli (Ducati) 158; 8. Haga (Aprilia) 155..... **Manufacturers** – **Ducati 441**; Aprilia 376; Yamaha 375; BMW 232; Kawasaki 192; Honda 162; Suzuki 158



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