MOTORSPORT

Wet Buriram thriller

- Miguel Oliveira (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) wins the OR Thailand Grand Prix
- Marco Bezzecchi (Mooney VR46 Racing Team) sets new circuit all-time lap record of 1'29.671
- New circuit top speed record of 336.4km/h

Miguel Oliveira (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing) claimed a dramatic victory at the 17th round of the 2022 MotoGP™ World Championship in a rain-delayed wet race at the Chang International Circuit in Buriram. Taking second place was Jack Miller (Ducati Lenovo Team), with Francesco Bagnaia (Ducati Lenovo Team) taking the final step on the podium in third.

With the wet conditions at the start, the Medium compound MICHELIN Power Rain tyres were the choice for all but one of the riders.

Following very heavy rain in the preceding days and a gloomy outlook for the weekend, Friday's Free Practice sessions defied the forecast and were dry. This gave the riders a full day to work on dry bike settings, but it also meant them having to push very hard in time attack mode in both sessions to set a top-ten lap time to claim a place in Q2, in the event that there were no more dry sessions before qualifying.

In a frantic final five minutes of FP1, Soft rear MICHELIN Power Slicks were fitted, and Marc Marquez (Honda Repsol Team) led the way with a lap time of 1'30.523. The times in were very close, with the top-ten riders being covered by just three-tenths of a second. FP2 saw a repeat of the morning session in terms of the search for fast dry lap times, but with Johann Zarco (Prima Pramac Racing) taking top spot with a lap time of 1'30.281.

Saturday was also dry, with patches of blue sky above the circuit. This saw the riders working on race pace with the different compound slicks for most of the session before switching to time attack mode yet again. Jorge Martin (Prima Pramac Racing) topped the lap times in FP3 with a 1'30.205, and four Ducati riders clocked a new circuit top speed record of 336.4km/h.

In a thrilling Q2 the pace increased in-line with the ambient temperature, with lap times falling as the riders fought for places at the front of the grid. Pole position

was taken by rookie Marco Bezzecchi – his first ever MotoGP pole position – with a new circuit all-time lap record of 1.29.671, followed by Jorge Martin and Francesco Bagnaia who took second and third places on the grid respectively.

Speaking after the race, Piero Taramasso, Michelin Two Wheel Motorsport Manager, said: "This was always going to be an interesting race weekend for us, and the results were very positive with consistently fast lap times, two riders under the previous all-time lap record, and good rider feedback throughout the weekend. In addition, both the Soft and Medium rear slicks worked very well and were viable options for a dry race.

"These very difficult conditions for the race, and the delayed start gave the riders much to think about, but despite having only ridden on slicks during the weekend, our MICHELIN Power Rain tyres gave them the confidence and grip they needed to push for the victory from the moment the lights went out for the start. Even though the track started to dry in the latter stages, the rain tyre performance remained very good, ensuring an exciting race right to the chequered flag."

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