



A perfect balance of bike and team was the key to winning the series championship.

JONATHAN REA

IN FOCUS



2015 WORLD SUPERBIKE CHAMPION

Special Interview

In 2015, the Kawasaki Racing Team won the much coveted World Superbike (WorldSBK) series championship. Jonathan Rea, who joined the team from the 2015 season, rode the Ninja ZX-10R and won 14 races.



It was an overwhelming victory worthy of a machine developed with the goal of dominating the circuit. Riding this machine, Jonathan Rea won 14 out of a total of 26 races to become the series champion for the first time in his career. He finished on the podium 23 times, setting a new record for Kawasaki, and also won more races than any other Kawasaki riders have ever managed to achieve in one season. To top off his sensational season, he even broke the record of consecutive WorldSBK podium finishes.

WorldSBK is the world's top motorcycle race in which competitors use machines based on commercially available motorcycles. Rea, who joined the Kawasaki Racing Team (KRT) in 2015, showed excellent chemistry with the Ninja ZX-10R and fully brought out its enormous potential, propelling the team to victory that same year. It was also a victory that seemed to promise more triumphs to come.

"First of all, I would like to thank all my teammates," says Rea. "Each one of us is a member of the championship team, and we are all happy with this result. The Ninja ZX-10R is packed with the outstanding technologies of Kawasaki, which creates all kinds of products, and we also have excellent engineers we can trust on the team. We could not have won the championship without this perfect balance of bike and team. The great chemistry between KRT's bike and my riding style was certainly a factor that helped me win 14 races in 2015. But more than anything else, it is the strong bond that I was able to develop with my teammates that made this happen. I would like to keep this good relationship going. I also want to thank my family for all the support they've given me. If it were not for my father, I would not be here today. He is the reason I started riding motorcycles, and his technical advice has always been an emotional support." Rea's father was also a motorcycle racer, and he started taking Rea out to the paddocks at the age of two. At the age of five, Rea started riding a BMX. "My father believed that I would one day become a champion when I was around five. He

was happy for me when I joined KRT, and, of course, winning the championship was a truly joyous moment for my father as well. I still ride a BMX at least three days a week during the off-season as part of my training. But now my training mainly consists of riding a road bike. I ride at least 50 km a day."



Jonathan Rea

A British motorcycle racer born in Northern Ireland, and the 2015 World Superbike (WorldSBK) champion. Made his WorldSBK debut in 2008 at the Portimao season finale (round 14), where he finished 4th and 15th. Notched his first win in race 2 of the 8th round of the 2009 season at San Marino (Misano, Italy). Won the Suzuka 8-hours race held in 2012.

Rea says riding a bicycle has a positive effect on competing in motorcycle races both physically and mentally. "While in races I ride at 300 km/h, motorcycles and road bikes actually have some things in common. For example, when you ride a road bike, you try not to waste too much energy. If you ride a motorcycle with the same frame of mind, you try to eliminate moves that needlessly wear out the tires, and you can increase stability."

His daily training is not the only thing that underpins the outstanding stability that characterizes Rea's riding performance. The inherent stability of the Ninja ZX-10R is also a major

factor. "When I first rode the Ninja ZX-10R," says Rea, "I was so impressed by its stability. Even when I was trying to reduce the lap time, it was so stable that it felt almost like everything was in slow motion. When I am racing aggressively, it feels like I can get even more power out of this machine, and that makes me want to ride it even more. The bike has an excellent foundation, and it has no weaknesses. It is an amazing machine that is perfectly balanced on all points. I feel that I have finally met a bike that fits perfectly with my riding style."

Rea shared his goal for 2016: "I started my pre-season preparations earlier than usual this year. I'm 1 kg lighter than I was last year, and I'm already in my best shape. I know that being the defending champion we will be heading into a tougher season than the previous one, but I will enjoy the race and aim to finish at the top with great teamwork."

Jonathan Rea, executing a sharp turn at the top of the race.

