



PRESS RELEASE



16 AUGUST 2026 · 19:00 MANX MOTOR CYCLE CLUB

RAIN STOPS FIRST QUALIFYING SESSION AS JOHNNY STEWART SETS BLISTERING PACE

AN OVERCAST SKY WAS THE BACKDROP TO A SHORTER THAN EXPECTED FIRST SESSION OF THE 2026 MANX GRAND PRIX AS THIS YEAR'S CLASS OF RIDERS GOT THEIR FIRST TASTE OF THE MOUNTAIN COURSE.

An overcast sky was the backdrop for the first session of the 2026 Manx Grand Prix as this year's class of riders got their first taste of the Mountain Course.

Sportbike and Supersport riders were able to get their first laps under their belt before deteriorating conditions around the course cut the day short.

A red flag was brought out after Salvatore Sallustro crashed at Greeba Bridge.

The Italian was taken by air-med to Nobles Hospital for further assessment and to receive treatment.

Newcomers

After a five minute delay the 25 newcomers were led away in groups of three to get their eye in around the famous 37.73 mile course.

Richard 'Milky' Quayle led the first group away made up of Andrew Herd, Aaron West and his son Illiam Quayle.

Unfortunately for the American Aaron West, who has travelled all the way from Castle Pines in Colorado, his bike failed to get going on the start forcing him to pull in at the bottom of pit lane.

Nathan Harrison took Kevin Lavery, James McLaren and the highly anticipated Laurent Hoffman, winner of last six IRRC superbike races, for their first sighting laps while travelling marshal Tony Duncan took Mauro Poncini, Aaron Cooke and Andrew Coulter out.

Gabriel Pons, August Kroon and two-time European Hillclimb Championship runner-up Thomas Altendorfer also got their first taste of the mountain course with the legendary John McGuinness passing his knowledge on to Arran Hands, Markus Karlsson and Jordan Larkin.

Wally Jacobs, Bailey Harker and Ashley Robson were taken out by Derran Slous as fellow travelling marshal Jonny Heginbotham took out Moritz Klaus, Stephen Bednarek and Andreas Racing Association 600cc champion Kyle Casement.

The final four newcomers away were Daniel Pearson and Shane Doran, both led away by Dom Herbertson on the TAS Racing Kawasaki ZXR750 while Don Gilbert showed the ropes to the German duo of Lorenz Rothaermel and

Chris Meyer.

Sportbike and Junior qualifying

The first qualifying session to get away was for the sportbike and Junior Manx Grand Prix.

Last year's Supertwin race, now renamed as the Sportbike class, saw Lewis Arrowsmith take the victory with Toby Shann following in second and Manxman Jamie Williams rounding out the podium.

In the Junior race, Jamie Williams secured his second Manx Grand Prix victory while Toby Shann took another second place finish with Michael Gahan coming home in third.

Johnny Stewart was the man to beat after the first session of 2026, setting a 112.852mph lap on his Aprilia RS660 almost 20 seconds quicker than Eddy Wormald who clocked a 111.179mph lap.

Liam Chawke and Andrew Farrell both lapped at over 110mph while Kevin Lavery from Dungannon was the fastest newcomer with a blistering 107.498mph lap.

Kevin comes into the Manx Grand Prix as a newcomer to the Mountain Course and is still relatively new to road racing itself. Despite his limited experience, he has already shown plenty of promise on the Northern Irish roads, establishing himself as a race winner. With his road racing career very much on an upward trajectory, Kevin is certainly one to watch as he makes his Mountain Course debut.

Two-time Andreas Racing Association (ARA) supersport champion, Kyle Casement was the second fastest newcomer with a best lap of 102.113 onboard three time ARA supersport champion Francisco Faraldo's Aprilia RS660 while the Swiss Mauro Poncini set a time of 101.233 to be third fastest newcomer.

Supersport and Senior qualifying

Following the Sportbikes was the qualifying sessions for the Supersport and Senior races.

Jamie Williams was victorious in the 2025 running of the Supersport race as he broke his way into the Tommy Club setting a 120.524mph lap to beat Caomhan Canny in second place and Toby Shann in third.

The 2025 Senior Manx Grand Prix proved to be one of the greatest races in memory after Caomhan Canny beat Chris Cook to the crown by just half a second while Jamie Williams finished third to round out an impressive week from the Manxman.

After topping the Sportbike charts earlier in the day Johnny Stewart showed no signs of slowing down.

He posted an impressive 117.018mph lap to top the session, ten seconds up on the 20-year-old Lee Hara who set a personal best 115.942mph lap in just his second year racing around the mountain.

Eddy Wormald set a 113.975mph lap to round off the top three positions, closely followed by Liam Chawke, Gaz Evans and Harley Rushton who all set laps of 112mph.

IRRC superstar and Manx Grand Prix newcomer Laurent Hoffmann impressed, setting a fastest lap of 111.094mph, good enough for 14th best overall.

Kevin Lavery continued his fast form from the sportbike session setting a 110.258mph lap while German Moritz Klaus was the third fastest newcomer on the supersport machine with a 109.162mph lap.

Action is due to continue around the course tomorrow evening with roads set to close around the course at 6pm.

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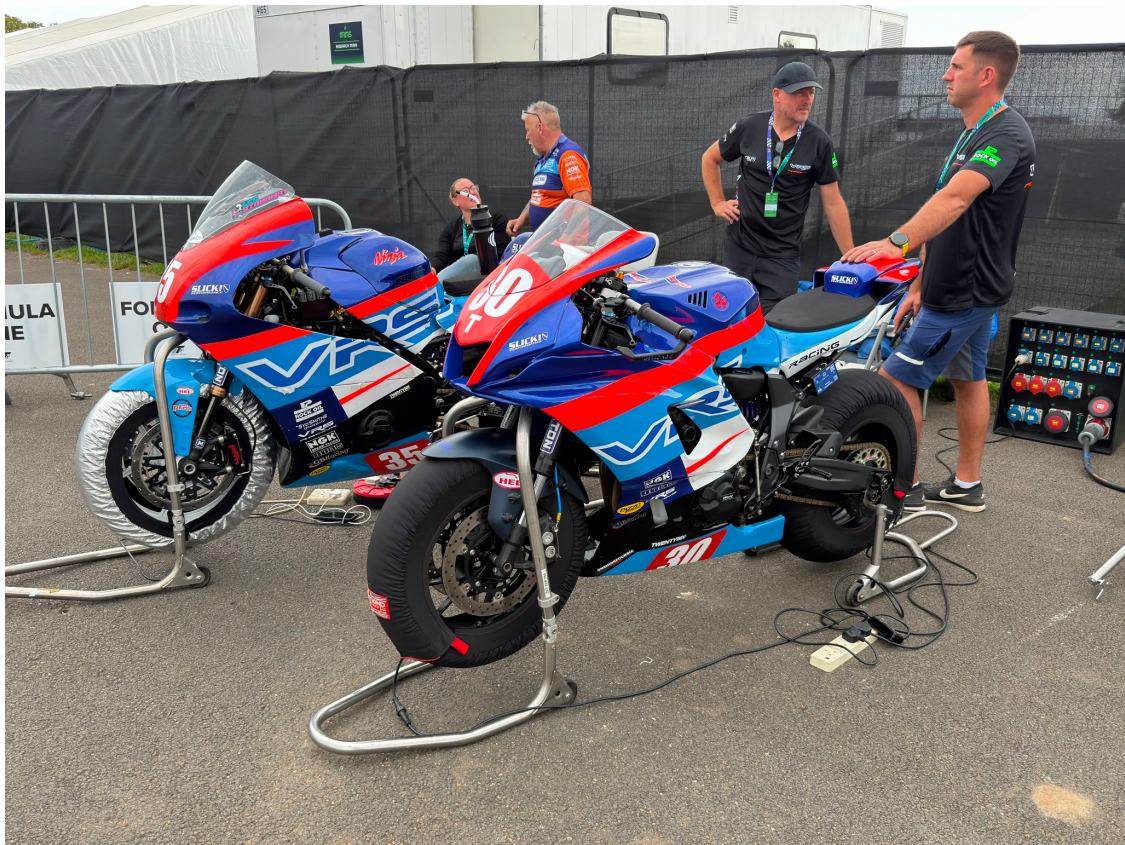
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