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#SimplyTheBez: Marco Bezzecchi sets Friday's fastest time at the LIQUI MOLY Motorcycle Grand Prix of Germany

- Marc Marquez puts on a show at the Sachsenring
- Lukas Tulovic misses out on the top 20 in Moto2
- New lap record in Moto3

Hohenstein-Ernstthal. Italian Marco Bezzecchi (Mooney VR46 Racing Team) kicked off the 2023 LIQUI MOLY Motorcycle Grand Prix of Germany with the fastest time of the day in practice on a dramatic Friday. The protégé of MotoGP legend Valentino Rossi topped the timings list after two practice sessions with a lap time of 1:20.271 minutes. He was followed by Spaniard Jorge Martin from the Prima Pramac Racing Team and his compatriot Aleix Espargaró (Aprilia Racing).

“On the whole, it was a pretty good day. However, I am still lacking a little when it comes to pace and feel. Up until the final push, I was not really happy with the bike. The steering response was not right, and I did not ride cleanly as a result. Fortunately, the guys made a very helpful modification at the last minute,” said Bezzecchi.

Italian world champion Francesco Bagnaia (Ducati Lenovo Team) was fourth fastest on Friday, ahead of his team-mate from last year, Australian Jack Miller (Red Bull KTM Factory Racing). German reserve rider Jonas Folger (GasGas Factory Racing Tech3) was 20th after the two practice sessions. Superstar Marc Marquez from the Repsol Honda Team provided plenty of action and a big moment. The Spaniard managed to rescue the bike on several occasions when he looked like crashing, before eventually running out of luck and hitting the deck, taking the Pramac Ducati of Frenchman Johann Zarco with him. Marquez was 14th fastest, meaning the eight-time world champion must take to the track in Q1 on Saturday morning.

“We will see how strong we really are tomorrow,” said Marquez after the practices. “We must definitely make some big changes and improve. I was given many warnings today, but in the case of my crash it was the other rider’s job to stay out of the firing line. You can crash very quickly there, because the front wheel locks so fast. Particularly when you are pushing at the end of the practice session. We were both very lucky not to be hurt.”

23rd place for Moto2 rider Lukas Tulovic on the opening day

Spain’s Pedro Acosta came out on top in the middle class, Moto2, on Friday. The rider from the Red Bull KTM Ajo team set the day’s fastest time of 1:23.979 minutes in the morning’s first practice session. Second place went to his compatriot Alonso Lopez (MB Conveyors SpeedUp), followed by Manuel Gonzalez (Correos Prepago Yamaha VR46 MasterCamp), also from Spain. Local favourite Lukas Tulovic (LIQUI MOLY Husqvarna Intact GP) from Eberbach ended the first day of practices in 23rd place. Tulovic did fare far better in the second session, finishing eighth on a drying track.

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The German, who celebrated his 23rd birthday on Thursday, ended the day 1.501 seconds behind Acosta. "This morning was a tough practice. The track is good, and I hit my points and the line well. I was just lacking a little aggression in two or three corners. The tyres made it a bit difficult for me, particularly because we were using very hard compounds on the rear. They did not offer much grip and I had never really ridden on them before. For that reason, I found it hard to judge how hard I could push when exiting corners," said Tulovic.

In Moto3, the previous lap record fell on Friday. Japanese rider Ayumu Sasaki from the LIQUI MOLY Husqvarna Intact GP Team took 1:25.840 minutes for his fastest lap of the Sachsenring. As the track was wet in the second practice session at midday, there was no improvement on that time. The second fastest time came courtesy of Turkey's Deniz Öncü (Red Bull KTM Ajo), with Spaniard Jaume Masia (Leopard Racing) third. Sasaki's Dutch team-mate Collin Veijer ended the day 14th fastest.

MotoE, the electric motorcycle racing series, held qualifying for its two races on Friday evening. Two-time champion Jordi Torres (Openbank Aspar Team) from Spain secured pole position on a damp track with a time of 1:34.601 minutes. Starting alongside him on the front row is his compatriot Héctor Garzó (Dynavolt Intact GP MotoE) and Brazilian Eric Granado (LCR E-Team). Swiss rider Randy Krummenacher (Dynavolt Intact GP MotoE), the only German-speaking rider, will start from seventh on the grid.

Remaining tickets for one of Germany's biggest individual sporting events are available via all the usual channels: from the online ticket shop at adac.de/motogp, by phone on 03723/8099111, or by E-mail to info@sachsenring-event.de.

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