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SAVE PRINT LICENSE ARTICLE

Australia's rising star of the motor racing track eyes third win at Warwick



Tony Moore

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Gold Coast motorcycling's rising star Tom Toparis has his feet on the ground, but hopes this month's Supersports championship round at Warwick will push him to the next level.

And from there, he has his eye on motorcycle racing's Grand Prix; the motorcycle racing level that made Aussies Mick Doohan and Wayne Gardner household names.



Tom Toparis records fastest lap time at Warwick's raceway ahead of round five of the Australian Supersports championships. Photo: Russell Colvin

The Goulburn-born 17-year-old, who began in local motocross racing, has already earned plenty of plaudits for his wins in late 2016 and early 2017.

Toparis now rides for the Gold Coast's Cube Racing Team and has taken pole position in previous Supersports category championship rounds at Goulburn's Wakefield Raceway earlier in 2017.

In 2017 he has [also won two rounds of the Supersports Championships, which cover the 600cc, 675cc and 750cc bikes.](#)



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Tom Toparis. Photo: Russell Colvin

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"In round two, I won the first race of the Australian Supersports Championships at Wakefield (Raceway) in New South Wales and then I won round four in Darwin," he said.

"So that's given me two wins out of four rounds this year."



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With this month's round five of the seven-round series beginning at Warwick's Morgan Park Raceway, Toparis was confident of a third win.

Last week in practice rounds, he set the fastest-ever round at the Morgan Park raceway, setting a sizzling 1:16.098 lap record in the final 30-minute session, before this weekend's racing begins.

He's hoping to get his time down to the "high" 1:15 barrier when racing starts between August 25-27.

His main rival is fellow 17-year-old Ted Collins, riding a Suzuki GSX-R 600, who is currently leading the 2017 championships.

"He's a good rider and he's a good competitor," he said.

"But there's still three rounds to go, so anything can really happen in the sport.

"It only takes one mistake and we are really racing neck and neck down to the last three rounds.

"So I am just going to try to keep it consistent and do a lot of racing from the front and see what happens."

Toparis wants to win the Australian Supersports Championship (600cc to 750cc) and push into Superbikes (over 1000cc).

"Long term I want to be in the premier class in Australia and racing at the front of that, but the dream would be to race overseas," he said.

"That would be after racing in the Australian SuperBike Championships, so if that opened doors overseas, that would be pretty crazy."

The connection to Gold Coast's Cube Racing is his home town of Goulburn, where an even younger Toparis first met Cube Racing owner Ben Henry.

"Basically he chucked me on to one of his little Ninja 300s to have a race in the production class," he said.

"That was at the start of last year, 2016, and we just started racing from there and it was such a massive advantage to have him there every time I would come into the pits."

Toparis quickly shifted through the Ninja 300 production class; the fourth places shifted to thirds, then seconds and eventually wins towards the end of 2016.

"We started winning towards the end of the year and then the MotoGP was at Phillip Island at the end of the year," he said.

"And in the Australian support races there was no 300cc class; there was only the 600cc and SuperBike (1000cc and above)."

That led to Toparis racing the 600cc, where he did better than his team Cube Racing ever believed.

"Which meant I landed on a Kawasaki Supersport 600 for this year, which is where I am right now," he said.

Motorbike enthusiasts and Supersports fans are watching very, very closely.

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