

#14 Grand Prix of Japan

Motegi

MotoGP facts & figures

■ Honda riders won the first three MotoGP races at Motegi, followed by three wins for Ducati and Yamaha then winning for the last two years.

■ Last year's victory in Japan was only the second time **Jorge Lorenzo** had finished on the podium at the Motegi circuit, the other was his 3rd place finish in the 250cc race in 2006. He was 4th in the MotoGP race in Japan in 2008 after qualifying on pole; the last MotoGP pole by a rider using Michelin tyres.

■ **Dani Pedrosa** has a great record at Motegi in the smaller classes with four podium finishes, including victory in the 125cc race in 2002 and on a 250cc machine in 2004. In the 2006 MotoGP race at Motegi he was 7th after a clash with Edwards at the second corner, which put him down in 15th place at the end of the first lap. In 2007 he qualified on pole but crashed out on lap 15. In 2008 he finished third and repeated the result last year in spite of qualifying down in 11th place on the grid.



■ Motegi is one of **Casey Stoner's** least successful circuits and his second place finish in 2008 is his only podium there since moving up to the MotoGP class. Stoner has never qualified on pole at Motegi in any class of GP racing.

■ **Valentino Rossi** has finished on the podium on eight occasions in the premier-class at Motegi. However his victory there in 2008 was his first win at the circuit on a 4-stroke MotoGP machine, his other victory there was in 2001 on a 500cc 2-stroke. He qualified on pole at Motegi last year for the first time, but finished second behind his team mate Lorenzo. Rossi's sixth place finish at the Aragon Grand Prix is his worst dry weather race finish since he was 7th at the Czech GP in 2007.

Twelfth year of Grand Prix racing at Motegi

This year's Grand Prix will be the 12th GP event to be held at the Motegi circuit. The circuit has been used for Grand Prix racing every year since the first visit in 1999. Below is a brief history of the Grand Prix events that have taken place at the Motegi circuit:

1999/Japanese GP – On the first visit by the Grand Prix circus to Motegi, Kenny Roberts won a very wet 500cc race, from pole position, riding a Suzuki. Second was reigning world champion Mick Doohan with hometown hero Norick Abe finishing third. There was also much to entertain the home crowd in the smaller classes with Shinya Nakano (Yamaha) winning the 250cc race from Tohru Ukawa, and Masao Azuma (Honda) winning the 125cc race from Hideyuki Nakajoh.

2000/Pacific GP – Just one week after clinching the world title in Rio, Kenny Roberts repeated his win of the previous year at Motegi – this time in the dry from Valentino Rossi who was in his debut year in the premier-class. The focus of interest for the Japanese spectators was the race long battle in the 250cc race between the eventual winner Daijiro Kato on a Honda and Shinya Nakano riding a Yamaha. Roberto Locatelli (Aprilia) won the 125cc race to clinch the world title.

2001/Pacific GP – Valentino Rossi scored his first victory at Motegi from Alex Barros and Loris Capirossi in the 500cc race. This was the last occasion that all three riders on the podium rode the Honda V-four two-stroke NSR500 – the machine that has had more success than any other in Grand Prix history. Once again the smaller classes were won by home riders; Tetsuya Harada the 250cc class on an Aprilia and Youichi Ui the 125cc race riding a Derbi.

2002/Pacific GP – Alex Barros won the race on his debut ride on the V5 Honda four-stroke. Second was Valentino Rossi followed by Loris Capirossi taking the last ever podium in MotoGP by a two-stroke machine. Toni Elias (Aprilia) became the first non-Japanese rider to win in the 250cc class at Motegi. Third in this race was Yuki Takahashi who was having his first ride in a 250cc Grand Prix aged just 18. Dani Pedrosa (Honda) dominated the 125cc race by winning from pole and setting a new lap record.

2003/Pacific GP – In an all Honda podium, Max Biaggi won from Valentino Rossi with Nicky Hayden finishing third – his first podium in his debut year in MotoGP. Makoto Tamada had crossed the line third but was disqualified for riding "in an irresponsible manner causing danger to other riders" when making an overtaking move on Sete Gibernau. Spanish riders again took the honours in the smaller classes, with Toni Elias (Aprilia) repeating his victory of the previous year in the 250cc race and Hector Barbera (Aprilia) winning the 125cc race ahead of current MotoGP rivals Casey Stoner and Andrea Dovizioso.

2004/Japanese GP – After six riders were eliminated from the race in a first corner incident, Bridgestone had two riders finish together on the podium in a MotoGP race for the first time – winner Makoto Tamada (Honda) and third place finisher Shinya Nakano (Kawasaki). This was Kawasaki's first podium in the premier-class since Kork Ballington finished third at Imatra in Finland in 1981 riding the square-four two-stroke machine. Youichi Ui finished 15th on his MotoGP debut riding the Harris WCM machine to become the first rider since Anton Mang in 1977 to score points in both the 125cc and premier-class of Grand Prix racing in the same season. In the 250cc race Dani Pedrosa (Honda) won from fellow Spaniard Toni Elias, while the 125cc honours were taken by Andrea Dovizioso (Honda) on his way to winning the world title.

2005/Japanese GP – Loris Capirossi (Ducati) dominated the MotoGP class by winning from pole and setting a new lap record. This was the first win in the premier-class by a non-Japanese motorcycle in a race held in Japan. Max Biaggi finished second – the last of his 111 podium appearances in Grand Prix racing. Hiroshi Aoyama gave the home fans plenty to cheer by winning the 250cc race riding a Honda and Mika Kallio (KTM) won the 125cc race.

2006/Japanese GP – The three winners from 2005 all repeated their success, the only change being that this time Aoyama was riding a KTM in the 250cc class. This is the last occasion that a Japanese rider won a GP in Japan.

2007/Japanese GP – Loris Capirossi took the MotoGP win for the third successive year, in drying conditions, resulting in riders changing bikes during the race. Capirossi's team mate Casey Stoner finished 6th to clinch the world title. Mika Kallio (KTM) won for the third successive year at Motegi – this time in the 250cc race. Mattia Pasini (Aprilia) won the very wet 125cc race in which there were 20 crashes.

2008/Japanese GP – Valentino Rossi won his first MotoGP race at Motegi, to clinch his sixth world title in the premier-class. Marco Simoncelli (Gilera) won the 250cc race to give Dunlop their 200th consecutive 250cc GP win. Stefan Bradl (Aprilia) scored his second 125cc win of the year.

2009/Japanese GP – In 2009 the Japanese Grand Prix was the second round of the year and held in April. Jorge Lorenzo (Yamaha) won for the first time in any class at Motegi; Alvaro Bautista (Aprilia) won the 250cc race and Andrea Iannone (Aprilia) in the 125cc class. Each of these riders left Japan leading the world championship standings, but none of the three went on to take the world title.



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■ **Andrea Dovizioso's** best result at Motegi while competing in the smaller classes was victory in the 125cc race in 2004 from pole position. His 2nd place finish in 2007 was his only podium at Motegi in his three years in the 250cc class. On his first appearance at the circuit on a MotoGP machine in 2008, he finished 9th and last year was 5th.

■ **Ben Spies** has been both the top rookie and best non-factory rider at the last five MotoGP races. Spies has never previously raced at the Motegi circuit.

■ **Nicky Hayden's** single podium finish at Motegi was in 2003, his rookie year in MotoGP, and was his very first top three finish in Grand Prix racing. Last year he was knocked off on the first lap by **Yuki Takahashi**.

■ **Randy de Puniet** finished second in 2007 at the Japanese GP riding a Kawasaki – one of only two podium finishes he has had since moving up to the MotoGP class at the start of 2006. He has had less success at Motegi since moving to Honda machinery, finishing 12th in 2008 and 11th last year after qualifying down in 16th place on the grid.

■ **Marco Melandri's** only podium at Motegi in the MotoGP class was 3rd in 2006 when riding a Honda.

■ **Marco Simoncelli's** victory in the 250cc class in 2008, from pole position, is the only time he has finished in the top five at the Motegi circuit. Last year in Japan he again qualified on pole for the 250cc race and was leading the race when he suffered a front tyre deflation after running over a rumble strip, dropping him back to finish in 17th.

■ **Colin Edwards' best** result at Motegi was his sixth place finish in 2005. Last year in Japan he qualified well in 5th place on the grid but suffered machinery problems early in the race that put him back to the tail of the field, before eventually finishing in 12th.

■ Motegi has been **Loris Capirossi's** most successful circuit in the premier-class, having finished on the podium five times, including three successive race victories in 2005/06/07 when riding for Ducati. In addition he has started from pole three times at Motegi – in 2001 riding the two-stroke Honda and in 2005 and 2006 on the Ducati. Capirossi's victory in Japan in 2007 was the last time he stood on the top step of the podium.

Casey Stoner closing-in on all-time greats

Casey Stoner's first win of the year at the Grand Prix of Aragon, was his 21st MotoGP victory. As shown in the following table, this is just one less win than three all-time greats of racing; Geoff Duke and John Surtees who both won the 500cc world title on four occasions, and three times world champions Kenny Roberts.

RIDERS WITH MOST WINS IN MOTOGP/500CC CLASS

78. Valentino Rossi
68. Giacomo Agostini
54. Mick Doohan
37. Mike Hailwood
31. Eddie Lawson
25. Kevin Schwantz
24. Wayne Rainey
22. Geoff Duke
Kenny Roberts
John Surtees
21. Casey Stoner



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■ **Hector Barbera** won the 125cc race at Motegi back in 2003 riding an Aprilia. He suffered a heavy crash in 2008 when practicing for the 250cc GP at Motegi, which resulted in two fractured vertebrae that ended his season.

■ **Aleix Espargaro's** best result at the Motegi circuit is seventh in the 250cc class in 2008. He did not compete at the Japanese GP last year as he was without a Grand Prix ride at that time.

■ **Alvaro Bautista** has had good results for the last couple of years in the 250cc class at Motegi; in 2008 he was a close 2nd after setting a new lap record on the last lap in an attempt to take the win and last year he won by almost six seconds.

■ **Hiroshi Aoyama** has twice won the 250cc GP at Motegi; in 2005 on a Honda and in 2006 on a KTM.

■ **Mika Kallio** has had three race wins at Motegi; the 125cc races in 2005 & 06, and the 250cc race in 2007, all when riding for KTM. Last year on his first race at the circuit on a MotoGP machine he finished an impressive 8th and second Ducati across the line, after qualifying down in 17th place on the grid.

Moto2 class & figures

■ **Toni Elias'** first GP win in the 250cc class was at the Motegi circuit in 2002 and he repeated the win 12 months later from pole position. He set the fastest lap of the race on his way to finishing third in the wet MotoGP race at Motegi in 2007. The last two years have been less successful for Elias at Motegi in the MotoGP class; in 2008 he finished 16th after running off the track on lap seven and then last year he was 15th having suffered a crash on lap six and re-starting.

■ **Julian Simon** has had good results for the last couple of years at Motegi; in 2008 he was 4th which was his equal best ever result in the 250cc class, and last year he finished second on his way to taking the 125cc world title.

■ **Andrea Iannone** won the 125cc race in Japan last year after starting on pole position. Iannone's victory in the Moto2 race at the Aragon Grand Prix continued his great success record when finishing on the podium; he has now won seven times from the ten podium finishes in his Grand Prix career.

Toni Elias could take world title in Japan

Although Toni Elias only took fourth place at the Aragon Grand Prix, it was enough to give him an opportunity of clinching the world title in Japan. In order to win the world title he must win the race in Japan with the results of other riders being as detailed below:

Julian Simon must finish no higher than fifteenth and
Andrea Iannone must finish no higher than twelfth and
Thomas Luthi must finish no higher than third.

Toni Elias has a tremendous season in the first year of the Moto2 class and his domination of the championship so far is illustrated by the following statistics:

He is the only rider in the class to have scored points at every Moto2 race so far in 2010.
He has had six Moto2 race victories in 2010, twice as many as the next best rider Andrea Iannone.
His tenth place finish at Silverstone is the only time this year where he has failed to finish inside the top five.
Toni Elias has not surrendered the lead in the championship since he went to the top of the table for the first time when he won the third race of the year at Le Mans.



Closest 125cc title battle of recent times

Following twelve rounds of the 125cc season, the top three riders in the championship standings are covered by just 11 points. This is the smallest ever margin covering the top three riders in the 125cc title race after 12 races since the current scoring system was introduced in 1993. Each of the top three riders in the championship have headed the table during the season and the position of each rider in the championship standings together with points' total after each race this year, is shown in the following table.

Qatar	1st – Terol – 25 pts	3rd – Marquez – 16 pts	4th – Espargaro – 13 pts
Spain	1st – Terol – 45 pts	2nd – Espargaro – 38 pts	8th – Marquez – 16 pts
France	1st – Terol – 65 pts	2nd – Espargaro – 63 pts	5th – Marquez – 32 pts
Italy	1st – Terol – 85 pts	2nd – Espargaro – 79 pts	3rd – Marquez – 57 pts
Britain	1st – Espargaro – 99 pts	2nd – Terol – 98 pts	3rd – Marquez – 82 pts
Dutch TT	1st – Terol – 118 pts	2nd – Espargaro – 115 pts	3rd Marquez – 107 pts
Catalunya	1st – Marquez – 132 pts	2nd – Espargaro – 131 pts	3rd – Terol – 118 pts
Germany	1st – Marquez – 157 pts	2nd – Espargaro – 131 pts	3rd – Terol – 118 pts
Czech	1st – Marquez – 166 pts	2nd – Espargaro – 151 pts	3rd – Terol – 143 pts
Indianapolis	1st – Marquez – 172 pts	2nd – Terol – 168 pts	3rd – Espargaro – 167 pts
San Marino	1st – Marquez – 197 pts	2nd – Terol – 188 pts	3rd – Espargaro – 177 pts
Aragon	1st – Terol – 208 pts	2nd – Espargaro – 202 pts	3rd – Marquez – 197 pts

Some observations from this table show how the championship fortunes of each rider has fluctuated during the year:

The early leader of the series was Nico Terol who, after the opening three races, had a 33 point advantage over Marc Marquez who at that time was 5th in championship standings.

Following the French GP, Marc Marquez won the next five races to open up a 26 point lead in the championship over Espargaro with Terol (having crashed at the Catalan Grand Prix and missed the race in Germany due to injury) back in third place, 39 points behind Marquez.

After returning from injury, Terol has finished either first or second in each of the past four races to re-take the lead in the championship that he last had following the Dutch TT.

Although Pol Espargaro has only briefly topped the championship table, following the British Grand Prix, he has been most consistent with his challenge for the title, never having been more than 26 points behind the championship leader.

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■ Three years ago **Mattia Pasini** won the 125cc GP at Motegi from pole position and last year he was third in the 250cc race – behind two riders who have since moved up to the MotoGP class.

■ **Stefan Bradl's** victory in the 125cc GP race at Motegi in 2008 was the last time he stood on the top step of the podium. He finished 4th last year in the 125cc race in Japan, equalling his best result of 2009.

■ **Gabor Talmacsi** finished fourth last year at the Japanese GP in just his second race in the 250cc class. His third place finish at the Aragon Grand Prix was the first time that he had stood on a podium in any class since winning the 125cc race in Malaysia in 2008.

125cc facts & figures

■ **Nico Terol's** best result from four starts in the 125cc class at the Motegi circuit is 5th in 2008. Terol has finished either first or second in nine of the ten races that he has finished this year.



■ **Pol Espargaro** finished third last year in Japan and is the only rider currently competing in the 125cc class who has had a podium finish at the Motegi circuit.

■ **Marc Marquez** has made just two previous appearances at the Motegi circuit; two years ago he crashed out of the race on the first lap and last year he finished 5th after qualifying in tenth place on the grid.

■ Motegi is one of **Bradley Smith's** less successful circuits and his best result there is the eighth place finish in the 125cc race in 2006, which was his best result in his debut year in Grand Prix racing. He crashed out in Japan in 2007, retired from the race with mechanical problems in 2008 and last year was 10th in mixed weather conditions.

■ **Danny Webb** led the 125cc GP at Motegi last year up to lap twelve when the track conditions became unsuitable for his full wet weather tyres.

Grand Prix racing numbers

129 – The points' difference between championship leader Jorge Lorenzo and Casey Stoner in third place is 129. This means that the only two riders who can now win the MotoGP world title are Jorge Lorenzo and Dani Pedrosa. This will be only the second time in the 62-year history of Grand Prix racing that a Spanish rider has won the premier-class title, the other occasion being in 1999 when Alex Criville won the 500cc title.

49 – At the Aragon Grand Prix two Ducati riders finished in the top three. Before this there had been 49 MotoGP races without two Ducati riders finishing together on the podium, since the Australian GP in 2007 when Casey Stoner won and Loris Capirossi finished second.

47 – Prior to the race at Aragon there had been 47 successive MotoGP races with at least one Yamaha rider on the podium. The last time that there was no Yamaha rider on the podium was at the final MotoGP race of 2007 at Valencia.

25 – Dani Pedrosa celebrates his 25th birthday on the Wednesday before the Japanese Grand Prix.

22 – Spanish riders have won the last twenty-two 125cc Grand Prix races. The last non-Spanish winner in the 125cc class was Andrea Iannone at the Catalan Grand Prix last year. This is the longest sequence of successive 125cc GP wins by one nation in the 62 years history of Grand Prix racing.

20 – Dominique Aegerter celebrates his 20th birthday on the day before practice starts for the Japanese Grand Prix.

9 – The victory by Pol Espargaro at the Aragon GP was the ninth victory of the year in the 125cc class by Derbi riders. This equals the highest number of wins achieved in a single season (1988) by Derbi in the 125cc class.

8 – Valentino Rossi has now made eight MotoGP starts without taking a win, which is his longest barren run since winning for the first time in the premier-class at Donington in 2000.

