

DiSalvo's Secret to Winning: Youth and Experience

Born on Two Wheels

Setting records around the globe for being the youngest American in 125 and 250 World Grand Prix racing was nothing unusual for Yamaha's Jason DiSalvo. That's because Jason started riding motorcycles before he was two-years-old. As Jason tells it, "When I was 18 months old my father got me a mini-moto 40cc bike and a tiny helmet that I still have. Even though the bike had training wheels, it was fast."

Living on Two Wheels

At 21 years old and with seven years of roadracing behind him, Jason DiSalvo of Stafford, New York is the youngest of the four-rider Yamaha team. DiSalvo now resides in Las Vegas where he is able to maintain his grueling regimen of practicing daily on his Yamaha YZF-R1 and YZF-R6, often under the guidance of trainer Jeff Haney and World Champion Freddie Spencer. "I also have a YZ450F dirt track bike and I'm having a motard bike built. I wish we could race every other weekend like Supercross does."

Winning on Two Wheels

In 2004, DiSalvo won four races for Yamaha, two each in Superstock and Supersport, finishing the season 4th and 5th overall in those classes. Yamaha's Team Manager Tom Halverson said, "When Jason won the AMA U.S. Superstock race at Road America in 2002 at just 18 he showed he wasn't intimidated by anyone. Though he just turned 21, he has the race knowledge of a 25-year-old. Jason's double wins at Virginia proved what we already know: he has championship potential."

New Year, New Bike

Like his Yamaha teammates, DiSalvo will race the new YZF-R6 in AMA U.S. Supersport for the Yamaha factory team, and the fully developed YZF-R1 in AMA U.S. Superstock for Graves Motorsports. Of the new R6 Jason says, "It's a difficult thing they did. They took a great bike and just made subtle changes to make it even better. The motor is the biggest difference. It has enough power to get you out of a sticky situation." Considering Jason won and visited the podium numerous times last year on the old bike, it's easy to understand his enthusiasm. Jason added, "I think I've got the patience and ability to win, but we're going to have to work hard for the championship. It's going to be a great season."

From Rider to Writer

Other goals? Standing at 5' 3", Jason joked, "One of my life's goals is to be six feet tall. At the rate I'm going, I think I might get there by the time I'm 80!" And he likes to write. "If I wasn't racing, I'd be in college majoring in journalism. I enjoy doing my column for *Racer X magazine*, which unlike some other racers, I actually write by myself." DiSalvo also spends his spare time in the seat of his customized Subaru WRX rally-style car. Jason said, "It has a 2.4-liter stroker motor with a 9,500 rpm redline. It's a beast. With it putting out about 450 hp, all four tires smoke in every gear!"

Team Effort

On his factory-supported Yamaha R6, Jason will have the help of crew chief and engine builder Jeff Myers and technician Seamus Taaffe, with Jim Roach and Jun Suganuma handling special projects and suspension, and Jim Atkinson taking care of logistics. On the Graves Motorsports R1, Jason will be supported by crew chief Geoff Cesmat and technician Josh Alverson, with the help of specialist Chris Lessing and Danny Hull handling logistics. "I have a great relationship with my crew. They have talent to make the bikes work at their best, which is important because the R1, with all its power, is a very challenging ride. This is the first season where I won't have to learn a new bike, so I'm set to put my head down and just concentrate on winning."

