

Masterclass Riding

IN A... WITH



Andy Ibbott
School Director & Level 4 coach

Andy Ibbott started riding motorbikes at 14-years old, and they've been his living since 1992, when he became a courier. In '94 he decided to become a bike journo, and found an opening at Fast Bikes magazine. To improve his riding skills he started racing a rented 250LC, switching to a 600 for the following season, and finishing 3rd in the KRC club championship in '95. At the end of '95 he went to the USA and attended Level One of the California Superbike School, and became a full time CSS employee at the end of 1999.

Andy was the first Brit to become a Coach for the California Superbike School in Europe, the first fully trained classroom seminarist and first Level 4 Coach.

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Camier - was his domination all down to the bike, or was it all down to him?



The Knowledge Talent

I often get calls and emails from racers, or their managers, asking about the schools. A common theme in the enquiry is what will I/they learn and will it make me/them faster. Of course, this is like asking how long is a piece of string? There is no clearly defined answer. I could say, it worked for Camier, it worked for Luthi, it worked this season for Abraham, but at the same time there are rides who did not improve after attending the schools, Lukas Pesek, Sandro Cortese and others.

It's argued by many riders that all you need is natural talent, but I couldn't agree completely - although talent and nowadays age, does have its advantages. But what happens when your talent runs out, or you start getting older?

By rights, with the amount of riding knowledge School founder Keith Code has, he should be up there with Stoner and Rossi duking it out for a world title, but at over sixty, all the knowledge in the world would not make him faster.

The fact is that raw talent can take you a long way, but all the way to the top is rare in most cases, as most riders will hit a barrier where raw talent is not enough.

They then start crashing (James Haydon could be an example) and once this happens most riders go backwards either due to injury or a reduction in self confidence. We would call this the 'trial and error' method - which is great until the error occurs. What happens then?

Well, if he's young and lucky, the rider will be uninjured. If not, it could be the beginning of the end. Sometimes injury can ruin a rider's aspirations, or he might be as 'hard as nails' and shrug off the injuries and battle on.

But what happens if he crashes again, and again, and again? As the old saying goes, 'you have to be in it, to win it.'

What does the rider do now? Push harder? Back off a little? Back off a lot? Take less risks and finish but not at the top?

It's a hard one that a lot of riders face and this is not just restricted to racers, but trackdayers, and the road rider when those horns come out or your competitive spirit rises when you are with your fellow road

riders. It happens. It's the nature of the beast. Heck, I could even argue that it comes out when a 'fast' car is around. Go on; tell me you have never done it...

The ones with talent do well. The ones with talent who actually know what they did, do even better. And now the crunch part: how do you get the knowledge to know what you did?

First of all, you have to have a willingness to learn and be prepared to change old habits.

Secondly, you need to actively seek out the knowledge you need, whether it comes from books, DVDs or schools.

No amount of trick parts or sticky tyres will give the confidence and control you'll get from that!



Cortese gets some extra tuition from Green Day's Mike Dirnt

Whatever your ability, you can improve your speed and safety on the road and track, with advice from Fast Bikes' expert scribbler, Andy Ibbott of the California Superbike School: Email fastbikes@futurenet.co.uk

Wet Dream

After doing two CSS days at Mondello my wet weather riding has improved so much I can hardly believe it. Now when I'm racing I'm praying for wet weather all the time as I know I'll be so much more competitive and nearer the front.

The thing is though, when it dries up I am way off the pace with the lads I have been ahead of. At the last race meeting here I qualified 5th on the grid in a wet qualifier only to finish second last and last in my two dry races.

I can't work out how I can be so far ahead of some lads in the wet and so far behind the same lads as soon as it dries up, any ideas? Like I said I'm baffled.

Thanks again for everything so far and see you at the CSS next year. P.

I have seen this before with other riders - even at the highest levels (Oliver Jacque and Michael Rutter are good examples). It seems that once the weather dries up you are getting more overwhelmed with the forces of acceleration and braking. So, with that in mind, what changes?

How do you feel different from one to the other? Do you suddenly brake later and harder because it is dry? Do you still roll the throttle on as progressively in the dry as

you do in the wet even though you have more grip? Are you using braking markers? And how do you brake, what style do you use? A lot of questions for sure as there is never a clear cut answer.

The first thing I would look at is the use of braking markers. These should change in the wet and then again in the dry. Next I would look at how you are braking in the wet and the dry. If you are smooth and progressive in the wet then in the dry you should keep this same style - just start it later and complete it in a shorter distance.



Even at the very top there are riders who are good, and bad, in the wet



Pedrosa always picks the bike up into the slide on corner exits

Pick Up Lines

When exiting a corner I'd imagine you should be on the limit of your tyres' grip to go fast, is there any particular way of getting a feel for this traction? Do you accelerate until you break traction, then keep a slight slide to the exit? Also

should there be a small bit of tyre slide before the apex or just after?

I find that the exit of a corner is where I'm losing time and am looking at how to get as most drive as possible.

Conor
email

Turn-in and apex points clearly marked by the cross and cone



Arc Angel

I have noticed that when I am on track I am pretty good at getting my turn point sorted, however I am still struggling with roads that I don't know and end up kerb hugging again or just going probably way too slow.

Are there any drills I can practice or advice for new roads? Obviously I am looking at the radius etc to adjust my speed but all too often still slam on the anchors just before.

Nick
email

It is true that on the track life can be easier as there are far less things to distract you and far less things out there trying to have you off! Plus, you're going round and round, learning every aspect of the corners. The issue that we face when our eyes see something they are not familiar is that they will always look for the danger rather than the good stuff you need - which is space. This is why you end up jabbing on the brakes, because you don't have the space you need.

While it's ok to use the radius of the turn and the vanishing point to 'see' the corner, you also need to leave it later before you turn or you get drawn in, and then your eyes start to flick between the entry and the apex. The trouble we have is that the entry space you have is getting less and less, and when the eyes flick back they scream 'NO SPACE - SLOW DOWN!'

This is where you need two things; first, a definite place to turn, and yes you can do this on the roads as there is always something you could use. Next it's the willingness to change that point if you feel it is too early or too late from the radius information you have collected. Go and practice.

