

# Jordan Burgess MY FIRST SEASON IN AMA



PHOTOS Brian J Photography

## » AUSSIE RIDER JORDAN BURGESS TELLS RACER ABOUT HIS FIRST SEASON IN AMA. THE HIGHS, LOWS AND THE LEVEL OF COMMITMENT AND SACRIFICE NEEDED TO MAKE IT IN A PRO SERIES...

My first season as a pro in Australia in 2010 was littered with injuries.

A few bouts of surgery and the pressures of being a rookie on the Australian factory Ducati Superbike got to me. In the end I was dropped by the team.

Looking back, this was a blessing in disguise as I have always dreamt of coming to America to race in the AMA. This could be my chance.

So there I was, finally in the land of opportunity, arriving at LAX ready for my big year ahead in AMA Superbike. No car, no home, just a gearbag, some clothes, my personal savings and a contract signed by Australian rider, Dave 'Aussie' Anthony to ride a Suzuki GSXR 1000 for Team ADR Fly Racing.

The glamour of the AMA series has appealed to me ever since I was a kid. I loved reading about the Motocross and Supercross guys like Jeremy McGrath, the Bostrom brothers and Mat Mladin tearing it up. I wanted to be a part of it.

Everything is bigger in the USA, and road racing is bound to bounce back from sales slumps and the global financial climate. It was my first chance to start making some money back from the sport since my family has sacrificed so much for me.

I thought: "Top ten, easy! These Americans won't know what hit them!"

Now that I have done a full season here, I look back on that and realise how naive I

was. These guys are awesome riders. They've been racing on the same tracks for years, with state of the art machinery and support. I understand now that it was never going to be easy for a rookie Aussie in a low budget team.

After getting my temporary sleeping and living arrangements sorted – a couch in a motorhome in the backyard at Dave's place – we headed for our first test at Daytona and I got my first taste of the AMA.

I was so thrilled seeing the double decker trucks, the riders, the teams and the banking on that bloody track for the first time that I almost wet myself in excitement!

The test went well and I was happy with the

Suzuki. Daytona is a really cool track, it's very simple and fast! You can really push the bike hard which is what I love. Riding towards the banking for the first time was such a rush. One second you're freaking out wondering what to do when you hit the steep bank then all of a sudden you're on it with your chest and helmet flattened on the bike at 2.2 Gs going at 190mph!

I finished the first race there 14th, which was awesome. After the race I was pumped and ready to celebrate so I made my way to the bar to have a beverage and lo and behold I saw my adolescent idol - the Milf Hunter! (If you don't know who this is, Google him.)

We got talking over a few Budweisers and

exchanged some notes on our chosen fields of profession – which was entertaining! Overall a pretty cool start to the season ahead.

Our team bikes, built by Dave Anthony himself, were running at a similar horsepower to the other Superbikes (approx. 186hp) as they can only run certain performance parts in accordance with AMA rules. However the biggest difference between us and the factory guys is the level of Electronics.

There is no cap on the level of electronics allowed, so it was always going to be an uphill battle for us to run up front with just a simple EM pro box and no TC.

Our team consists of two main riders, three mechanics, a driver and sometimes another hand – if we're lucky! It's a tough ask for a team trying to look professional and put on the show we do when it's normally only three or four of us setting it all up – but we made it happen.

Gearing up for the 15,000 miles I was going to be doing that season, I bought myself a little Isuzu SUV for a measly \$3000. I wasn't sure if it would go the distance but she's still kicking on.

I had an absolute ball with the crew. We traveled East from California and stopped at places like Las Vegas, Milwaukee and Chicago on our way to the tracks.

At every place we visited, I managed to convince people that I was an Aussie sheep farmer. I found this a lot easier to explain than being a pro Superbike racer. The general public here has no idea what the hell a Superbike is, let alone understand an Aussie accent!

Racing fans differ from state to state. At Miller for WSBK there wasn't really much going on, but at tracks like Ohio and the MotoGP at Laguna Seca the crowds were loving it!

Ohio was crazy, the crowds would circle the bikes with female pillion passengers and shout at the girl to show her boobs – if she didn't they boo'd her. Classic!

Off the bike, I was loving it, however, on the bike it was a different story.

For the first few rounds, I found myself having a shocker trying to get up to speed quickly on the tracks and riding around equipment flaws. I crashed in qualifying at Infineon and Miller in WSBK, which meant that for two rounds I was scoreless.

I thought my luck on track would have changed for the race at Miller, but I pushed too hard through a turn and lost the front end. I found myself DNF'd yet again!

That was a killer blow. I was trying so hard to get noticed but I just couldn't hold it together – or so it seemed...

It was time for me to re-evaluate my strategy. I had come to the realisation that I wasn't going to make a name for myself overnight. I would need to be a bit more patient and ride smart.

From the Road America course (Wisconsin), on until the abrupt end of the season at New Jersey, I had consistent qualifying runs and top 15 finishes with a best place of 12th, improving at every round to finish 15th overall, despite the DNF's.

Unfortunately, two rounds got cancelled – Virginia and the final round, which never got organised for some reason. I thought it was funny how the other teams and racers just accepted it. I didn't get it. I was paying to race this year so I was infuriated!

Yes, that's right. Not everyone here, only the top five or ten guys, are getting any sort of return from our so called 'profession'. It's a real shame, but that's the way racing is all over the world right now. It's tough and sometimes you have to ask yourself: 'what am I sacrificing all this for?' But it's simple. As a racer, if you still have that burning desire to race and chase the dream, you must do it while you can and take any and every opportunity you can, whilst being smart about it.

I was thankful to have this opportunity with Team ADR for 2011. I've learnt so much as a rider and I am looking forward to next season but I have no ride as yet and need more personal sponsors to be able to compete and keep charging hard. To sum it all up, the AMA is a tough competition and a great feeding



ground for the World Championships. My goal is to continue racing here next year and build upon the knowledge and the experiences I have taken from this year!

For now though, I am off to Oktoberfest to sample some beers and spend a few days in Europe with some friends!

Peace  
Jordy

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