



02/11/2015. INTERVIEW JORGE MARTÍNEZ 'ASPAR' AND MUFADDAL CHOONIA

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As the current season draws to a close, it is time to take a look back and reflect on another year in racing. For the Aspar Team it is the end of a first season together with Mahindra at the start of a new and exciting project together. The 2015 campaign has seen hard work, a podium and several thousand air miles invested in making the Mahindra a competitive package in the Moto3 class. There is still much work to be done but every day sees the Aspar Team and Mahindra edge closer together and closer to their goal of long-term success. In this interview, Jorge Martínez 'Aspar' gives us his reflections on 2015 and his hopes for 2016, once again with Mahindra. Also Mufaddal Choonia, CEO of Mahindra Racing, talks about the future.



How do you reflect on the first season together with Mahindra?

Preseason and the start of the season were very encouraging. As we all know, the World Championship is difficult and demanding and the situation between the factories and the riders is very close. KTM and Honda have developed a lot over the course of the season. On our side, during this first season together with Mahindra we have had some great races, we have scored a podium and we have been fighting to win on several occasions, but our objective is to improve considerably on these results. The Aspar Team and Mahindra want more, so we are fighting and working to improve.

Pecco Bagnaia and Jorge Martín are both signed for next season...

Jorge and Pecco are two super-talented young riders with big futures. They both have an ability to adapt to different circuits and conditions, as well as excellent technical skills. Jorge Martín is still lacking a little experience in terms of race craft. He has improved a lot in practice this year, he just needs to develop a more solid approach to

the races. Jorge has a brilliant future ahead, no doubt. In Pecco's case he has exceptional desire, he's showing total confidence in himself and in the team, as we saw in the Australian Grand Prix. He started from 26th position and by the third lap he was leading the race. He still has to learn that sometimes it is better to finish second or third rather than risk it all for a win.

What are your expectations for 2016?

I hope that alongside Mahindra we can take a major step forward and give the riders a bike that they feel 100% confident with and excited about. I hope we can go into next season at the top level from the start. I hope it is a year of great results for us. I want to see the Aspar Team, Mahindra, the riders and our sponsors enjoying racing through winning. That is the challenge ahead.

After a year with the Mahindra, what would you say are its strong points?

The bike from mid to top range, both in terms of speed and chassis, is very competitive. Its weak point, or the area we need to improve, is acceleration. In any case, a lot of work is being done to bridge our shortfalls.

Mufaddal Choonia – CEO of Mahindra Racing

How are you feeling about the continued partnership with Aspar moving into your second season with them?

The Mahindra – Aspar partnership is a long term partnership and I am very excited to see the start of a new season with them as our factory team. The first year has been spent learning each other's strengths and I am hopeful that we will be able to build on this knowledge in the coming years. We have had a season where we have shown the potential of this partnership on numerous occasions. I also believe we have been terribly unlucky this year with some of the race results, but I hope all that is behind us now and we can make 2016 a milestone year for all of us.

You have retained Pecco Bagnaia and Jorge Martín, how do you predict they will develop moving into season two?

We have seen both Pecco and Jorge take big strides this year. And there is absolutely no doubt that both have the ability to be World Champions at some stage in their careers. There are of course areas where they need to sharpen their skills and that is where having a partner like Jorge Martínez Aspar is invaluable. 2016 will be a year when Mahindra Racing will celebrate its 100th GP appearance as a manufacturer and we hope that Pecco and Jorge will give us many reasons to celebrate this wonderful occasion as the 2016 season progresses.

What planned improvements will be made to the bike?

We are making improvements on almost all areas of performance of the bike and more particularly on the engine side. We know where our package is strong and where it is weaker compared to the competition. Fortunately we have made strides every year and the gap between us and the competitors has been narrowing every season. I hope we are able to completely bridge this gap in 2016 and give all our riders a package capable of winning races.

In terms of the programme in general, what improvements are you planning to make?

We have and continue to make significant investments in our racing development centre in Italy. This includes both in manpower and equipment. Some very good talent will be joining us over the next month or two and this will help strengthen the Mahindra Racing development team significantly. We have also made a lot of improvements to the 2016 Mahindra MGP30 racer and the new bike will be significantly different from the motorcycle we have at the moment in almost all areas.

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