

Daily News SPECIAL



As is the norm at the end of the year 2009, and also the decade, the world media has offered its view on the top athletes of the last ten years. With seven premier class World Championship titles since his entry into the category back in 2000, **ROSSI** has secured his spot at the pinnacle of the sport and is now considered one of the best sport stars of the past decade.

MotoGP records

500 cc

- **First** in all time race wins standings with 77 race wins.
- **First** in all time podium standings with 126 podiums.
- **First** in most podiums in a season with 16 podiums in 2003, 2005 and 2008.
- **First** in most fastest laps in a season with 12 fastest laps in 2003.
- **First** in most points in one season with 323 points in 2008.
- **First** in consecutive podiums with 23 consecutive podiums from the 2002 Portuguese GP to the 2004 South Africa GP.
- **Second** in all time world championship wins with 7 world championships, behind Giacomo Agostini with 8 championships.
- **Second** in all time pole positions standings with 48 pole positions, behind Michael Doohan with 58.
- **Second** in all time race fastest laps standings with 63 race fastest laps, behind Giacomo Agostini with 69.
- **Second** in most race wins in a season with 11 race wins in 2001, 2002 and 2005.

250 cc

- **Second** most podiums in a season with 12 podiums in 1999 along with Marco Simoncelli, Jorge Lorenzo, Marco Melandri, Shinya Nakano, Max Biaggi, Luca Cadalora, John Kocinski and Sito Pons, behind Dani Pedrosa, Tetsuya Harada, Daijro Kato and Ralf Waldmann with 13 podiums in 2004, 2001, 2001 and 1996 respectively.
- **Third** in most race wins in a season with 9 race wins in 1999 along with Jorge Lorenzo, Marco Melandri and Max Biaggi, behind Daijro Kato with 11 race wins in 2001, Anton Mang and Mike Hallwood with 10 race wins in 1981 and 1966 respectively.

125 cc

- **First** in most race wins in a season with 11 race wins in 1997.
- **Second** in most podiums in a season with 13 podiums in 1997 along with Mikko Häkkinen and Mike Hallwood with 14 podiums in 2006.

Overall records

500 cc / 250 cc / 125 cc

- **First** in all time points with 4026 points, the only rider to achieve more than 4000 points in the history of the grand prix motorcycle racing.
- **First** in all time podium standings with 164 podiums.
- **First** in all time pole positions standings with 58 pole positions along with Michael Doohan.
- **Second** in all time race wins standings with 103 race wins, behind Giacomo Agostini with 122 race wins.
- **Second** in all time fastest laps standings with 83 fastest laps, behind Giacomo Agostini with 117 fastest laps.

valentino ROSSI



One of the best world athletes of the decade

In Italy, **ROSSI** tops the rankings. Over 40% of Gazzetta dello Sport readers consider the 30 year-old to be the best, well ahead of Swiss tennis star Roger Federer (13.8%) and Olympic and World 100m and 200m champion Usain Bolt (8.8%), with Michael Schumacher (7.4%) and the Italian national football team (6.3%) also featuring in the poll. There was a similar trend in Tuttosport, with **ROSSI** taking a sizeable 48.6% of the vote, and Bolt 12.4% and Federer 11%. In Spain, daily El Mundo registered nearly 30,000 votes from readers with **ROSSI** taking second place with 17% of the share, behind Federer (27.1%) and ahead of Phelps (12.2%). itassonline.com

Valentino Rossi was born in Urbino (February 16, 1979), then the family moved to Tavullia. Son of Graziano Rossi, a former motorcycle racer, he first began riding at a very young age.

Rossi's first racing love was go-karts. Fuelled by his mother, Stefania's, concern for her son's safety, Graziano purchased a go-kart as a substitute for the bike. However, the Rossi family trait of perpetually wanting to go faster prompted a redesign; Graziano replaced the 60cc motor with a 100cc national kart motor for his then 5-year-old son.

Rossi won the regional kart championship in 1990. After this he took up minimoto and before the end of 1991 had won numerous regional races.

125cc, 250 cc and 500 cc World Championships

In 1994, Aprilia by way of Sandroni, used Rossi to improve its RS125R and in turn allowed him to learn how to handle the fast new pace of 125cc racing. At first he found himself on a Sandroni in the 1994 Italian championship and continued to ride it through the 1995 European and Italian championships. Rossi had some success in the 1996 World Championship season, failing to finish five of the season's races and crashing several times. Despite this, in August he won his first World Championship Grand Prix at Brno in the Czech Republic on an AGV Aprilia RS125R. He finished the season in ninth position and proceeded to dominate the 125cc World Championship in the following 1997 season, winning 11 of the 15 races.

Rossi was rewarded in 2000 for his 250cc World Championship by being given a ride with Honda in what was then the ultimate class in World Championship motorcycle racing, 500cc.

Rossi won his first 500cc World Championship in 2001 (winning 11 races) in the final year of that class. In the following year, 500cc two-strokes were still allowed, but 2002 saw the beginning of the 990cc four-stroke MotoGP class, after which the 500cc machines were essentially obsolete. In that year Rossi teamed up with American rider Colin Edwards for the Suzuki 8 Hours endurance race aboard a Honda VTR1000SPM. The pair won the race despite Rossi's lack of experience racing superbikes.

Rossi riding his Honda RC211V MotoGP bike

The inaugural year for the MotoGP bikes was 2002, when riders experienced teething problems getting used to the new bikes. Rossi won the first race and went on to win eight of the first nine races of the season, eventually claiming 11 victories in total. It was more of the same in 2003 for Rossi's rivals when he claimed nine pole positions as well as nine GP wins to claim his third consecutive World Championship. The Australian GP at Phillip Island in 2003 is considered by many observers to be one of Rossi's greatest career moments due to unique circumstances. After being given a 10-second penalty for overaking during a yellow flag due to a crash by Ducati rider Troy Bayliss, front runner Rossi proceeded to pull away from the rest of the field eventually finishing more than 15 seconds ahead, more than enough to cancel out the penalty and win the race.

With the traditional first race of the season at Suzuka off the list due to safety considerations, the 2004 season started at Welkom in South Africa. Rossi won the race, becoming the only rider to win consecutive races with different manufacturers, having won the final race of the previous season on the Honda. Rossi would go on to win eight more GPs in

the season, primarily battling Sete Gibernau, with Rossi clinching the championship at the penultimate race of the season at Phillip Island.

In 2005 Grand Prix motorcycle racing season, Rossi captured his 7th World Championship and 5th straight MotoGP Championship. He finished with a total of 367 points, 147 points ahead of 2nd place finisher Marco Melandri (220 points), and Nicky Hayden finishing 3rd with 205 points. In the Portuguese Grand Prix, the penultimate race of the season, Hayden was taken out by his teammate, Dani Pedrosa, and did not finish the race. This led to Rossi taking the points lead with only one race left in the season. However, Rossi crashed early in Valencia, the last race, and Hayden went on to win the 2006 MotoGP Championship. Rossi finished the season in 2nd place.

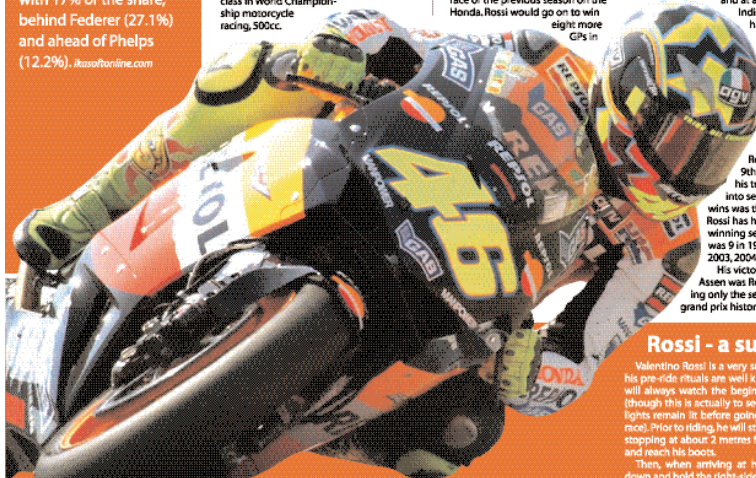
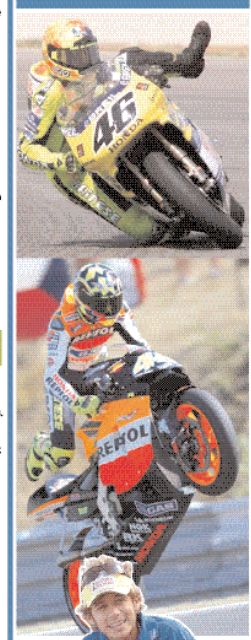
Winning a total of nine races in the season

For 2008 Rossi changed to Bridgestone tyres. The season started slowly with a fifth place finish in Qatar, but he took his first win in Shanghai and also won the next two races. From that race, Rossi was on the podium of every remaining race (except the Dutch round at Assen, where he crashed on the first lap and finished 11th), winning a total of nine races in the season. His victories at Laguna Seca (after a pass down the "Corkscrew" corner over Stoner, who crashed but continued and took the second place) and at a rain-shortened race in Indianapolis, meant that Rossi has won in every current circuit in the calendar. His win in MotoGP was his first victory there on a MotoGP bike. The victory at MotoGP won Rossi his first 800cc MotoGP title, his sixth in premier category, and eighth overall.

The 2009 season saw Rossi win 6 races to win his 9th championship title, beating his team-mate Jorge Lorenzo into second place by 45 points. 6 wins was the lowest number of wins Rossi has had in a championship winning season; the previous lowest was 9 in 1999 in the 250 cc class and 2003, 2004 and 2008 in MotoGP.

His victory at the 2009 Dutch TT in Assen was Rossi's 100th victory, becoming only the second rider in motorcycle grand prix history to reach 100 wins.

Rossi in action



Riding a race bike is an art - a thing that you do because you feel something inside - Rossi

Rossi - a superstitious person

Valentino Rossi is a very superstitious person and his pre-ride rituals are well known. On a race day, he will always watch the beginning of the 125cc race (though this is actually to see how long the starting lights remain lit before going out at the start of the race). Prior to riding, he will start his personal ritual by stopping at about 2 metres from his bike, bend over and touch his boots. Then, when arriving at his bike, he will crouch down and hold the right-side foot-peg, with his head bowed. He adjusts the fit of his leathers by standing straight up on the foot-pegs, whilst riding the pit

lane before the start of race or practice. He also interviews - with always puts one other, one glove on before the other, and he always gets on the bike the same way. He also gets off the bike in the same way, swinging his right leg over the front of the bike.

Valentino Rossi's nicknames: "The Doctor" "Rossifum" "Valentinik"