
240bhp Electric Superbike Hits 190.6mph

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An electric superbike run by Chip Yates Racing has broken records by crossing the finish line of a standing start, one-mile run at a speed approaching the magic 200mph.

The run, held at the Mojave Mile Shootout, Mojave CA, was the latest achievement for the Aliso Viejo, California-based team. It was the first electric motorcycle ever to take part in the event.

The superbike, which is a regular closed-circuit racing contender, had been specially modified for the ostensibly simpler speed trial. Catalyst Racing Composites developed a custom set of full fairings, and UQM Technologies, which makes the electric motor and controller in the superbike, was brought in for additional consultation and software adjustments to accommodate the top speed attempt.

A new, higher-strength set of drive-sprockets was made by specialist supplier Crushmaster Grinding/Evolution Industries, tough enough to handle the 365lb ft of torque while spinning up to 8500rpm. The bike was geared for 229mph, and saw 227mph on the dyno. Conditions on the day, though, meant that regular rider, Chip Yates, was unable to hold the machine steady at just-sub-200mph speeds.

“All our models of the bike’s performance as well as the data collected from today’s runs put our top speed on a one-mile course at over 200mph, but unfortunately I was unable to go full throttle for the whole one-mile run due to a high-speed buffeting that caused some weaving of the bike similar to what slowed us a bit at Auto Club Speedway in January and February,” explained Yates.



“We made some aerodynamic changes to improve the buffeting but then suffered failures of both our main charger, and our backup battery charger due to high voltage spikes coming from a rented generator we were using in our pits. With no way to recharge our batteries, I was only able to make two runs. I’m disappointed about not reaching 200mph today, but I know we can do it next time out, and for now I have to be happy with establishing our superbike as the fastest electric motorcycle in the world.

“This run should go a long way towards our goal of demonstrating that electric vehicles can lay down extreme performance and compete directly against gasoline-powered vehicles if properly designed and executed. But remember that ours is a road-racing superbike and not a land-speed bike, so rest assured we are now right back at work continuing our development and preparation for Pikes Peak, which will be an absolutely epic event!”

The 2011 Pikes Peak International Hill Climb will take place on Sunday, June 26 with race-related events all week long. For further information, see www.ppihc.com.

Text: Steve Wakefield

Photos: Chip Yates Racing

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