

Josh Day Reflects On 2016, His Most Challenging Year Yet In Motorcycle Road Racing

For motorcycle road racer Josh Day, 2016 was a year that he will remember for the rest of his life. Josh's situation evolved from life-threatening, to life-saving, to life-altering, and now, as 2017 begins, the quiet, ever-likeable Floridian's current situation can best be described as life-affirming.

A certain degree of risk and danger are inherent in the sport of motorcycle road racing, and every rider, every crew chief and team member, every family member, everyone directly involved in the sport, and virtually every fan know full-well of the perils.

It's the cumulative effects of those perils that can sometimes forever change one's destiny.

For Josh Day, his unfortunate crash in the first round of the 2016 MotoAmerica Championship at the Circuit of The Americas in Austin, TX, set about a chain of events that he didn't realize, let alone fully grasp, until months later.

"That crash at COTA essentially contributed to the crash I had at Road Atlanta, and to the crash I had at Road America, which ended my season," Josh said. "After the Road America incident and the brain injury I suffered there, my treatment and rehab revealed that the concussion I sustained at

COTA was exacerbated by the second concussion I suffered at Road Atlanta, and what happened at Road America was basically 'three strikes' for me, to put it in baseball terms. And I was out, not only out as in knocked unconscious, but out of the sport of racing motorcycles."

Together with his wife Lauren, Josh came to the conclusion that his career as a road racer is officially over. "I'm not going to say 'retired' because road racers hate that word, especially when they're only 27 years old like I am," commented Josh. "'Retired' is for people over the age of 65, and I've got almost 40 years left in me before I reach that point! So, I'm just going to say that I will no longer be racing a motorcycle professionally. But that doesn't mean that I am walking away from the paddock.

"Racing a motorcycle has been a dream profession for me, and I have so many people to thank for helping me along the way. I'm so grateful to my family, my friends, and all the fans for believing in me. I've met so many fantastic people all over the world, been to countries that I never even imagined I'd visit, and shared success with a lot of great people who I will never forget. I'm very blessed to have the racing career I did."



Josh And Lauren Day

When asked what's next on the horizon for Josh, he said, "I want to remain in the MotoAmerica paddock, either as a rider coach, or a member of a crew or race team, but I'm really motivated to offer my assistance to one particular aspect of the sport, and it's an underserved area."

And that aspect is the life-affirming part for Josh.

"I learned a lot about head trauma, concussions, and even CTE (Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy) during the second half of the 2016 season, after my crash at Road America. Concussion assessment and protocols are obviously hot topics these days in most of the stick-and-ball sports, but it's an underserved area in motorcycle racing, not only here in the U.S., but around the world. I'd like to be an advocate for baseline testing of riders so that a formal concussion protocol could become a required safety procedure in motorcycle road racing.

Josh explained, "I attended the final round of the MotoAmerica season at New Jersey Motorsports, and it was great to be in the paddock again. But, one of my primary goals was to speak with MotoAmerica officials about what I experienced and to help develop a policy for possibly preventing, or at least mitigating, what happened to me from happening to other riders in the

future. My discussion with MotoAmerica was encouraging, and we continued that discussion again in October during the AIMExpo, which I attended in order to keep the dialogue going."

Josh is very motivated to advocate for increased safety measures and monitoring of head injuries in MotoAmerica, and he sees the recent rules changes in the American Flat Track Series as a step in the right direction.

"American Flat Track is going to do base testing of all its riders prior to the 2017 season, in order to create a concussion protocol. That's great news, and it's something that I'd love for MotoAmerica to adopt, as well. Let's get all our road racers baseline-tested so that if, God forbid, someone crashes and suffers a head injury, they can be evaluated, and steps can be taken to prevent an injured rider from suffering the same cumulative effects as I did from the three successive concussions that I sustained this past season.

So, as the New Year dawns, Josh Day is embarking on a new chapter of his motorcycle road racing career. Look for him, at some point in the near future, amidst the teeming hustle and bustle of the MotoAmerica paddock as he continues working in the sport he loves.

Story and photo courtesy of Josh Day Racing

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2017 MotoAmerica AMA/FIM

North American Road Race Championship

- Round 1: Circuit of The Americas, Austin, Texas, April 20-23
- Round 2: Road Atlanta, Braselton, Georgia, April 28-30
- Round 3: Virginia International Raceway, May 12-14
- Round 4: Road America, Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin, June 2-4
- Round 5: Utah Motorsports Campus, Salt Lake City, Utah, June 23-25
- Round 6: Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca, Monterey, California, July 7-9
- Round 7: Sonoma Raceway, Sonoma, California, August 11-13
- Round 8: Pittsburgh International Race Complex, August 25-27
- Round 9: New Jersey Motorsports Park, Millville, New Jersey, September 8-10
- Round 10: Barber Motorsports Park, Birmingham, Alabama, September 15-17