

Beat: Sports

Joan Mir Leopard Racing Team is the 2017 Moto3 World Champion

2017 Moto3 World Champion Joan Mir.

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USPA NEWS - This name uses Spanish naming customs: the first or paternal family name is Mir and the second or maternal family name is Mayrata. Prior to moving up to the Moto3 world championship, Palma-born Mir competed for two seasons in the Red Bull MotoGP Rookies Cup in 2013 and 2014, finishing as runner-up (with three wins) to Jorge Martín in 2014. Mir contested the CEV Moto3 Junior World Championship in 2015. Mir made his Grand Prix début in 2015 with Leopard Racing at Phillip Island replacing the injured Hiroki Ono. Mir started 18th on the grid but failed to finish the race after an incident with John McPhee. In 2016 Mir competed full-time in the Moto3 World Championship with Leopard Racing, partnering Fabio Quartararo and Andrea Locatelli. He finished the championship in 5th position as rookie of the year, scoring 144 points.

Joan Mir, taking the crown at Phillip Island after a stunning year that has seen him take nine wins so far. Mir won four of the first six races, but faded towards the end of the season, and ultimately finished fourth in the championship. Joan Mir wrapped up this year's Moto3 championship with two rounds to spare after taking his ninth victory of the season in a shortened Phillip Island race.

The Spaniard arrived in Australia with a 55-point advantage over nearest rival Romano Fenati, after his lead was slashed dramatically the previous weekend at Motegi following a dismal ride to 17th in the wet - his first non-score of the season.

Mir therefore needed a top-two finish in Phillip Island to guarantee himself the crown regardless of what Fenati could do, or avoid being outscored by the Italian by six points.

Starting third, Mir was in the lead group throughout the race, and was running fifth when it was red-flagged with eight laps to go due to a rain shower.

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Leading MotoGP riders have praised newly-crowned Moto3 champion Joan Mir, and have predicted a big future for the 20-year-old. The last rider to win more than nine races in the lightweight class was Valentino Rossi, who racked up 11 wins in 1997 on his way to that year's 125cc title.

Asked what he made of Mir's season, the Italian veteran said: "He is young and this year he has been scary on the track. Joan is a very fast rider, I love his character, he is very calm and serious. He is the only one who has finished all the races, showing that in addition to being very fast, he also thinks a lot on the bike."

Mir will graduate to Moto2 next season with the Marc VDS squad, world champion 2017 Moto2 Franco Morbidelli.

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