



Press Release

FIM Europe mourns the departure of Angel Nieto



Spanish motorcycling legend Angel Nieto sadly passed away on 3 August, after he succumbed to injuries sustained during a quad bike accident in Ibiza in late July.

Angel Nieto Roldan was born on 25 January 1947 in Zamora, Spain. His brilliant career - which would see him clinch 13 World titles - or 12+1, as he used to say for superstitious reasons... - started in the mid-sixties when he joined the Derbi factory, first as a young mechanic, then as a rider alongside Spaniard José Busquets and Australian Barry Smith.

In 1966 he took part in his first World Championship events and finished 9th overall in the 50cc World Championship thanks to a 5th place at the German Grand Prix in Hockenheim. The following year the performance of the Derbi improved a lot and he finished in 4th position, scoring points in four of six races and earning a brilliant second place in Assen.

In 1968 he was 4th again, with another second place at his home Grand Prix in Montjuich. 1969 was his break-through year: with his two first wins and three second places, he became World Champion for the first time, just one point ahead of Dutch rider Aalt Toersen. Meanwhile Derbi had prepared to enter the 125cc class, and in 1970 Nieto began to be a leading rider in both 50cc and 125cc for almost fifteen years.

That year he took the 50cc title again and finished second in the 125cc behind Dieter Braun and his Suzuki. In 1971, he succeeded in the 125cc class, winning five races, after a great fight with a Suzuki rider called Barry Sheene! But in the small class he finished second to Jan de Vries and his Kreidler.

Then he would get both titles in the same season: 1972 saw him double World Champion, in the 125cc ahead of Swede Kent Andersson, and in the 50cc level on points and results with Jan de Vries - he got the title beating the Dutch rider in the total of the times.

In 1973 Angel Nieto switched to Morbidelli, who seemed to have a promising machine; he was 7th in the 125cc Championship, and in 1974, he came back on a Derbi which took him to third place. In 1975 he took the 50cc title riding the very fast Kreidler, against which



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he had fought all these years: six wins and two second places. In 1976 he went to another Spanish manufacturer, Bultaco: another title in the 50cc, and a second place in the 125cc. In 1977 he clinched his third consecutive World title in the smallest class, again on a Bultaco, and he then decided to concentrate on the 125cc, as he had lost the battle against the Morbidelli riders, Italian Pierpaolo Bianchi and Eugenio Lazzarini, ending in third.

He left Bultaco for another new manufacturer Minarelli in 1978, but after taking only 4 points in six races, he went back to Bultaco and scored 84 points in the last six races. A great performance, but it was not enough for the title, Lazzarini was too far ahead. In 1979 the Minarelli was working well and Angel clinched seven consecutive wins in the first seven races (and one in the last six...) gathering more than twice the points of the second placed rider...

It was not the end of his career - yet. After a third place in 1980, the Minarelli became the fastest bike and Angel was back on the top of the 125cc class in 1981 with eight wins and another title. Then he decided to change again, this time to Garelli: the motorcycle seemed to go well, and it did: three more consecutive 125cc World titles in 82, 83 and 84. At this point he decided that the time had come to stop. He became team manager, then TV commentator on Spanish TV. He was a much-recognised figure in the paddock and such was inducted as MotoGP Legend in the Motorcycle Hall of Fame in 2002.

“He had been a great champion in motorcycling and also after stopping racing he always maintained his strong passion for the world of motorsport”, commented FIM Europe President Dr Wolfgang Srb. “His sons Pablo and Angel jr are both dedicating their talent to motorcycling, too, so as his nephew Fonsi. To them and to the whole family of Angel Nieto, as well as to his friends, go the deep condolences of FIM Europe. We have lost a real legend of our sport, but he’ll continue to live forever in our memories”.



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About FIM Europe (www.fim-europe.com) - The FIM Europe (in the past UEM, Union Européenne de Motocyclisme) includes 47 National Federations (FMNs) and 6 Regional Motorcycling Associations and is a European organization acting within its attributions in all matters in relation with motorcycling activities and, as such, in domains ranging from sport, tourism, leisure, environment, mobility, road safety, legislative affairs, protection and defence of the rights and interests of motorcycle users. As far as motorcycle sport is concerned, the FIM Europe is the supreme and sole European authority empowered by the FIM to control European motorcycling sport activities organized under its jurisdiction throughout Europe. The aims of FIM Europe are to develop and promote all forms of motorcycling in Europe as well as the co-operation and friendship between its members, and notably: to examine all questions related to the development of motorcycling in Europe; to organize European Championships and to establish all competitions that appear beneficial subject to the prior approval of the FIM; to co-operate with the FIM in all matters relating to the organization of international events and motorcycling in general; to organize camps and seminars for riders, officials, coaches and administrators of various European FMNs; to support the creation and development of motorcycling activities in all European countries; to promote the co-operation among all European FMNs; to promote motorcycling among young people, both as sport and motorcycling in general; to encourage the use of motorcycles in European countries and to develop motorcycle tourism; to represent the interests of motorcyclists before European authorities; to promote in the media the sport of motorcycling and the use of motorcycles in all of Europe.

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