

Bikeland Chats with Attack Kawasaki's Steve Rapp

By Jessica Lee

He's been racing for many years, has had the chance to ride Ducati's, Suzuki's, and Kawasaki's just to name a few and to top it off he's a pretty cool guy. Oh yeah - did I mention that he's the 2007 Daytona 200 winner? That's right guys, I'm talking about the one and only Steve Rapp. I got the chance to have a one on one conversation with him fresh off of a hot practice at the 2007 Rockstar Suzuki Superbike Showdown at Road Atlanta. Here you'll find out just what he's all about!

Bikeland: How are you doing?

Steve Rapp: Good.

Bikeland: How's the weekend going for you?

Steve: It's going okay; I had a big crash yesterday.

Bikeland: Ouch! What happened?

Steve: Just a high side. A really big high side. I'm really lucky I didn't get hurt. Actually I'm pretty lucky I'm walking right now!

Bikeland: Well - onto other things! When did you start racing?

Steve: My first road race was in 1994.

Bikeland: Did you do any motocross or flat track before that?

Steve: Nope, just got on the bike and went for it but I did ride streetbikes before I raced.

Bikeland: Who inspired you when you first started?

Steve: A guy I went to high school with, his name was Dave Stan. He rides for the M4 team now but he used to ride for the Valvoline Suzuki team. He rode for them and was the one that kind of helped me. I would go to the races with him and then when I would start racing he would kind

of help me. Just being around him I saw what I needed to do to become a successful racer.

Bikeland: Is there anyone you look up to now?

Steve: Uh, not really. I've been racing for a while and it's like you don't really want to look up to somebody because it's like you're putting them up on a pedestal and it makes them better than you. I just look at it as a job and I come in to do the best I can.



Bikeland: Do you have any pre race superstitions or anything?

Steve: Not really, I'm not very superstitious. I can't think of anything I do. I mean, I do have a routine but it's not anything to do with superstitions it's just what I do before a race. You know, stretching and sort of things like that. Nothing out of the ordinary, I don't have any lucky socks or underwear or anything.

Bikeland: What's your favorite track?

Steve: I think Road America.

Bikeland: Any special reason?

Steve: Well, I've always done really well there for one but it's also a very fun and fast circuit which I like. I like a lot of the faster tracks.

Bikeland: How do you train?

Steve: I do mostly cycling and running.

Bikeland: What do you do in your time off...when you actually have time off?

Steve: Well, I bike ride - cycling is a hobby and part of my training. I also like sailing and I have some rental properties that I deal with.

Bikeland: Do you have any favorite racing movies like *On Any Sunday* or *Faster* that you like to watch?

Steve: *Faster* was cool, probably the best motorcycle movie that's out. I think that's my favorite right now.

Bikeland: From watching *Faster* and watching MotoGP, is that something that you would want to try?

Steve: I would love to try it but at this point in my career, I don't think that's something that's going to happen. You never know, but realistically I don't want to get my goals up too high because then you can just get disappointed. So I just focus on right now and try to win because if I do then that might happen. I just have to control what's going on here and now. But I would like to try it for sure, like Roger did at Laguna Seca. That was cool, so if I ever got too then that would be cool!

Bikeland: Has anything changed since Daytona after you got such a good result there? Any new sponsors?

Steve: Yeah I did get a few new sponsors after that.

Bikeland: Like who?

Steve: Motorsport Outlet and NGK, those two are the most new ones. Mostly, I think people have taken a little more respect, you know? Especially right after it was definitely different. Now it's been a while and people have forgotten.

Bikeland: So how are you liking the Kawasaki compared to the Suzuki?

Steve: It's good. I like the 600 a lot. It's a little easier on the set up and things like that. The bike's really nice; I like it a lot. The tires are really nice. They're Pirellis. The tires are still relatively new here so they are still developing and still working on getting them perfect you know? Dunlop has been here for 20 years and Pirelli is still working on it. At every race we learn something for the next season or whatever so it's all a work in progress.

Bikeland: Do you have any advice for up and coming road racers?

Steve: Have lots of money, make your parents pay for it! Umm, well I've never really been a good teacher really but just don't make enemies in the sport when you're coming up because eventually you will work for them at some point. You know what I mean? I haven't done that but I've seen people who have and it can really affect your career. You just have to have the right attitude basically.

Bikeland: Do you have a favorite quote or anything you think about on the grid?

Steve: Not when I'm riding no. I just go to do my job, I'm not superstitious or anything. So, I don't really think about anything like that.

Bikeland: Well, thanks so much for the interview Steve!

Steve: No problem, nice meeting you!

It was super cool of Steve to do the interview after practicing. Thanks again and good luck!