2026 FIM SPEEDWAY GP OF POLAND – LODZ – BURB'S BRIEFING

Hello and welcome to Burb's Briefing! Here is some information and a few talking points which may assist your coverage of the FIM Speedway GP of Poland – Lodz this Saturday ...

WHERE?

- One of world track racing's most modern facilities, the Moto Arena Lodz makes its debut on the Speedway GP calendar this weekend. This is undoubtedly the biggest event the stadium has hosted.
- A full-capacity crowd is expected for the FIM Speedway GP of Poland – Lodz on Saturday, with tickets for the Sportlab Cosmetics FIM SGP2 of Poland – Lodz on Friday also selling fast.
- Opened in July 2018, the stadium is home to Orzel Lodz, who race in Poland's Metalkas 2. Ekstraliga – the second tier of Polish speedway.
- It has covered seating for 10,000 spectators, including over 700 VIPs and is purpose-built for speedway.
- The Moto Arena Lodz track is 321 meters long. The club website boasts that it is the first speedway stadium in the country to feature banking not only on the curves (6%) but also on the straights (3%). This design facilitates overtaking and allows riders to reach high speeds.
- Moto Arena Lodz also has a drainage system installed along the entire curb, offering the best possible chance to clear water from the track if rain hits.
- The stadium has hosted the International Individual Ekstraliga Championship (IMME) for the past three seasons – an annual event contested by the top riders in Poland's PGE Ekstraliga. This year's edition was won by former Lodz favourite Brady Kurtz.
- As of 2025, Lodz has a population of 640,000, making it Poland's fourth largest city in terms of population.
- Founded in the 14th century, the city became famous for textile manufacturing from the 18th century.
- The city is also internationally known for its National Film School, a cradle for the most renowned Polish actors and directors, including Andrzej Wajda and Roman Polański. In 2017, the city was inducted into the UNESCO Creative Cities Network and named UNESCO City of Film.
- This weekend, FIM Speedway takes the spotlight.

WHEN?

Saturday, August 1

- Speedway GP Qualifying – 14:00 CEST

- FIM Speedway GP of Poland – Lodz - 19:00 CEST

FIM JURY

REFEREE: Aleksandr Latosinski (Ukraine)

JURY PRESIDENT: Pavel Ondrasik (Czech Republic)

FMNR REPRESENTATIVE: Ireneusz Igielski (Poland)

RACE DIRECTOR: Phil Morris (Great Britain)

TITLE FIGHT

- Polish icon Bartosz Zmarzlik heads into the Lodz round with a five-point lead over nearest rival Brady Kurtz at the top of the Speedway GP World Championship standings.
- Zmarzlik on 98 points is the only rider to have reached the final at each of the opening six rounds, winning in Wroclaw, finishing third at four rounds in Landshut, Prague, Manchester R4 and Malilla, as well as taking fourth place at Manchester R3.
- He is seeking to become the first rider in the sport's history to win seven Speedway GP World Championships this season.
- The historical milestones just keep coming for Zmarzlik – his final appearance in Malilla saw him move on to 77 career finals, matching the number achieved by Australian three-time Speedway GP world champion Jason Crump. Only American legend Greg Hancock on 92 has reached more.
- But Zmarzlik has two in-form riders chasing him. Kurtz, who is second on 93 points, has reached the last five Speedway GP finals. He is seeking his first podium since he won Manchester R4 on June 6 as Kurtz has finished fourth at both of the last two rounds in Wroclaw and Malilla.
- Kurtz is excited to line up in Lodz, where he represented the club in the Metalkas 2. Ekstraliga from 2020-2022.
- He is known to be a fan of the track and also won the 2026 International Individual Ekstraliga Championship (IMME). Zmarzlik also won the IMME event here in 2024.
- The duo faces an increasing threat in the standings from Great Britain racer Robert Lambert in third place, who has 81 points, putting him 17 behind leader Zmarzlik and 12 short of Kurtz in second.
- A missed final or LCQ for either rider could see Lambert capitalise, and he has raced to second place at the last two SGP events in Wroclaw and Malilla.

TIGHT FOR THE TOP SEVEN

- While the frontrunners have burst clear of the Speedway GP chasing pack, a very tight contest is emerging for places in the World Championship's top seven – which guarantees riders a spot in the 2027 SGP series.
- Behind Zmarzlik, Kurtz and Lambert, Danish star Michael Jepsen Jensen is also nicely poised in the battle for qualification in fourth spot on 66 points, despite scoring only five at R6 in Malilla.
- Three riders are deadlocked on 55 points, with Kacper Woryna in fifth place, Leon Madsen in sixth and the absent Jack Holder in seventh rounding out the top seven automatic qualification places.
- Aussie star Max Fricke is just a point behind them on 54 in eighth place, with Poland's Patryk Dudek ninth on 51.
- Despite not contesting the opening round, SGP first substitute Anders Thomsen's victory at the last round in Malilla puts him firmly in contention in 10th place on 50 points.
- Latvian star Andzejs Lebedevs has work to do in 11th place on 44, with Australia's former world champion Jason Doyle on 42 in 12th spot.

QUALIFICATION PLOT THICKENS

- But the qualification plot has thickened significantly since round six in Malilla after the 2026 FIM SGP Challenge took place in Terenzano, Italy last Saturday.
- Great Britain hero Robert Lambert won the event to guarantee his place in the 2027 SGP series, with Australia's Rohan Tungate second to earn his first full Speedway GP season next year.
- Poland's Kacper Woryna took third spot to guarantee his Speedway GP berth for 2027, with Swedish champion Kim Nilsson producing a breathtaking final ride to take the last qualification place. He is back in Speedway GP for the first time since 2023.
- While the quartet's places in SGP 2027 are safe, if Lambert and Woryna reach the 2026 Speedway GP top seven, they could open the door for other riders to join them.
- Lambert is currently third in the standings and 27 points clear of eighth-placed Max Fricke. Woryna is fifth overall, but only a point ahead of Fricke.
- If either Lambert or Woryna reaches the SGP top seven, Latvia's Andzejs Lebedevs is guaranteed a spot in the 2027 Speedway GP series after he was placed fifth in the Challenge.
- If both Lambert and Woryna reach the top seven, Denmark's Michael Jepsen Jensen – sixth in the Challenge – also qualifies for 2027.
- If Lebedevs (currently 11th on 44 points) and Jepsen Jensen (fourth on 66 points) also reach the top seven, things get even more interesting.

- If three of Lambert, Woryna, Lebedevs and MJJ reach the Speedway GP top seven, Denmark's Frederik Jakobsen (seventh in the Challenge) would take his place in Speedway GP for the first time next season.
- If all four riders reach the Speedway GP top seven, British legend Chris Harris, aged 43, would make an astonishing Speedway GP comeback after finishing eighth at the Challenge. He last raced in the Speedway GP World Championship in 2016 and famously won the 2007 FIM Speedway GP of Great Britain – Cardiff with possibly the greatest final ride in SGP history.
- Speedway GP qualification is also on the line in the Speedway European Championship, with the winner guaranteed a place in SGP 2027.
- Danish star Leon Madsen won the opening round on his Polish home track Zielona Gora on July 18, leaving him level on 14 points at the top of the standings with Poland's reigning European champion Patryk Dudek. Jepsen Jensen is just behind on 13, with German racer Kai Huckenbeck on 12 and Mikkel Michelsen on 11.
- There are three SEC rounds still to race on September 5 in Gustrow, Rzeszow on September 19 and Pardubice on October 2 – six days after the final SGP round in Torun.
- The final three places in the 2027 Speedway GP series will be allocated to three permanent wild cards, chosen by the SGP Commission. But with quite an injury crisis developing, these could be in short supply.

MISSING THIS WEEKEND

- Three Speedway GP regulars sit out the Lodz round.
- Swedish star Fredrik Lindgren has missed all but the opening round of the season after crashing out of a Polish PGE Ekstraliga meeting for Lublin in Leszno on May 17 with an ankle injury.
- Great Britain hero Dan Bewley has also missed the last five rounds after suffering a broken femur when he crashed out of a Danish Speedwayligaen meeting in Outrup on May 20.
- Australia's Jack Holder is absent after crashing out of the DEWALT FIM Speedway GP of Poland – Wroclaw on June 20, suffering multiple injuries. He missed the previous round in Malilla.
- They are replaced by Speedway GP substitutes Anders Thomsen, Jan Kvech and Kai Huckenbeck.

WILD CARD

- Polish star Piotr Pawlicki makes his first Speedway GP appearance since 2017 in Lodz on Saturday.

- Pawlicki raced to sixth place in the 2016 Speedway GP series, before losing his spot in the championship after finishing 11th in 2017.
- But he still won a Speedway GP along the way – topping the 2017 FIM Speedway GP of Latvia – Daugavpils podium – leading a Polish one-two-three with Patryk Dudek and Maciej Janowski.
- Pawlicki is a two-time FIM Speedway World Cup winner with Poland in 2016 and 2017. He also won the 2014 FIM Speedway Under-21 World Championship – now known as SGP2.
- He was a non-riding reserve as Poland won 2025 FIM Speedway of Nations silver in Torun last October.
- Younger brother of 2018 Speedway GP rider Przemyslaw Pawlicki, Piotr has roared back into form in recent times and is currently back with boyhood club Leszno in the PGE Ekstraliga. Speedway GP regular Dominik Kubera and track reserves Marcin Nowak and Szymon Szlauderbach also graduated from the famous Leszno academy.

WHERE TO WATCH

Fans can catch every moment of 2026 Speedway GP and SWC action live on global broadcaster Warner Bros. Discovery's streaming platforms HBO Max or discovery+. Coverage of every Speedway GP Qualifying session is also available on these platforms.

HBO Max is available across Europe, with FIM-MOTO TV providing coverage around the world.

ACROSS EUROPE: Live on HBO Max and discovery+

BRITAIN: Live on HBO Max and TNT Sports

POLAND: Live on Eurosport 3, HBO Max and Player

SWEDEN: Live on Kanal 9 and HBO Max

DENMARK: Live on 6'eren and HBO Max

AUSTRALIA: Live on Fox Sports

GERMANY: Live on HBO Max and discovery+

ACROSS THE BALTICS: Live on Go3, TV3 Sport and HBO Max

CZECHIA: Live on HBO Max

SLOVAKIA: Live on STVR Sport and HBO Max

USA/CANADA: Live on Racer

REST OF THE WORLD: Live on FIM-MOTO TV