



## *Dress For The Crash*

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**D**uring my time off, I ride with a large group of sport bike riders. Unlike most riders in Florida, this group believes in wearing full gear. Even when it is 95 degrees outside, most of us still ride in full leather gear. We insist everyone riding with us have the following gear as a minimum: helmet, motorcycle-specific jacket, riding gloves, jeans and boots.

Early one Sunday morning, we decided to go on a spirited ride through a couple of towns. There's always one guy (we'll call him "John") who wants to ride, but doesn't have full gear. On this ride, he had everything except boots

—he was wearing tennis shoes. After much debate, it was decided that he could join us, since he was wearing jeans and a textile jacket with armor.

We started our ride and everything went well for the first couple of hours. We rolled through some nice sweeping turns and a couple of real good twisty sections, while doing our best to scare the local strays off the side of the road. I was riding in back on my Z1000, pulling video duties, when I looked over the crest of the next hill to see a big cloud of dust. My first thought was that someone had run off into the orange groves. I was almost right.

Over the crest of the hill, the road takes a sharp, almost 90-degree left turn. It is

surrounded by orange groves. The exception is that there is a dirt road that cuts through the groves if you keep going straight. John was riding his brand new Suzuki GSXR 600 following George on his Honda CBR 600RR. George came into the left turn a little faster than he thought was safe and tried to hit the brakes. Instead, what he hit was the sand on the outside of the corner, which immediately caused his bike to go into a slide, with him sliding face down right behind it. John, seeing this, kept his focus on the downed rider instead of concentrating on the turn before slowing down. Due to his target fixation, John also went off the road. He tried to keep the bike upright, but the front wheel dug into the sand, causing the bike to flip over on top of him before cartwheeling away.

I pulled up to the scene to find George walking around cussing at his bike. "Well, he's all right," I thought. Then I run over to John, who's still on the ground. After seeing the accident, I could only imagine how bad he was hurt. As soon as I got over to him, he was already trying to get up. I helped him to his feet

and we did a quick check of his whole body for injuries. The only one we could find was a sprained ankle. His armored jacket kept him from getting injured when his bike rolled over top of him, and of course, the helmet protected his head. We wondered if he'd been wearing an appropriate pair of motorcycling boots whether he would have even hurt his ankle.

Checking on George, we found the worst of the injuries: the palms of his hands. He was wearing full leather pants and jacket, but had decided to go cheap on the gloves. The second his hands touched the ground, the asphalt wore right through them and gave him some nice road rash. Luckily, he was not injured more than that.

Both the bikes needed a little roadside repair to make them rideable for the trip home. John's brand new bike, with only 750 miles on it, now needed all new bodywork, among other pieces. George's bike also needed some rebuilding.

What we really learned that day, though, was that without the proper gear, the result of this

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*Here we're trying to figure out how to put John's bike back together.*



*George's bike.*

incident could have been a lot worse. We stayed at the scene for a little while and got to a point where

we could laugh and learn about everything. Overall, it turned out to be another great day on a bike. ■



*One of the guys playing with John's broken bike parts.*