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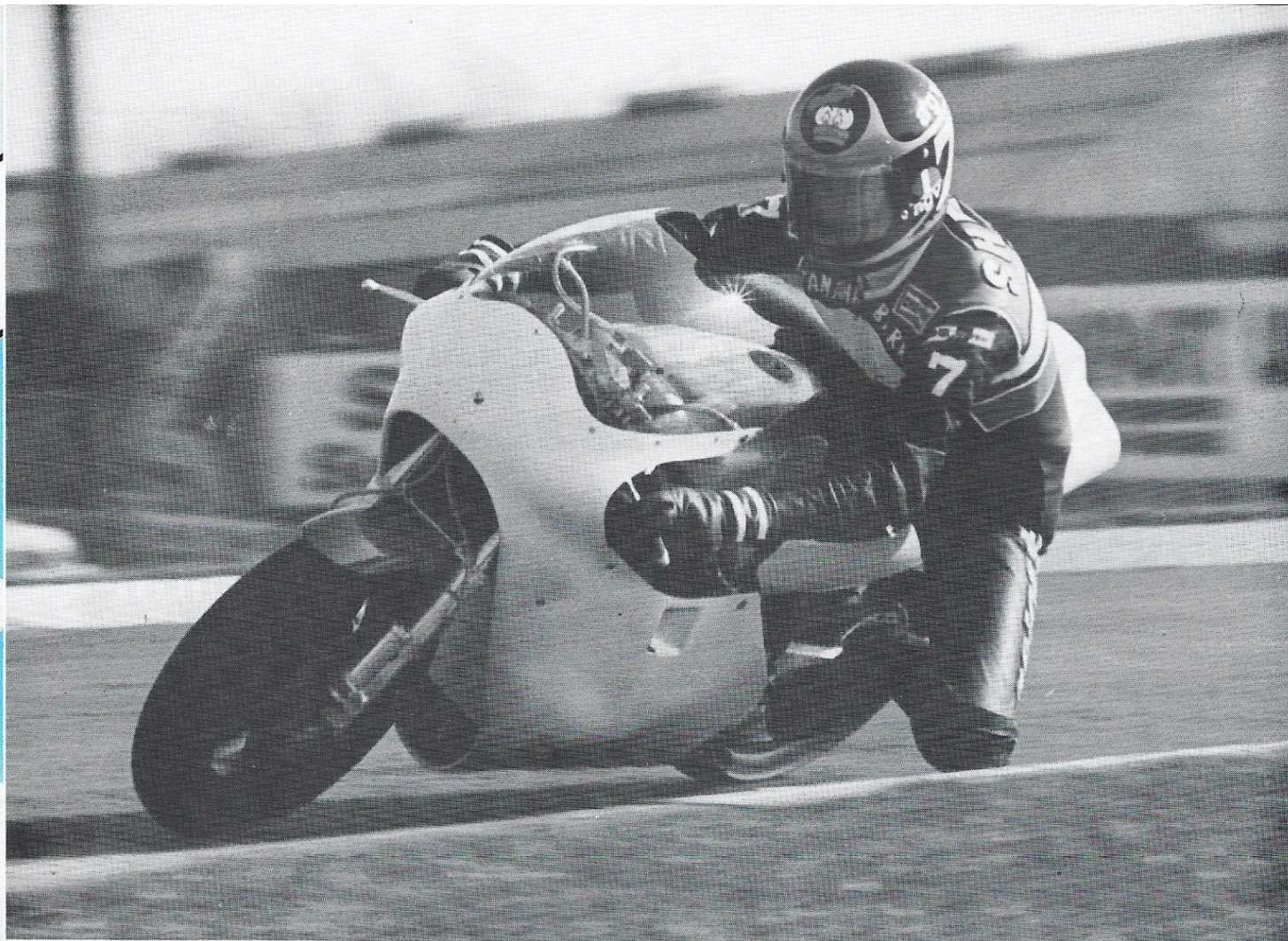
Organised by the
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Saturday/Sunday, April 17/18, 1982

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Barry Sheene tests his new Yamaha OW60 at Donington prior to the start of the World Championship trail in Argentina.

Barry Sheene: Good start to '82

By ANDREW MARRIOTT

BARRY SHEENE stood on the victory balcony at Buenos Aires Autodrome wreathed in smiles and garlands. He rattled off an interview in Spanish for Argentine TV followed by another for World of Sport and finally was able to battle his way back to the paddock garage to join his team to thank them for their efforts.

It could well be a turning point for the 31 year old Surrey based rider. For that second place by inches in Argentina may well mark the return of Sheene as a genuine contender for the World Championship in 1982.

Certainly he did finish fourth last year and he cleaned up the World of Sport title with consummate ease, but he had started the season without the latest Yamaha and with the memory of a disastrous 1980 finish in his memory.

In direct contrast Sheene has started 1982 with a brand new OW60 Yamaha to the same specification as Kenny Roberts' with some useful Donington testing miles under his Michelins, and the memory of a win in the last Grand Prix of last season.

Add to that the satisfaction of landing a sponsorship deal with John Player Special which, while it doesn't match the sponsor's

seven figure involvement in car racing, is packed with potential for the future and will keep the wolf from the door.

But most important of all Barry started the season with a new attitude. After opening his British season with two convincing wins at Cadwell Park, he told me "I feel so good about this year, somehow everything is just falling into place. John Player came along at just the right time and I am building up a great relationship with them, especially Peter Dyke — the new head of sponsored events. The new OW60 is a revelation, the best bike I have ever ridden. I am enjoying the season more than for some years."

Sheene's great race to second spot in Argentina should be put in perspective. He was the underdog. After all Kenny Roberts is the number one Yamaha rider, with three World Championship titles for the firm under his cowboy belt that's not surprising. He was getting the lion's share of the Japanese technicians' time as well as the considerable help of Dunlop who are putting a massive effort into the 500 cc category this year. Roberts too has the advantage of a top team manager in former champion Kel Carruthers.

Barry's other main rival Freddie Spencer had an even stronger back up

team. There were no fewer than seven of the sensational new Honda three cylinder, two stroke NS500s on hand for Spencer and team mates Lucchinelli and Katayama, plus six spare engines.

A back up of team management, technicians and mechanics numbering twenty including Barry's last year's tuner Irv Kanemoto.

Sheene was in the next door garage, in contrast sharing it with Marc Fontan, another rider blessed this year with an OW60 Yam. His back up team consisted solely of mechanics Ken and Martin plus Stephanie to look after the stop watches. He had just the single bike, no spare engine, no containers full of spares crates. Barry was not only the team's rider but also team manager, shipping agent and resident translator. In the past I have criticised Barry for taking on too much, that the peripheral activities have detracted from the main effort. Certainly at Buenos Aires they made no difference to his performance — and his linguistic activities certainly put him one jump ahead of the rest of the opposition.

Whether his small and compact team will be able to fend off the might of Honda, not to mention the heavily sponsored Suzuki team, this year remains

to be seen. He admits "When you look at the kind of Grand Prix car racing style set ups that Honda and Suzuki now have you start to wonder if you can beat that. If the finance was available I could expand my operation, fit in more testing and so on. But I honestly believe that you can get too big and confuse matters. Right now I have control over everything, I am to a large degree the master of my own destiny. I like that. I could have joined Ago's team with the same bike, a bigger operating budget but less control. I believe in my own decisions and this year if I win or lose it will be down to me. Of course the Yamaha engineers will always be close at hand if I need them."

Enthusiastic about the latest Yamaha Sheene added "I couldn't believe it when I rode this year's bike for the first time. It is so small and easy to handle. When I got back on the 750 at Cadwell Park it felt like a truck on flat tyres. It really brought it home to me. After several years of stagnating, I think this year you will see the lap times start to tumble."

Certainly the new breed of smaller Grand Prix machines make for exciting racing as Argentina proved. Anyone who watched ITV's World of Sport coverage of the race can't fail to be impressed how Sheene, Spencer and Roberts were able to flick the bikes so quickly through the chicane before the pits. Just watch at Donington at the chicane before the pits and you will see what I mean.

Sheene is delighted to be back at the track on the Leicester/Derbyshire borders again this year. Barry said "I had a great 1981 at Donington, I like the circuit, it suits my riding style — although I reckon I can ride most places — and they make me so welcome. But I suppose this year with



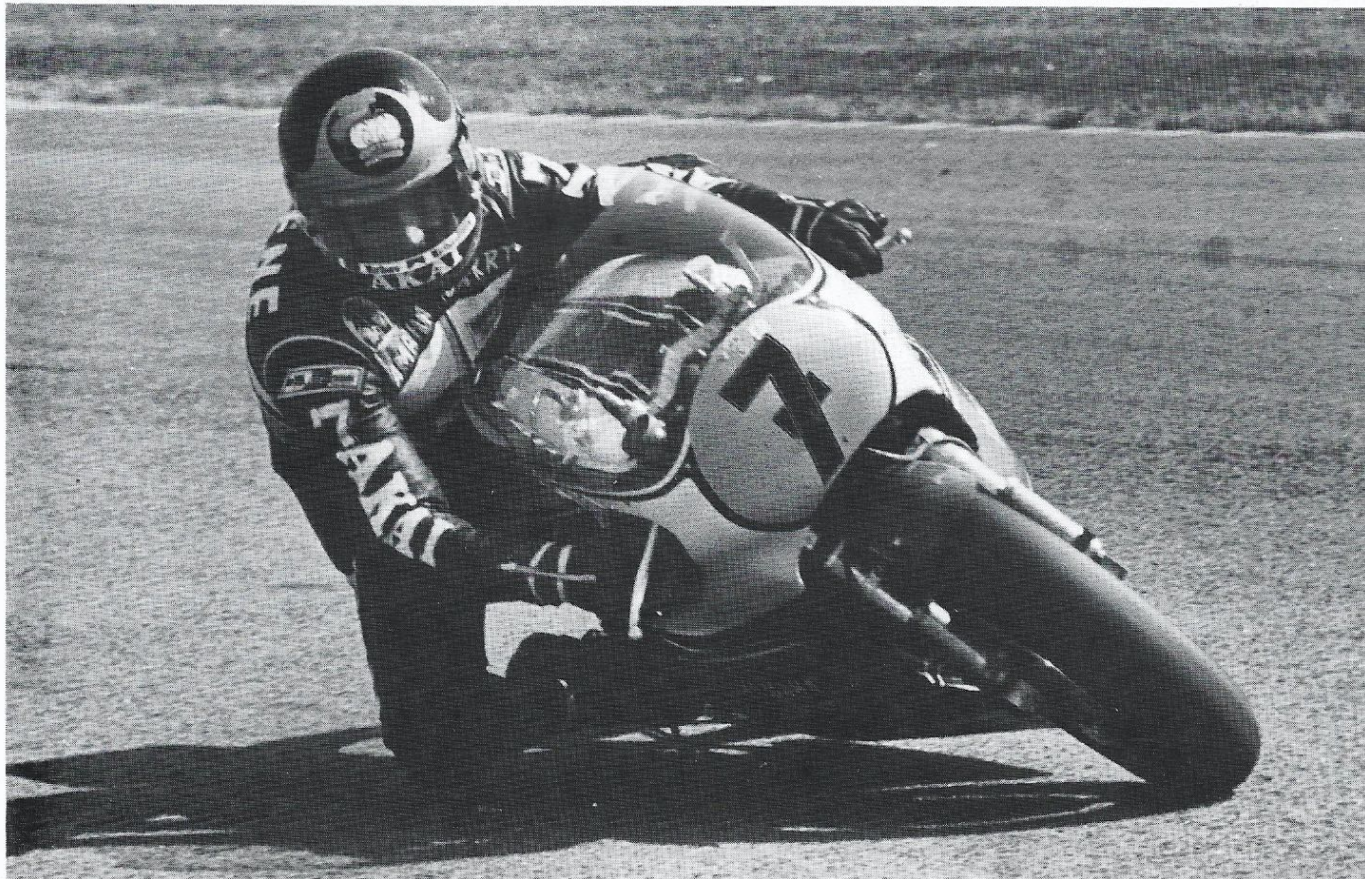
my new sponsorship I have got to keep winning. That is expected of me to keep it in house. Mind you I wasn't averse to taking some of the other lot's money over Easter!"

Yes, there is no doubt about it, Barry Sheene is in for a good year. He has to be favourite to win at Donington this weekend and all of a sudden he has dialled his way back into everyone's reckoning

for the World Championship too. Perhaps one indication of what is to come was confirmed by Linda Patterson, the lady who handles his interview schedule. She told me: "It's staggering. All of a sudden everyone wants to interview Barry again. He is always popular but right now the phone won't stop ringing."

Barry Sheene and his John Player Yamaha are definitely big news this year.

Barry at Donington last year on his older-model Yamaha.



SINCE the introduction of the John Player Gold Cup for 500 cc machines it has been adopted by the factories as their most important pre-World Championship shakedown. Of course, the appearance of the Argentinian Grand Prix this year means that the World Championship season is already underway, but it still serves a very useful purpose as teams look ahead to the *European rounds*.

With the Austrian Grand Prix at the Salzburgring only two weeks away, Yamaha, Suzuki and Kawasaki — the three manufacturers represented here this weekend — will be running their final checks before heading for the Continent. In addition to a valuable technical run through, it can give the rider the perfect mental boost he needs as he goes in search of Grand Prix points in Europe.

If Barry Sheene can beat Randy Mamola and Kork Ballington this weekend his journey to the Salzburgring will surely be all the merrier, and the same goes for his two main rivals if they reach the line before him.

This year the race takes on a new look. In the past it has been one straight battle of 30 laps (58.72 miles), but this time the organisers have wisely made it a two-leg affair. Arrangements like this always guard against one of the stars breaking down and disappointing the crowd if he is only contracted to appear in the one event.

And the race fan is certainly getting better value for money if he has a second battle to look forward to later in the afternoon — it's simply a better value for money package. This year there is better value for money than ever. Both legs consist of 20 laps and the total race distance is some 78.82 miles.

Here to defend his Gold Cup title is the controversial Californian Randy Mamola, who this year heads the exclusively World Championship



Randy Mamola receives the John Player Gold Cup after his record-breaking victory in last year's race.

JOHN PLAYER GOLD CUP Prelude to the European GP season by ANDREW MCKINNON

Suzuki team. Mamola is paired off this season with the Italian Suzuki brought in from the cold, Virginio Ferrari, but neither have anything much to shout about so far this year!

In both his major race engagements so far Mamola has failed to finish. He fell at the first corner at Daytona and then in Buenos Aires gear selection problems on the 1982 works Suzuki ruled him out when things were hotting up.

So don't be too surprised if you see a sizzling performance from Mamola. There is so much frustration bottled up inside him that he'll ride the wheels off his Suzuki!

This really is Mamola's big chance to get some success under his belt before his quest to recover those 15 lost points in Austria begins. Suzuki have put all their eggs in one basket with Mamola and the pressure will soon begin to mount if successive victories are not recorded when we get back to the World Championship calendar.

Mamola was in record-breaking form at this meeting last year. His new lap record of 1m 14.3s, 94.84 mph, took him to victory over former team-mate Graeme Crosby (now in Agostini's Marlboro colours), Barry Sheene, Keith Huewen, Kenny Roberts and Italian Franco Uncini.

In fact, that race will always be remembered as a vital chapter in the story of the development of Yamaha's 500 cc Grand Prix racer. Despite much speculation Sheene and Roberts arrived at Donington Park with virtually the same machinery on which Kenny had raced the previous season.

Quite simply the Yamaha partnership on the

reverse-cylinder machines was thrashed as Mamola and Crosby gave the new Suzukis their first outing. Sheene was a long way behind the second placed man and so much off the pace was reigning World Champion Roberts that Keith Huewen, on what was basically a production RG500 Suzuki, separated him from Sheene.

But it soon became apparent that something fishy was going on! After the race neither Sheene nor Roberts seemed worried by World Championship prospects, despite their hammering. Then, sure enough, Yamaha unveiled their superb square-four disc-valve 500 cc racer at Salzburgring. The whole Donington episode had been a calculated ploy to lure Suzuki into a false sense of security!

It's doubtful whether we've got such intrigue in store for us this weekend, but you can never be certain in a sport where development is as keen as it is at present. Stories are already circulating that Roberts is to ride a V4 Grand Prix racer in the first European race. Could the machine we are seeing Sheene on this weekend be heading for the scrap heap before the season is out?

Whatever the motives behind appearances here today, Sheene's brilliant early season form will be every bit a match for that bottled-up Mamola rage! The British superstar's performances to date have brought out all those boring clichés about his best years being behind him, but he has been, and always will be, the nation's number one entertainer.

We were not able to measure up his and Mamola's chances in South America because of

the Californian's misfortune — here is our chance. And here, too, is a golden opportunity for South African Kork Ballington to reassure himself that this could be the year of fruition after a patient and expertly carried out development programme for Kawasaki.

Kork's eighth place in Argentina was a disappointment to us all. He has long been held as the "man most likely to" and the time seemed ripe for Kawasaki to blow the World Championship race wide open. But it never happened in round one of this year's championship and both Ballington and the factory will want to be more of a threat by the time they pull into the Salzburgring paddock. Let's hope Donington Park 1982 will go down as a significant chapter in Kawasaki's development history book.

Those really are the three main factory challengers for the prestigious Gold Cup title, but the man who could well provide the shock is Keith Huewen, now firmly under Heron Suzuki GB's wing after being co-opted to their squad last season.

We could be cruel and say that Keith's bike is the one on which Mamola set last year's record lap and so there is no excuse, but we won't heap pressure on him like that! With two wins at Donington Park already this season Keith has had the feel of winners' laurels around his neck. He's riding as well as ever and will be with the pace-setters if he has his way. This could be the tremendous lift he's looking for as he begins his career as a works-supported Grand Prix rider.

From Huewen we move down the entry list and consider the wealth of home riders who

could pull off a surprise at the expense of the name riders. One name in particular to watch for is St Helens rider Bob Smith, this year equipped with the best tackle money can buy for the privateer. Bob is no stranger to success around this track but will want to erase the memory of his fall at the early national when his Dennis Pratt Suzuki RG500 Mk 7 (the most expensive item on the market for the non-works rider these days) bit the dust.

The incident happened when Bob chased Steve Henshaw out of Redgate. Henshaw fell and Smith was unable to avoid him. It will also be interesting to study the form of Harold Coppock's rider today in view of his period of hospitalisation with a back injury as a result of that accident. Smith and Henshaw both ride new Mk 7 Suzukis this weekend and any other favourites to be considered for the main event are likely to be owners of similar machinery.

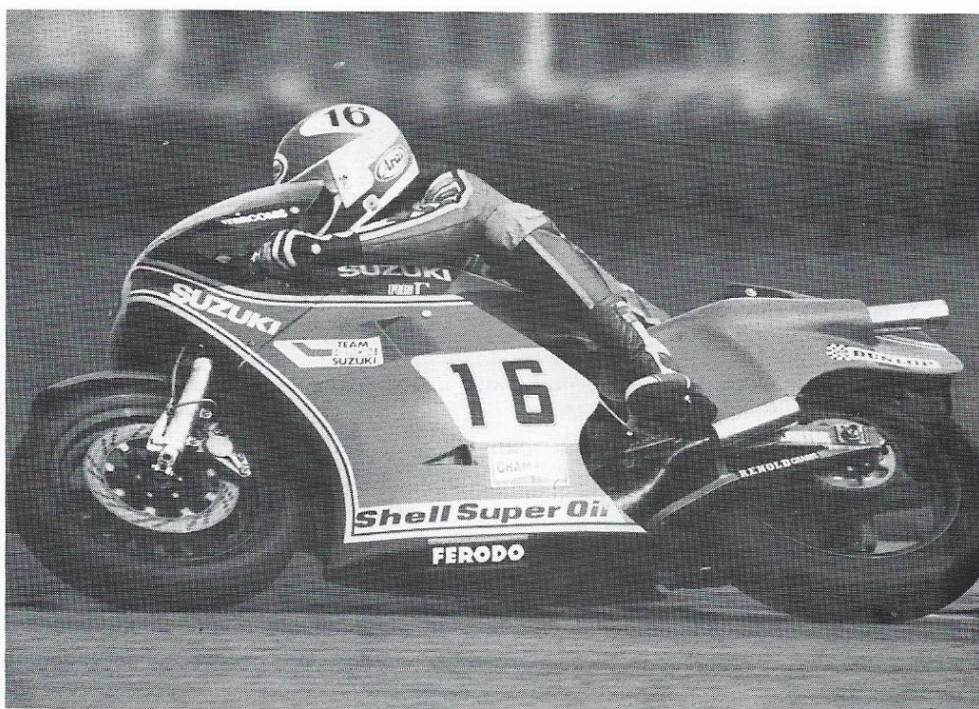
Two such owners are Phil Henderson and Gary Padgett, both of whom are finding encouraging 1982 form in the early meetings. Both have raved about the capabilities of their new machine. Indeed, Henderson chose not to use his at a rain-swept Cadwell national last month, claiming that on the day there was simply too much power for him to use it safely!

Let's hope that he can put that turn of speed to good use this weekend and that Mr Padgett can earn some welcome cash to nibble away at the bank overdraft he arranged to join that elite branch of the Suzuki Owners' Club!

But in the private sector it will by no means be a Suzuki monopoly. The performance of the latest Yamaha over-the-counter racer, a descendant of the works reverse-cylinder model which Kenny Roberts rode for the first time at the 1980 Dutch TT, has been a revelation.

Match Race team member Graham Wood rides the Fowlers of Bristol machine with backing from British Yamaha importers Mitsui and riding with Mitsui backing also is Steve Parrish, who was so unfortunate to fall last time here.

Parrish's form has been one of the most newsworthy points of the opening weeks of the



Will Keith Huewen provide a major surprise following his superb form here in March?

season. And even when he broke his collarbone in a crash at the height of his titanic battle with Keith Huewen at this circuit in March he didn't throw in the towel. He underwent immediate surgery and, with a plate on the offending break, was able to appear at Easter.

Graham Wood saw his Match Race chances disappear two seasons ago through a similar injury to Parrish's current complaint and it was this very memory at the back of his mind which has given him a somewhat subdued start this term. But now with the Easter challenge out of the way we are likely to see an altogether more aggressive attitude from him.

Other names to watch out for are talented Chris Guy on Sid Griffiths' 500 Suzuki, Steve Williams on a Yamaha, Peter Wild (who is progressing well on the Mk 7 Suzuki supplied by sponsor Dave Orton), Barry Woodland, Alex George, Simon Buckmaster (breaking into the bigger classes) and Gary Lingham (who should prove one of the nation's best prospects when he establishes consistency).

Phil Mellor, Dave Dean, Mark Salle, Andy Bond and many more all have the machinery to get among the top 10 each time.

But first there are almost 80 racing miles to help you compile your own form report.

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THE ASSEMBLY of such a complete motorcycle racing programme as the 1982 John Player Series underlines the belief and commitment of Donington Park to the future of the sport. Taking in six full internationals and four nationals, the series has plenty to offer. To cater for the clubman there are several other meetings including a round of the ACU clubman's championship.

Donington and the John Player Series has put around a third of a million pounds into motorcycle racing in the shape of prize money and appearance money. This helps to underline Donington's claim to the 'The Heart of British Motor Sport' and is another step up the ladder to the return of Grand Prix racing to the circuit — before the second world war Donington hosted both car and motorcycle Grand Prix races.

Donington backs bikes

DAVE FERN describes the behind-the-scenes activities which resulted in this year's exciting motorcycle programme

Since its re-opening five years ago, Donington Park has developed rapidly and achieved much — more already than many cynics thought possible when Tom Wheatcroft's dreams first became reality. On that first meeting back in March 1977 the Leicester builder's investment in the sport was in many ways justified. A crowd of around 20,000 attending a national motorcycle meeting.

In those five years the public has responded well to the circuit's aim to provide the best in racing action, and it has become a riders' and drivers' circuit with a fair minded policy of keeping costs down but keeping prize money at the highest possible level.

Donington has always championed the £20,000 minimum prize fund for International motorcycle meetings such as this weekend's and would have liked it to have been increased this season. The decision not to step up the minimum has met with more than a little disappointment in the corridors of power at the Park.

It is all part of the belief that the only way to improve standards and encourage the younger 'up and coming riders' to aim for the top is to dangle an attractive carrot in front of them and race for it. Under the old system the few who were guaranteed the security of start money pay out did not have to worry too much about fighting for prize money.

That is not to say that some superstars are not bought in having reached the top of a rather 'short term career' and because of their level of earnings from the Grand Prix Circus it is only natural they should require some premium to take part in a non championship event.

Away from those leading few, Donington via the John Player sponsorship package is doing its utmost to encourage the 'second division' riders. The £15,000 John Player 250cc International Championship, the first two rounds of which are being held this weekend, should boost numerous young riders in their motorcycle racing careers.

But it is not just in terms of cash paid out that Donington underlines its commitment to motorsport. The rapid growth, backed by a massive investment by its proprietor, Tom Wheatcroft, in the provision of facilities for riders, drivers and spectators is backed by the policy of fair play to the spectators in this time of recession. Free admission for children, accompanied by an adult and aged 15 and under, free car parking and the chance to win

hundreds of prizes on the circuit's novel free Chequered Flag Bingo Promotion are just some of the ways Donington is playing fair with its customers.

The signs are encouraging and, like today, Donington's full day's racing is interspersed with on-circuit promotions and air displays — to ensure there is never a dull moment.

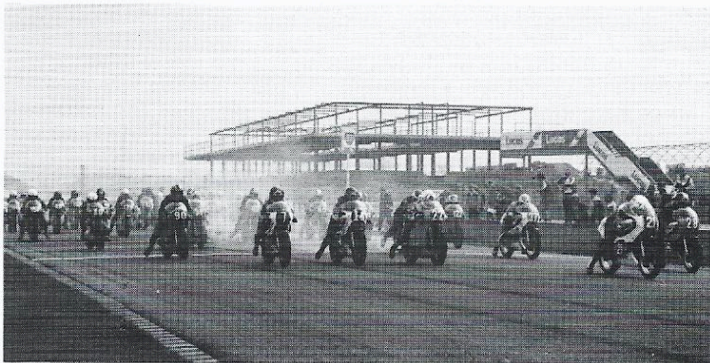
It is all part of the Donington policy of striving to achieve the best — exactly the same policy as is applied to the circuit's development.

Having taken advice from every available expert when he designed and rebuilt Donington Park circuit, Tom Wheatcroft was able to incorporate many safety features, and provide modern facilities. He wants to achieve top class facilities for the competitors and the spectators.

Over the winter months the results of much of that work are plain to see. Opposite the Old Hairpin and around Starkeys Bridge the hillside has been literally dug up and soil used to infill the centre field.

Thousands of cubic feet of soil had to be carried away by two gigantic excavators working

Construction work at the Park Chicane is seen in the background at the March season-opener.



daily for some six months. The results are two fold. For the competitors a much bigger run off has been provided on a particularly fast section of the track. Tom Wheatcroft had noticed that riders and drivers going through Starkeys Bridge and then twisting left towards McLeans often left the track — the simple way of trying to make life more comfortable and safe for anyone sliding off would have been catch fencing or straw bales. Not though at Donington. Make the run off area much bigger and grass it down.

For the spectators the benefit of carving the hill away is a much better view of the racing and by term, when the banks have been grassed down and fencing erected, an infield viewing area.

The cost of it all, around half a million pounds on top of the already estimated £3½m it cost to rebuild the circuit.

But that is not the only present development work in hand. Spectator banking is being built at Redgate and Craner Curves. The appalling winter nearly held this back, but work is progressing well and will be complete soon. Please accept our apologies in the meantime.

Work is also underway on the first permanent grandstand at the circuit. Situated the top end of paddock one, between the control tower and the park corner island it will have 400 seats and provide an excellent view of the start/finish straight. Housed underneath the stand will be a new, fully equipped Medical

Become a Donington supporter!

The Donington Park Racing Association (the circuit's independent Supporter's Club) gives active support to this circuit and, in turn, is able to provide a host of benefits for its members for the annual £5 subscription. Joint membership for husband/wife is £8.00 per annum and Junior membership (14 to 18 years) is available at £2.00 per annum. We are now able to accept a limited number of new members for 1982 and would be pleased to give you further details of membership. Simply call in at our Caravan at McLean's Corner or write to our Membership Secretary, Jim Armett, at Hilltop Farm, Castle Donington, Derby.

Centre providing more facilities than the existing one.

Also on that Park Chicane Island the latest phase of hospitality suites is being built — 30 executive viewing suites are housed in this latest complex, bringing the total available into three figures. 16 of the new suites face the start/finish straight, the remainder Starkeys Straight and the soon to be completed Grand Prix Loop. Available for hire at £2,500 per annum these suites, together with those in the Pit Lane (£1,500) and Redgate (£2,000-£2,500), offer remarkable value, an excellent view of the action and hirers receive 15 season passes. The majority of the suites are let, underlining local industry and commerce's belief in the circuit.

The racegoers enjoyment has been reflected already by a large attendance at the opening

John Player Nationals meeting — the takings, though, were just a drop in the ocean compared to the sums being spent on development, such is Donington Park's commitment to motorsport.



Today's prizes

1st Prize — £100

25 prizes each of a double ticket to a future meeting of your choice

50 prizes of John Player cigarettes

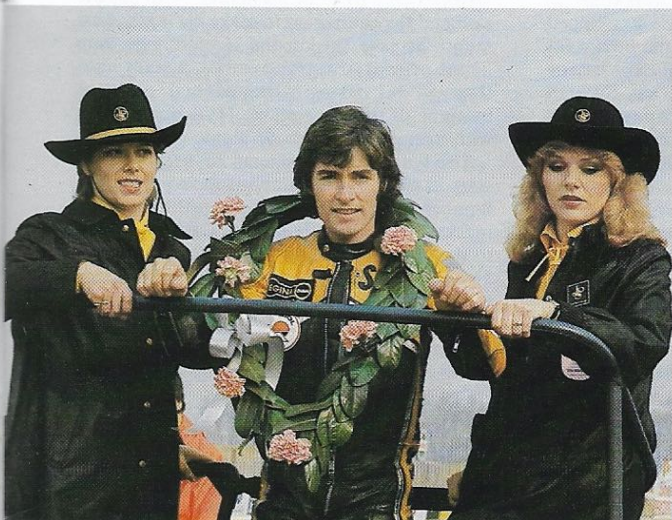
500 prizes of a pint of Everards Beacon bitter

Full details of the bingo game and the numbers will be broadcast over the public address system, together with the times to collect your prizes from the Starkeys Bar redemption centre.



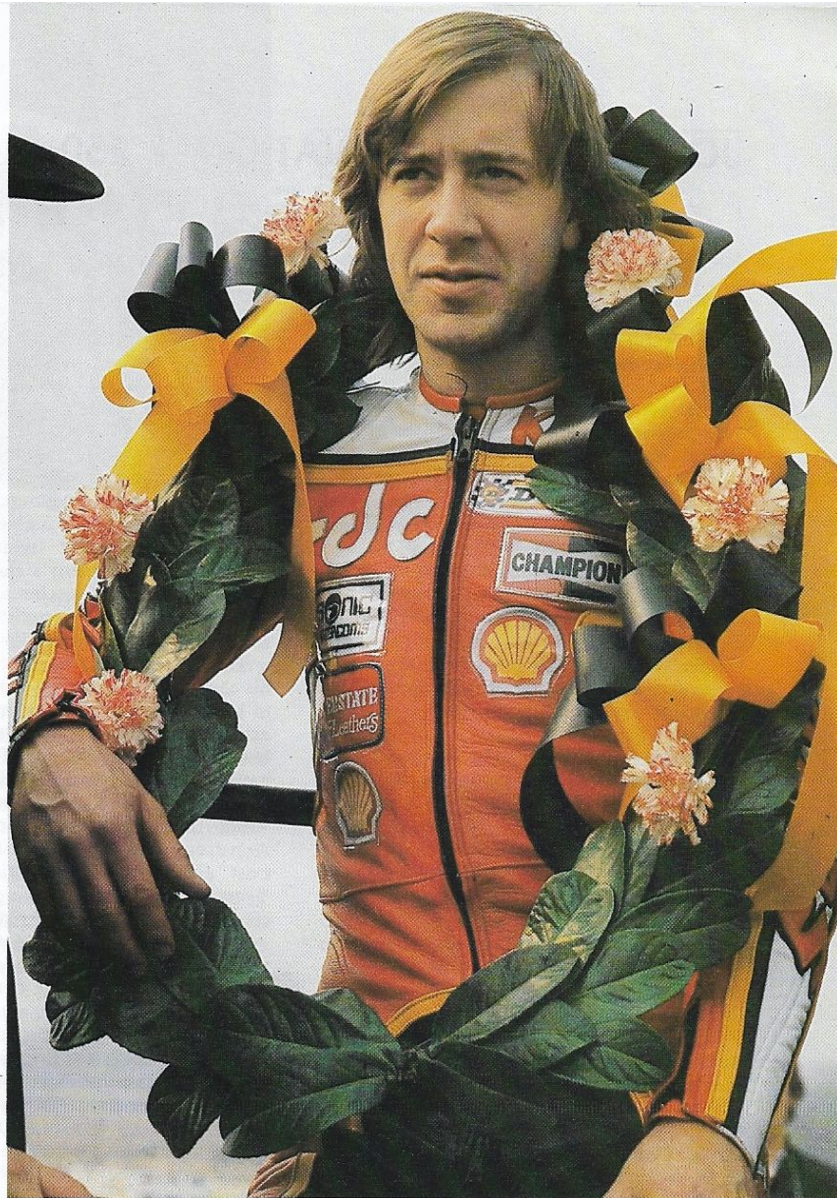
JOHN PLAYER NATIONALS FLASHBACK

Dave Rigley's photographs from
the March 28 Donington meeting

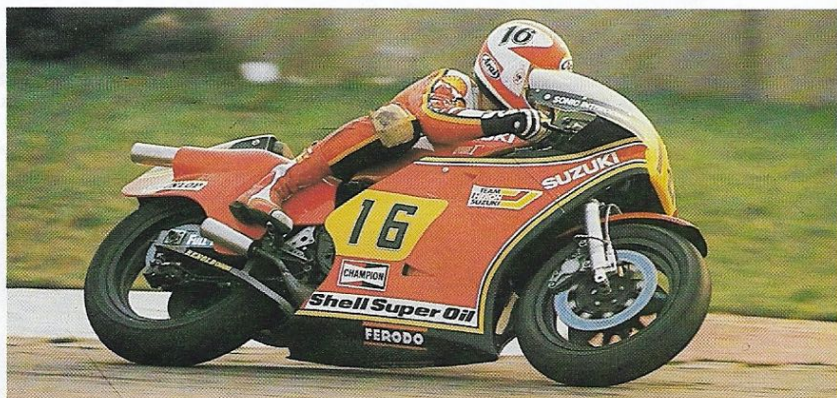


Above: Steve Tonkin, winner of the exciting 250 cc race on his Randle Armstrong, poses with the John Player girls.

Below: Seventeen-year-old Alan Carter won the 350 cc race and was third in the 250 event. He cannot obtain his international licence until his 18th birthday.



Above: Keith Huewen, the John Player Rider of the Day, won the 500 cc and Superbike races on his works Suzuki, an ex-Randy Mamola machine.



Above: Keith Huewen, who set new outright national lap and race records, is the early leader of the John Player Superbike Trophy series run at Donington national meetings.



Right: Donington's Managing Director, Robert Fearnall presents D. Waite, from Preston, near Hull, with the first £100 bingo prize of the year.

JOHN PLAYER INTERNATIONAL 250 cc CHAMPIONSHIP

£15,000 for the 250s

By ANDREW MCKINNON

DONINGTON PARK'S £15,000 series for 250 cc machines can accurately be described as the best thing ever to happen to this class in Britain. Never before has this sort of money been available to 250 cc riders and, with five rounds to go at, the country's experts will handsomely line their pockets from the championship which comes under the massive John Player package in the company's second year of association with Donington Park.

Now, coupled with the £8000 *Motor Cycle Racing/EBC Brakes* championship, the series has transformed the class into one of the most lucrative on the home international calendar. Britain has by far the most competitive and rewarding 250 cc arena outside the World Championship schedule.

This weekend, two of the scheduled five races will be staged, and that means £6000 in prize money for the fortunate ones who have made the grid. Quite naturally, with cash like this being thrown about, the organisers had a problem selecting entries and so to start the ball rolling they accepted the first 10 home in the March national.

In addition to that high class list they have been showered with applications from overseas riders and the very best of those you will see this weekend.

Favourites for the early action will be the Armstrong team racing under the Randles Racing Team banner. Tony Rogers, who along with team mate Jeff Sayle from Australia had a frustrating Argentinian Grand Prix to begin his World Championship campaign, already has an international victory under his belt and he's hungry to add more pound notes to a road racer's habitually lean bank balance!

The four-strong team being spearheaded by the sport's only lady sponsor, Ruth Randle from nearby Whitwick, is having mixed fortunes as it tries to sort out some sort of consistency before the opening European race in the World Championship for 250s at Nogaro near the French-Spanish border on May 9.

Rogers won brilliantly at Cadwell Park on April 4 to notch his first international victory for his new team and Tonkin took the chequered flag at the March 28 national at this circuit.

For Sayle and Clive Horton (last year one of the nation's most effective 250 riders) the early meetings have been a nightmare, to put things bluntly, and the whole problem has stemmed around their inability to start their 1982 machines. The company's choice of Dellorto carburettors for the machines has given them different starting characteristics which Sayle and Horton are finding difficult to master.

Twice already this season Sayle has ruined his chances with a terrible start and he'll want to have that behind him before the big money action starts here. Horton, too, has suffered but had the consolation of setting a new national 250 cc record for this track when he crossed the line second to Tonkin in March.

But the series will by no means be an Armstrong carve-up! Razor sharp rivalry will exist among these twin-cylinder men with Yamaha riders desperate to prove that their choice of machinery is the right one.

Australian ace Graeme McGregor will start the series as one of the chief threats to Rotax dominance on his George Beale Yamaha. He was hoping to catch up on a backlog of testing before this weekend, incurred by his visit to South America for the first Grand Prix of the year. If he gets his machine competitive for the Donington contest then he is a definite favourite as he has proved with many a stunning performance here before.

Another of the Yamaha threats is that of Peter Hubbard from Lincoln. For some time the capabilities of this hard-riding, but sensible man have been overlooked. If his third place at the Cadwell International is anything to go by he'll get rich from the Donington championship.

Already this year Ulsterman Donnie Robinson, one of the real nice guys of the paddock, has managed to capture top form.

His earlier outing at Donington brought a second place in the 350 cc event to Alan Carter and he crossed the line fourth at Cadwell Park. Indeed, the scene could be set for a really bumper year for Donnie. His forte so far has been that of racing on closed roads circuits like the Isle of Man and Ulster Grand Prix.

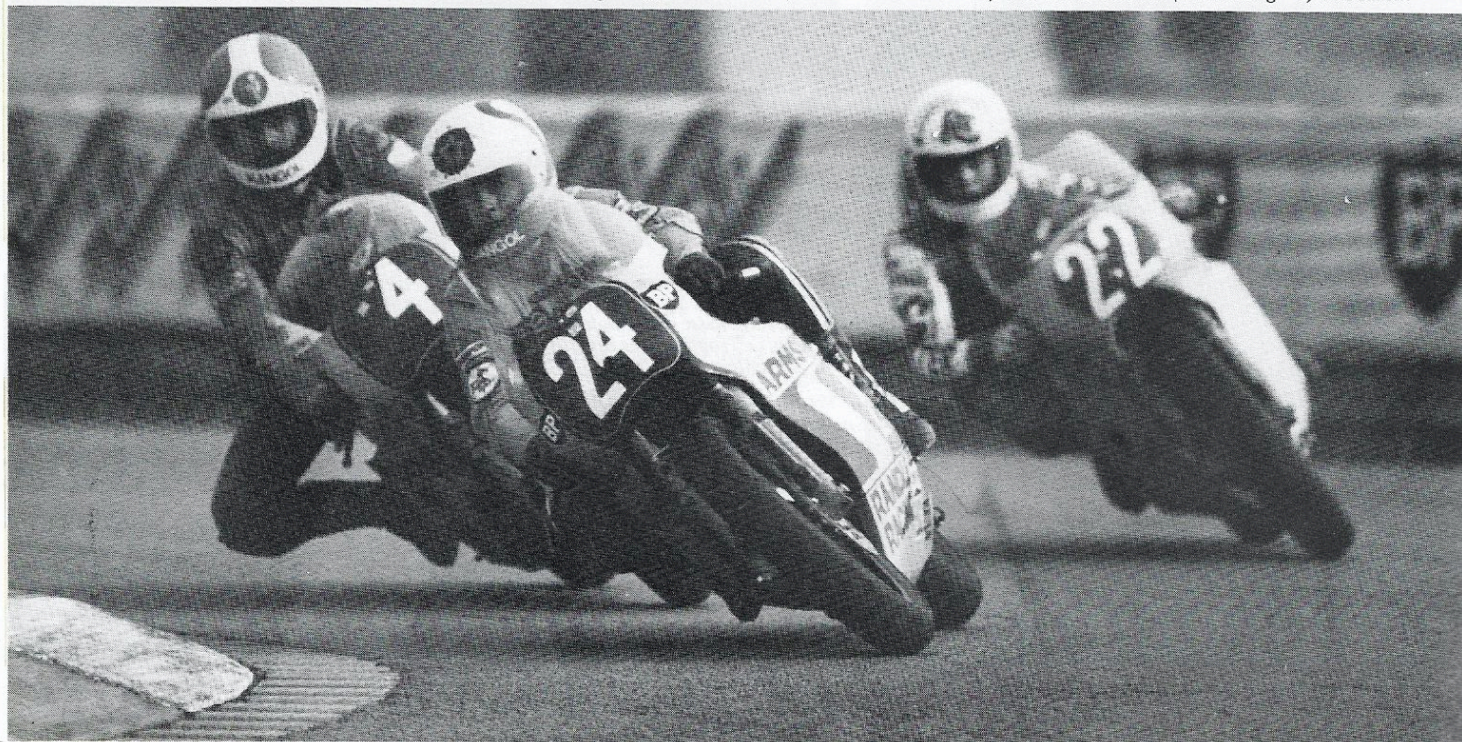
Watching frustratedly this weekend will be young Alan Carter, the man who got the better of Donnie in that opening clash here. Quite simply Mal Carter's brilliant racing son is too young to be granted an international licence and must wait until next year's Donington series to get a piece of the action. Alan has the skill and the equipment to make his mark. Last month he gave Tonkin and Horton, who were on the official Armstrong entries, a really hard time on his privately-entered and prepared machine of the same make. He'll be watching with interest how form develops.

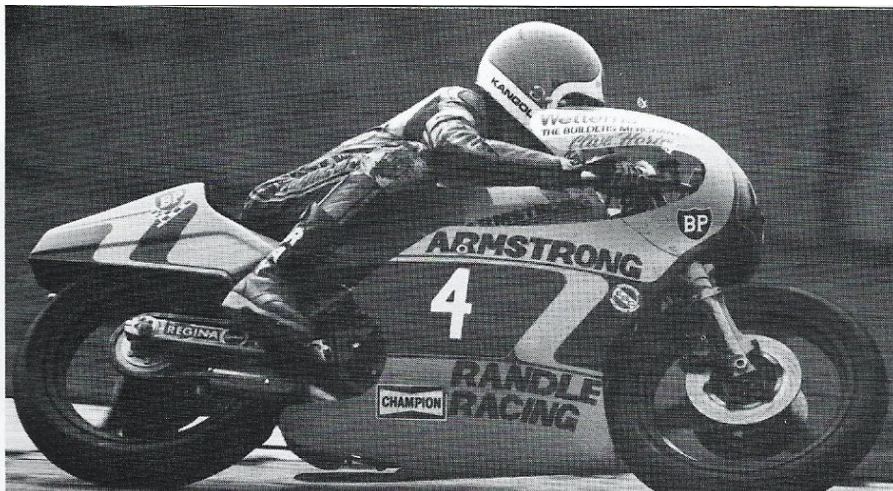
The Waddon/Ehrlich team got off to a great start in their bid to establish their product as number one among the 250 cc machines on the market, with a fourth place at Daytona thanks to the efforts of talented Coventry rider Tony Head. With their resources and the legendary tuning skills of Dr Joe Ehrlich (who has come out of racing retirement especially to see through this project) they must start the Donington battle as one of the most fancied teams.

On more than one occasion the exceptional power which Dr Joe has squeezed from the redesigned in line twin power unit has been evident. What Tony now has to do is perfect the combination of himself and the machine and present his rivals with a headache. Already he's scored a fourth at Donington this year and so he knows what it's like to set the pace. The pressure is on for Tony for the professional Waddon/Ehrlich operation would dearly like the Donington and *Motor Cycle Racing* titles to advertise their wares.

With such a depth of field for the exciting new series it's a tall order even trying to predict who will feature in the top 10 finishers. To

Close battle featuring Steve Tonkin (Randle Armstrong - 24), Alan Carter (Pharaoh Yamaha - 22) and Clive Horton (Armstrong - 4) in March.





Armstrong exponent Clive Horton, one of this country's best 250 riders.

illustrate this point, let's just examine some of the overseas riders who have travelled here specially to contest the 250 cc championship.

When we saw Finnish rider Eero Hyvärinen at Cadwell Park on April 3 he looked in particularly good shape with a fifth place behind Rogers, Tonkin, Hubbard and Robinson. A Grand Prix regular, he can live with competition and could be the dark horse of this series if he makes it a priority.

Then we have the battling Bolle brothers from France. Jacques is the more established of the two through his efforts on the works 125 cc Motobecane on which he finished the World Championship in fifth position last season. His 250 cc exploits were not nearly as successful, way down in the lower 20s, but his 110 per cent commitment to the Motobecane project certainly detracted from his concentration in the bigger capacity class.

His younger brother is bulging with talent — a French Alan Carter if you like! Pierre's only 250 cc championship points came from fifth place at Paul Ricard, but he qualified on the front row of the grid on more than one

occasion last year.

And there are other young Frenchmen seeking out the Donington cash. Frederick Duval shows great promise and he is accompanied by Thierry Rapicault and Thierry Seuz.

Making your mark at overseas meetings is always more difficult than going well in your own country because of the time involved in dashing to and from the meetings. But what makes our visitors' problems even greater this weekend is the sheer number of riders on the grid who have proved that they can lap this circuit very respectably.

We haven't mentioned yet the exciting talents of Peter Wild and his close friend from north of the border Donnie McLeod who has scored very consistently in the early 250 cc events.

Then there is the interesting combination of Chris Guy and a 250 Yamaha, which is sure to produce good results, and that brilliant veteran who has shown as good form as anybody during the opening meetings, Tony Rutter. Phil Mellor rides the McKinstry Racing Yamaha

John Player International 250 cc Championship

John Player encourages the "second division" of motorcycle racing with the entirely new five race John Player International 250 cc Championship at Donington Park this season. A cash injection of £3000 per round immediately makes this one of this country's premier and richest championships.

The winner of each will take home £750, with the remainder of the money split as follows: 2nd, £500; 3rd, £300; 4th, £250; 5th, £200; 6th, £160; 7th, £125; 8th, £115; 9th, £110; and 10th, £100. £15 is paid to every finisher after 10th.

The winner of each round will also receive a solid gold pendant, individually numbered, and inscribed with John Player and Donington.

The first two rounds take place at this weekend's John Player Gold Cup meeting, the other three rounds taking place at the international meetings on June 20, August 29 and October 3.

Points are awarded on a 15-12-10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis to the first 10 finishers in each round.

and will be looking to get back in the results after an uncharacteristically lean period with which to kick off the season.

And in with a real chance of the jackpot is Batley's rapidly rising star Gary Padgett who has already tasted success on his 250 Yamaha at the rain-soaked Cadwell national. Whether it's wet or dry he must be rated highly and so he could be the man to watch.

After a seventh place in the opening round of the *Motor Cycle Racing/EBC Brakes* series at Cadwell Park, Paul Tinker of New Waltham near Grimsby looks likely to be one of the finds of the season. He displayed great skill on his John Bull Yamaha and now has the sort of mileage under his belt to help him progress at international level.

Of course our form guide will take on a much more positive look after this weekend's opening two races, but be sure to circle one of the names we have discussed for your wagers!

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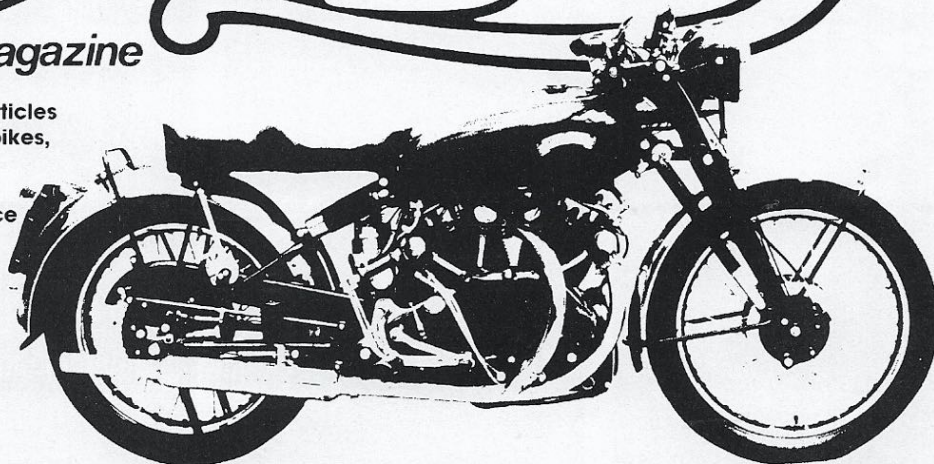
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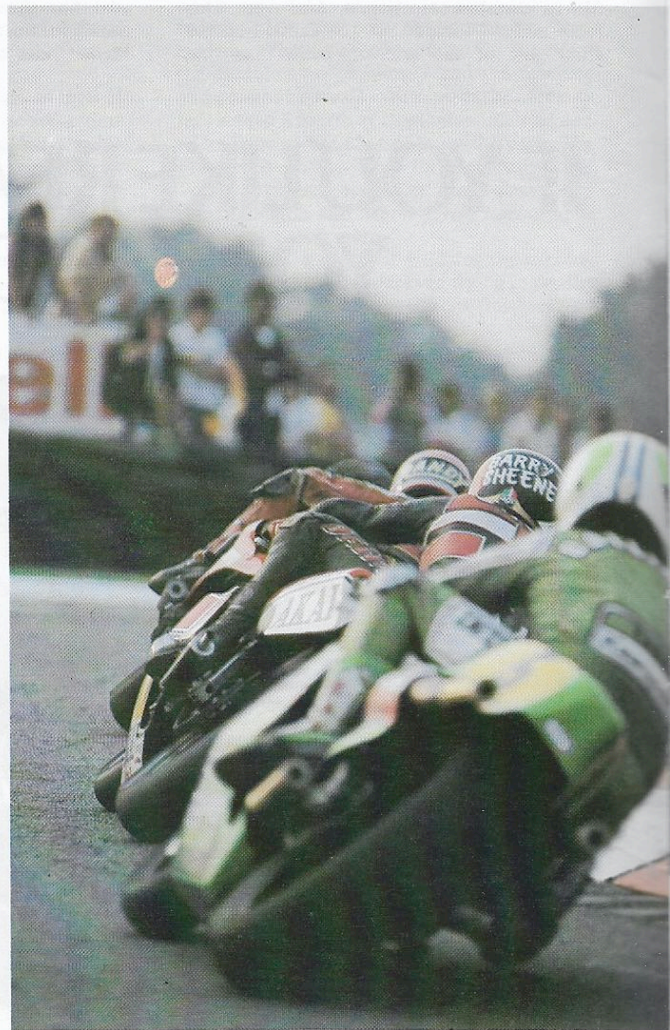
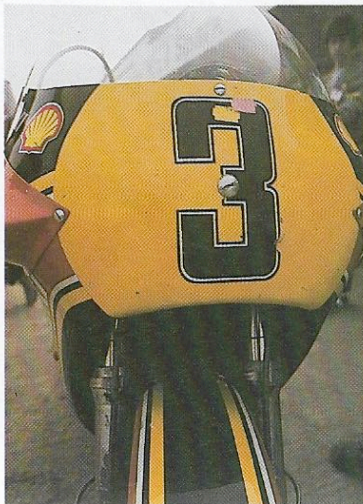
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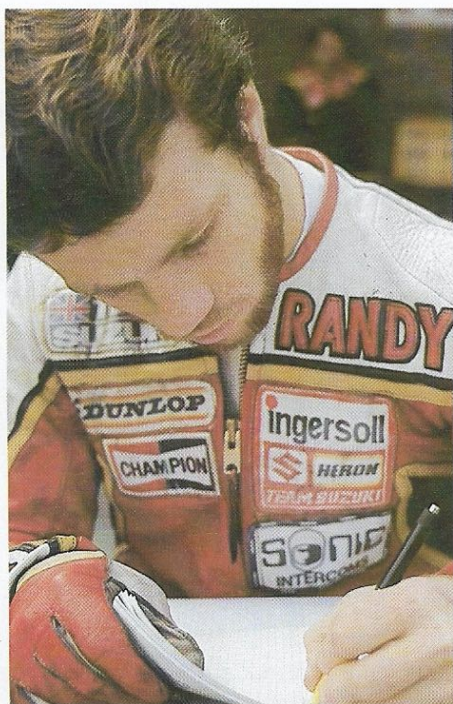


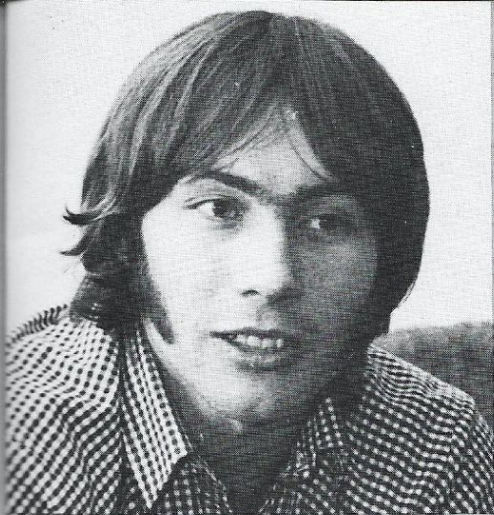




Motorcycle racing at Donington Park

As Donington's international
motorcycle racing season
gets underway some John
Colley photographs from
1981 set the scene . . .





RON HASLAM

SARAH GIBBINGS interviews 'the lad from down the road'

RON HASLAM is the Barry Manilow of the motorcycling world — an unlikely sex symbol who pulls heart-strings as well as crowds, and dominates the dreams of his adoring fans as completely as he dominates the big bike races on the track.

And while the women weep outside his caravan, their boyfriends bellow round the circuit. In an era when image is all, this unassuming Derbyshire lad has found the secret of universal appeal.

He's the boy-next-door made very good indeed: a sporting star who shrugs off the attractions of the suntan-and-model set and prefers to stay with his mother in the mining village council house where he was brought up; an international traveller who searches out British home cooking whenever he's abroad; a reluctant celebrity who finds the limelight an embarrassment.

He was born in 1956, the youngest of a family of 10, and by the time he was 11 Ron was already skiving off school to mess around on his brothers' road bikes. His introduction to racing came a few years later when his brother Terry — now an established sidecar competitor — bought a Norton Atlas.

"He'd only had it three weeks when he lost his licence for three speeding offences," grinned Ron, "So he decided to have a go on the track, since he'd got the machine. I went along to help out, and that was it — I knew I wanted to race myself."

Soon another brother, Phil, joined the growing Haslam entourage, and teenage Ron was allowed to trail along to club meetings in return for cleaning up the bikes.

Then came a big break. With an uprated machine, Phil had been making an impressive showing at national level and attracted the attention of Halifax garage owner Mal Carter. It was the start of a personal and professional friendship which has shaped Ron's career. Under Mal's sponsorship Phil began to fulfil his early promise — and Ron, still only 15, made an illegal début on his brother's old bike.

Nobody watching that club meeting would have predicted a great future for the underage competitor. "I fell off, as usual," Ron remembered. "In fact, I saw rather more of the tarmac than I'd have liked in those first few seasons — and at rather closer quarters than I wanted to."

But he persevered, and in 1973, when he was 17, Mal gave him an official chance to ride one of his Pharoah Yamahas at

Cadwell Park. He finished fourth, and Mal agreed to back him in more races. Bubbling with enthusiasm, Ron had embarked on his first full season the next year when disaster struck. Phil, who'd gone from strength to strength and — after winning the Manx — was tipped as one of Britain's brightest prospects, was killed in a tragic crash at Scarborough.

The Haslam family was devastated, and the remaining racing brothers contemplated leaving the tracks for good. Only a combination of sentiment and luck kept Ron in the saddle.

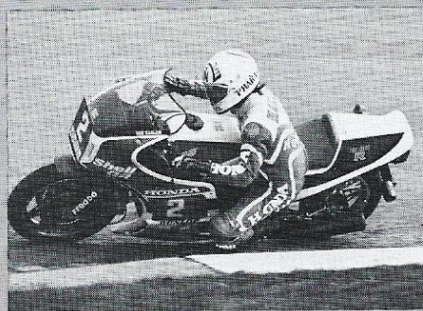
"Although we were all horrified by what had happened to Phil, it seemed to me that if I carried on racing it would be a kind of tribute to him, because I admired his ability so much," he said.

"Plus, racing bikes was all I really wanted to do — and then there was Mal, who was prepared to sponsor me and Terry, despite Phil's accident."

By 1975 Ron was becoming a force to be reckoned with, first on 250 and 250 cc bikes, and then on a new 700 Yamaha which Mal chose specially for him.

It turned out to be a shrewd purchase. Ron — who had always yearned for one of the big-engined racing bikes — took to the machine immediately, and brought home the Star of Darley title before creating a sensation at a Cadwell international by winning two world-class events. He finished the season as runner-up in the British Solo championship.

So Mal decided to make an even greater investment in his protégé, and packed the lad who'd never left his Langley Mill home off to America for three months, to study race preparation with a Yamaha works mechanic. Remarkably quickly, Ron had reached a stage where he was interesting the works teams. After falling at Daytona



while lying 10th in 1976, he made a big splash by giving Barry Sheene a run for his money in the 750 Grand Prix at Silverstone, and Suzuki approached him for a trial ride on one of their 500s.

Unfortunately, when the opportunity arose the next season, Ron literally fell for it. The bike had a defective front brake, Ron broke his wrist in practice and had to wait another year to close a big-time deal. Honda, who have kept him ever since, gave

him three outings on their Formula 1 machine, then signed him up for 1979.

It was a stunning season, and the last in which Ron piloted Mal's bikes. When he scooped both the national F1 and Superbike championships for the Japanese giant, then topped his achievements by becoming the British rider with the most international victories of the year, they relegated Mal to the position of manager.

Since then, Mal has reaped the rewards of his long years of patient help and advice. He's still Ron's mentor, and takes half of the 25 year-old's massive earnings. "And he deserves every penny of it, for the risks he's taken on me," Ron retorts to anybody who dares to question the arrangement.

"I'd never have got anywhere without him. No matter what happened, he kept buying me bikes and looking after me, even when his business was going through a rough patch."

The Haslam/Carter/Honda combination has proved almost unstoppable. In 1981 Ron took Britain's Superbike and Streetbike titles, won the Macau Grand Prix on his first trip to that highly dangerous circuit, and was awarded the big class TT victory on the Isle of Man, although he later lost it to Graeme Crosby in a wrangle over timekeeping. Now he faces 1982 with the promise of four Grand Prix outings, and the feeling that he's set to dominate the big bike classes once again.

Many riders would have let such success go to their heads — but not Ron. His determination to keep Mal in his life is typical of the way that he's clung to his roots, and tried to repay debts incurred on the way up. He's travelled the world with his bikes, won fame and fortune, but his only concessions to the moneyed milieu in which he moves have been to buy his family's semi — and a battered E-type which stands proudly in the road outside.

"I could afford to buy a big place now, but the whole glamour scene just doesn't appeal," he explained. "I'd far rather stay with my mum, and make things a bit easier for her."

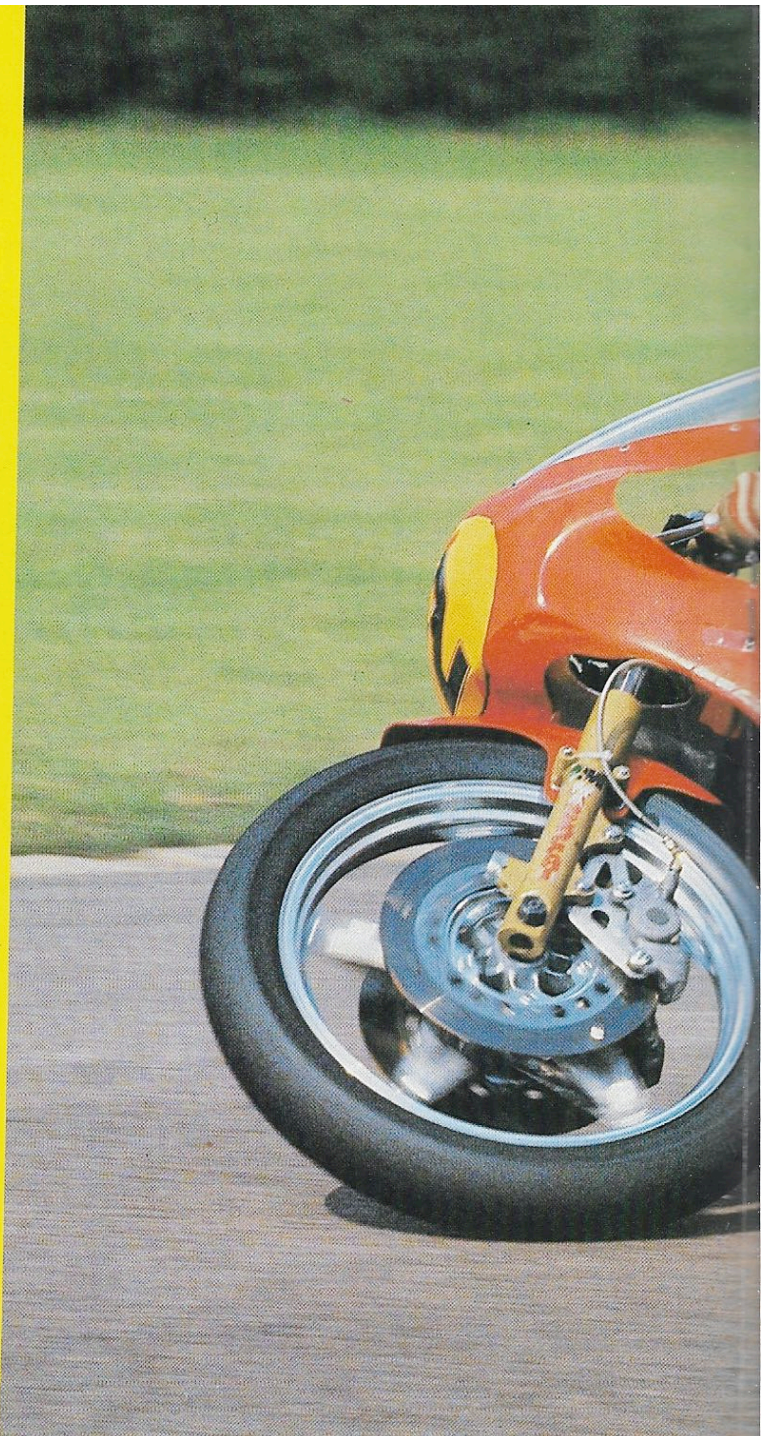
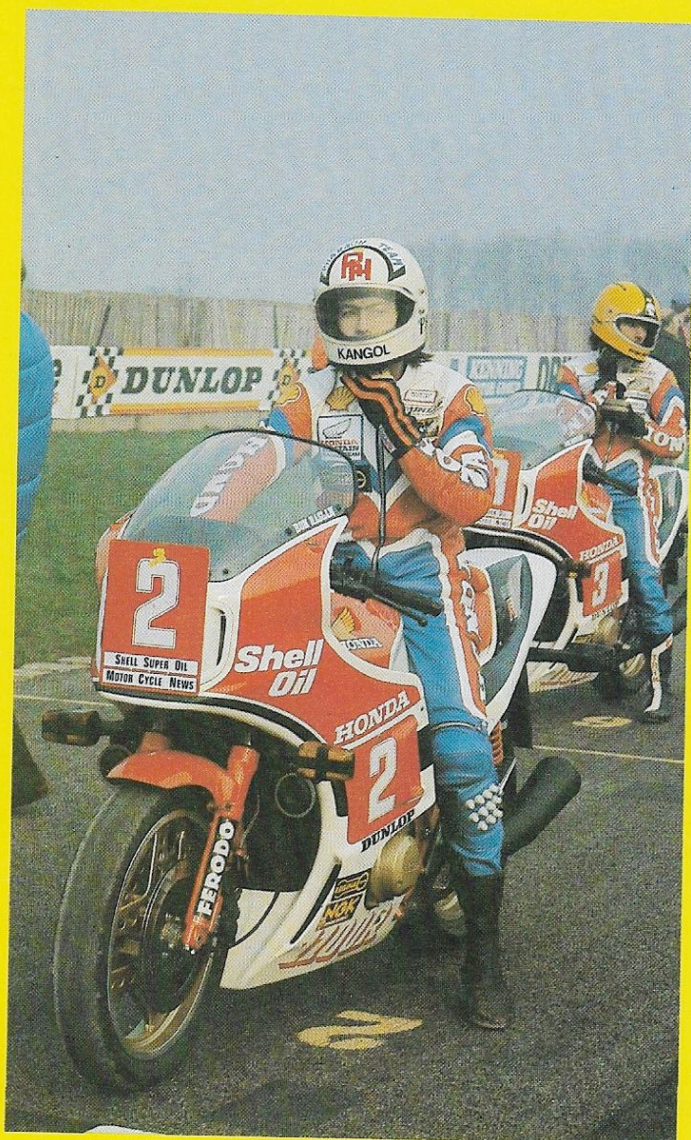
"I never really had a job after I left school when I was 15 — I did get a couple, labouring and driving dumper trucks, but I kept getting the sack because I'd take days off to ride the bikes — so she had to keep me for years."

Mother Lily didn't fancy exotic holidays or clothes as a thank-you present from her son — but she did like the idea of an unusual pet. Ron bought her a squirrel monkey called Mindy, who now shares pride of place in the kitchen with whatever model aircraft he happens to be building.

Model-making is one of the schoolboy passions which continue to obsess him. He's currently attempting to build a remote-controlled model helicopter — "But the thing will keep crashing. I've got

Right: Ron Haslam at speed on the unsuccessful works Honda 500. Bottom, left: Ron with Mindy, the squirrel monkey he bought for his mother Lily. Bottom, right: The proof of his success — Ron's silverware. Below: on the grid at Donington for the John Player Nationals three weeks ago.

Photos by John Colley and Dave Rigley.



planes and boats sussed, but the helicopter breaks my heart — I just can't seem to get it right."

Then there are his guns, jostling incongruously for wall space with blown-up photographs and etchings of Ron in action. "I go for anything unusual, whether it's valuable or not. The oldest gun in my collection is Arabian, from the 19th century and inlaid with mother-of-pearl. But I've got ordinary air guns and rifles as well, for potting rabbits on local farms. It's one of the nicest things about having done well — that I can afford to indulge these hobbies, and take time off to do a bit of rough shooting."

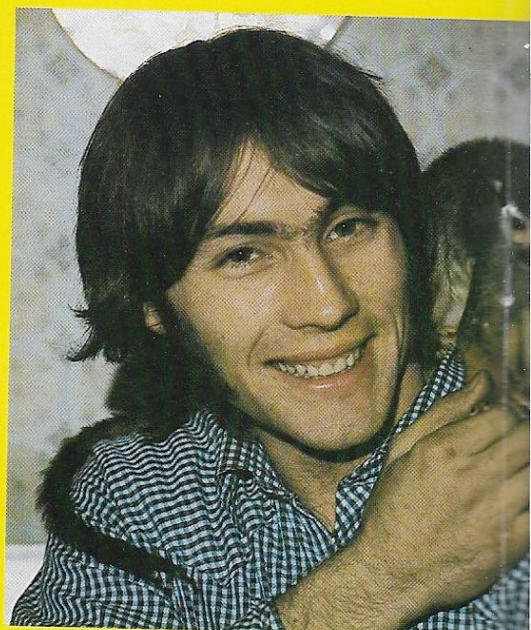
Otherwise, his spare time is spent training — weight-lifting in the gym he's made above his sister's shop in a nearby town, and running — or chatting with his bike-mad girlfriend Ann, who's in charge of his timekeeping at races.

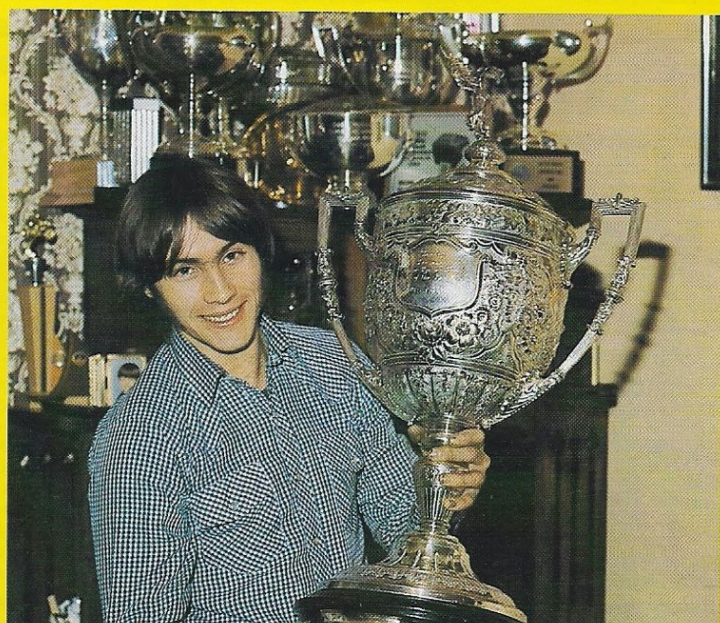
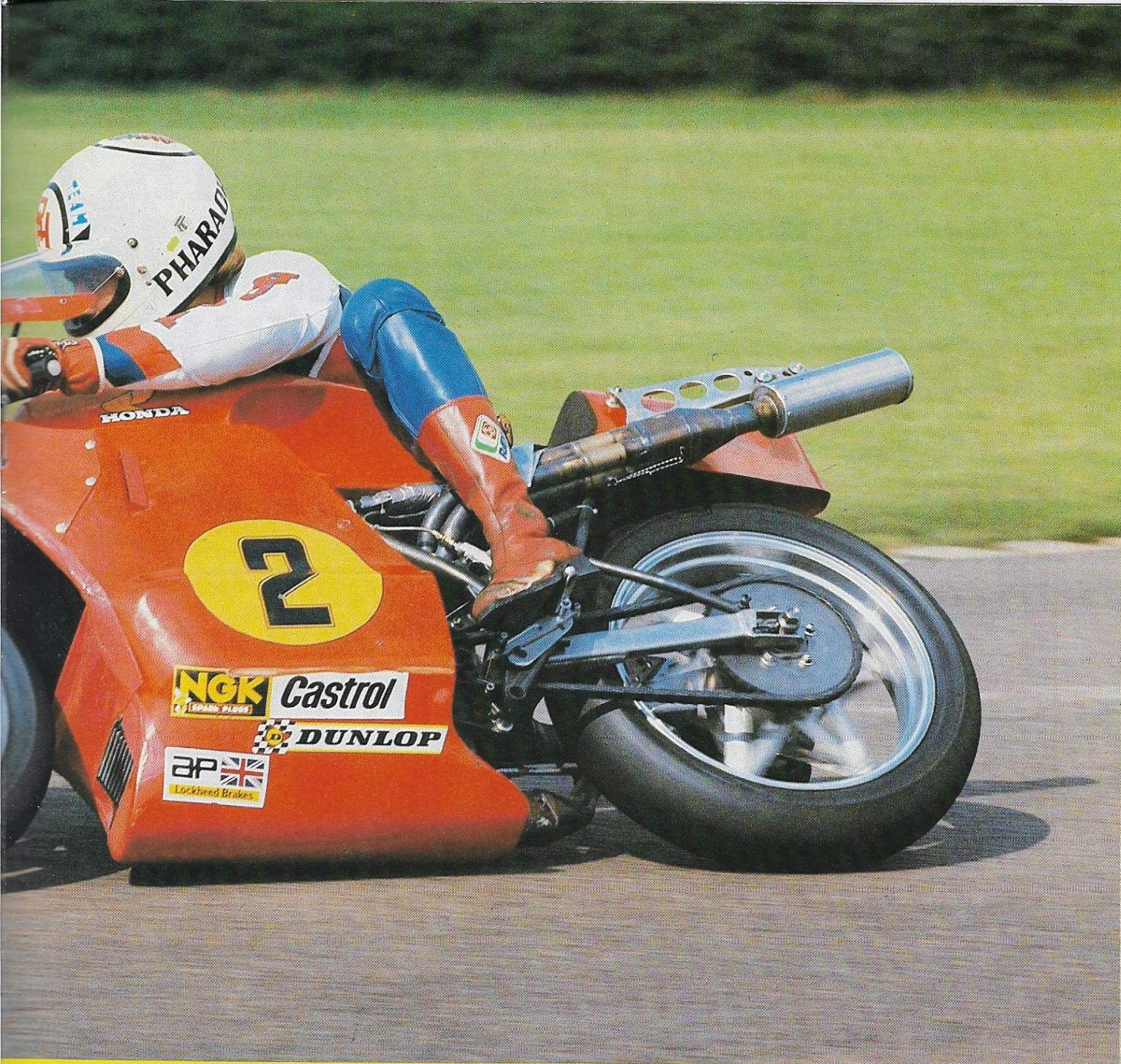
"I don't drink or smoke, I'm not bothered about going out much, and when

I'm competing abroad I tend to rush around trying to find a place which does food like my mum makes," he admitted. "I don't even ride a road bike — it may not be in keeping with a biker's image, but it's far too dangerous. I stick to the circuits, where everybody's prepared for an accident."

His down-to-earth attitude extends to his fans. He finds the war-cry of his nickname, Rocket, chanted by tens of thousands at major meetings rather overwhelming. "It's a bit like boasting, accepting a nickname like that, and hearing it shouted out for you, when you're only a person who happens to ride bikes quite well."

And because he's convinced that he's nothing special, he goes out of his way to chat to as many of his followers as possible. "Some of the riders reckon that because they've won a few races, they don't have to bother with their fans — but they're wrong," he stressed. "They've made the effort to come and see us, they're what real-





ly keeps the circuits going, so I'll always try to stop and talk to people if they want, no matter how busy I am."

He even spends long hours labouring over an opinion column for *Motor Cycle News*. "I'm not very good at spelling — too much time with the bikes when I should have been at school — and although Mal did fix some private tuition for me, it's still an effort. Still, people seem to want it, so between the paper and me, we've worked out a way — it's the least I can do."

His fans have responded to his cheery accessibility and talent by making him the biggest draw in the business, and by voting him MCN's Man of the Year for 1981 by a record-breaking margin.

He's motorcycling's Mr Nice Guy, and though his history reads like the plot of a Hollywood rags-to-riches movie, he has no desire to flaunt his stardom. "I'm still the lad from down the road," he said firmly. "I'm still ordinary — just luckier than most."

What's in store?

By BRENDAN QUIRK

THE ITV World of Sport Superbike Challenge: the name has become synonymous with brilliant televised racing from Donington Park. And this year will be no exception. Barry Sheene, Randy Mamola and Kork Ballington, all on works Grand Prix racers, head the line-up which has attracted even more interest this season since the inception of the John Player Manufacturers Trophy.

This will be the first time European and British fans will have the chance of seeing the '82 works Suzuki and Kawasaki machines, fresh from their racing debut at the Argentine Grand Prix.

Those of us lucky enough to see highlights of the Grand Prix on TV will know Barry Sheene is in top form and stands the best chance for several years of winning the World Championship. But Randy Mamola, who suffered gearbox troubles in Argentina when catching the front runners, will be out to show that his new Suzuki is every bit a match for Sheene's square-four Yamaha. He will be keen to get the psychological advantage of a win over Sheene before the pair meet again at the Austrian Grand Prix in two weeks.

Randy's work will be cut out. Even when on mediocre equipment and not in the best of form, the TV cameras at Donington always seem to spur Sheene on to extraordinary efforts. He has won the last four ITV World of Sport races on the trot and beaten some formidable opposition in the process.

Barry has the psychological advantage of a second at Argentina and two wins in the first round of the Superbike series. And Kork Ballington should not be ruled out. He had little chance to test the new Kawasaki before Argentina and any suggestions he might have made about improvements to the new machine could be incorporated by this weekend.

Towards the end of last year Kork was impressive at Donington on the works Kawasaki: he was to be a favourite along with Sheene and Mamola.

While it is hard to see local heroes like Ron Haslam and Roger Marshall keeping up with the Grand Prix two-strokes on their big four-stroke racers, we shouldn't forget that their machines are almost as powerful now. Also Keith Huewen will be keen to see how his '81 works Grand Prix machine compares with this year's works bikes as he is keen to race in World Championship events as well as the major British meetings.

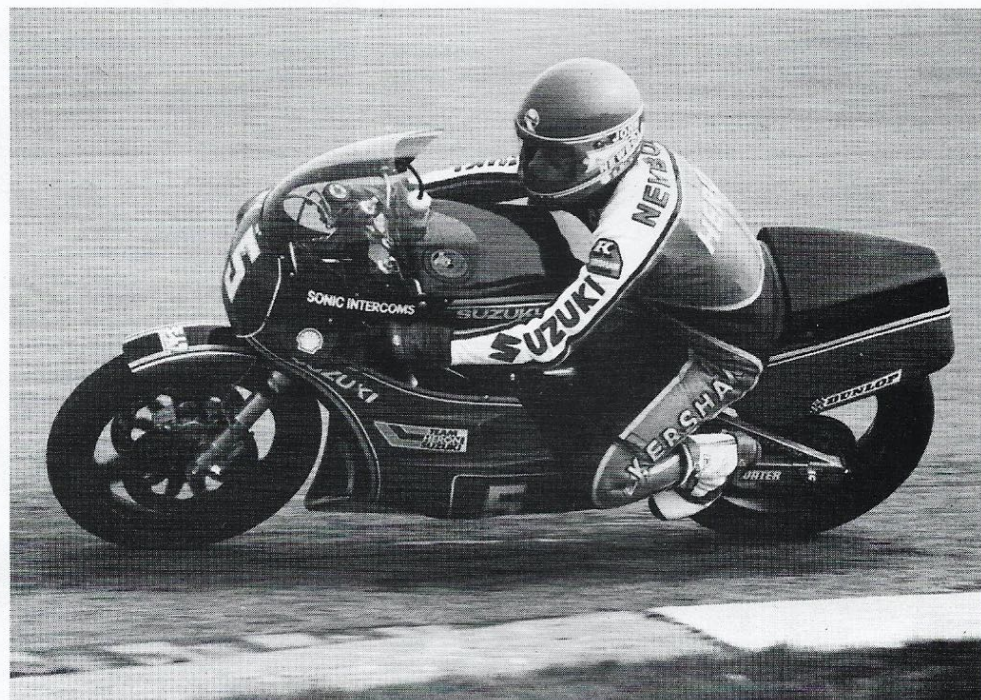
Sheene, Mamola, Ballington, Huewen, Marshall and Haslam should be in the front-running group and they will probably be joined by Wayne Gardner on his Honda. But it will not take much bad luck for those six to be overshadowed by any number of British stars.

Bob Smith, current British champion; Steve Parrish, who has already showed how well his production Yamaha goes around Donington; Joey Dunlop, on a works Honda Superbike; Chris Guy, Stuart Avant, Steve Henshaw, Gary Padgett, Peter Wild, and Phil Henderson — all on the latest Mk 7 production Suzuki racers — and Rob McElnea are all capable of the minor placings, or better, if bad luck strikes the favourites.

As well as those that have Donington form or '82 season racing experience, the ITV race has also attracted the likes of Bernard Fau from France, Hiro Kawasaki, a factory Suzuki rider from Japan, and Carlos Moranti of Italy. Any of these three could upset the predicted race pattern. But 18 laps of Donington is a long way and it will be a major upset if neither Sheene,

ITV World of Sport Superbike Challenge— John Player Manufacturers Trophy:

Works bike domination?



John Newbold hopes for a good showing on his works Suzuki Formula 1 machine.

Mamola nor Ballington were to cross the line to take the chequered flag first.

The fact that all three are riding factory bikes gives them a massive advantage. The factory, or works, bikes are invariably lighter, more powerful and are equipped with better brakes and suspension than their more ordinary counterparts available to the average British racer.

The standard of entry in this weekend's ITV race is very high and it is almost impossible for any of the privateers to hope to equal the works bikes' performance. So far the large capacity superbikes, such as the 1123 cc Hondas, have

been unable to match the 500 cc GP racers of Sheene and company, mainly because of their larger physical size which means, inevitably, more weight. More weight means it is harder to stop the machines, it takes more power to accelerate them and it takes more effort to change their direction in the corners.

But the big four-strokes have been coming along in leaps and bounds and perhaps this will be the race where the gap narrows even more and Haslam, Marshall, Gardner and Dunlop give the Grand Prix stars the hurry-up. Whatever happens you can be sure the racing will be exciting!

Yamaha RD350 ProAm Series: 'Ams' are poised to conquer the 'Pros'

MITSUI MACHINERY, the Yamaha importers for Britain, have cut back on their road racing programme this year, but thankfully they have retained their Yamaha RD350 ProAm series. Last year this limited production series provided some of the closest and most exciting racing of the season with virtually a different winner each time.

The concept behind the series, now also run in several European countries, involves putting experienced international racers on exactly the same machines as international newcomers. And it is not always the experienced riders that come out on top. Very often the newcomers, more used to production racing than their "elders", take the honours.

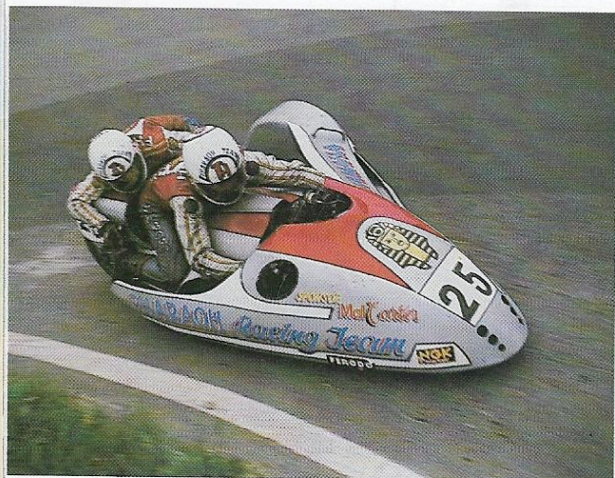
Donington Park hosts the first round of this year's series and you can bet your boots all 20 riders will be out to prove that they are the one to beat in the rest of the series.

As well as exciting racing the series provide the young riders, usually struggling to make ends meet and pay for their racing, with a good way of making money. First prize is £500 — enough to keep a racing motorcycle going for several meetings — and this "carrot" is one of the things that spurs them on.

The fact that Mitsui supply and look after the bikes is an added bonus. To ride in the series costs them nothing — in fact, Mitsui even pay them travelling expenses and to race in the series costs them not a penny.

Sidecar spectacular

Right: Donington regular Gordon Nottingham has his passenger working overtime. Below: Terry Haslam, brother of Rocket Ron, is an established sidecar exponent.



Above: A sidecar crew working together. Right: Dick Greasley leads a string of sidecars under the Dunlop Bridge and towards the Park chicane. Bottom: Former World Champions, and Donington lap record holders, Jock Taylor and Benga Johansson aboard their Fowler Yamaha.



What's in store?

By BRENDAN QUIRK

Water cooled Yamaha LCs owe their development to the out-and-out TZ350 racer, but the ones Mitsui supply for the series are almost identical to those you can see on the street. Naturally they have the best tyres fitted and they run a petrol mix instead of the oil injection used on the street machines.

The Pros (Professionals) include Pete Wild, who won the championship last year, mainly with good placings rather than outright wins. Also in the Pros are Kim Barker and Alex Bedford, who scored more wins than anyone else last year.

The winner of the final round of the series, Gary Padgett, will also ride again this year. Kevin Mitchell, who put up a good performance last year, is also back in the series along with Simon Beaumont and Ray Swann, who has already started the season with a win on his 125 MBA racer.

Neville Busson, Dave Raybon and Tom Drury, who used to race TZs for Mitsui, make up the

Pro side with Rob McElnea the Pro reserve.

Facing these experienced international racers will be the 20 "Amateurs." These include Marlboro Clubman's winner Ivan Gray, Manx Grand Prix star Geoff Cannell from the Isle of Man and Steven Chambers, who has started the season so well on his Paul Chambers sponsored 125 cc MBA.

Mike Capon, who rode in a few ProAm races towards the end of last year, and Paul Tinker are two more Ams whose form already this season has shown they are "in the groove". They should give the Pros a good run.

Other members of the Am squad include Keny Irons and Charlie Corner, who had a good year in club racing during 1981. Philip Usher and Stuart Moorhouse along with Niall McKenzie make up the 20-strong team, Scotsman John Davidson acting as reserve.

While many of these names may be unknown to international race fans at present, you can bet by the end of the season most of them will sound familiar. There is also a good chance that later in the year young Alan Carter may be seen on a ProAm bike when he turns 18 in August and becomes eligible for his international licence.

One thing is certain. The racing will be fast and furious.

outbraked Sheene regularly, despite the fact he was riding a comparatively heavy Moriwaki Superbike. He, too, says Donington is one of his favourite circuits.

And, to add spice to the event, Steve Parrish will also be in the race. At the John Player national meeting here three weeks ago Steve surprised the pundits by giving Keith Huewen a real run for his money until he crashed. It was obvious his reverse-cylinder production 500 cc Yamaha was just as fast as Randy Mamola's old works bike. Despite a broken collar bone, Steve will be fit to ride. He had an operation on the break a week after the accident.

British champion Bob Smith is another starter who did well in the first round. Bob will be riding Suzuki's latest production racer, the RG500 Mk 7. These new bikes feature an engine very similar to Keith Huewen's machine and in the recent 500 cc race Keith had a good deal of bother getting past Bob, so he is another one to keep your eyes out for.

A rider who has been taking it easy in the early part of this season is Graham Wood with the Transatlantic races in mind. He and Steve Henshaw and Phil Henderson are quite capable of being in the front-running.

Rob McElnea has shot to prominence this year with several outstanding performances in early meetings, including a third place in one Superbike leg at Cadwell. If he continues his present form he will be another privateer that the factory riders will have to watch.

Although John Newbold has yet to hit his best form in '82 it could be Donington's safe and open track that draws the best from him. He will be on a factory Suzuki Formula 1 bike so he has the machinery needed to back his undoubted talent.

Down the field we should see riders like Alex George, Mark Boughton (on a factory Formula 1 Suzuki), Chris Guy (who should be well up with the front-runners as he was obviously holding himself back in the early meetings with the Transatlantic races in mind), Simon Buckmaster, Mark Salle (who has already put in a couple of impressive rides on his elderly Suzuki), Steve Williams (on one of the quick reverse-cylinder Yamahas), Gary Padgett, Peter Wild and Tony Rutter.

Motor Cycle News Superbike Championship Can Roger Marshall beat Ron Haslam?

DESPITE the Yamaha factory's decision to stop development of the TZ750 racer some four years ago, the mainstay of big capacity racing, *Motor Cycle News* Superbike Championship shows no sign of faltering. When the FIM dropped their short-lived Formula 750 championship, and Yamaha subsequently stopped development, MCN's series looked to be in trouble. The rules were changed to permit 500 cc racers, but despite

the lack of development on the TZ750 it is still this machine which many riders favour for the championship.

Indeed the first two rounds were won at Cadwell Park earlier this month by Barry Sheene on his four-year-old 750, but it is true to say that as the years pass the big four-strokes and the new generation of 500s are being seen more often on the grid.

This weekend we will see the second round of the series, run over two legs. Points are scored depending on placing and the rider who scores the most points this weekend gets a bonus five. Points are allocated on a 15-12-10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 basis to the top ten finishers in each leg.

With Barry Sheene deciding against riding in this second round, both races will be wide open. Ron Haslam came second in the second leg at Cadwell with Roger Marshall taking runner-up honours in the first leg. Considering that sort of form either could be reckoned to take the honours this weekend, but it would be a fatal mistake to ignore others in the top class field.

However, Ron Haslam has already put in some stirring rides at Donington on his Honda Superbike — and to see him at the chicane before the start straight was an education last year. He obviously likes the circuit . . . !

Roger Marshall also rates Donington as one of the best tracks in Britain, but Suzuki, unlike Honda, have only Formula 1 machines of 997 cc as opposed to the Honda Superbikes of 1123 cc. So Marshall will start off with a power disadvantage.

Another rider who is sure to shine is Keith Huewen on the ex-Randy Mamola 1981 works Suzuki. Keith is sure his mechanics, new to the bike, have yet to extract the most from it and it could well be at Donington that the works bike's superior handling and braking come to the fore.

Aussie Wayne Gardner has already had the Donington fans on their feet when he had a terrific duel with Barry Sheene last year. Gardner

John Player Special Awards

The popular John Player Special Award continues in 1982 with increased prize money. The rider elected to have established the best performance at each of the ten John Player meetings will receive £150 in cash.

The panel of judges, comprising representatives of the press and commentators, will select the winner, having taken consideration of the machinery and competition.

Last season, when the award winners received £100, the recipients were: Phil Henderson (March 29), Wayne Gardner (April 12), Gordon Nottingham/Steve Johnson (May 17), Ron Haslam (June 21), Pete Wild (July 12), Alan Carter (August 9), Barry Sheene (August 30) and Phil Mellor (October 4).

World of Sport Superbike Challenge and John Player Manufacturers Trophy

World of Sport continue to back Donington Park in 1982 with a three-race Superbike series. It will incorporate for the first time the John Player Manufacturers Trophy. The winning rider from the series will receive £1500 and the World of Sport Trophy. Second and third placed riders receive £750 and £250 respectively. World of Sport are offering prize money of over £8000 for each of three races, the race winner receiving £750.

The winning manufacturer will receive a magnificent John Player Manufacturers Trophy, which has been specially commissioned for the series.

The races are being held on Saturday April 17, Saturday June 19, and Saturday August 28.

John Player International Sidecars Jock is the favourite— again!

JOHN PLAYER'S sponsorship of Donington Park has been a great boost for motorcycle racing. It has allowed Donington to offer very attractive prize money which has adequately rewarded riders for their efforts. But don't be mistaken into thinking the money they win goes into the bank. Almost all the non-factory riders will be ploughing the better part of the prize money back into their racing efforts, and this statement is especially true among the sidecar racers.

Without doubt they are the poorer relation when it comes to international riders. A good deal have no sponsorship at all, some have a little bit of help and one or two are fortunate in having very good sponsorship deals. But running a sidecar is a very expensive business.

What's in store?

By BRENDAN QUIRK

Superbike line-up in March: Keith Huewen on his winning works Suzuki (16), Steve Parrish's Yamaha (6) and Ron Haslam's Honda (2).

No-one has designed an engine specially for the work and at international level a prerequisite for success is an expensive Yamaha TZ750, or earlier TZ700, engine or even one of the even more expensive TX500 units. All three have been designed by Yamaha for solo racing.

Used for solo racing they are more or less fairly reliable but still require a good deal of maintenance. When these engines are put in sidecars, where they have to drag along considerable extra weight, their reliability suffers. It is not uncommon for the engines, despite regular maintenance, to break con-rods, demolishing in the process £5000 or £6000 worth of crankcases!

If you were in a factory team that would not be too much of a disaster. You would just sit around while the factory mechanics fitted a new engine. In the case of most of the sidecar riders, however, they have already paid out £8000 or so for the engine and then they are faced with having to shell out another £5000 for spares.

If you are unsponsored that could very well mean the end of your racing . . .

More fortunate than most is Jock Taylor, our former World Champion, who has to be favourite this weekend. Fowlers of Bristol and Dennis Trollope Racing, along with the Yamaha importers Mitsui, are behind the Scotsman and his passenger Benga Johansson. So while the team still has to worry about costs and money, the day to day worry about how the next lot of spares are to be paid for are off Jock's shoulders.

And it shows in his racing. He is able to give 100 per cent of his attention to winning, something he is very used to doing. He has already won both international sidecar races this season, setting a new lap record in the process, so it is hard to see any other sidecar racer beating him here today.

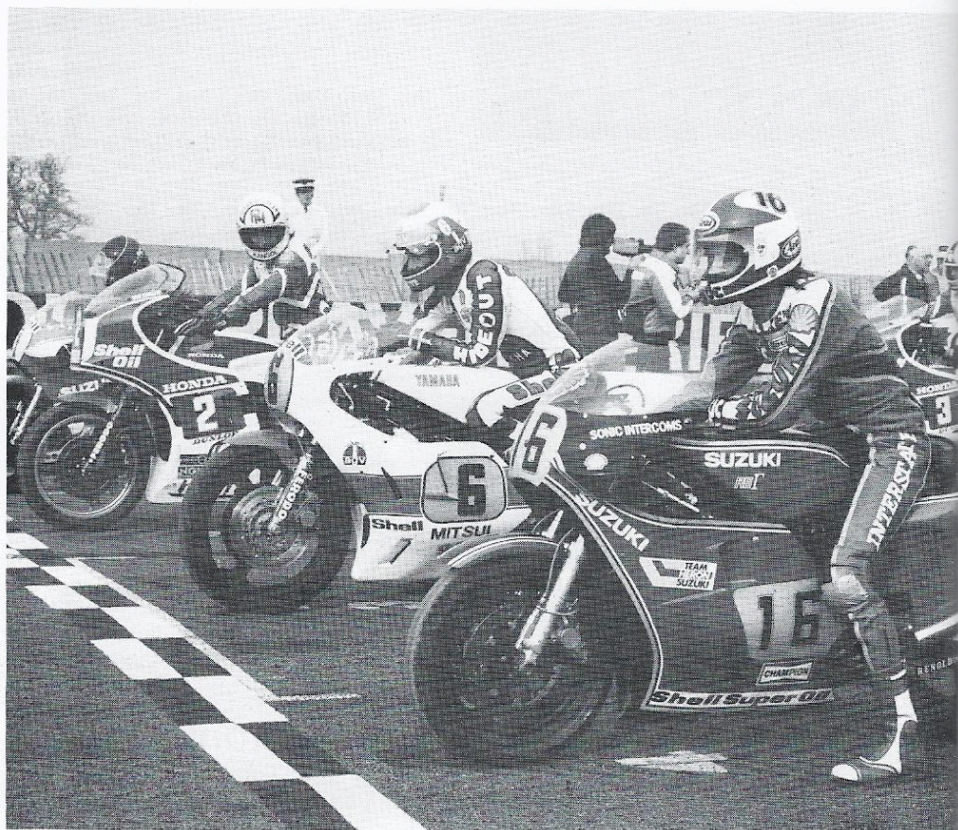
But Steve Abbott and Sean Smith on the Ham/Yam outfit have already won here at Donington and "hurried" Jock along two weeks ago in the first international sidecar race of the season. Jock's competition will not stop there, however. Several sidecars will be making their first or second appearance for '82 here at Donington, among them the outfits of Bruce Ford-Dunn/Alistair Pirie and Mick Boddice/Chas Birks. Both crews are very experienced and along with Derek Bayley/Rob Bryson are sure to be among the front-runners.

Trevor Ireson and Don Williams have already scored a second at Donington — which would probably have been a first if their drive chain hadn't broken just before the finish line — and they, too, have to be in with a good chance.

Others who cannot be ruled out include Frank Wrathall and Phil Spendlove. Their early season form has been impressive along with that of Dennis and Julia Bingham.

Sidecar racing involves a good bit of luck, especially so far as machinery reliability goes, so Clive Stirrat/Roger Kingsmill, Mick Barton/Nick Cutmore and Gordon Nottingham/Steve Johnson are all in with a chance.

But keep your eyes on Jock Taylor and Benga Johansson. Even though their new Grand Prix outfit will not be ready in time for Donington, their revamped '81 machine has already proved it is fast and reliable.



Motor Cycle News/Shell Streetbike Series Quiet, but very entertaining to watch

PRODUCTION RACING in England, at least in the last few years, was always confined to club racing and up until last year production racing at international meetings was virtually unheard of. In the opposite hemisphere, however, Castrol Six-Hour Production racers were drawing tremendous factory and rider support both in Australia and New Zealand.

Very often the factories would ensure the first batch of a new 'sports' machine went to the Antipodes first so it could carry the respective factory's flag in these races.

Motor Cycle News were looking around for a new championship to support and, having cast their eyes in the direction of Australia and seen how successful the format was, they decided a similar class should be a success in England.

Previously production racing regulations were loose, to say the least. Numerous modifications were permitted to the bikes so the English fans saw a machine racing that was the same as their road bike in name only. MCN decided the race fans would identify with the class best if the machines were identical to those they rode on the streets. Consequently the rules are very strict.

Indeed, a row has already broken out over the machines the Suzuki GB team used at the first round three weeks ago. They were apparently machines built by the factory for the New Zealand and Australia markets.

As already explained the factories and the importers Down-Under attach a lot of importance to the results of production racing and that is why special high-performance models have sometimes found their way south rather

than here to Britain. The Suzuki GB bikes which were the subject of several protests in the first round were apparently New Zealand models which had, among other things, different compression ratios and exhaust systems. Hopefully the rules about the eligibility of these models will have been sorted out by this weekend. Whatever the outcome, it is still Ron Haslam on the Honda CB1100R who has to be considered favourite for the Streetbike race here. Last year Ron lost only one of the rounds, and that was to Aussie ace Wayne Gardner, another on Honda CB1100R. So far Ron has annihilated the opposition in this class, so for that reason alone he has to be favourite.

However, Wayne Gardner, riding for Honda UK for the first time, took his CB1100R to a higher placing than Ron in the Superbike race at the Donington national meeting a few weeks ago. At that time the bikes were using slick tyres, so it is hard to say how much importance to attach to that fact.

But if anyone is to give Ron a run for his money it will have to be Wayne or perhaps New Zealander Dave Hiscock on a Suzuki Katana 1100. Hiscock has a wealth of experience riding this bike in production races in New Zealand and Australia and last year managed to lead Ron for a few laps at Donington. Hiscock has the benefit of having put in a winter's racing Down Under and he will undoubtedly be on form.

Other riders who are bound to shine include Paul Iddon, Suzuki GB's latest signing, plus Mark Boughton who impressed at Donington last year on his Kawasaki Superbike. Don't rule out people like Neil Storey on his



Mark Boughton was a Donington favourite in 1981 on his Kawasaki Superbike.

What's in store? By BRENDAN QUIRK

CB1100R or that wily veteran Mick Grant on a Suzuki Katana 1100. Storey finished third in the first round ahead of Honda UK rider Joey Dunlop, who will also be up front.

Other riders who should be fighting out the minor placings include Geoff Johnson, (sixth in the first round on his 1100 cc Suzuki Katana), Howard Selby (seventh on a similar machine) and Eric McFarlane (eighth in the first round on yet another Katana).

One drawback about the strict rules of this class, from a spectator point of view at least, is that the machines make very little noise. So you'll have to keep your eyes peeled. You certainly won't hear them coming.

Daily Mirror Trophy ACU TT F1 Championship Second round revenge for Honda over Suzuki?

THE DUEL between Honda and Suzuki for British Formula 1 honours continues at Donington Park this weekend with the second of the seven-round British championship events. Both Honda (with "Rocket" Ron Haslam, Joey Dunlop and Australian Wayne Gardner) and Suzuki (with Roger Marshall and John Newbold) have suffered from the late arrival of their 1982 machines, Honda more so.

At the first round at Cadwell Park Honda suffered from a good deal of teething trouble. Ron Haslam's bike was misfiring as he came to the line for the start of the race and the anticipated duel between himself and Roger Marshall never eventuated.

Wayne Gardner, while lying second, had a camshaft drive chain break, putting him out of the race: a disappointing start to the Honda race

What's in store? By BRENDAN QUIRK

effort.

But the biggest Japanese factory of all have never been ones to let the grass grow under their feet. You can be sure the Honda mechanics have been busy in the last few days ironing the bugs from the machines and that they will come up to the start this weekend much better prepared for the Honda v Suzuki battle.

However, judging by practice times and comments heard in the pits at Cadwell, Honda have a fight on their hands. The '82 Suzuki Formula 1 bike features a new smaller frame with different suspension and the 997 cc engine, based on the GS1000 road bike engine, has been further modified from last year to give even more power. This year the engine has two complete ignition systems with two spark plugs per cylinder which apparently help combustion, giving more power.

Last year Graeme Crosby had little difficulty in keeping the Hondas at bay with his F1 Suzuki, losing only one race to Ron Haslam. For 1982 Roger Marshall has taken Crosby's place and, as an accomplished four-stroke rider with an improved bike, I think the odds have to be stacked in his favour.

But here at Donington we could see Ron Haslam giving Roger one of the hardest battles of the series. Ron loves Donington and his performances here in the past have always been impressive. On top of that we shouldn't discount Wayne Gardner. It was here at Donington on his "sit up and beg" Moriwaki Superbike that Wayne consistently outbraked the master of them all, Barry Sheene on his Grand Prix racer, causing Barry to say afterwards: "I don't know how he can do it. His bike is heavier than mine

and must be harder to stop".

So we have Haslam and Gardner plus Joey Dunlop on the Hondas and Marshall and John Newbold on the '82 F1 Suzukis. John was not quite in the groove at Cadwell, but he has a wealth of experience at Donington, as has Mick Grant. Both these riders are almost certain to be in the first half dozen.

The sensation of two weeks ago was New Zealander Dave Hiscock, the highest placed non-works rider in last year's championship. He took second place in the first round and is quite capable of doing the same thing this weekend if he gets the breaks. Hiscock's machine is unusual in that it has an aluminium monocoque frame. In other words, it has no frame tubes but is made of beaten and welded aluminium sheet.

His sponsor, Rod Coleman of New Zealand, is the Suzuki importer for that country and has obviously pulled a few strings at the factory as Hiscock's bike has a twin-plug works engine, the same as Marshall and Newbold. Watch out for him because he is sure to be among the front-runners.

Although Kawasaki don't have any factory bikes in the race, they have supplied Gary Lingham and Jim Wells with factory engines. Gary's bike was only finished the night before the Cadwell race and was not fully sorted out, but both he and Wells, with the extra horsepower the factory engines should turn out, will have to have an advantage over the rest of the field.

Others who could well be fighting it out for the minor placings include John Hesselwood, Kevin Wretton (sixth in the first round), Neil Storey, Ron Storey, Asa Moyce (with three or four F1 seasons behind him) and dark horse Raphael Fernandez on a Bimota Suzuki.

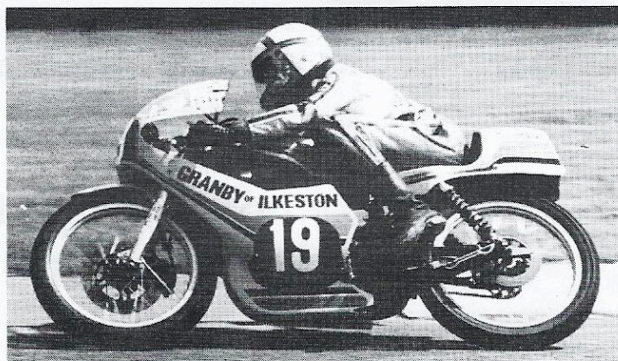
With three Japanese factories directly or indirectly involved this year's Formula 1 championship is bound to be a cracker.



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