

CYCLE SPORT

APRIL 1972

PRICE 50¢



Why are these men smiling?

DAYTONA 1972



METROPOLITAN MADNESS

by
NOEL YOUNG

Due to the simple logistics of printing a monthly magazine, this column, written in mid-March, will not appear in print until mid-April. By then the scrambles season will be upon us with the first race, being held at Fishkill on April 16th. I will be attending at least one or both Middleboro events (NESC) before this to see just how they do things and how they differ from out events.

One of the most important things to happen since the last column was written is the ban of rear knobby tires at the Fishkill track. Even though the Metro Sports Committee voted as a group to give up on the knobby ban due to rider pressure, the Crotona Club, who sponsor the Fishkill events, has decided to ban knobby rear tires from their track. This is, of course, on their own and contrary to the Sports Committee recommendation, and a complete reverse of the letter to me in the February Cycle Sport from Don Pink, Crotona Club member. As track owners they can do it. The only thing a rider can do if he does not agree with the ruling is simply not ride. The Crotona club is

banking on the popularity of the Fishkill races to make the ban work and unfortunately it will. Last year there were well over 325 riders at each Fishkill event. Without the ban in effect there would have been more this year. With the ban in effect and even if 200 riders can't find trials tires or simply refuse to ride, there will still be nearly 200 riders who will, and this will still be more than enough to hold a scrambles that will keep the paying spectators happy. The only thing that would pressure them would be a total rider ban and that would never occur. The experts and top amateurs have too much to lose by missing a race and there are a large group of riders who will make any sacrifice to race.

By the time this column appears in print, most of the riders' anger will have subsided, most of the panic of trying to find trials tires will have ended, and most of the money for these tires will have been spent. I don't know what will happen at Fishkill and maybe I am beating a dead horse but I feel I must say what upset me about this as a rider.

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If the Sports Committee had voted in the knobby ban back in December there would have been a lot of complaining and general moaning by the riders (me included) but there would be hard and fast rule constant at all tracks that the riders could either comply with or not ride, and facing the realities, we as sportsmen racers would comply because we want to ride, even though the ban was not in our best interests.

Now we have another situation that can only be described as half-assed. At Fishkill we will use a trials tire on the back, at other tracks we will use knobbies (Walden also will be banning rear knobbies). And what happens if it rains? (Ever try riding a 400 Suzuki with trials tires in the mud?)

Riding with one trials and one knobby is not the best situation; the handling of any machine is adversely affected. So count on every serious rider in the sports committee spending fifty to sixty dollars on tires in the near future.

To me the time factor is the worst aspect. If we knew about this in November or December we could have made adjustments. The Fishkill announcement arrived at my home on March 8th (first race April 16). People who have bought new bikes with knobbies must now buy a new set of tires instead of merely making a free tire exchange to trials at the time of purchase. Trials tires will become very scarce in the near future as dealers who did not know about the requirement will not have ordered adequate amounts, which they could have if they had know earlier. Perhaps some dealer who knew about this will make a killing while others will wait in vain for back ordered trials tires. I question the wisdom of a decision such as this at such a late date.

I wonder just what Fishkill will be like in April. Will it be smooth as a billiard table and so much faster that we have a few novice riders killed as they come down the back straight ten to fifteen mph faster than last year and hit one of those lovely trees which line the course? I don't see how they can say they have the riders in mind in this respect. If Crotona wants to do something for the riders they can remove some trees from the strategic places on the track. The track would still be very physically attractive and much safer. George Simmons, a top New England expert who raced on Fishkill last year and demolished our 500 experts with a fine riding performance, was seen walking around the track feeling the trees. When asked why he was doing this, he answered, "I'm trying to find the soft ones."

What does Crotona plan to do if, after 350 bikes finish pounding its track, it still gets chewed up, and what, heaven forbid, if it rains? Perhaps a new proposal will appear requiring square number plates, flat shield, Dunlop K-70's and steel shoes for all riders. Sounds a bit out of date to me, but it's possible. No wonder we were so reluctant to eliminate the open class even when we had no riders in it. TT scrambles here we come!

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Metropolitan Moto Cross....?

As you probably already know, moto-cross is being promoted in the Metropolitan area by the Berkshire Moto-cross Association. They will be holding events in Copake, N.Y. (The same locale as last year). There will be four events this year and any riders who want to try MX should try to make these events even though they are a very long way away. No other Metro tracks are promoting Moto-cross events this year so if you wish to try it you can go to Copake or to New England or Pennsylvania.

Last year I ran one moto-cross in Pennsylvania and found it very educational and interesting even though it was not exactly a riding triumph for me or Tom Rulka who went with me.

We went to the Candytwon Moto X in Marxville, Pa., on one of the hottest days of mid August instead of riding at the Modena track for what seemed like the tenth time that year. The drive took us five exhausting hours in my VW with four people and pulling two bikes on a trailer (slow). The track is situated on a high sloping hillside overlooking a large valley. Very nice location. It was about one mile in length and featured rocky terrain and seven jumps, some as high as four to five feet. We had come out here thinking, "What do these Pennsylvania TT riders know about rough tracks?" Apparently the Pennsy riders go as overboard on making rough MX tracks as they do making super smooth TT tracks. The track was rough, tricky with many off-cambers, ruts, and clouds of dust. In practice I managed to go over backward on one jump and waste my new super fender. Tom fared worse falling four times in his first practice lap.

As we lined up for the first moto we found our 125 class had some forty riders and we were to start in a single line which after about one hundred feet uphill funnelled into a 180 degree turn onto the track proper. We also found that a hand on helmet start was being used. We, being dum-dums from New Jersey, lined up at the extreme outside of the line and found ourselves in a bad position at the start. We rallied to the cause and assumed the famous "moto-cross cheater start." It consists of pulling in the clutch with your pinky, engaging first gear, and keeping your other fingers on your helmet which is laying on the handlebar. It looks stupid but it works.

We headed into the first turn. Dust! Bikes all around us and we couldn't see five feet in front of us. Bikes were all over the infield. I went off a five foot embankment nose first and found myself in about eleventh place, which changed to about ninth by the end of the race. Tom again had a bad case of the falls but still finished about twenty-fifth. Back in the pits we found the track was a bike eater. My bike had both rims badly dinged, a dented expansion chamber, broken fender, flat tire, and leaking shocks (and I didn't fall). Tom's bike had a broken rear frame member, dinged

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rims, expansion chamber crushed flat, and one shock bent into a stylistic S. After working with our trusty rubber hammer, we were ready to ride the next moto. The results were similar except that I secured seventh at the start of the moto and held it for the moto. Tom also made his most spectacular fall. Coming off the largest jump (about a five foot dropoff where one can play Evel Knievel, if one has enough nerve, and sail about forty feet). Tom got into a speed wobble and lost it in front of the announcer and all the crowd. The announcer, a master of the language, said, "There's a boy who's down! Is he alright?" Tom beyond the point of self-control, picked up dirt and stones and threw them at his dead bike and at the announcer. By this time all were completely exhausted from the 95 degree heat and as I dragged Tom out for the third moto, we heard the ambulance had to leave and the last moto would be cancelled (relief)! All that remained was to ride home (five hours) and collapse. To top everything off Nixon announced his wage-price freeze on the radio during our return. Now that you know all the hassles with Moto-cross hope to see you at the first on at Copake.

Metropolitan News

There is nothing much to report besides the knobby ban at Fishkill and Walden. One other item of note: At tracks this year there will be only a VALID AMA card and a VALID sports committee card accepted in order to race. There will be no more of the nonsense of getting these cards at the race. So if you don't have these two cards in your hot little hand before the race, don't even bother coming as you won't ride. This will lessen waiting times at sign-up and eliminate the odd duds on the Harley 74's who decide they want to try some dirt track racing and then proceed to get in everyone's way. Another thing to be prepared for is number plates. They should be legible with the letters in block and one inch thick. Ligible plates don't cost much to make or buy so why not spring for a new set and be on the safe side?

The new Sports Committee rule-book is out and is quite clear in its approach. It's long overdue but finally here. If you don't have one send \$1 to Joan's Chain & Sprocket, Ringwood Ave., Haskell, N.J.

Next Month

Next month will include impressions of Middleboro scrambles, race reports of Fishkill and the North Jersey Trials in West Milford, N.J. and many other goodies as the racing scene opens up around here for 1972. If anything comes of the proposed New York-New England match races I may have something to report on them next month. Also after seeing how New England runs their scrambles, I may have something to say about such novelties as Novice classes and the splitting of classes when they are too large. See you next month.

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