



# TRIAL AND TRIBULATION

## ***It Was Rough Row to Hoe, But the Success Made All The Grief Worth While***

**by John Wasser**

New England's rift with the AMA hasn't hurt the promoters one bit, and all events so far have been resounding successes. One example was the Professional Motocross, hosted by Intersport at their Pepperell location on April 27. Over 3,000 fans showed up to watch more than 200 riders tear around this popular European-style motocross track. For the first time, 70 riders had the added incentive of racing for prize money. Contestants came from as far away as Maine and Pennsylvania, and the action was fast and furious.

The president of Intersport, who is on the AMA congress, was pushing hard for professional motocross and helped set up the AMA rules for this type of

event. Now, however, the plot thickens. The AMA crossed the New England Sports Committee by revoking that group's charter and by their decision that the regional referee, NOT the district referee, must preside at National Championships. This meant that Berkely Baron, who has presided over 10 National Championships, would have to give way to Charlie Watson, whose first "National" was the '69 Daytona fiasco.

The New England clubs, including Intersport, voted unanimously not to purchase AMA sanctions except for National events. Further meetings have been held, but the stalemate continues, and the Intersport event was run under AMA rules, but without AMA sanction. This is of benefit to many riders, who are sick of the AMA's policy of suspending those who ride outside events. They can now enter any event they want, and still ride AMA-style scrambles and motocross.

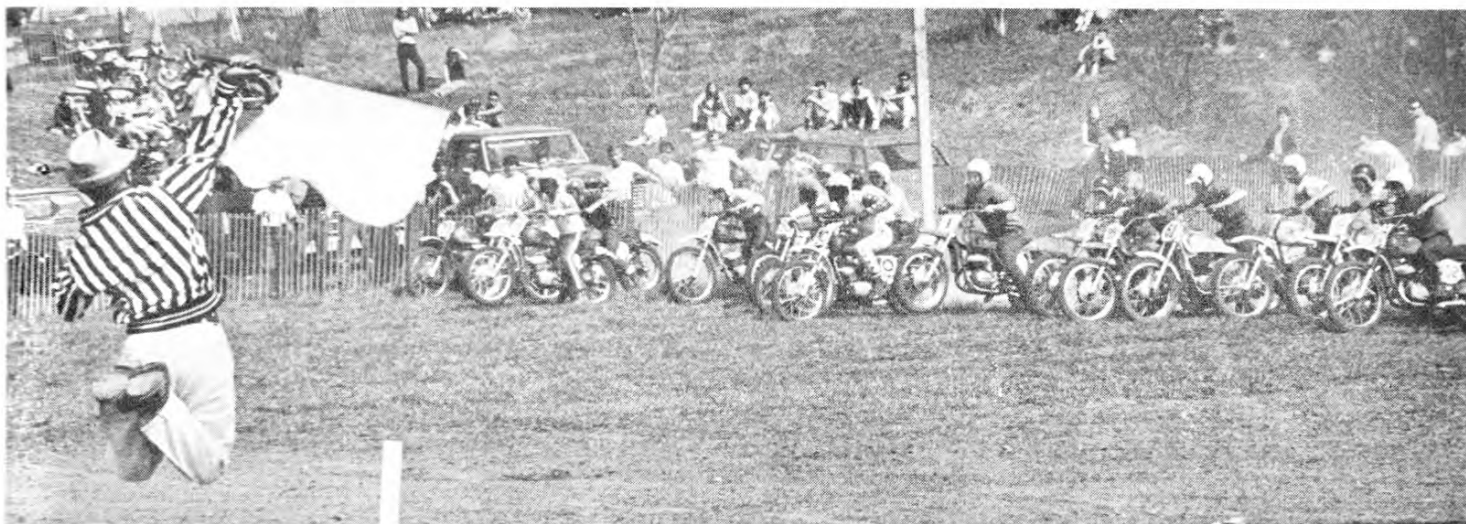
This also led to amusing incidents with AMA riders from other areas who

wanted to compete in the Pepperell event. One popular short-track rider from Pennsylvania, who did not want his name to appear in the results, signed up as "Sparky Plug." His secrecy was not necessary, however, as only the top 15 riders in each heat were listed, and he failed to make it. Better luck next time, Sparky old chap. . . .

There was no 125cc class at Pepperell, though "Barney" Mayer and Charlie Vincent were both talking about riding one-two-fives in the 250 events. Don Mayer didn't show up, and Charlie scrounged an OSSA 250, on which he finished 19th (still can't get used to those 2-strokes), but Billy Hobbs brought along his 120 Kawasaki and rode the 250cc events. Looked pretty good out there, too, for a two-week expert, but he failed to make the top six, at least.

The Pepperell course is a lot different from most local courses, with two good jumps, fast straights, both fast and slow

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CYCLE GUIDE**



*The starter leaps high off the ground to give the air of professionalism to the start of the 250 Pro class.*



*This was a typical scene of Pepperell's first turn, seconds after the start of each event.*

# MOTO CROSS



*Jim Weinert and his CZ pass Hal Ljonquist on a Bultaco. The CZ's were the machines to beat in all the races.*



*The winner of the open-professional class, Bob Ismailof, keeps his CZ close to the ground over the jumps to maintain speed.*



## TRIBULATION MOTO CROSS

Continued

turns, plenty of width for passing, and lots of bumps. Add to this the fact that it is quite long, which makes it hard to learn well, and the races are long and tiring, and you can see why the winner's list is frequently different from the results at lesser tracks. At Pepperell, the winner might be the rider who maintains his machine just a bit better than average, for instance.

Novices and amateurs raced 10-minute heats, while the experts raced 30-minute heats. That's an hour of racing, scored in the European manner: 1st in each heat scores one point; 2nd, two points; 3rd, three points; on down to 15th, worth 15 points. Anyone finishing below 15th is awarded 20 points.

Scoring differed from the European method in that non-finishers were also given 20 points, allowing them to place in the overall results. In Europe a rider must finish every heat to show in the overall tabulations. The rider with the lowest aggregate point total for both heats is the winner, with ties decided on the basis of fastest winning speed.

The fans were treated to an unexpected thrill when Charlie Vincent lunched the engine on his 500cc Cheney-frame Triumph special. The drive-side rod chewed up the crankcase walls a bit, leaving the engine unrepairable. Charlie had plenty of room in the truck, however, so he had brought along his 650cc Triumph for just such emergencies.

In the second heat, Charlie was running very close to his younger brother Glenn, and both were well in front of the field, when Glenn's seiz-easy (purists say chaise-sled) locked up the tranny, leaving Charlie in front, where he stayed for over 15 minutes, untouchable, on a heavy 650, riding the roughest track in New England. Only in the last three laps could George Parmalee get by him on the 360cc Montesa, and Charlie was still able to hold 2nd away from Bob Ismailof.

We know one rider who says Charlie's secret is throttle control, which allows him to relax more on the track, but we don't believe a word of it. No, Charlie's success is internal. Anyone can assimilate and develop throttle control, but Charlie has an internal balance, a total *savoir-faire* which leaves him in complete command of any situation. Nobody else could have taken a 650 2nd place at Pepperell, and if the race had been a few minutes shorter, he would have had the overall win. In fact, there wasn't even another 650 in the official finishing list. Before he tired, the only rider who could stay with him was his brother Glenn, considered by many to be the finest motocross rider in New England — and even Glenn could not have done it on a 650.



**Charlie (Cee Vee) Vincent kept the front wheel of his Triumph lofted as often as possible on the course.**

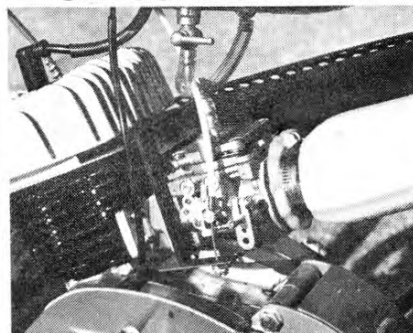
If the second open professional heat was a corker, the second 250 professional heat was equally exciting. Glenn Vincent built up such a lead that he started taking it easy. Joe Bolger crept up on him and took over the lead on the penultimate lap, without Glenn's even realizing it. That's a rough way to lose a race after leading for virtually the whole 30 minutes!

Each year it seems a new machine comes on the scene as the one to beat. Husqvarna has the reputation but hasn't done too much yet. John Penton was supposed to have had one at Pepperell for Terry Coolbeth but didn't show up. Terry's C-Z seized, putting him out of the running. C-Z is the machine to beat this year, especially as Jimmy Weinert and John Bettencourt are up front on that brand. Bultaco is still in there with Bruce Maguire, Joe Bolger and others, but look at the number of OSSA's in the results — a tie for 1st overall and then sprinkled throughout the standings.

John Taylor is the aggressive distributor who built up Bultaco to where it is today, and now he's doing it with OSSA. They obviously have solved last year's power and handling problems, and John has such riders as Smiley Hulbert ("he made me an offer I just couldn't turn down"), Bob Hicks and others riding the silver streamliners. C-Z may be the machine to beat, but OSSA is the machine to WATCH in New England this year.

And so Professional Motocross, held up by the AMA for so long, comes to New England — WITHOUT the blessing of the AMA. It proved a resounding success, a great show for the spectators, made even more lively by Charlie Vincent's misfortunes. Next time, Intersport promises to go up on the prize money from the \$600 offered this time. Don't miss it. **CG**

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