



Gary Younkins was the only first-year man to earn a gold medal for the United States.



Kevin LaVoie nearly lost it all in a last-day getoff, but stayed with the program for a silver.

50TH ISDT 1975

**West Germany
extinguishes
Czechoslovakian hopes ...
and the U.S. goes up
in flames.**

By B. R. Nicholls

The Golden Jubilee ISDT went through a quick game of musical countries for 1975 before seating itself on the Isle of Man. Less than 12 months before the trial, Austria reneged on its offer to hold the event, leaving the FIM out in the cold. After some searching, they turned to Manxland, changed the date from September to October, and the 50th International Six Days Trial became reality. In the decade leading up to this trial, a lot has changed. Bikes are vastly different. The necessary land is harder to come by. American interest has increased to the point where the U.S. now fields competitive teams, and the British, who once dominated the event, have been replaced by the Czechs.

Because of the Czech domination, most competitors were forecasting a tough event. A win on the Island would give Czechoslovakia a record six consecutive Trophy victories, and with that motivation they had no intention of going down easy.

Meanwhile, the Russians decided to stay at home and the Poles barely slid in under the door as last-minute entries, after using postal delays as an excuse for arriving after the closing date.

The poor British, whose ISDT effort has reached rock bottom, began having problems even before the start. On the eve of the Trial they lost two Trophy men. . . one with an infected hand, the >



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At left: Rod Bush (250 Penton) was one of eight U.S. riders who brought home the gold.



Lots of slop greeted riders like gold medalist Danny Young of the U.S.



It was the revolution all over again as the United States chased the British.



Fatigue was starting to show on Ron LaMastus in a wet special test.



Jack Penton leads a Czech rider in the rocks. Both stayed on gold.

other to an isolation hospital with suspected glandular fever. (It turned out to be an allergy to the soap in his boarding house). Strictly speaking, a team has only one reserve rider, but a jury meeting enabled two new members to be nominated to the British team, bringing them back up to full strength. In all, 11 Trophy teams and 13 in the Silver Vase began the event.

The first day of the Trial was a sad one. Both the U.S. and British Trophy teams were put out of the running by day's end with a retirement each. First to go, literally in a blaze of glory, was Tom Penton. Before the trial was half an hour old, flames began shooting from under his seat. The exhaust had set fire to the foam rubber from the air filter. By the time he stopped it was too late to salvage enough of the bike to continue.

Later that morning, Nick Jefferies, promoted to the Trophy team from the British Vase team, had a slow-speed fall and dislocated his shoulder. Under the new points scoring system, both the British and American teams would shoulder responsibility for the missing riders with daily penalties of 15,000 points. Another facet of the new scoring is that a gold medal is not necessarily lost by a rider who is one minute late at a check point, as used to be the case.

Gamesmanship—better known as cheating—started early and continued unpenalized for a couple of days. Petr Valek of the Czech Vase team clocked in 10 minutes early, then realized his mistake and clocked in again at his correct time amid a group of riders. He was later disqualified from the Trial. But that wasn't the only problem for the Czechs, because during the motocross test Masita of their Trophy team broke his chain. No one on the team carried a chain breaker, as such a mishap was previously unheard of on the works Jawas. The minutes ticked by as Masita tackled the problem in agricultural fashion with a rock and screwdriver. By the time he was away again he had incurred 1194 penalty points. That put the Czech Trophy team in the unusual position of 9th, just ahead of Great Britain. The United States languished in bottom spot with the consolation that the only way to move was up. They were similarly placed in the Vase event.

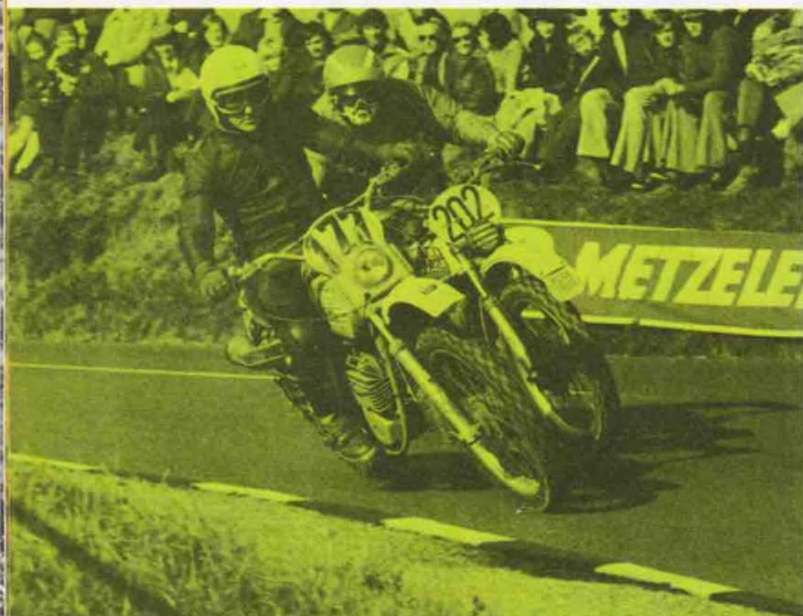
Tuesday's weather was just as good as the previous day's, but the organizers stayed with the standard speed schedule because of myriad complaints of fast and dangerous riding by competitors during Monday's run. The Clerk of the Course issued a very strongly worded statement that threatened to abandon the Trial if riding behavior did not improve on the paved sections. Additionally, there had been a tragic fatality on Monday when New

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Photography: B.R. Nicholls



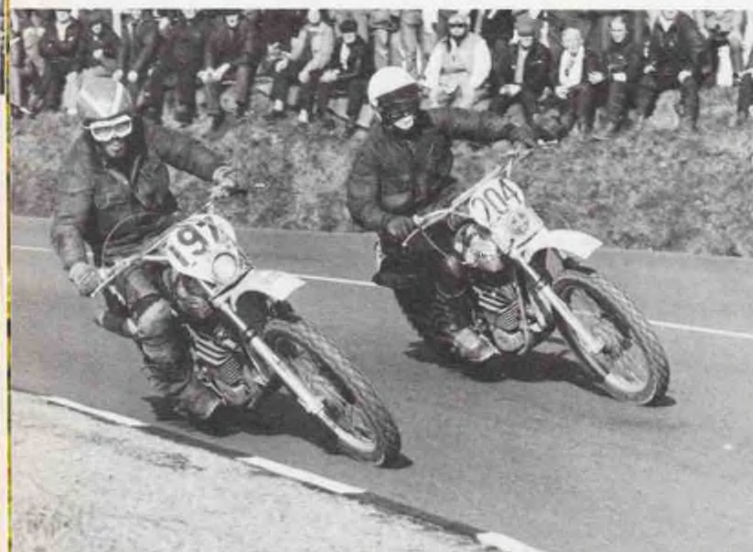
Malcolm Smith's Husqvarna ran strong for six full days.
So did he. . . a gold medal's worth.



Speed tests on the pavement were hairy. . . thanks to knobby tires and what some considered fast and dangerous riding.



Italian rider Andrioletti leads a string of riders through the wet on an easy stretch of course.



Penton rider Dane Leimbach (197) grabbed gold and lots of respect from onlookers.



Poland's Stanislaw Mielczarski fixes a flat on his 350 Jawa. Two other riders had the same problem at this very spot.



West German Reinhard Christel rode the last three days with a broken collar bone.



Ex-World Motocross Champion, Jeff Smith, took his Can-Am to a gold medal.



Two U.S. hotshoes, Carl Cranke and Malcolm Smith, head for the hills.

York rider Brendan Moran died from injuries sustained from a crash. The incident happened on a section of the course covering an abandoned railway.

Tuesday was also puncture day. The Polish team, 2nd at the end of Monday's run, slumped to 9th when Stanislaw Mielczarski got a flat on his Jawa close to a time check in the southern part of the island. The handful of spectators could hardly believe their eyes; no sooner had the Pole disappeared into the distance than Czech Vase man Kauler and Trophy man Zloch pulled up with the same problem.

The East German team had a stroke of bad luck when team ace Ewald Schneiderwind crashed on his Simpson, sustaining broken ribs and a leg injury. That dropped the team from the top to 11th place. Czechoslovakia then took over the Vase lead, with West Germany 2nd. At the same time West Germany was also leading the Trophy competition, just ahead of Sweden.

As the last riders finished day two, there were ominous signs of a change in the weather. Sure enough, during the evening and long into the night, heavy rain fell. It was just what the Trial needed to separate the men from the boys.

Adding difficulty to a faster schedule for Wednesday, rain and hail hit the early part of the entry. But it didn't daunt the American Vase team which fought back and rocketed up the table from 10th to 4th, a position it consolidated and held for the rest of the Trial. The U.S. Trophy team was still next to bottom in 10th place.

Disaster to other teams helped the Yanks in their fight back. Sweden lost Berndt Eno (KTM). Canada and Austria lost men. And France dropped from 6th to the cellar when half its Trophy team went out.

The day ended well for the West Germans. They led both competitions as a result of brilliant riding and careful study of the rules. To ensure maximum benefit from the bonus points system, they slowed their class leaders to raise the points of their slower riders. In a way, it was a tribute to the Czechs, whose careful study of the regulations back in 1971 had taken the Trophy from the West Germans in the speed test on the final day.

But the Germans lost all hope of a double on Thursday when Vase man Reinhard Christel dropped his Hercules and got up with a broken collar bone. Tight strapping and pain killers saw him through to the end of the week and a bronze medal. Poland, which had come up to 5th from 9th on Tuesday, lost any hope of further improvement when Olszewski lost an argu-

ment with a farm tractor and had to retire. The U.S. team made more progress in the Trophy, gaining three places in the table to finish 7th.

Thursday saw the Czechs in trouble again—Stanislav Zloch of the Trophy team ran out of gas during the special motocross speed test...right in a place where officialdom was rife. So there was no hope in the world of his finding the "friendly" can of gas that so often appears from nowhere when team men have that sort of problem. Course marshals followed him the entire two miles back to the *parc ferme*, including a hard uphill slog from sea level to the Glencrutchery Road. After that, 3rd was the best they could hope for.

Friday, the final full day of the rough stuff, saw the East German Vase team lose Gerhard Haatz with a broken leg. Also into the broken bone class fell Doug Wilford, U.S. importer of the Hercules Wankel, who was riding one of three models in the Trial for the Manufacturers' award. He went the broken collar bone route.

Jim Simmons was not allowed to start the day's riding because his Rokon's big magnesium front wheel was seen to have a crack in it; and Jim Hollander voluntarily retired his Rokon when it was noticed that the "fairies" had changed his magnesium wheel for the more conventional one with lots of spokes. The U.S. Trophy team fared better, pulling up to 6th by Friday night, and all were confident for the speed test the next day.

There was a heavy frost on Friday night, but little to trouble the riders on Saturday, so imagine the feelings of American Vase rider Ken LaVoie (Ossa) when he collided with a van and suddenly saw a whole week's riding evaporate. Although suffering a concussion, he was allowed, after a hospital visit, to return to the start and take part in the speed test.

The majority of riders in the speed test were out of control. Most of the large capacity machines slid around corners in true dirt track fashion. In other words, there was all the usual hairy riding that distinguishes W.F.O. riding in a Six Days.

So in the end, major honors were shared by West Germany and Italy, who headed the Trophy table in that order, but reversed it in the Vase classification. The full points list for both trophies shows just how wide the gap was between the front-running nations and those trying to topple them from the pinnacle.

Of the 307 ISDT starters, nearly half either retired or were excluded for being over the time limit, leaving 167 finishers. Of that total 71 gained gold medals;

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ISDT

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but they were not so exclusive as the silver winners, of whom there were but 25. Bronze medals were awarded to 71. Forty riders carried the Stars and Stripes in 1975 and 16 of them never made the end of the trial. A baker's dozen qualified for bronze medals and an elite band of three gained silvers. They were Cutler, LaMastus and LaVoie, the man who so nearly lost it all on the final morning. Those who hit the gold standard were Younkens, Burleson, Jack Penton, Bush, Leimbach, Young, Cranke and Malcolm Smith.

Just as American experience and expertise in the ISDT is growing, the entire event seems doomed to extinction. Each year it becomes more difficult to find a host country with both suitable terrain and the necessary accommodations. Moreover, it costs a lot of money to organize the Six Days, and there is very little return on the investment. The overall distance covered in the last three ISDTs has diminished with each succeeding year and will probably continue to do so. Like so many sports it has become affected by political pressures and gamesmanship, in which "spoilers" are used to reduce the effective scoring of the opposition. Cheating makes it that much more difficult for a private owner to succeed, and yet without private entries the Trial would immediately collapse. It is doubtful at this point that the Trial will survive another five years. And that will be a tragedy indeed for anyone who has never had the chance to experience the ISDT firsthand.

RESULTS

INTERNATIONAL TROPHY

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 1. West Germany | 282.5 |
| 2. Italy | 2040.0 |
| 3. Czechoslovakia | 2836.2 |
| 4. Holland | 11,681.8 |
| 5. Poland | 52,632.1 |
| 6. U.S.A. | 93,493.7 |
| 7. Austria | 126,629.3 |
| 8. Canada | 127,847.7 |
| 9. Sweden | 138,814.8 |
| 10. Great Britain | 140,322.4 |
| 11. France | 227,854.5 |

SILVER VASE

| | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 1. Italy | 951.4 |
| 2. West Germany | 2073.7 |
| 3. Holland | 8800.6 |
| 4. U.S.A. | 53,333.5 |
| 5. Great Britain | 82,992.5 |
| 6. Czechoslovakia | 90,376.8 |
| 7. Sweden | 99,208.0 |
| 8. Ireland | 99,475.0 |
| 9. France | 99,966.1 |
| 10. Belgium | 102,232.0 |
| 11. East Germany | 105,169.5 |
| 12. Spain | 109,881.2 |
| 13. Canada | 258,022.4 |