



Opposite: Billy Uhl, raking the trail.

ISDT QUALIFIER

*The authority
of Dick Burleson's
overall victory is
matched by
Billy Uhl's
dazzling display of
wrenching.*

The red clay hills of Alabama's Cumberland Mountains region could well be nicknamed "Burleson's Playground" after his sweep of the Qualifier activities presented by the Two Days in Alabama Committee this season.

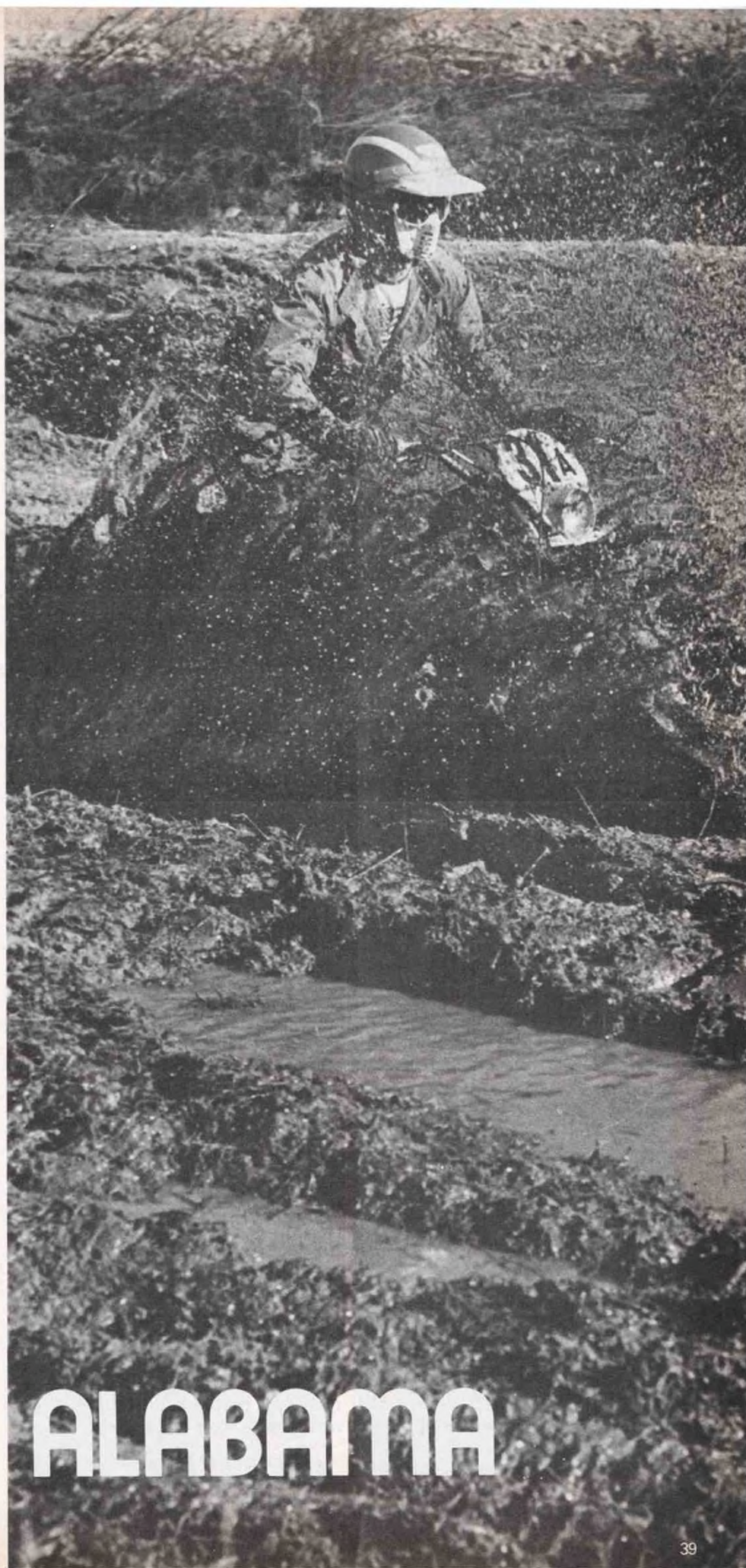
The February One Day proved to be a warm-up which definitely worked to Dick's advantage, as he rode through, around or over a dozen or so top Penton riders to emerge as the solid winner. His score of 1665 was some 28 points lower than that of his closest competitor Jack Penton, who had to settle for winning the 250cc class.

As you would expect, 326 miles of hard riding on dirt roads, pipe lines and woods trails, with just enough pavement to tie them all together, takes its toll on the bikes of the mighty as well as those of the

TWO DAY(S) IN ALABAMA

by Brian and Ann Palormo

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The Alabama Two Day Committee has a well-earned reputation for putting on a smooth-running, well-organized event. They almost make it look too easy, and the rider may come to take for granted those features which contribute to the overall success. One of the most important of these is good, continual community support.

The courteous attention and welcome signs sprinkled throughout the Pell City business district have to warm the heart of the weariest rider who has traveled half the country or more to participate. At a time when land use is a subject dear to the hearts of all dirt riding enthusiasts, the cooperation between the committee and Southern Natural Gas demonstrates the need for continual communication. Pipeline sections used previously were in danger of being taken away, because the person in charge began to be uncertain about the way in which the lines were going to be used. However, after a full understanding was reached about the nature of a Two Day Qualifier, the company turned around and provided as much support as was needed — making available an area for camping and manning necessary gates providing access to the lines, while demonstrating to the rest of Pell City their support for the event.

Because of the small number of committee members, wives and older children pitched in to help with the clerical details of the run. Two nine-year-old girls got special attention from the riders, as they worked flip cards at a checkpoint. What better way to prepare them

for their own future competition.

One of the mainstays of the Alabama operation has been the support of the local Lions Club. They are a strong contact with the Pell City businesses and townspeople and their refreshments were a welcome sight to a weary rider. The committee in return has donated part of the proceeds to the Eye Foundation supported by the Alabama Lions Clubs.

This year, \$1000 from the proceeds from the One Day and Two Day events has been earmarked for the ISDT support fund. Its specific use will be set later when exact needs can be determined.

As was stated earlier, the committee had excellent control over the things they *could* control, and a few other variables seemed to be in their hands as well. However, one phase of organization obviously was not — participation on the part of the AMA, in this, the fourth Qualifier in this year's series. No amount of persuasion could convince the AMA of the need for a representative in the event there should be a question in scoring or a protest that the committee didn't have the background to make a judgment on. Fortunately, no such incident came up, but the AMA was definitely the loser, in that this was an event they could have pointed to with pride as a model to be followed by others sponsoring AMA-sanctioned activities.

One recognizes the expense involved in participating in all such sanctioned events, but certainly the AMA ranks the Qualifier effort near the top in importance among amateur activities. Or does it?

average rider. However, it was the skill in the crises which made the difference in the way riders handled the situations and scored. When considering the stress of the ISDT, mechanical skills could be demonstrated through a useful and interesting special test.

No one was tested to the degree that Billy Uhl was, when his piston gave out at the end of Day One. He admitted later that his Hercules was already well-worn, and that he should have changed pistons before the start of the event. Those who viewed his Sunday morning routine

are probably secretly glad he did not.

While other riders spent Saturday evening in carefree relaxation, Uhl's was devoted to detailed planning for his morning repair job. The Hercules team manager supplied the needed parts from his demonstrator, and Uhl then organized the necessary hardware for the repair job, taping nuts and bolts on duct tape in the order they were to be used.

Jim Hollander had something to prove after being dropped from the Rokon team. He finished second 350 behind Carl Cranke.

On Sunday morning he moved into the impound area for his allotted 15-minute repair period. With an intensity that had the crowd reduced to silence, he worked through the steps, wasting no motion along the way. In a mere 13½ minutes the new top end was properly in place, leaving time for changing the air filter and making a few routine service checks.

Just as his number came up on the flip cards, he pushed his bike to the starting line where it fired on the second kick. It was then that the carefully-executed repair plan was almost lost for want of a score card. He had forgotten it would have to be



Dick Mann and his four-banger passed Joe Patrick's sound test and went on to take a Gold.



punched at the start of the second day. For a few nervous seconds he fumbled for it in his belongings, spilling tools and finally retrieving it for the equally-nervous start official. With only a fraction of his minute remaining, he got it all together and shot past the yellow flags just as the next minute flipped over on the cards.

The crowd breathed for the first time in several minutes, and then cheered the figure fast fading in the Alabama horizon. At the end of the day, Uhl's efforts paid off with a third place in his class behind Tom Penton, overcoming the large gap which existed at the end of the first day.

The run consisted of an 80-mile course laid out with great skill by the team of Birdwell and Rochester. Riders looped this twice on Saturday, and then rode a somewhat modified and shortened version in reverse on Sunday. Last year, spring rains made the mud a major factor in the battle to keep bikes running. This year, dust and heat wore down riders and contributed to the strain on engines.

Most of the leading riders in the Qualifier series zeroed the course both days, so it was the special test scores which determined the winners. Looking back, it was fortunate that the early-arriving participants persuaded the committee to install a grass track test, which had been eliminated due to lack of time to get one organized. It was on this two-mile track, resembling a snake lazing in the tall grass enjoying the warm Alabama sun, that Burleson gained his winning edge.

In the cross-country test, which was seven miles in length, no more than a total of 11 points separated Burleson, Cranke, and Jack and Tom Penton, with Jack having the fastest time on Saturday. Sunday, Burleson decided he'd better get busy, and on a narrow woods trail which wound around trees and rock outcroppings up the side of a mountain, he was clocked at 38 mph. He later commented that he hadn't noticed most of the obstacles others were talking about.

The pit area is an interesting place to visit during the course of a Two Day, and a would-be competitor would do well to study the methods of the more successful racers at a time when seconds count and useless motion should be avoided. There are



Lars Larsson gives his 250 Penton the same loving care he used to lavish on his Huskys.



Burleson checks his minute after gassing up. His effort is a virtual one-man show, but it keeps Husky on top.



Dennis Vandecar found mud (and Gold) on a dry weekend.



Jim Fogel and the Rokon pit crew demonstrate the classic gas check.



Billy Uhl's fantastic 13½-minute piston change on the morning of Day Two put him back on Gold.



The end of a long day. John Calhoun of Birmingham, Alabama, pushes his Frontera into the impound area and tries to forget that tomorrow is Day Two.



Despite wandering off-course in the grass test, Jack Penton topped the 250 class.

a lot of spectators trying to guess if the approaching rider is a Cranke, a Penton or a Burleson, but the ones who should know rarely have to speculate. They are extremely conscious of the all-powerful CLOCK.

The number of riders serviced by Team Penton makes that pit area the setting for much activity. What is amazing is manager Marcia McDonald's ability to be prepared for the needs of each separate rider, no matter how different they may be. No one can fault the riding skills of the former Ossa team members now working with Penton, but certainly the team manager was an equally valuable acquisition.

Burleson's efforts for Husqvarna

are certainly a study in contrast with those of the Pentons. Since Husky is no longer supporting a manufacturer's team at ISDT, Burleson's operation is on a much smaller scale. With the exception of some assistance with the gassing of his bike, he does all his own work in almost total silence. At first, one thinks he has no idea of how much time has elapsed, but his mental clock makes constant checks on the time unnecessary. At the exactly necessary moment, he stops all work, kicks the bike over and rides away to the checkpoint and beyond.

Nevertheless, Burleson's efforts for Husky and Uhl's for Hercules were isolated successes in the midst of a Penton triumph. Brothers Ted and Dane Leimbach captured wins in the 100 and 125cc classes, while brothers Tom and Jack Penton took the wins in the side-by-side 175 and 250cc groups. Carl Cranke led the 350 event. Burleson's overall was quite a few points away from the rest of the pack, but, after that, it was very close among the leaders.

In all 74 Gold Medals, 18 Silver and 46 Bronze were awarded to the 138 who finished from a starting pack of 244.

RESULTS

OVERALL

Dick Burleson Husqvarna 1665 points

125cc

1. Dane Leimbach Penton 1788 points
2. Donald Cichochi Penton 1866 points
3. Mike Rosso Hercules 1867 points

200cc

1. Tom Penton Penton 1696 points
2. Jeff Gerber Penton 1777 points
3. Billy Uhl Hercules 1779 points

250cc

1. Jack Penton Penton 1693 points
2. Mike Hannon Bultaco 1722 points
3. Gary Younkens Penton 1731 points

350cc

1. Carl Cranke Penton 1703 points
2. Jim Hollander Rokon 1728 points
3. Charles Vincent Ossa 1812 points

Open

1. Dick Burleson Husqvarna 1665 points
2. Barry Higgins Maico 1718 points
3. Kevin LaVoie Penton 1728 points

Manufacturers Teams

1) Penton Imports (Leimbach, T. Penton, J. Penton)
2) Penton East (Cutler, Cranke, LaVoie)
3) Yamaha (Ashley, Mann, Fero)
4) Ossa (Hulse, LaMastus, Vincent)
5) Rokon (Simmons, Bishop, Fogle)

Club Teams

1) Nashville Rubber Ducks (Burleson, Popiel, Schmidt)
2) Pacific Performance (Gerber, Thompson, Cameron)
3) Team Army (Hoffman, Messer, Pillsbury)