

I would like to think that if you, the readers, were in the same position that I now find myself, you would feel the same divisiveness that I do. There are perhaps five perfectly good approaches to reporting the events of the Four-Stroke National Championship. There are, unfortunately, only four pages for me to relate those events, forcing me to make a decision on what I will tell you.

Just look at the potential lead sentences to these articles: "Top National stars such as Marty Smith and Tommy Croft were vanquished here today by local boy Mike Bell."

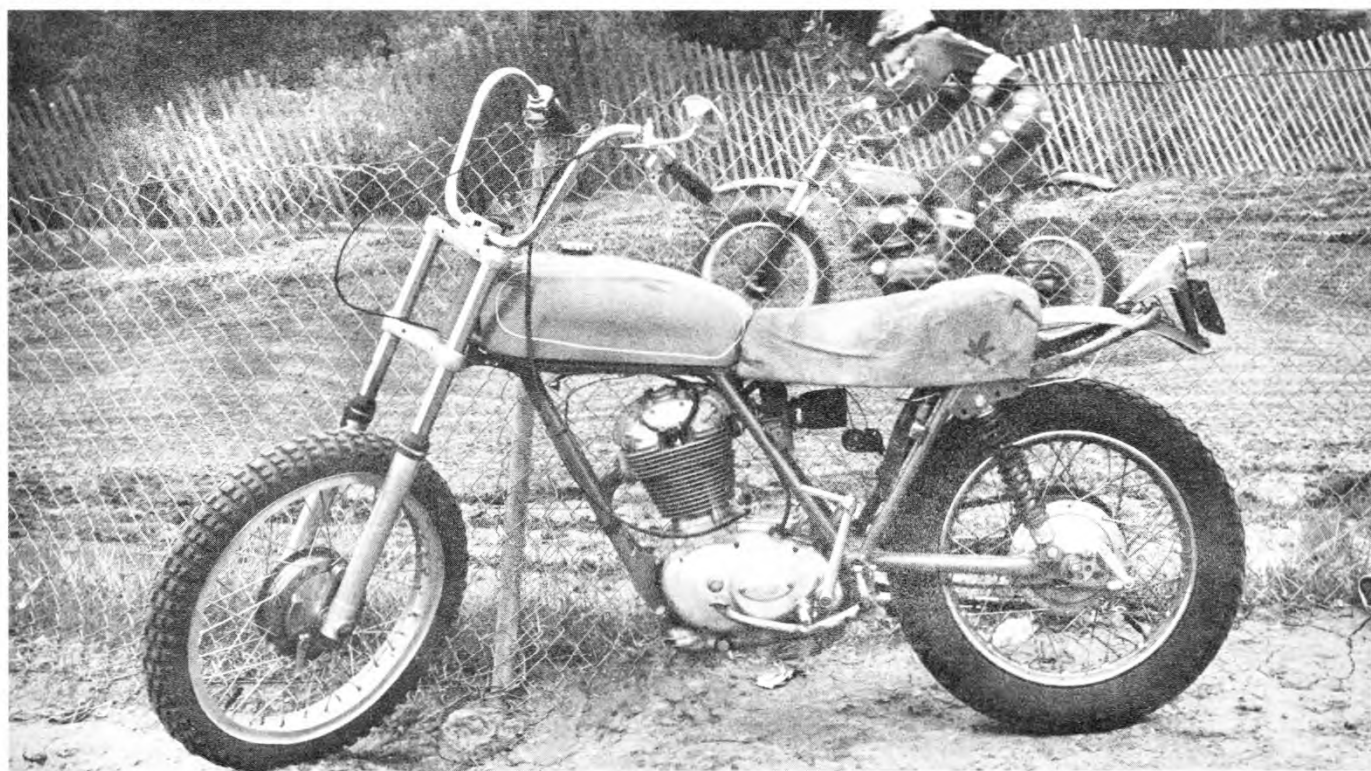
That tells one side of the story, if not the lighter side. Or we could have, "The good old boys and their funky old four-stroke motorcycles turned out for the Four-Stroke National Championships." That would certainly portray some of the most important aspects of the race. Or we could go with, "In an impressive display of sportsmanship, enthusiasm and expertise, Martin Horn and the boys from McHenry, Illinois, ran herd on the Four-Stroke National Championship aboard their English CCM motorcycles." That would satisfy the Anglophiles, of which I am one. Or, how about, "Accom-

Mike Tripes, on the 250 CCM, swept both 250 Pro motos.

panied by an impressive display of dirt racing, the Four-Stroke Nationals proved beyond a shadow of doubt that four-stroke motocross is not dead." We know that, but do you? Or finally, we could provide the predictable, "Hyuh, hyuh, all us good ole boys from DIRT BIKE turned out for the Four-Stroke Nationals where our hot-shot editor defended his Championship and the rest of us got drunk and took pictures." Certainly one side of the truth.

Do you see why it's so hard to

The disparate nature of the Four-Stroke National symbolized as Tommy Croft passes behind an odd interpretation of the Ducati Marquee.



Martin Horn led his CCM crew to a bloody good time. Here he puts the well-used 250 CCM through a portion of its paces.

*Dear readers, Had a wonderful time,
wish you had been there.*

by Dave Schoonmaker

FOUR-STROKE NATIONAL MOTOCROSS





DIRT BIKE'S own editor, Gunnar Lindstrom, defends his #1 plate against the onslaught. His Powrroll 600 Yamaha proved to be slightly pubescent.



You might be surprised to find out how many Japanese miracle machines finished to the rear of this 441 BSA incognito.

Timers event. The CCM pits were a blur of changing number plates as different riders readied the same bikes for different races. The 250 CCM competed in eight motos that day and won the 250 Professional class in the process. Most of the machines available competed in at least a half-dozen motos. Rolf Tibblin rode a new 600 which showed mighty prowess until it pitched the chain and dislodged the

choose now? All those things happened. You should have seen the duel between Bell, Croft, Smith and Marty Tripes. In the first moto Tommy Croft and Mike Bell had an incredible dice until Croft's forks ruptured. And Marty Tripes rode the seat off a 250cc CCM, since there was no 500cc bike ready, to finish fourth. Then in the second moto Tripes was aboard a 500cc CCM and flat ran away from everyone. What a ride! Still, Bell finished third after crashing himself, when Croft crashed his way down to fourth. That provided Mike, riding dad's Long Beach Honda, with the overall win and the National Championship in the 500 class.

Maybe there weren't as many good old boys and their four-strokes out this year as there were last year, but they were still there in force. Cheney-Victors placed high in the Sportsman classes, though the 500 Sportsman champion was a repeat of

last year, Keith Petrangelo aboard his CCM. John Hardy brought out a beautiful 600cc Matchless Typhoon which he sold on the spot for \$550. If we'd only known. Among the observers were folks on machines such as a Norton Atlas, mint condition, a chopped Ducati 250, and we think we saw old Dick Miller's Velocette there again this year. The finest Triumph Cub we've seen in years failed to make the starting gate, but adorned the pits nicely. Would you believe that there was a Ducati 860cc sidecar rig there? Now that's good old boys and their funky new four-strokes.

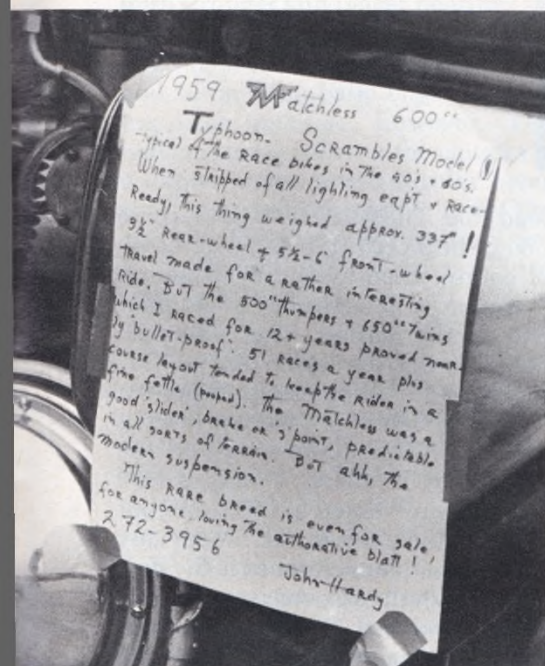
One of the stories that entertained us the most was the CCM gang exploits. Martin Horn drove out from his Aero-PA shop in Illinois with a truck full of CCMs. He drug out his entire stock and loaned them to most anyone who was interested in racing. Martin himself rode in 250 and 500 Sportsman and in the Old



One of the boys aboard his Triumph, the only twin entered this year, shows the obvious strain of competition and national exposure.



Mike Bell took the overall; his four-stroking experience helped.



Perhaps only but a small few of you will appreciate this superb Matchless. But to those who do, John already sold it, on the spot.

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transmission seal. And then, of course, there was Marty Tripes' incredible ride in the last Open Pro moto. We were cheering, you better believe.

But all of the above proves one thing in particular, that four-stroke motocross racing is every bit as exciting and considerably more pleasurable to watch than the two-stroke counterpart. Subtle psychological effects of the four-stroke engine play some role in placidity of the spectators. They provide excitement without the nervousness. There's only one way to describe it — they're more mellow. And quite obviously, their sounds are just not as piercing, allowing spectators to stay closer longer without feeling discomfort. The racing was some of the closest we've ever seen, and if the speeds were not as high as the USGP, few people would have guessed.

Then there's what really happened. That's the story of your

ardent reporters and their indefatigable efforts to have a good time. We went to the Four-Stroke Nationals to have fun and nothing was about to stop us. All the beer in the cooler was unable to prevent us from being thoroughly entertained. Not even seeing young Mike Tripes win the 250 Professional race on a CCM could keep us from smiling. Watching juiced-up BSAs they call CCMs win the lion's share of the classes didn't even stop us. In fact, we were so stalwart that the pleasant party at Angus and Mary McCarty's after the race didn't even bring us down. When Rolf Tibblin offered your reporter more wine, claiming it would make him in better shape, your reporter doubted the claim. But when Rolf claimed he was already in good shape, who could question it? Actually, the only thing which could have any effect upon our buoyant moods was the writing of this story, and I still can't figure out what to do with it.

