

No one story will ever do any Six Day Trial justice. The I.S.D.T. begins months before we ever notice it and carries through until after we've forgotten it. No other single motorcycle event can approach it for time, effort, money and devotion. Every rider's story is a long one, comprising the lives of dozens of people for the better part of a year.

I.S.D.T. riders don't do what they do for the money or the glory, and they seldom receive much of either. There's only one way and one reason for riding 1,200 miles in six days: love. Every person who rides or aspires to the Six Day Trials loves to ride their motorcycle. The I.S.D.T. offers the ultimate challenge to that love: Can you do it? Can you keep it together? Can you like it? No one comes out of the I.S.D.T. bored.

Sacrifice? Part and parcel of the experience. Imagine Jim Hollander on Day Four. Flat broke and no way to get money. What would you do? Jim slipped some travelers checks in his leathers and stopped at the bank on the way to the first check. Left his Rokon idling outside. In endurance trials you must always maintain your cool.

Reports have run around about the easy course laid out for the 51st I.S.D.T. Don't let them fool you. Easy becomes a relative term, far beyond all the understanding most of us can muster. The 51st I.S.D.T. just went further in the direction Six Day Trials have been bound for years: speed. No, I.S.D.T. is not a six-day trail ride. It's a six-day trail ride with a race at the end of each day. Imagine the entire Czech trophy team changing both tires before every special test while someone is counting the milliseconds. One of the more successful Czech Trophy Team members was Jiri Stodulka — some of you may remember his name from results lists in International Motocross.

Which is maybe some sort of explanation of what happened to the U.S.A. in Austria, besides the obvious fact that we weren't fast enough. Trophy Team winners are full time pros and their trail abilities are inconsequential. They are there to go fast in special tests. Should they be a little hard on the bike, arrangements are easily made. Overall winner Allesandro Gritti was there because he was fast and his Italian support team made sure that *both* of his bikes operated

# THE 51st ISDT

## *Six Instant Replays*

by the staff of Dirt Bike and Tom Cullen

Photos by David and Margery Maltais and  
Jeannie Flippin

flawlessly throughout the trial.

No, it's not the machines. Any Six Day rider with a support team worth its mettle can make any halfway tolerable motorcycle do the job. It's both the support and the teamwork. Fast riders on fast bikes with high quality cheating win the I.S.D.T. Unless, of course, we're speaking of the Czechs, who are so good they don't have to cheat. But, never doubt that they can do a superb job of it if called upon.

So Kevin Levoie came to a



Alessandro Gritti of Italy was the No. 1 rider for the 1976 Six Days.

grinding halt on day three with motor maladies. Kevin, KTM, Penton and the Trophy Team were honest and the Trophy Team took a swan dive. Be sure that Gritti would never have succumbed to similar problems.

With Kevin aside and the Team amassing an extra 15,000 points a day, individual performances became the important aspect. Our disparate and sometimes inexperienced Trophy Teamers made a mockery of the prophesiers of doom. Jim Hollander pushed his independent Rokon through with the tenacity he has by now become famous for. Everyone pitched in to help Jim and Gary Edmonds get through the logistical nightmare of Six Days, both on Gold.

Bill Uhl and his non-Trophy Team Hercules-mates took on the I.S.D.T. smoothly and uneventfully. Bill earned a Gold for the Trophy Team on a 250 and added his score to the Hercules Manufacturers Team with Drew Smith and Mike Rosso, both on 175s.

Lars Larsson logged his fourth I.S.D.T. Gold Medal for the Trophy Team, finishing with one eye on the clock to squeak into Carat-dom.

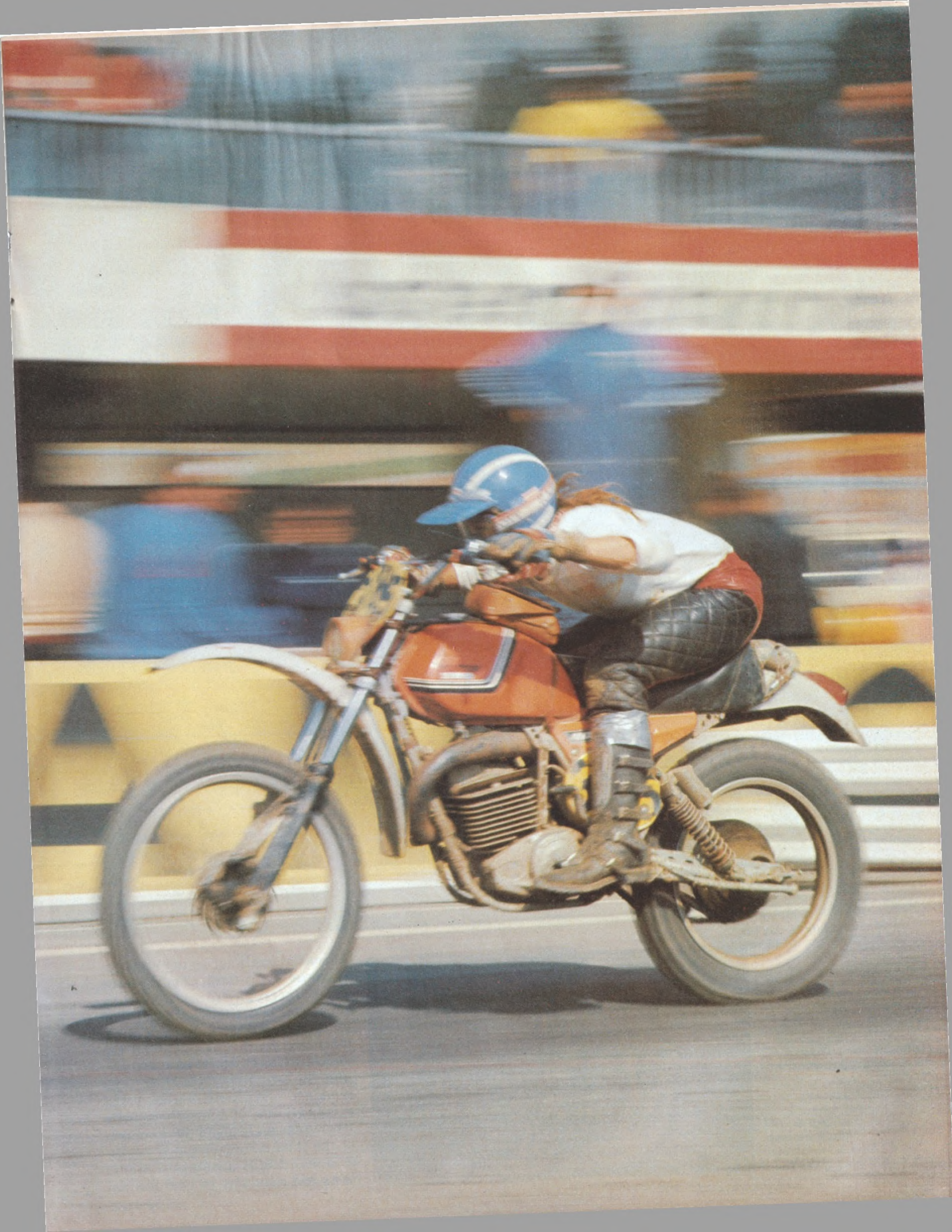
Mike Hannon completed his first ever I.S.D.T. on Gold and mumbled about not being fast enough. He's the first one to ever claim that, but he promises revenge in years to come. The performance of Mike's Bultaco and those of his manufacturer Team-mates, Ben Bower and Charles Bethards, caused much eating of crow. Ben earned his second Gold Medal since taking up motorcycling in 1971 and the unflappable, ever-smiling Charlie got his first Gold Medal at the age of 54.

Gary Younkens rounded out the Trophy Team Gold gathering squad with his second fine Six Day performance. Gary and Kevin Levoie both show tremendous potential, with their already proven speed and a rare amount of cool for their age.

The United States Silver Vase team this year was likely the finest we have ever fielded. Composed of Six Day veterans Dane Leimbach, Carl Cranke, and Jack and Tom Penton, the four-man squad represented the peak of American ET

Opposite. Carl Cranke gets down during the acceleration test.









Malcolm Smith, day four.



Dick Burleson scored top American. Here he motivates during day four.

potential. All of our Vase-ers finished on Gold, and none experienced any serious trailside problems. Yet, after Day One, they sat in a respectable but not overwhelming fourth place, behind the amazing Czechs, the West Germans, and the Italians. These positions remained unchanged through the event. Fourth, of course, especially when it means being in the company of the three aforementioned teams, is a wonderful accomplishment. With the right sort of qualification

DIRT BIKE





system and backing (see sidebar in this article), these riders have the ability to take the top.

The motocross special test on the final day was especially frustrating for Tom and Jack Penton. Starting problems dropped them from their standing as first and second Americans, respectively. Dick Burleson, consistent and unflappable as ever, ended up with the well-deserved top American slot.

The remainder of the American riders on the various club and

manufacturers' teams did well, as evidenced by the total take of twenty-nine Gold Medals out of a total of thirty-four American entries. Kevin Levoie, as stated before, suffered one of the five DNFs. David Hulse was forced to retire after being involved in an accident in which he hit a 70-year-old woman. David did what could be done on the spot, then rode on to report the injury. The woman later died, and David was severely shaken. He was initially taken into custody, but was later

released and cleared of any possible charges.

A broken front axle took out Ron Lamastus on the fifth day. He improvised with a few tools and struggled into the next check, but the part could not be replaced and Ron's fifth of Six Days was suddenly over.

Larry Thompson suffered the ultimate frustration of being disqualified for receiving help from a spectator. The help came in the form of a push just as Larry was bump



starting his motorcycle. The fact that he tried to discourage the push to the point of striking the Austrian soldiers responsible seems to have gone unnoticed. Confusion reigned in reports of the incident, and the jury voted for disqualification.

On the brighter side, Team Yamaha scored three Gold Medals in their first full blown I.S.D.T. effort. Chris Carter, on an IT 400, deserves special recognition for being the only American to win a moto in the motocross special tests.

Malcolm, of course, got a Gold, finishing up ninth American despite tire problems on the first day which cost him some time.

In all, the 51st I.S.D.T. was a combination of satisfaction and

frustration for the American riders. *Dirt Bike* friend, Tom Cullen, had some interesting first-hand observations to make, so, to conclude the story, we'll turn to Tom . . .

#### TOM SAYS . . .

"It was just another I.S.D.T. Three hundred guys going 200 miles a day for six days in the Styrian Alps of Austria. There's not much one can say about something as mundane as that. But journalism must live on, even if 'bottom-of-the-barrel' items are its life blood. The following accounts and items are the real substance of this year's Austrian I.S.D.T.

The first thing of importance that you should know is that the



Only Malcolm could look that out-of-shape while being in perfect control.

## ON THE ROAD TO AN ISDT VICTORY

Make no mistake about it, our American ET (Endurance Trial) riders are among the best in the world. The problems that plagued them in Austria were not really, in my opinion, problems of lack of ability. This was an unusual Six Days, and its very unusualness can, I believe, be used to point out some changes that should be made in our National ET championship series, changes that would strengthen our teams of the future.

I've attended two previous ISDTs, and heard stories about others. The unpredictability of these events has, in the past, been the only predictable factor.

Italy was very tough — tough because of the terrain, because of the schedules, and especially because the organizers had confused those schedules by forgetting to include time for one Special Test. The riders were, on occasion, required to run wide-open to maintain schedule or recover time that they had lost due to the above-mentioned error. The Czech team, who most agree are the present masters of the sport, was the only team to maintain both the schedule as a team, and their team composure. This was a result of organization as well as of riding ability. Our best cross-country riders, who can equal anyone in check-to-check riding, did all right in Italy. Some of our other riders didn't, simply because their trail speeds were not fast enough to recover from the organizer's error.

This year, however, the organizers didn't make mistakes; the weather, unlike that at the Isle of Man, was fine. The high percentage of Gold earned in this trial was not because the event was easy, but because it lacked surprises. Again we proved that, barring unforeseen mishaps, we are among the top group of Six Days countries in the world, along with Czechoslovakia, Italy, and East and West Germany. At this point, though, we are near the bottom of this top group. We have the potential, and I've been wondering what can be done at home to push this potential to the top.

In road racing and motocross we have proven that once we get a grass-roots system going, once we start producing riders who have developed on tracks similar to those the Europeans use, we can beat them.

Our good ET riders, now, have only the National Championship series for actual in-competition training. For many of these riders, that means only four events a year. In these events we seldom have anything, aside from check-to-check terrain, that is like the Six Days. We are not losing points on check-to-check speeds, but on Special Tests. The Special Tests in a Six Days, this year being a prime example, are not really reflected in what we require in our Championship Series here. More grass track events, and other things of that

nature, should be included.

Grass tracks, motocross tests and the like are easier for the planners. This is why they were so prevalent in Austria, and why they *could* be more prevalent here. Our clubs that sponsor the events in the ET Series, through no fault of their own — since they are generally enduro clubs which throw one ET event a year, seem to include the Special Tests as an afterthought. This is exactly the wrong approach. Special tests are the crux of the entire ISDT philosophy.

The problem parallels those found when motocross first became popular in the U.S.. Motocross, originally, only attracted much notice during those few races in the fall which made up the Inter-Am series. To be top American in the Inter-Am was considered the highest any of our riders could aim for.

Slowly, MX started to become a grass-roots sport, something that went on every weekend across the country. Only after this happened did the Japanese companies start building real production motocross bikes. Now, because of these factors, we are producing incredible riders: DiStefano, Smith, Hannah and many more.

This could happen to ET events. If smaller clubs, those who usually throw enduros, could easily get information on how to hold, for example, a one-day event using ET rules, they would likely jump at the chance. ET events eliminate many



Mr. Penton's son, Tom, in one of the grass track Special Tests.

'Clerk-of-the-Course,' stated in German, is the 'Fahrtleiter.' How'd you like to do 1,200 miles on a course laid out by a Fahrtleiter? Me neither.

Sekau must be the most Americanized village in Austria. When a rural community of only about 1,500 persons hosts nearly 200 Americans for two weeks, drastic changes must result. Every kid in the area can now say clearly, 'You got any stickers, mister?' Most of the riders got booked into the only two guest houses in Sekau, one of which had one bathtub for 42 persons! Many of the support personnel and spectators were lodged in private homes throughout the area. Several of the U.S. Bultaco support people were

housed on a farm which just happened to have a garage with a welder, air compressor, drill press, grinder and loads of tools. Johann Edlinger now possesses the most complete Bultaco shop in Austria.

The two guest houses in Sekau were quickly re-named. The Hof-wirt became the 'Warthog.' The Spodnut became the 'Spitoon.' The U.S. team doctor apparently had something to do with these names. Now there's an awe-inspiring guy. I mean, how would you like to ride on a team with a doctor named 'Crazy Richard'? He wears a uniform with a duck embroidered on it. Says he's a 'track-quack.'

Opening day produced a multitude of wheelies out of the Pare

## Some suggestions for the future by Dick Mann

of the organizational problems found in enduros, especially the protest syndrome which seems to be growing with the advent of enduro computers.

ETs also put the medal system into play, which, to me, makes more sense than a trophy system. A trophy system, especially as in enduros today when a mistake of a few minutes at a check can put a good rider completely out of the running, encourages quitting once the points are dropped. The medal system, with its breakdown into Gold, Silver and Bronze, encourages keeping on.

If these events could begin to appear, then eventually a real national organization could form. Regional championships, perhaps divided into Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and Southwest regions, would provide more events for interested riders with less travel and expense. These districts could keep track of individual performances, even to the point of fielding regional teams. District champions, or strong district performers, could then go to the National Championships. A system of incentive levels would begin to appear. Clubs, after throwing district ETs during the year, would be better prepared to hold Nationals, thus both the events and the riders would improve.

Finally, qualifying for the ISDT should not be touted as the pinnacle of achievement. Because of the realities of fielding a team to

travel to the Six Days, it is unlikely that team selection can be much different than it has been — a combination of ability, politics, and factory support.

The term "qualifier" was always misleading. Perhaps 60 riders could meet the criteria for qualification, yet only 30 might be able to actually ride on the American ISDT team.

The National Championship ET Series should only determine which riders are capable of being *considered* for Six Days. A reward, such as a National jacket or helmet, could be awarded to those riders who do achieve great enough success to merit consideration. This should be a part of the goal and the reward for competing, a prestige item.

A further incentive would be provided by holding a large ET event each year, at the conclusion of the Series. This could be a two- or three-day event, termed, perhaps, a North American Championship. Different teams from foreign countries should be invited, as the European MXers were to the Inter-Ams. Each year a different section of the country could host such an event. Regional teams, made up of the district winners, could compete, along with, of course, the National Championship winners.

Think of it, 300 American riders could compete, rather than just the 30 or so who can go to the Six Days. This would be the event of

the year in America, and would go a long way toward preparing riders for our future teams as well as giving ET events the coverage they deserve.

Our National Championship riders now have much too narrow an arena of success. Not more than ten new riders in any given year are likely to have a chance at going to the ISDT. With an improved Championship system there would be publicity and honor *before* becoming one of those ten.

This kind of system would build America a team for the future, while strengthening our teams today.

The responsibility for making this all happen would logically fall upon the AMA. A few years back they seemed to be taking steps toward these ends, but with the conclusion of the Six Days in America their interest seems to have dropped. The guideline booklet for holding an ET-type event, which we mentioned earlier, would be a giant step back in the right direction.

Funds, which would be collected for AMA sanctions of ET events in America, could be used directly toward furthering this type of competition — creating, in part, a self-sustaining system.

A letter to the AMA (American Motorcycle Association, P.O. Box 141, Westerville, Ohio) voicing agreement with the ideas presented here could be a strong step toward a future Six Days victory.





Jim Hollander in a Special Test, brake lever falling to the ground, trying for a one-knee recovery.



Gary Edmond moving on the mighty Rokon. (Jeannie Flippin photo)



Rookie Mike Hannon brought home a Gold.



Gary Younkins dices with unidentified Italian and Dutch riders in the motocross Special Test.

Ferme, but king of them all was Jim Hollander. Jim did it for about three blocks, and everyone knows you can't do a wheelie on a Rokon.

Destined to become the star of the show was Ted Dirstein, a Canadian who crashed hard before Check 1 on day 1, bent his forks and bars *bad*. He went all week, steering one way and going another, and finished!

Also a crowd-pleaser was the Swiss rider who rode the final day, including the motocross, one-handed the other arm being broken. He didn't look slow either, and didn't finish last in his moto.

World Trophy leader in total wins is Great Britain, 16 times, followed by Czechoslovakia with 12 wins. In Silver Vase competition, the Czechs have 16 wins (including '76) and Great Britain has 11. No other country is even close in either category.

All time winning 'line' for any American in a foreign country,

'Yeah, I ride all the time with Steve McQueen and Robert Redford.' It worked so well for Chris Carter in England that everyone was using it this year.

An unforgettable scene occurred on the final day in Austria, on a country road leading into Sekau. Imagine a farm tractor, driven by the then-famous Johann Edlinger, with seats on each fender, occupied by Mike Hannon and Charlie Bethards respectively, with Ben Bower sitting atop three crated Bultacos being trailered behind the tractor. A stone gas! Schnapps made Johann ride five mph faster."

## RESULTS

### World Trophy

1. West Germany	312.0
2. Czechoslovakia	383.8
3. East Germany	785.1
4. Great Britain	2130.0
5. Austria	2226.1
6. Poland	2349.9
7. Belgium	5346.8
8. Canada	8469.9
9. France	33,566.3
10. United States	61,994.6
11. Holland	63,225.9
12. Sweden	91,172.1
13. Switzerland	92,962.2
13. Finland	93,256.7
15. Italy	225,304.3

### Silver Vase

1. Czechoslovakia	580.0
2. West Germany	625.0
3. Italy	717.6
4. United States	981.3
5. Finland	1307.0
6. East Germany	1345.4
7. Belgium	1366.5
8. Canada	3954.7
9. Switzerland	4243.6
10. Holland	4936.2
11. Austria	17,677.0
12. Sweden	32,528.3
13. Spain	61,220.8
14. France	66,941.3
15. Great Britain	77,408.0

### Manufacturers' Teams

1. Zundapp I	50.6
2. Jawa I	204.2
3. Zundapp II	261.4

### Club Teams

1. Dukla Praha	612.8
2. UAMK CSSR	748.2
3. ADAC Stuttgart	864.5

### Best 10 American Scores

1. Dick Bursleson	3985.9	Hus
2. Jack Penton	3995.5	Pen
3. Tom Penton	4010.44	Pen
4. Carl Cranke	4066.1	Pen
5. Frank Gallo	4118.0	Pen
6. Jim Hollander	4127.8	Pen
7. Billy Uhl	4131.3	Her
8. Gary Younkins	4132.4	Pen
9. Malcolm Smith	4133.3	Hus
10. Dane Leimbach	4143.6	Pen

Other American Gold Medal Winners: Drew Smith (Her); Don Cichocki (Pen); Mike Rosso (Her); Harry Heilemann (Pen); Lars Larsson (KTM); Eric Jensen (Pen); Mike Hannon (Bul); Jeff Gerber (Pen); Earl Law (Oss); Dennis Vandecar (Pen); Rod Bush (Pen); Gary Edmond (Rok); Jeff Hill (Pen); David Ashley (Yam); Bill Geier (Pen); Chris Carter (Yam); John Fero (Yam); Charles Bethards (Bul); Ben Bower (Bul).

American Silver Medal Winners: Jim Simmons (Hus); Stan Rubottom (Yam).

American Bronze Medal Winners: Ricky Weathersbee (Pen); Ken Maahs (Hus).