



The Penton dynasty; Tom, John and Jack.

THE ENDURO SEASON AT MID POINT

MICHIGAN NATIONAL ENDURO

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Shakespeare said it first and history has proven its truth: "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown." In the kingdom of enduro riding, the Declaration of 1976 put forth the proposition that no man shall ride to the top for a third year unchallenged.

And so it was that as the season moved to the midway point, competi-

tion was like a sustained tennis volley as Dick Burleson traded overall honors with his most serious rival Jack Penton. Neither could afford to relax too much lest he trip himself or tense up to the degree that he lose his ability to capitalize on the other's break in concentration.

While other riders crossed that start-



Burleson approaches the finish.



The Michigan woods get tight in spots.



The satisfaction that comes with a job well done.

ing line anticipating a fun outing on the trails through the woods, for these two it was serious business. As the sun hovered longer at high noon in those mid-summer months, it was also just plain hard work.

July 4th, as the country celebrated its 200th birthday in a variety of light-hearted ways, the two men put their all into a battle against the elements of nature in the Michigan woods. It was almost symbolic of the perseverance our forefathers demonstrated as they moved across the miles and years to bring America from the first scattered settlements to its present greatness.

The Seaway Festival Enduro, a first year national, gave contenders one of their hardest rides to that point in the season. The long off-road sections found riders weaving through rough-cut pine stands, face-high young pine growth and log-strewn sand thrills. This terrain coupled with a generous portion of intense sunshine resulted in extremely tired riders crossing the finish line set in the woods some 15 miles from the starting area. A person with a cold beer concession could have hustled a few bucks very easily at that

point.

Jack Penton, riding several rows ahead of Burleson, was as high spirited as the original Yankee Doodle as he eyed the clocks at the finish line and the woods through which Burleson would come crashing in that final attempt to scrape a few seconds off his total. Jack seems to know when he is on—and when he is, Burleson can feel the heat around the throne.

Although the total turnout was light (281) with about 150 finishing, those participating had nothing but high praise for the run. Credit for their enjoyment goes primarily to organizer Neil Sharporn. In fact when reports of missing arrows came in late Saturday evening, it was Neil who rode through the night replacing them.

It was indeed Jack Penton who savored the sweet taste of victory that day, topping Burleson by 3 points. Burleson may spend some moments in silent evaluation of a less than perfect run, but he is not one to linger too long once the final scores are posted because there is always another race just ahead and preparation for it becomes the main order of business. ●