

CZECH ODYSSEY 52ND ISDT

Cruising in an airplane 34,000 feet above the Swiss Alps, an American Six Day rider works his way stiffly down the center aisle, limping due to two broken bones in a foot and carefully keeping his arms to his sides to minimize further aggravation of a cracked shoulder. While asking the Team doctor at the plane's stern for an additional pain pill, Carl Cranke draws the attention of a non-motorcycling passenger. The woman surveys him, removes her headphones and asks, "How did you do in that motorcycle race in Czechoslovakia young man?"

"I got a Silver Medal, and I'm prouder of it than some of the Golds at home."

"And you raced for six whole days?"

"Yea, and right now I



Good old American ingenuity was brought to Czechoslovakia in the form of paint brush, stick, duct tape and grease—instant chain lube demonstrated by top U.S. finisher Tom Penton. Getting berserko—(right) resulted in high scores for many riders on the grass motocross special tests.

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**The Chess Board Turned To Mud
When It Rained On Black Friday.
Suddenly The Trial Became A Desperate
Struggle That Ended With 166 DNFs
And Only Two American Golds**

By Brad Zimmerman





Soaring above the crowd from one of the numerous jumps, eventual 500 class winner and former GP racer Jiri Stodulka finishes Day Six in style. Below: Just one of the many picturesque spots during the third day.



Middle left: Henny Jansed of the Netherlands pitches his 250 KTM sideways while (above) eventual 350 class winning Czech rider Kvetoslav Masita passes one of the many farmhouses en route to a time check. Left: The toughest class to compete in was the 50cc category where lots of paddling compensates for minimal horsepower. In a rock section that claimed many a footpeg and ankle, Arnulf Alexi and Carlo Zenoni disregard finesse and style in favor of getting through untweaked. Both riders were eliminated during "Black Friday."

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Many of the local inhabitants took the week off to watch the world's best riders go past their houses, barns and fields. Chris Carter begins the last half of Day Three after he and his Yamaha were refueled, rested and quenched. Right: Each day riders tested their motocross abilities on one of three courses.





Far left Don Cichocki wheelies his 175 Penton up a special test grass hill, ignoring a badly swollen hand, while Frantisek Mrazek discovers his 250 Jawa and an unfortunately placed rock will lead to an instantaneous get-off.

can feel every one of them."

The other 12 finishers out of 37 U.S. starters could also relate to punishment and bruises as they vainly tried to sit comfortably in their DC-10 seats. The 52nd International Six Day Trial, sponsored by Czechoslovakia near the town of Povazska Bystrica was labeled by many experienced riders as the toughest ISDT in history.

The American Team had come prepared for a tough run. At the conclusion of the 1976 Austrian ISDT, rumors concerning the toughness of terrain and time schedules had already been confirmed by the Czech riders who have used the hills and forests around Povazska Bystrica for their qualifying events since 1971.

The U.S. had assembled a strong collection of riders. The Trophy Team, which is generally com-



Left: Jeff Hill gets prepped for further battle with the terrain by two of the 14 American volunteers at a gas check, without whom the U.S. effort in ISDT couldn't survive. They pay their own way (about \$2000) to work the pits and add moral support. Right: Tom Penton, the only American to stay on time for the event, gets his card punched along with Josef Stefl (Jawa) at one of the 18 checkpoints along the Day Four route.



Far left: Barry Higgins made his way through Day Five only to have a rear wheel collapse at the special test in late afternoon, eliminating him from the competition. Swiss rider Michel Buri on 175SWM in ascent section on Day Two.

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prised of our six best riders, was well represented by Jack and Tom Penton, Dane Leimbach, Kevin LaVoie, Frank Gallo and Gary Younkins, all mounted on Pentons. The Vase Team was all-Yamaha with John Ferro, Chris Carter, Mark Deyo and Larry Thompson aboard IT models. Manufacturer teams (groupings of three riders on the same brand) included a very strong Cycle East Distributor/Husqvarna effort of Greg Davis, Dick Burleson and Bob Popiel. Suzuki's manufacturer team was represented by Bruce Kenny, Ted Worrell and Dave Hulse. Mike Rosso, Drew Smith and Ron Bohn made up the Hercules USA group, while Maico USA assembled Billy Uhl, Barry Higgins and transplanted Swede Lars Larsson. Add to that Ted Leimbach, Jim Smith, Jeff Hammond, Jim Fogle, Mike Deyo, Jeff Hill, Bob Pearce, Roy Cook, Dennis Reese, Rick Munyon, Don Cichocki, Frank Piasecki, Rod Bush, Nate Pillsbury and Carl Cranke, all gathered in groups of three as Club Teams.

BEFORE THE START

"That must be one of our crates—it says Perverted Bezerko on it."—Jack Penton.

The town started filling up and bikes were being taken apart for riders' final inspections four days prior to the start. On one corner amidst motorcycles of various origins was France in miniature. Two blocks away the Italians labored over their machines, at the other end of town the British team brewed tea in between checking torque on head bolts. On Saturday previous to the Monday start an accident occurred that not only affected the possible outcome of Six Days but severely hampered the West German Trophy Team. While practicing Heino Buse, a strong favorite to take the overall win, had crashed, driving a footpeg through his boot and consequently breaking the bones in his arch. Replacing him would be 20-year-old Paul Rottler in his first ISDT event.

MONDAY—DAY ONE

"Am I ready? Maybe you'd better ask me when it's all over and I'm not so nervous."—Rick Munyon.

Besides being anxious to start plus trying to review last minute preparations that were possibly overlooked, the entire 37-man American team had to make the required 60-second start to begin the longest day of the Trial. The only incident during that early morning start was when Finnish

Ted Leimbach, out of spare time and due into the impound, slapped the bare rim back on his machine, installing the tire and tube the following morning.



rider Petri Myllys rushed in to impound two minutes late due to an alarm clock that failed.

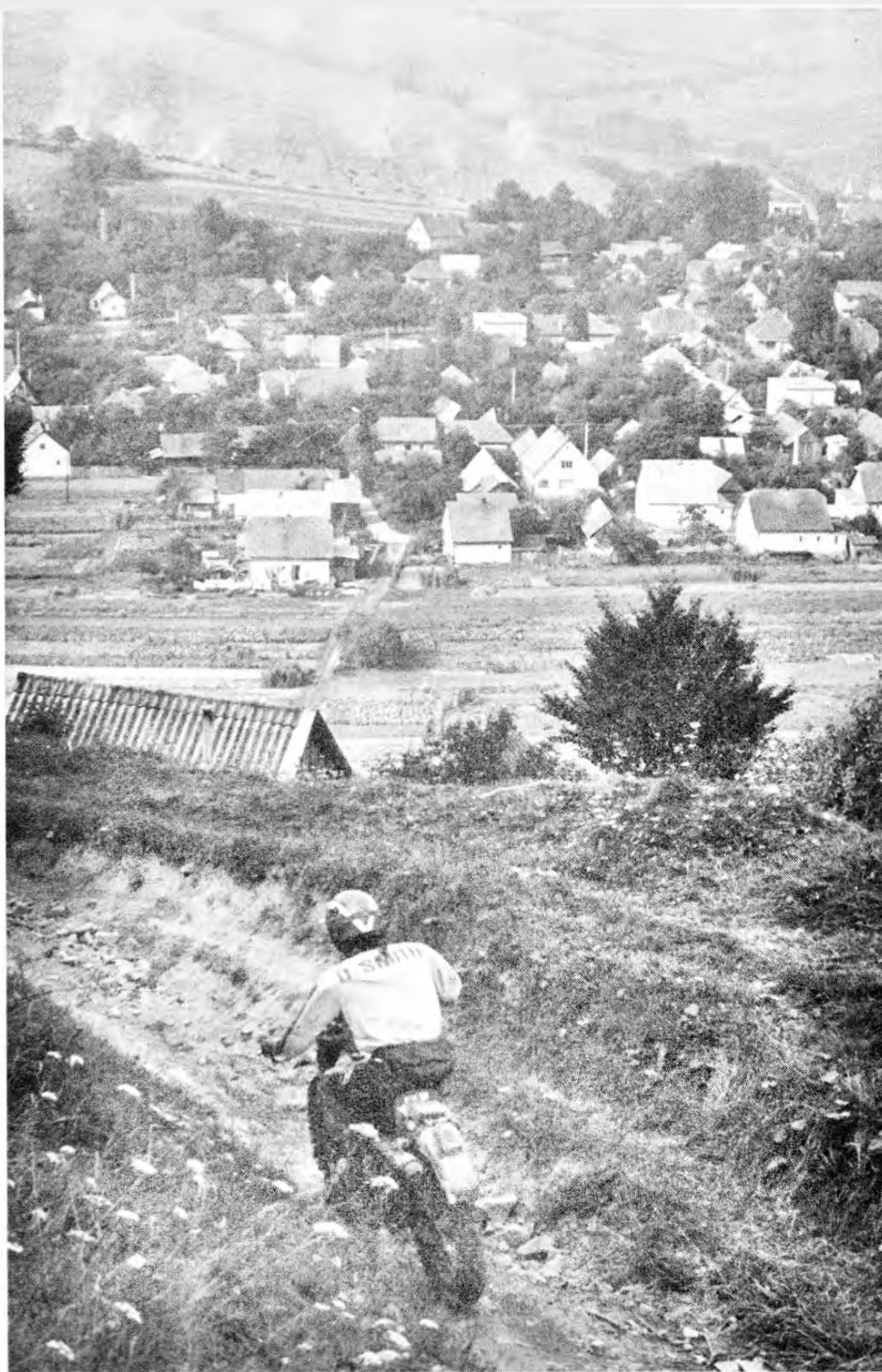
The course layout covered terrain similar to that found in Oregon with 90-percent trail winding through trees, over mountain paths and past farm houses. The slower "B" time schedule was used allowing most riders to arrive at timed checkpoints with six minutes to spare. Even with the comfortable trail pace the Americans had problems. Larry Thompson was eliminated when a trick knee dislocated and spent the day sitting alongside the trail keeping his Yamaha company while adding insurmountable penalty points to the Vase Team effort. Bob Pearce broke his shoulder when he lost control of his 125 Can-AM on an extremely tricky off-camber downhill and bailed off only to be pounced-upon by his own machine. Bruce Kenny retired when his Suzuki PE250 ate a ring and seized. Jeff Hammond had lost time due to two flat tires, then collected further penalty points when his Yamaha decided to seize as he tried to

get back on Gold scheduling.

Falling in the same spot that claimed Bob Pearce, Tom Penton arrived at the next gas stop with the knee portion of his leathers torn out and ripped skin showing through. Penton had removed the protective knee cups and was obviously regretting the decision. Jim Smith came into a gas check with handlebars dropped to the gas tank due to a crash. When offered goodies like oranges, Gatorade or granola bars, Carl Cranke declined stating, "Don't give me anything that's good for me. Just shove some junk food down my throat." Upon arriving in town for the noon check Cranke misunderstood directions from a policeman and followed a crowd of cars being routed away from a pavement section of the course. Realizing his mistake, he blitzed back to the Parc Ferme (impound area) only to discover that he'd also missed a route check. Backtracking through town to pick up the check and then riding faster than Kenny Roberts through the streets, "Crazy" Carl managed to ar-



The basic formula for Day Five: Look at the terrain, put the bike in gear, stick out both feet for stability, hang on and try to guide it as best as possible. When you fell, it didn't necessarily mean you stopped.



Drew Smith works his 175 DKW-Hercules around one of the many hay-cart trails high above the village of Horny Mostenec.



Without any fancy cross-ups, slides or wheelies, Dick Burleson applied speed and quickness to come up with the fastest American time in the 500cc class and the second of two U.S. Gold Medals.

rive at the Parc Ferme for the second time only three minutes off schedule. Roy Cook riding a 250 Penton also had problems when he passed a stamp check without getting his card punched. Fortunately the excellent Czech organization had a back-up system and Cook wasn't penalized for the mistake.

In a non-U.S.-related incident Italian Trophy Team member Luigi Petrogalli was kicked a tool by his Team Manager, a direct violation of Six Day rules. It was noted by a Jury member (there's one representing each competing country) and the subject was brought to the nightly Jury meeting Monday evening. It was voted Petrogalli be assessed 300 penalty points for the infraction.

As the nightly results came off the computer, the expected was announced. The Czechs were leading the Trophy competition and the East Germans controlled the Vase. Showing that he meant business this year, Barry Higgins turned out to be by far the fastest American in the two grass-track special tests and single acceleration test. There were 32 riders on Gold, one Silver (Cranke) and one Bronze (Hammond).

TUESDAY—DAY TWO

"So much for trail riding. Let's get down to some serious racing!"—Rod Bush.

Reversing Day One's course and using the quicker "A" time schedule riders were confronted by a roughening trail and only four minutes of spare time coming into checkpoints. Tom Penton was taking no more chances and showed up at the start limping slightly but with the knee cups reinstalled in his leathers. Only two American riders had problems on the second day. While rounding a corner tapped-out in fourth gear, Don Chicocki was suddenly faced with an Italian rider sitting sideways aboard his bike on the trail. With no room to get around and little time to brake, Chicocki center-punched the other machine with his 250 Penton, sending himself over the handlebars and injuring a hand which swelled to the size of a grapefruit by day's end. Dave Hulse, a last-minute Suzuki team addition, joined fellow retiree Kenny with the mysterious Suzuki Seizure Syndrome. Manager John Morgan and Suzuki factory mechanic Aki Goto were unable to diagnose the problem of wandering rings, leaving Ted Worrell a bit nervous about his lone remaining PE.

At the end of Day Two many of the riders planned tire changes before pushing their machines into the impound area, provided they had the spare time. This is when all that practicing of the fabled four-minute

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tire change begins to pay off. Greg Davis put in the most impressive showing by changing the front tire on his 250 Husky in less than two minutes.

Ted Leimbach in his first year of ISDT competition had the distinction of sharing a riding minute with Alessandro Gritti reportedly one of the fastest riders in the world and overall winner of the ISDT last year. According to Ted, "Gritti may be fast in spe-

cial tests but his trail pace is much slower than I expected. All during Day One I stayed behind him so I wouldn't slow him down. But today I alternated riding ahead and behind Gritti. My comfortable trail pace is a lot faster and better than his." In the last section Ted opted to follow Gritti into the finish and due to the Italian's slower pace, the young Penton rider didn't have time to completely change a tire. With only the rear rim temporarily on the machine, Ted impounded his bike and had to install a tire and tube during the following morning's 10-minute work period.

At the second Jury meeting that evening the Italian representative

tried to reverse the decision about Petrogalli. He didn't feel the 300-point penalty was fair and pushed the issue. In a play that suddenly stopped the heated arguments one member stated, "I think this matter is no longer about Petrogalli getting 300 penalty points, but rather whether or not he should be disqualified from the event." A vote was taken and the Italian rider was out.

At the end of Day Two the Czech team retained its lead in the Trophy competition followed by West Germany, Italy, East Germany and the USA. In Vase competition the Italians held the top spot while the U.S., due to

continued on page 77

RESULTS OF TEAM COMPETITIONS TROPHY TEAM

1. Czechoslovakia.....	1,630.49
2. East Germany.....	2,438.70
3. West Germany.....	46,717.54
4. U.S.A.....	98,905.72
5. Holland.....	103,157.32

SILVER VASE

1. Czechoslovakia.....	3,161.09
2. East Germany.....	3,401.39
3. Poland.....	50,433.07
4. West Germany.....	60,395.27
5. Canada.....	81,062.61
10. U.S.A.....	154,058.73

CLASS WINNERS AND ORDER OF OVERALL INDIVIDUAL PLACINGS

1. Erwin Schmider.....	Zundapp.....	125cc.....	W. Germany.....	4815.24
2. Jiri Stodulka.....	Jawa.....	500cc.....	CSSR.....	4836.75
3. Guglielmo Andreini.....	DKW-Herc.....	250cc.....	Italy.....	4848.45
4. Kvetoslav Masita.....	Jawa.....	350cc.....	CSSR.....	4854.42
5. Jurgen Grisse.....	Zundapp.....	100cc.....	W. Germany.....	4903.49
6. Franco Gualdi.....	DKW-Herc.....	175cc.....	Italy.....	4909.69
7. Osvaldi Scaburri.....	Puch.....	75cc.....	Italy.....	4924.36
8. Gini Perego.....	DKW-Herc.....	50cc.....	Italy.....	9081.39

ORDER OF U.S. FINISHERS (AND RETIREMENTS) ACCORDING TO POINTS EARNED OR DISTANCE COMPLETED BEFORE HOURING OUT.

1. Tom Penton.....	Gold.....	250 Penton
2. Dick Burleson.....	Gold.....	390 Husqvarna
3. Jack Penton.....	Silver.....	250 Penton
4. Gary Younkens.....	Silver.....	350 Penton
5. Rod Bush.....	Silver.....	250 Penton
6. Carl Cranke.....	Silver.....	400 KTM
7. Mike Rosso.....	Silver.....	175 Hercules
8. Ted Leimbach.....	Bronze.....	250 Penton
9. Kevin LaVoie.....	Bronze.....	400 Penton
10. Mark Deyo.....	Bronze.....	250 Yamaha
11. Bob Popiel.....	Bronze.....	390 Husqvarna
12. Bill Uhl.....	Bronze.....	250 Maico
13. Ron Bohn.....	DNF.....	250 Hercules
14. Chris Carter.....	DNF.....	400 Yamaha
15. Don Cichocki.....	DNF.....	175 Penton
16. Roy Cook.....	DNF.....	250 Penton
17. Greg Davis.....	DNF.....	250 Husqvarna
18. Mike Deyo.....	DNF.....	250 Yamaha
19. John Fero.....	DNF.....	400 Yamaha
20. Jim Fogle.....	DNF.....	250 Penton
21. Jeff Hammond.....	DNF.....	400 Yamaha
22. Barry Higgins.....	DNF.....	400 Maico
23. Jeff Hill.....	DNF.....	400 Penton
24. Lars Larsson.....	DNF.....	400 Maico
25. Dane Leimbach.....	DNF.....	175 Penton
26. Rick Munyon.....	DNF.....	175 Yamaha
27. Nate Pillsbury.....	DNF.....	400 Maico
28. Frank Piasecki.....	DNF.....	250 Penton
29. Dennis Reese.....	DNF.....	400 Penton
30. Drew Smith.....	DNF.....	175 Hercules
31. Jim Smith.....	DNF.....	250 Penton
32. Ted Worrell.....	DNF.....	250 Suzuki
33. Frank Gallo.....	DNF.....	400 Penton
34. Dave Hulse.....	DNF.....	250 Suzuki
35. Bruce Kenny.....	DNF.....	250 Suzuki
36. Bob Pearce.....	DNF.....	125 Can-AM
37. Larry Thompson.....	DNF.....	250 Yamaha

**37 starters
12 finishers**

STARTERS AND FINISHERS BY CLASS

Class	Started	Retired	Finished
50cc.....	6.....	5.....	1.....
75cc.....	14.....	7.....	7.....
100cc.....	11.....	4.....	7.....
125cc.....	29.....	22.....	7.....
175cc.....	57.....	35.....	22.....
250cc.....	78.....	57.....	21.....
350cc.....	41.....	29.....	12.....
500cc.....	68.....	49.....	19.....
750cc.....	9.....	6.....	3.....

STARTERS AND FINISHERS BY BRAND

Brand	Started	Retired	Finished
Anciolotti.....	2.....	2.....	0.....
Bultaco.....	8.....	7.....	1.....
Can-AM.....	8.....	6.....	2.....
DKW-Hercules.....	10.....	5.....	5.....
Fantic Motor.....	5.....	4.....	1.....
Hercules.....	14.....	11.....	3.....
Husqvarna.....	19.....	17.....	2.....
Jawa.....	42.....	21.....	21.....
KTM.....	67.....	52.....	15.....
Laverda.....	2.....	2.....	0.....
Maico.....	15.....	11.....	4.....
Mohican Rickman.....	1.....	1.....	0.....
Monark.....	1.....	1.....	0.....
Montesa.....	4.....	4.....	0.....
Moto-AIM.....	3.....	3.....	0.....
MZ.....	13.....	5.....	8.....
Ogar.....	10.....	2.....	8.....
Ossa.....	10.....	6.....	4.....
Penton.....	16.....	10.....	6.....
Puch.....	12.....	9.....	3.....
Simonini.....	4.....	4.....	0.....
Simson.....	8.....	4.....	4.....
Suzuki.....	9.....	8.....	1.....
SWM.....	19.....	14.....	5.....
Tatran.....	1.....	1.....	0.....
Yamaha.....	12.....	9.....	3.....
Zundapp.....	8.....	2.....	6.....

continued from page 48

the loss of Thompson, sat in 12th.

WEDNESDAY—DAY THREE

"When Gritti got to the starting line this morning he wasn't too happy."—Ted Leimbach.

The repercussions of the Tuesday night Jury meeting were seen by the riding field on Wednesday morning. As each of the six-man Italian Trophy Team approached the starting line he pushed his bike past the time clocks to the side of the course. When all the riders still competing had left the Parc Ferme the Italians loaded their equipment in a van and drove home, withdrawing from the trial in protest of the Jury's decision. Alessandro Gritti in a message to the press about the withdrawal stated, "It's a pity. I could have at least continued as an individual but I had to withdraw because I was on the Trophy Team. I feel that I could have won the overall again this year, though now I have been told to pull out."

The third day marked the start of a new course, with tighter trails, a quicker pace and steep uphill that hampered progress due to numerous slippery tree roots and loose rocks. Even the more experienced riders had only four minutes at each check to take a breather.

Two freak incidents severely damped the U.S. hopes for a good Trophy Team placing. When Frank Gallo got a flat tire on the second loop, he immediately pulled off course to install a new tube only to discover his spare tube refused to inflate. A third tube was "dropped" by a passing Belgian rider, and once installed, Gallo found that it too wouldn't inflate. But there was still a way for him to continue if Carl Cranke, who was riding in the open class behind Frank, could possibly "lose" a tube as he rode past. A small crowd gathered around Gallo as he waited, obstructing his view of the trail. Cranke rode past without spotting his teammate in the center of the group and Gallo never caught sight of Cranke. He returned to the motel around seven o'clock, retired due to being more than an hour late at a checkpoint, which automatically added 15,000 penalty points to the Trophy Team score for *each* day he didn't compete.

Fellow teammate Dane Leimbach riding a 175 Penton zigged when he should have zagged. Approaching the outskirts of a time check, he felt sure he was late due to two stops to clean his glasses. When he entered a time check area one of the American volunteers motioned Dane to stop by

his car for a drink of water. Leimbach misunderstood the hand-wave as confirming his fears of being late. Regardless he was severely penalized with 300 points when he unknowingly checked through five minutes ahead of schedule.

Rick Munyon also wasn't having the best of luck. You could hear him coming down a trail long before you could see him. The engine in his Yamaha IT175 was beginning to sour and when the bike was shifted into first gear it sounded like marbles in an overhead air conditioner. A technique using lots of second gear accompanied by slipping the clutch somehow kept him going.

At the end of Day Three the Czechs still led the Trophy Team competition but the West Germans were getting closer to nabbing the top spot. The Italian rider Andreini still had the fastest special test scores aboard a 250 DKW, although his acceleration test runs (done every morning) weren't outstanding. On the U.S. scene, Dick Burleson was fastest American in a field that included 29 Golds, two Silvers and one Bronze.

THURSDAY—DAY FOUR

"That's the most irreverent Czech I've ever seen in my life! But is he a blast to watch!"—Dane Leimbach

He's talking about Tomas Peterman who rode a 175 Ogar (same as Jawa) as one of three riders on the same minute with Leimbach. At first Peterman was imitating an Italian playboy loose in Rome, with the exception that he was riding his machine in World Competition as he patted the posteriors of pretty girls spectating on the trail. Repeatedly he blew kisses or complimented a lovely lady in passing, yet the coup de grace occurred on a particular downhill outside of town. Spotting a good-looking blonde standing at the bottom, Peterman yelled to her in Czech. In an apparent frenzy she searched her pockets for a piece of paper, then borrowed a pen and wrote down a number. When Peterman reached the bottom of the hill he indicated that the paper was to go in his jacket pocket. Score one lovely lady's phone number.

The fourth day was the most relaxed as the riders went over terrain they had covered on Wednesday, and at a pace they knew was adequate. The only problems that arose were Munyon's machine had totally lost first gear by noon and was gnawing away at second; Nate Pillsbury's Maico was starting to shed spokes; and Ted Worrell was riding with a vise grips as a footpeg, due to a shearing incident with a rock that

continued



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somehow only dropped him three minutes off schedule. Kevin LaVoie dropped 26 minutes, explained when he entered the finish with broken handlebars. Barry Higgins' chain stretched incredibly, falling off seven times.

Unrelated to the day's trials activities, but worthy of mention was the introduction of this author to what could be considered kamikaze Czechoslovakian geese. In the out-laying farmlands geese are considered a valuable commodity, even though they seem to roam freely about the countryside. I inadvertently hit one as I rounded a corner and immediately stopped to move it to the side of the road, figuring that although it was a bit dazed it would survive. As I started to get back in the car an elderly woman, apparently the owner of aforementioned goose, came running from a nearby field with arms in air, voice at high pitch and apparently very upset about her bruised livestock. Twenty Kronas (the local currency) were quickly offered in payment but I was told through hand language that it wouldn't suffice. Ten stickers were offered. Still not enough. After I forked over 60 stickers along with the money, the woman seemed satisfied. She walked to the side of the road, grabbed the goose by the head and swiftly broke its neck, proudly handing it to me. In turning down the offer (I couldn't fathom what to do with a dead goose), I apparently added more color to the local rumors about the "crazy Americans." For the remainder of the week when I passed her farm and she recognized the car, I was greeted with excessive waving and a smile as she shook her head in amazement.

Back at the impound entrance during the final minutes of the day, the tire changing routines were going full blast. Burleson, who was currently fourth in the 500cc class, put in a performance that drew applause even from the usually partisan spectators. Even though he had some difficulty rethreading the front axle into the fork leg, Burleson did an amazing tire change in five minutes, putting new tires and tubes on both front and rear wheels.

At midnight—results time—the Czechs still had a stronghold on the Trophy Team standings, but the West Germans had dropped to sixth position allowing the East Germans to gladly fill the number two spot. With Gallo out, the U.S. fell to seventh position. In Vase Competition West Ger-

many took the lead followed by dethroned Czecho and the East Germans. In individual scores Kvetoslav Masita completed the special tests on his 350 Jawa in 9:28. Eduard Hau on a 125 Zundapp went over the same course in 9:41 proving that when it comes to riding talent, engine displacement makes little difference. The U.S. rolled along with 25 Golds, three Silvers and four Bronzes.

FRIDAY—DAY FIVE

"I thought I was going to hour out on the special test! It took forever to get around it!"—Chris Carter

Friday was rain day, the day of "The Hill," the day that the question "How far did you get?" became more common than "Did you finish today?" Rumbling thunder that sounded like artillery kept some riders awake at night. Heavy rain in the early morning hours followed by a steady down pour on various sections of the course turned an already difficult trail into an almost impassable combination of gumbo mud, non-tractable clay and slippery granite rock. On the fifth day close to half the entered field was eliminated, with most riders forced to retire because they were more than an hour late into a time check. The list of Americans who "houred out" was almost as long as the list of Americans entered, in all 20 riders were eliminated from the running within four hours. Among those knocked out by the time element were Dane Leimbach, Greg Davis, Don Cichocki, Jim Smith, Drew Smith, Chris Carter, John Fero, Dennis Reese, Jim Paisecki, Mike Deyo, Ron Bohn and Jeff Hammond who had painstakingly worked his way from a Bronze back to a Silver with good special test scores.

If you had any problems at all, even the smallest bothersome item, you immediately houred out. Rick Munyon just couldn't keep up the pace using four of the original six gears in his machine and houred out at noon. Jeff Hill had an electrical short under the gas tank of his Penton, removed the tank three times trying to trace the problem and houred out because of the delay. Roy Cook, one of the riders stuck on "the hill," spent a frustrating 20 minutes trying to get over the top. By the time half the 250cc field got to the hill it was scattered with machines, and other competitors caused a bottleneck at the bottom with no place to go. Due to the congestion riders were houring out before they even got a chance at the hill. Ted Worrell made it over the obstacle with brute strength but his Suzuki was suffering. Riding with no clutch or right footpeg and bruised kidneys, Worrell was eventually

forced to stop but not before putting up quite a fight against the clock and terrain. Nate Pillsbury somehow managed to nurse his rear wheel through most of Friday only to have sand and mud get into his chain and round all the teeth off his countershaft sprocket. Lars Larsson threw a chain and destroyed his magneto cover. Barry Higgins, after five attempts at a hill in the special test and continual fighting with a loose chain, had his rear wheel collapse. Ron Bohn broke a shifter right off, Jim Fogle fell and hurt a leg, Cranke severely twisted an ankle breaking bones in his foot, Jack Penton threw his chain 12 times, Bill Uhl stopped and took a link out of his chain because the wheel could no longer take up any more slack, and finally Dick Burleson dropped 10 minutes because the no-fog on his glasses wore off leaving him to ride using the Braille system. Throughout "Killer Friday" only one American rider managed to retain his Gold Medal and keep on time. One of just 21 competitors to retain a Gold status, Tom Penton relied on good physical condition and mud experience.

The results from Day Five were devastating for the Americans. Our Trophy Team, already in trouble due to the loss of Gallo earlier in the week, added Leimbach to its casualty list. The Vase Team lost Chris Carter and John Fero which left only a lonely but determined Mark Deyo aboard a Yamaha. The Belgian Trophy Team dropped four of its members, the French Trophy Team relinquished all six riders. The West Germans lost a lot of riders on Zundapps because a new engine configuration mated to an older transmission design was unable to withstand the punishment. Many of the Czechs who were eliminated traced their problems back to their Jawas, which were apparently allowing a lot of water into the carburetors and dying on the trail. Still there weren't enough riders eliminated from the Czech team to alter Trophy Team standings and the host country still led. In Vase they dropped to second position allowing the East Germans to take over.

It may have been embarrassing to the bigger machines, but Luigi Medardo on a 75cc Puch set fastest time of the day, completing both special test sections for a total of 11:55, a full 44 seconds quicker than the second fastest time of Erwin Schmider on a 125 Zundapp.

SATURDAY—DAY SIX

"I'd like to say it's all over now, but the sore muscles. But we've got 68 miles still to go, and it's going to be damn long!"—Mike Rosso It was the shortest and last day of the trial, yet

the Czech organizers were still playing mind games with riders just as they had done all week long. The course broke down statistically to 68 miles on a "B" schedule, tight sections with 17 route and time checks. Due to both mental and physical fatigue a lot of competitors dropped points. Only 101 riders started Day Six, the survivors from Friday's massacre. As if he didn't have enough troubles breaking a foot the day before in the mud, Carl Cranke got off again and this time cracked a shoulder. Kevon LaVoie lost 10 minutes, Bob Popiel dropped 17 minutes, while Billy Uhl and Mike Rosso each fell 21 minutes off the pace. For Dick Burleson the tension was enormous before that final day's start. By dropping 10 minutes on Day Five he had fallen to Silver status. His only chance of regaining a Gold rested in the final motocross test in which he had to finish within 50 seconds of the class leader.

In that midday motocross test riders were paired in their engine class groups, instead of riding individually as they had all week. The most impressive U.S. ride was put on by Tom Penton who led the 250 field for the initial two laps, and finished, in third position pulling wheelies all during the last lap. Penton's highest-placing American finale not only pumped the American spectators but drew applause from enthusiasts of every country.

Billy Uhl also won a lot of admiration by merely riding the final special test. He had suffered all week from severe tendonitis in his hands and wrists so painful that he had trouble holding a glass or fork at dinner. In the final motocross test he rode not because he had to—the Bronze was automatic—but because "When I got there the Germans who had taken care of us all week had their cameras out. They wanted a picture of me riding so I went around for two laps. Then I couldn't hold onto the handlebars any longer and had to stop." He finished the Six Days on a Bronze, probably the hardest-earned medal of the entire American team.

When it came time for the open class Burleson was quietly concentrating on that Gold. The start was flagged, he came through the first turn in mid-pack but within sight of class leader Jiri Stodulka on a Jawa. When the checkered fell 30 minutes later, Burleson had squeaked his way back to a Gold by finishing 48.54 seconds behind Stodulka, barely more than a second's margin above a Silver.

In the final tally the Czechs won the Trophy Team competition free and clear leading from start to finish

and always running the show. Strange, however, was the East German situation. Going into Day Six they led the Czechs by 1700 points, finally breaking into the lead of the Silver Vase standings. But on that final day the East German team suspiciously amassed 1740 route points, while the Czech Vase riders cleaned the day. In the end the Czechs had won both the Vase and the Trophy competition. In the U.S. Manufacturer's competition the Cycle East/Husky team, even with the retirement of Greg Davis, had bested the Penton A team which lost Frank Gallo.

In the tally of individual scores both Tom Penton (highest-placing American—fifth in the 250 class) and Dick Burleson had earned Gold Medals. Silver Medals were awarded to Jack Penton, Gary Younkens, Rod Bush, Carl Cranke and Mike Rosso. Completing the 52nd ISDT with a Bronze were Ted Leimbach, Kevin LaVoie, Mark Deyo, Bob Popiel and Billy Uhl. The final tally: 37 American starters, 12 finishers. Starting numbers which ranged from 1 all the way down to 369 had dwindled to a mere 99 finishers on Day Six.

Before the start of the ISDT in a meeting for all the U.S. riders Al Eames had explained what he felt would happen. "The Czechs are going to play games with you, both physically with tough tight trails and mentally due to fast schedules and numerous checkpoints. At times you'll think you're late, gas it, crash and hurt yourself, then slow down and lose your Gold. That's exactly what they're counting on. Be prepared for some psyching because the Czechs are going to play with your brain. This Trial will probably end up being half mental and half physical. None of it means a thing unless you finish the sixth day."

Only the best riders made it that far. Worthy of special mention is Erwin Schmider on his 125 Zundapp who was the lowest scoring, highest placing individual in the ISDT. Edward Hau also on a 125 Zundapp would have taken the overall win but a rule infraction on Day Two garnered him enough points to knock him out of top contention.

Going home on the plane Al Eames summed up the U.S. results with "anyone who won a medal this year really worked for it, deserves all the credit he gets and should be extremely proud. There was nothing easy about Czecho, it was possibly the most difficult event ever. A guy who finished the ISDT this year can consider himself a bona fide Six Day rider who knows the meaning of punishment, fatigue, mental exhaustion and success." **M**

PENTON

continued from page 56

drop you off trail pace into Silver."

We also talked to Tom about the special test scores he produced, and apparently, he takes a different approach than most riders when attacking the test sections.

"Those portions are very safe now. Most of them are grass tracks and there isn't that constant possibility of getting seriously hurt if you make a mistake. It's hard to do an endo in an ISDT special test. Generally when you fall, it's a slide-out in a corner. To get a good special test score you've got to push yourself hard but not to the point where you're sliding-out in corners or making big mistakes that take up time. A lot of guys practice for the ISDT special test by going out and riding a lot of motocross. This might work for some riders, but they've got to remember that the Six Days special tests are on grass tracks and it's totally different. There are no berms, no bulldozer-made whoop-dee-dooos, and there isn't much practice before you're timed.

So what comprises a good Six Days rider? In Tom's opinion, the motocrosser still has an advantage.

"I feel that a hotshoe in motocross who has the ability to handle and understand his motorcycle would make a good Six Days rider. You've got to learn how to feel out the bike, keep it together, know how it works and why. There are so many guys who can go fast, but even in motocross manage to break their motorcycle. They have to learn that quite often when a rear wheel, for instance, breaks, it's possible that it wasn't the wheel's fault, but the rider's for not treating the wheel properly when riding. The rider should take most of the punishment of the trail if he expects his machine to last. You must shift properly each and every time, save the engine and suspension, work with the motorcycle.

"Six Days is probably one of the neatest forms of motorcycle racing. I was especially impressed with the organization of the event in Czechoslovakia. It was very well run because the organizers anticipated almost all the problems that could have arisen, and eliminated them beforehand. The rider problems often stemmed from a lack of physical conditioning, knowledge of the motorcycle, and as always, bad racing luck. But like you hear every year coming home on the airplane, 'there's always next year.' In 1978 it's going to be in Sweden, very unlike Czecho in terrain, food and atmosphere, and once again, it will be an entirely new ball game. I've already begun my planning." **M**