

lap. Jim Ellis was urged on to catch Tripes, while Smith tried to swoop both at the same time. Going into the last corner Ellis picked a poor line, one which got him tangled and slowed by a lapped rider. Smith went low, got power to the ground sooner, and took over second position. The finish was Tripes by six seconds, followed by Smith and Ellis no more than a bike length apart. Ten seconds farther back came Hannah. The largest gap was between these four and Weinert, who had elected to cool it in the back section. After a total of 12 laps, the front four had a 46-second cushion over the Jammer on a course that only took two minutes to circulate.

By virtue of his second Supercross win in a row, Tripes had taken a commanding point lead after Daytona. The schedule calls for five more races. Can Tripes maintain his lead? According to many who should know, Marty is almost invincible. Where Hannah dominated Supercross last year, it looks as though 1978 will be Tripes' big banner year. At the start of the season he was a reserve rider for Honda, not considered an official factory team member. After each race his status in the Honda pits is elevated. As team Manager

Terry Mulligan put it, "If Tripes keeps this up, and I hope he does because it's great to watch, it's going to cost Honda an awful lot of money to keep him for next year. I'd like nothing better than to see that happen."

Supercross Results		
1. Marty Tripes.....	Santee, CA.....	Hon
2. Marty Smith.....	San Diego, CA.....	Hon
3. Jimmy Ellis.....	East Hampton, CT.....	Hon
4. Bob Hannah.....	Whittier, CA.....	Yam
5. Jim Weinert.....	Laguna Beach, CA.....	Kaw

Alligator Enduro

Even The 'Gators Almost Drowned.

Due to heavy rains and Florida's natural swamp-like wilderness, the Alligator Enduro held on Thursday was more like a submarine sprint than a motorcycle enduro. The sponsoring club told riders that it would be wet, but very few were ready for puddles four-feet deep and 200-feet long in spots. In many a competitor's mind the Alligator was soon re-labeled the "Aggravator Enduro." Waterproofing and an early start minute were the keys to finishing. Without both you stood little chance of seeing the finish line except from the end of a tow-rope.

The winner of the last two Alligators, Skip Olson, drew a late (79th minute) starting position. By the time he got on the course all the trails had turned to big rain ruts filled with mud that could easily remove your boot or claim your motorcycle should you be unfortunate enough to get stuck. Quite a few riders were having problems stopping their machines due to water-logged brakes. Olson, despite a valiant try, didn't finish high in the standings. Riding his new 370 Can-Am for the second time, he ran out of gasoline just a mile from the finish. All the high revving of the motor required to pull him and the bike through the muck took a toll of vastly reduced mileage.

The overall winner was Jack Penton, who dropped only two points throughout the 60-mile event. Penton, who had an earlier start minute than Olson, didn't have things very easy either. Although some of the ruts hadn't yet developed, he still was often faced with the problem of slowing his machine down from 60 mph in order to ride through puddles with unknown depth or bottom.

Other ace riders at the Alligator included Dick Burleson, who dropped only 3 points on his new 250 OR Husqvarna. Former Alligator winner Herluf Johnson competed on a prototype PE175 Suzuki and lost only 5 marks. MOTORCYCLIST will feature the exclusive first test of the production PE175 next month.

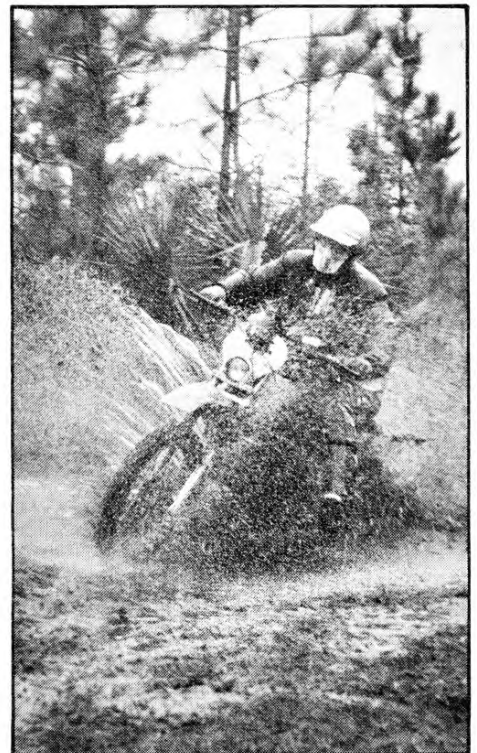
As you might have guessed, the drop-out rate among the 579 entries

was extremely high due to course conditions. Usually this would upset many riders, but the Alligator has such a festive atmosphere surrounding it that not too many people are worried about winning the darn thing. Most come just to ride and sample the experience. As one rider, his bike stuck up to the decals in mud, put it, "So what if I can't ride any farther? I've got the best damn seat in the house out here in the middle of the mud bog. I've seen more funny crashes and strange saves in 15 minutes than I have in the last four years of working checkpoints. I'll tell you who I feel sorry for. The guys who didn't ride and are working the gas pits. They don't know what they're missing." He plopped down on a nearby log and waited for the next group of riders to arrive at his personal bog theatre. **M**



Bob Hannah had troubles at the Supercross race with three fast Hondas. The Yamaha pilot got fourth.

Alligator Results		
Sweepstakes.....	Jack Penton.....	Pen
Class AA overall.....	Dick Burleson.....	Hus
Class A overall.....	Randy Martin.....	Rok
Class B overall.....	Ronnie Hines.....	Hus
Senior.....	John Penton.....	Pen



Endless miles of puddles like these turned the Alligator Enduro into a submarine race.