



**The Connecticut Ramblers'  
26th Annual  
Bren Moran Memorial  
Snow Run**



The first thing my husband's buddy wanted to know as I picked up the phone that morning was, "Is he still going?" Not an unusual question when you knew it was four below at our house and ten below at his.

The coldest day of the winter season to date. That's how WCBS, news radio 88 in New York had called it - the day of the 26th annual Snow Run in Vernon, CT. Yet as Connecticut Rambler Co-Trail Boss Ron Webster had predicted, it turned out to be one of the best all-around Snow Runs ever. Despite the bitter cold, the conditions themselves were a big part of its success. As Ron explained it, the event is always an either/or occurrence: snowless, rut filled, or fast hard packed snowmobile trails. Or, as it was last year, 4-6 inches of loose, powdery snow, hazardous because you had no idea of what was underneath. And some 85 riders, including a dozen or so post-entries, paid their \$7 to find out.

What was it like? It was about 73 miles of tight woodsy trails, cornfields, and cold paved road sections. It was fires built at checkpoints, and one guy who thought he could get by with motocross gloves. It was a lot of guys kicking and pushing their Huskies and KTMs that wouldn't start. It was the jubilation of really moving over the snow, and the simple joy of a hot cup of coffee at journey's end. It was Jeff Proctor doing jumping jacks at the gas stop, and Jerry Shinnars with the blazing eyes of someone not quite in command of all his senses, "I've ridden it every year; I wouldn't miss it. I love the Snow Run."

Highpoint winner, Herluf Johnson, said that he was pleased with the organization of the event. For one thing, there was a greater-than-average number of checks (thirteen, although one was thrown out when it was discovered that the watch was off). And perhaps most importantly, the checkpoints were well-placed. It seemed that the organizers had consistently tried to place the checks both at the end of road sections (at the start of a trail) as well as at the end of trail sections. That way, time-keeping skills are really tested on the fast, easy road sections, and riding skills are tested over the rougher trails. This "checkpoint placement policy" eliminates the occasional "A rider gamble." (See note). And, in fact, a talk with Connecticut Rambler President Ernie Mellor confirmed that that was exactly what the club was trying to do. Having more checks, he said, brings back the concept of a timed event, not a motocross.

Top: No lift lines in this game, before you can get it on.

Bottom: There's a checkpoint at the end of this hill.

Opposite page: When else can you blast across the cornfields?

Report & Photos by Gail Pells







In spite of the cold, it was also a good day for spectators. There's something about a really bright, frigid, plenty-of-snow-reflecting day that makes everything look crystal clear. The only problem with these kinds of conditions is in trying to compensate through the viewfinder. Somehow I don't think I was the only one having a battle with the sun and snow among those of us in the camera contingency. Once dealt with, however, there were at least four easily-accessible spectator points from which to wait and watch.

Only a couple of miles from the start, where the route crossed Woppingwood Road, we stopped to watch for a while before heading on to the gas stop. Here a dirt road crossed Wappingwood, and then a woods trail was picked up on the other side. I watched as riders, still with plenty of adrenalin flowing this early on, came at me at a good clip, lightly jumping up and over a man-made pile of saplings. Just past there, however, at least a half dozen riders misjudged a right angle turn, and landed in the overturned leaves. No casualties; it was just typical of the surprises under the snow that day.

After a half hour wait in a school parking lot, the A riders came all in a huddle to gas. They were mostly all early and had plenty of time to try to warm up before tackling the trail again.

From there we decided to check out a stream crossing followed by an icy uphill section, topped off with check #8. No one had any real problems with the water, but the icy ascent downed more than its share of riders. It was difficult watching the struggle not to want to help, and sometimes the urge to push was too strong to overcome. When we started to help push one C rider, he seemed grateful at first, but then his conscience got the better of him, "Don't push; let go; I'll be disqualified!" It's a rough choice for a spectator - when to lend a hand, and when to leave well enough alone.

Considering the treachery of the snow-hidden ice, it was remarkable that only one rider (to my knowledge) was hurt. B-Heavy rider, Jerry York, had an altercation with an ice patch just before the 6th check and wound up with eleven stitches under his chin. Dennis Laliberte was the only one I saw lose it at that stream crossing, but later it didn't keep him out of first place in his class.

Having been lucky enough to borrow my mother-in-law's camper for the day, we were motoring along back to the finish (slapping each other on the back

Top: Up and over.  
Bottom: Down and out.



congratulating ourselves for bringing it instead of the van) when someone spotted riders coming out of a field onto the road in front of us. Pulling the hulk over, we quickly parked and ran up the trail to get cold again. It was a made-for Trail Rider scene: stubby cornstalks poking up through a vast field of snow, with a panoramic view of a wintry New England countryside. And just as I crossed the street, passed the checkpoint on the road, and headed up to the field, my husband came flying around the corner towards us, laying a rooster tail for the three waiting cameras of my friends and me. We stayed until we could no longer feel our ears, and then headed back to the start/finish at the Vernon Skate Park.

Keytime had been ten o'clock, and the first riders finished around 1:30. Until the trophies were handed out at 4, the usual apres-ride bench racing was punctuated by roller skaters, strobe lights, and the Bee Gees at the big arena and entertainment complex we shared with other Sunday afternoon recreation seekers. Aside from the scores of downs and ups and downs again, the only slightly sour note I heard about was the discussion of crisscrossing on a long downhill before an easily spotted check. Illegal, yes, but difficult to prove. Finally, the last of the score cards were handed in, and still Ron Webster refused to model his survival suit.

What is it about the Snow Run that would make a rider want to subject himself to this type of abuse, traditionally the most gruelling of the season? The Snow Run is many things to many people: one last run on last year's bike; a test ride for the brand new one; C riders hoping/dreaming for that fluke, the Kevin Lavoie success story; B riders getting a jump on the season; and the A's who work it. But most of all, I think, it is an enduro for the mid-winter dreamer, the guy who just can't wait to get back on the trails. Riding in the snow may not be exactly what he had in mind, but it's an appetizer. And the appetite has been whetted for another season.

Note: A tricky strategy used occasionally and mainly by top A riders in outguessing where a check will pop up. The gamble comes in guessing that there won't be a checkpoint at the end of a road section where a trail begins. If the rider is correct, he can make up time that would have been lost on the trail on the road BEFORE the trail, and thus lose little or no time through the rough stuff.



Top: Water splash at near zero temperatures, on a trials bike at that!  
Bottom: "It was great!"





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**HIGH POINT - Herluf Johnson 17****A BANTAM**

1. Brad Young	25
2. Art Senecal	26
3. George Brouillette	29
4. Glenn Cairns	40
5. Larry Gibbs	50

**A LIGHT**

1. Dave Cichon	28
2. Alan Wickstrand	29
3. Allan Zitta	32
4. Glenn Vincent	34
5. Richard Jung	38

**A HEAVY**

1. Glenn Clark	24
2. Jeff Proctor	27
3. Joe Morel	28
4. John Wheeler	32
5. Gary Edmond	34
6. Kevin Lavoie	9ck

**B HIGH POINT**

Dave Betts	25
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**B BANTAM**

1. Denis Laliberte	30
2. John Menze	32
3. Joe Cournoyer, Jr.	38
4. Vince Staskiewicz	62
5. Edmond Boucher	68
6. Tom Rocha	8ck
7. Fred Domer	5ck
8. Frank Griffis	4ck

**B LIGHT**

1. Brad Puchkoris	31
2. Dennis Sulzer	36
3. Kevin Leonard	38
4. Jack Yarsawich	45
5. W.J. Hadder	46
6. Peter Coupe	77
7. Richard Marko	6ck
8. Linwood Clarke	4ck
9. Peter Moriarity	4ck

**B HEAVY**

1. Bill Blythe	37
2. Tom Carlson	49
3. Jerry Shinnors	50
4. Jerry York	6ck

**C HIGH POINT**

David Legienza	42
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**C BANTAM**

1. Roger Niemiec	42
2. Dennis Huron	56
3. Joe Gardina	56
4. Stephen King	9ck
5. Joel Wagner	9ck
6. Gregory Kantorski	7ck
7. Alan Driver	5ck
8. Steve Carley	4ck
9. Tony Dominguez	4ck

**C LIGHT**

1. Jeff Anderson	11ck
2. Edward Wheeler	10ck
3. Tim Barkiewicz	4ck-9
4. Jim Hutchinson	4ck-17
5. Stuart Edgerton	4ck-24
6. John Spinelli	3ck

**C HEAVY**

1. Frank Bidwell	63
2. James Emery	4ck-38
3. Don Gorski	4ck-44

**B SENIORS**

1. Curt McCann	52
2. Jerry Venacio	53
3. Bob Milliken	56
4. Jack Noga	57
5. Dave Hunter	10ck
6. Jerry Eagles (C)	5ck
7. George Bean (A)	4ck
8. Frank DeGray (A)	2ck



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