

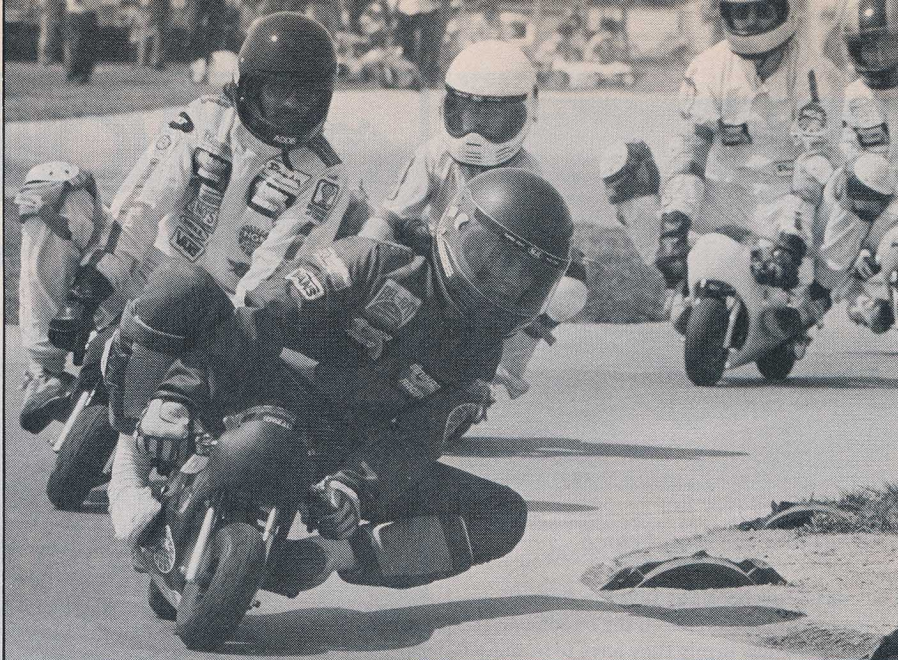
ROADRACING:

Pocketbike Racing

The grown-up sport all kids will enjoy.

• Racing need not be a rich man's sport, as pocketbike racing demonstrates. Don't mistake these tiny tiddlers for toys, either. They're real racers, and they compete on real racetracks. Maybe not to the scale you'd expect to find at Daytona or Laguna Seca, but nonetheless, it's racing. And for some, that's enough.

Pocketbike racing originated in Japan, and the sport now is popular throughout that country. With more than 100 mini-tracks



PHOTOGRAPHY © 1982 DAIN GINGERELLI

Rickie Goujon pushes his pocketbike to the pack's peak position

Knee-to-knee and elbow-to-elbow is a Dandy way to go racing.

tailored specifically for pocketbike racing, father-son teams take the sport very seriously.

Pocketbike racing is growing in America, too. The United States Pocket Bike Association (16711 Brighton Avenue, Gardena, California 90247) sanctions regular races at the Grand Prix racecar track adjacent to Ascot Speedway. A pocketbike race day at Ascot Grand Prix begins at eight in the morning and

ends by noon, leaving plenty of time to relax after a day's racing.

Young pocketbike racers compete in their own classes, and adults—the grown-up kids—are separated from the youngsters and race under their own handicap system. Power-to-weight ratio is critical, and so the lighter adults generally are staged in the back of the starting grid. There are three four-lap heats



"Flying" Ronnie Farrell in a turn

Knees out, and in the groove.

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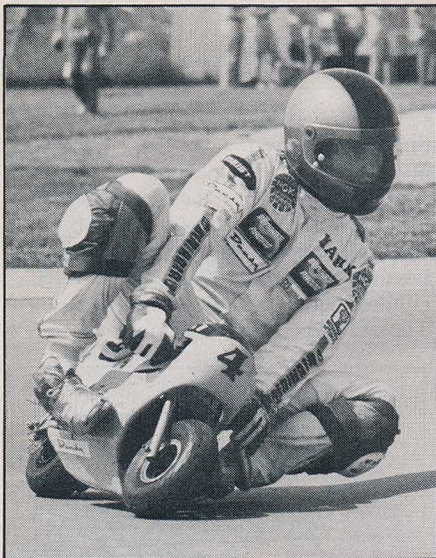
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A stylish big-kid pocketbike racer

He'll tuck in on the back straight.

per class, and the highest-scoring rider at the end of the day wins.

Even though the racing usually is informal, there was an invitational race last year pitting an all-star Japanese team against the best from the west. Most of the races were won by the visitors, but American Ricky Goujon managed to win the Junior Modified class. Fourteen-year-old Goujon figures to use pocketbike racing as a springboard to real road racing. He wants to get a Yamaha TZ125 because, as he says, "it's the next obvious step."

But for the most part, pocketbike racing is for the less-serious racer. And when you consider that a bike costs less than \$600, fits in the trunk of most cars and a set of tires will last a season, pocketbike racing is indeed attractive. The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat are still there. They just don't cost as much.

-Dain Gingerelli



A breakdown means a short walk back

No need for a tow truck here.

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