

● AT SOME TRACKS EVERYTHING GOES right. For Darrell Shultz, that track is Daytona. He won the 1981 Supercross event at Speedweek, and he repeated that feat in March of this year, winning the fifth round of the 1982 AMA Wrangler Supercross series.

The championship comprises 12 events, and results from the first seven rounds indicate that this year's competition is the most intense ever. Team Honda has made an outstanding re-emergence. Donnie Hansen won the first two Supercross races at Anaheim and Seattle on a completely re-designed Honda works stadium bike. Shultz, also on a Honda, finished fourth and second at those races, which put him just behind Hansen in the overall points standings.

Mark Barnett, defending Supercross champion on a Suzuki, started the year abysmally, chalking up a ninth and a 15th. Then, on the second night of the two-race Seattle event (which was round three), he got it all together and won,

leading from start to finish.

It was in that race, though—the second at Seattle—that Shultz made everyone take notice. Darrell had a bad start, completing the first lap in ninth. He proceeded to put the make on everyone, including his teammates, Jim Gibson, Donnie Hansen and Johnny O'Mara, Yamaha's Bob Hannah and Kenny Keylon, and Suzuki's new rider Warren Reid. In fact, he blitzed by everyone in his way except Barnett, and barely missed there. He caught Barnett and made his move, but came up short by half a bike length at the checkered flag.

Round four at Atlanta proved that no one was going to roll over and die, and that this '82 series was going to be one to remember. Bob Hannah slogged through the mud (it had rained fiercely the night before) and beat all the other survivors. Hannah's win bumped him to third overall, behind Hansen and Shultz.

Daytona is where Darrell peaked. He dominated his qualifying heat, in front of

heavy hitters like Yamaha's Broc Glover and Kawasaki's Jeff Ward. In the final, several riders made Shultz work hard for his victory. Darrell got the holeshot, but Hannah and Barnett were barely inches behind. Shultz got his adrenaline going and took the lead by the end of the first lap. Eventually, Hannah had a minor crash and dropped to sixth. Jim Gibson moved right into place to help Barnett put the pressure on Shultz.

These three—Shultz, Barnett, and Gibson—all had a chance for the win going into the final lap. They carved through traffic and tried to pass each other simultaneously. Barnett set Shultz up in his sights as they approached the flag, but Darrell beat Barnett by a wheel.

His win moved Shultz ahead of Hansen in the points standings—122 to 115. After Daytona, Hannah (with 103 points) and Barnett (with 96) were both dogging the leaders. Johnny O'Mara (with 81 points) was still a contender, but he was turning into the longshot.

In Supercross you gotta have the guts to hold it wide open and the brains to know when to back off. Shultz has proved he has both, and after Daytona took the series lead.

DAYTONA SUPERCROSS SHULTZ ENCORE



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In the two-week period between the Daytona and Houston rounds, Shultz suffered a knee injury. At Houston, which was another two-race event, he finished the qualifier in the opening race Friday night and started the final, but after a small pileup in the main he had to retire.

Barnett and Hannah both knew they would never have a better shot at becoming the favorites in this series, and both responded. Barnett came alive: He won both nights' main events (as he did last year—he too knows that some tracks are yours by destiny), which moved him to second overall behind Hansen, who regained the points lead.

Hannah finished fifth and seventh, which was good enough for him to maintain his third-place overall standing and keep close to Barnett and Hansen in points.

Since Houston, the Pontiac and Kansas City rounds of the series have run and the July 17th Los Angeles and the San Diego events remain. At this point, all of the top five are potential champions. ©



Clockwise from left: Rain created lots of mud, but the track was fine for the final. Johnny O'Mara (9) grabbed the holeshot in his qualifier. Donnie Hansen (7), series leader going into Daytona, finished fourth. Mark Barnett (1) continued his roll begun in Seattle, and nearly caught Shultz. Jim Gibson (8) kept the pressure on Barnett and Shultz, finished third and boosted himself to sixth in the standings. Broc Glover (6), after some bad luck, is ranked seventh in the standings. In the start of the main, Shultz eked out the holeshot and made it stick.



