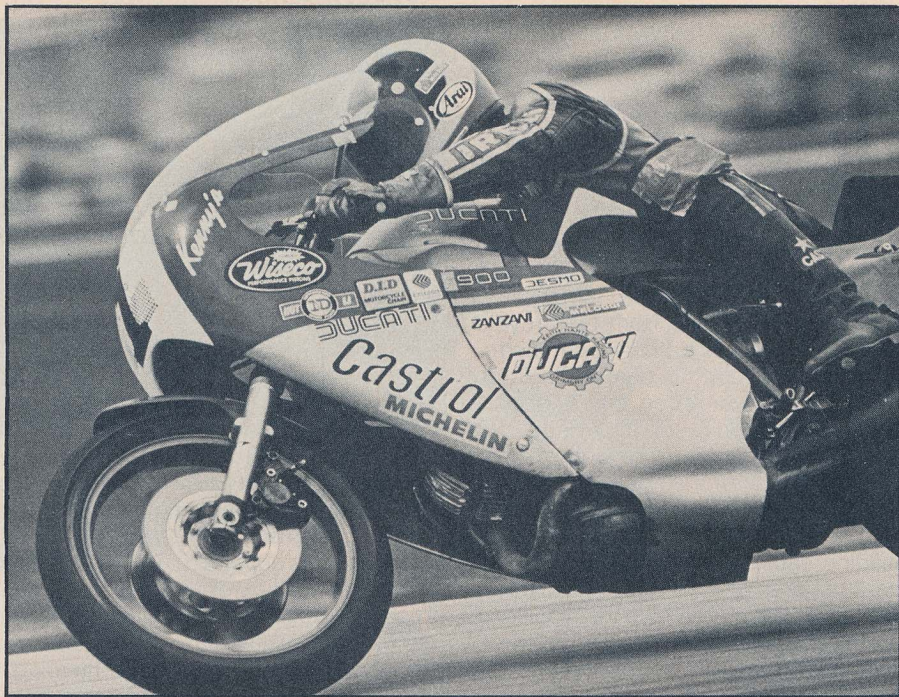


Though the company does not build a big-inch four-stroke twin, Kawasaki may have aided the Battle of the Twins. Kawasaki illuminated a basic fact of Superbike life, making the point convincingly. Even at bargain-basement prices, Superbike racing is too expensive for most privateers to take seriously. Kawasaki's replica-racer is an incredible bargain for \$11,000 because no private individual could build anything nearly as good for eleven grand. The Superbike class has not yet benefited from the appearance of a squadron of Kawarepli-racers (only one private bike, the Racecrafters machine for Harry Klinzmann, was ready for Daytona), but even a kind interpretation of the Superbike race results at Daytona would conclude that, behind the six factory-supported motorcycles, there were only about five efforts with serious pretensions and the wherewithal to put a motorcycle in the same race with the factory bikes. The replica-racer should dispel any lingering illusions about Superbike racers as garden-shed projects.

Riders, so sobered, on marginal four-cylinder bikes could do nothing, other than race and bear it, and plan to visit their Kawasaki dealer back home. Twin riders, on the other hand, could go out the back door of the Superbike class and in the front door of the Battle of the Twins. The admission ticket is a big four-stroke twin, Ducati or Moto Guzzi or BMW preferred, but Yamaha and Harley-Davidson tender is accepted as well. There's a certain amount of door swinging at Daytona; that is, running both events on one bike. No matter the condition of your talent and twin—showroom fresh, or resurrected out of Milwaukee history, or imported from an Italian speedo-salon—the Battle of the Twins can accommodate: a Grand Prix class; Amateur Modified; Expert Modified; and Stock.

The Battle of the Twins operates as a semi-vintage class, a place for twins to go in that interim period before four-cylinder Superbikes drop to 750cc in 1983, when they will run against one-liter-plus twins. If time hasn't stood still in the twin class, it has moved forward about an hour a day. No factory money equals no pressure and slow progress. That's the point, don't you see? Small private investors have an abiding interest in economy and technological stability, and factories do not. That's why, historically, factories spend themselves toward departmental or corporate insolvency on behalf of racing, while nice old sporting millionaires become collectors of classic cars and vintage racing machines. The Battle of the Twins, then, is a class in which everyone uses The Known, The Proven, The Cost Effective, and, consequently, The Old.

No twin has ever received real chassis improvements like those of the factory



DAYTONA
2

BATTLE OF THE TWINS

The Past As Present, And Vice Versa

Superbike fours. Before chassis work, the fours could be beaten by twins of the same displacement. Rich Schlachter won at Loudon on a Ducati in 1979, and even in 1980 Jimmy Adamo was able to embarrass Honda factory riders on his Reno Leoni Ducati. But the twin racers seem somehow content to plod along with their severe rearward weight bias, school bus wheelbases, heavy steering, early-80s brakes and front- and rear-wheel chatter. The rule change by itself, without clever builders and financiers to take full advantage, won't make twins competitive with 750cc four-cylinder Superbikes. Semi-vintage racing is about what you can expect here: the machinery is cost effective; the class as a whole has the lap times to prove it.

As expected, Jimmy Adamo ran away from everyone on Reno Leoni's Ducati, and the drama was pretty much confined to the Dave Roper charge through the field, his tussle with John Long's BMW, and the Harley's eventual wheezing-on-empty slowdown. In fact, the greatest activity of the day seemed to be the Katzenjammer Kids routine on the starting line: Roper's crew trying to deal with a truculent gas-cap O-ring; when the fitting-

frenzy ended, the Rob Iannucci-owned Harley had lost its front row starting position, having been moved to the back. The Harley-Davidson XR750 Revival Bike finished third, out of touch with Long's second-placed BMW, which only got close to Adamo's Ducati back at the Winner's circle. Meanwhile, Chris Bannister-Brown (Ducati) picked up the Novice Modified win, while Expert Modified belonged to Triumph-equipped Jon Minonno, and Chris Steward copped the Stock class on his Yamaha.

Adamo wasn't threatened at Daytona, and doubtless he could have gone quicker on demand: pressure from the field dictated his pace, and he wasn't under much. In 1977, the first and last time a Ducati twin won the Daytona Superbike race, the average speed was 100.982 mph for 50 miles with the quickest lap at 2:15.9; five years later, Adamo could win the BattleTwin with a 101.106 mph. Over in Superbike Land (please read: Factory Four-Cylinder Territory), a pit-stop-punctuated 100-miler was run at a 108.796-mph clip. In BattleTwins, the racing goes on, the participants can pay their way home, and the world seems always to turn at just about the same speed. ●