

Cycle

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Turbo Preview Honda CX500

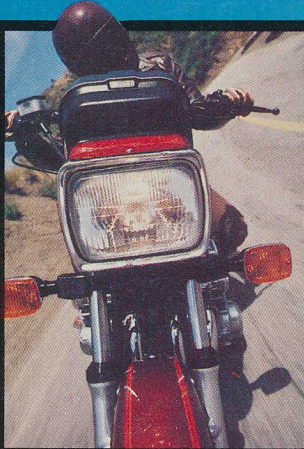
HONDA GL1100 INTERSTATE

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Versatility Made A Virtue

Rear Suspension Techno
Single-Shock Systems

Yamaha IT465H Enduro
Off-Road Skywalker





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This Month's Cover: Although he's hidden behind the GL-crest, DDC, America's answer to Mighty Mouse, played a starring role in Robin Riggs' captivating photo of Honda's GL1100 Interstate. In order to position the giant Gold Wing emblem, Riggs nailed Daniel's shoes to the wall at the appropriate level, inserted DDC into the shoes, and epoxied the shield to his helmet top. Then, threatening DDC with a bare 220-volt line, Riggs told Daniel to stand up very straight. Presto. And click. The test begins on page 20.

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Carlsbad USGP:

The Toughest Grand Prix

By Ken Lee

We've come a long way: Now Europeans expect to scrap and tear for every point. In 1981 they found it ain't getting any easier.

● MOST RIDERS ON THE 500CC GRAND PRIX circuit agree: the American round is the toughest race of the series. Although World Championship contenders must travel to and compete in 11 European countries, they are never as hard pressed to score points or just survive as they are in the United States. The first-place and second-place finishes by Americans at the 1980 Carlsbad meeting in California proved once and for all that American riders not only can challenge the best Europe has to offer, but can beat the top Continental racers. This the 1981 meeting would reaffirm.

The European regulars can rattle off any number of reasons for the USGP being a particularly difficult race, but they always return to three key elements: the adobe track, the hot weather, and the American riders.

Andre Vromans, the Belgian factory Yamaha rider who finished third overall in



1980, had this to say: "The USGP is difficult for Europeans because it's so hot. It's so hot that after 25 minutes of racing you feel the way you would after an entire moto in Europe. It takes so much money to get here, and it's difficult to get points."

Five-time Carlsbad winner, Dutchman Gerrit Wolsink: "The heat and hard track make Carlsbad difficult. It's not as hot as last year, but it's still very difficult."

Hakan Carlqvist, the Swedish Team Yamaha pilot, raised a point concerning the "Us versus Them" confrontation hyped by so many Americans: "The announcer, he tries to get a fight between the Europeans and the Americans. Sure, I want to beat Americans, but I want to beat Europeans too. I want to win—I don't want to beat *just* Americans; I want to beat everybody. It's not like this anywhere else. The fans go crazy and it gets kind of scary. Broc is a good rider; so are

Bell and Sun. I like racing here. I didn't come to fight with anyone."

American Brad Lackey returned to his home state with something of a European outlook: "The heat is definitely a factor. It's not hot this year by Carlsbad standards, but I've been racing in Europe in 50-degree weather, and to me it's hot." Concerning the challenge of American riders, Lackey replied, "Carlsbad is just another race in my quest for the World Championship. But for U.S. riders it's the once-a-year chance to race the Europeans and be a star." As it turned out, the Americans had only to wait until the first moto to prove that correct.

When the starting gate dropped, 500cc National points leader Broc Glover rocketed his Yamaha to the front. Resplendent in white leathers and jersey, Glover led the first lap, followed by the 500cc GP points leader and reigning World Champion, Andre Malherbe, who

was mounted on a Honda. Next came American Honda ace Chuck Sun, Lackey, Englishman Graham Noyce and Carlqvist, in that order. Left in the dust at the first turn was 1980 Carlsbad victor Marty Moates, his hopes for a repeat win shattered by a broken fork leg suffered during a tip-over in the starting melee.

As Glover made his way around the track the partisan crowd roared its approval, cheering on the American. Broc responded by stretching out a slight lead, leaving Sun, Malherbe and Lackey to battle for second. After 10 minutes of dicing, Lackey charged past Malherbe and Sun and began to whittle away at Glover's now-substantial lead. He later recalled, "I felt like I kept riding at the same pace, going as fast as I could safely go. But Lackey kept closing a second or two each lap." As the gap between Broc and Brad diminished, new developments were shaping up behind the two leaders.

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE HAWKINS, HAL HUNT





Carlsbad USGP

A couple of laps after Lackey had passed, Sun built a tenuous lead over Malherbe. Carlqvist and Noyce then caught up to the World Champion, and the three Europeans jockeyed for position. The group soon passed Sun, who had slowed considerably due to suspension problems. Still, Sun kept riding consistently, albeit more slowly, trying to survive until the end of the moto.

At the 30-minute mark, Lackey caught Glover and began to press for the lead. Going up The Ledge, Brad saw his chance; Glover got sideways and drifted wide, so Lackey took the rougher but shorter inside line and grabbed the lead. Glover fell in right behind Lackey, testing and probing without actually going for the pass. He reasoned that by stalking Lackey until the last few laps he could repass him without giving the Suzuki rider a chance to regain the lead.

With two laps to go, Glover made his move. The Yamaha pilot cranked it on while descending the fast Carlsbad Freeway downhill, pulling even with Lackey. Brad, seeing the move, accelerated just enough to get to the horseshoe-shaped left-hander first. As the riders slammed into the berm at the bottom of the hill, Lackey had the inside line. Glover, how-



ever, squared it off and started back up the hill on the inside. Broc later recounted, "I had him, then he got back on the gas and tried to repass me in the same turn. There was no way he could make it." Coming back up the hill, Glover eased to the outside to take the best line. This move forced Lackey into the deep whoops, and disaster struck.

"I'm not sure what happened," Lackey said later. "I got sucked in and I hit the big bumps by the fence. Suddenly I went down. I think I might have caught my handlebar in the fence." Both bike and rider went sprawling, leaving Broc to take an uncontested checkered flag.

While the two leaders had been slugging it out, the trailing group of Europeans had stepped up the pace. With six minutes remaining in the moto, Carlqvist's mechanic signaled him that he was gaining on Lackey. The Swedish rider started his end-of-the-race charge. As he began to pull away, Noyce gassed it up, and the two riders soon left Malherbe behind. After the moto Noyce explained, "I knew that if Malherbe didn't stay with me when I screwed it up to catch Hakan he would wilt. I picked up the pace to keep up with Carla, and Malherbe just disappeared behind me." The two riders closed on the leaders, and when Lackey fell they swooped by for second and third.

As Malherbe circulated the track, Gerri Wolsink, on a Honda of Holland works bike, caught up, and the two riders began scrapping. The two racers collided and Malherbe went down. "I don't know what happened," Wolsink said. "We bumped, and I never saw him again." Malherbe got up and rode one more lap; then, realizing he was out of the points, he pulled off on the white flag lap.

On the last lap Wolsink and Sun passed the shaken Lackey, who had restarted his bike and was trying to salvage a points-earning finish. At the checkers it was Broc by a healthy margin ahead of the still-closing Carlqvist and Noyce, Wolsink in fifth, then Lackey leading a contingent of Americans including Marty Smith, Mike Bell and Danny LaPorte.

At the end of the first moto, the riders retired to the pit area where Glover relaxed and reflected on his first-moto victory. "It was great!" he exclaimed. "After Lackey passed me I followed his pace for a few laps, then I set him up for the downhill where I finally passed him." The Yamaha rider looked flushed and tired, but not unduly affected by the heat.

Lackey, on the other hand, seemed to be one of the few riders truly down from the heat. While other riders were overheated and fatigued, Brad had to be doused with water and helped to his

motor home. Brad later explained, "Normally, when I push to the starting line I know I'm in better shape than anyone else; I've won a lot of races that way. But since I broke my foot, I haven't been able to train. I've just been sitting on my butt, and I can feel it. On top of that, I came down with infectious tonsillitis this week."

The team physicians noted Lackey's and the other riders' heat-induced plight and petitioned the FIM jury to extend the between-moto break so the riders could recuperate. The international jury met and decided to delay the start of the second moto for rider safety. The second moto, originally scheduled for a 3:30 start, was postponed until 4:15. This move prompted promoter Gavin Trippe to quip, "It'll be nice and foggy in the morning; why don't you run it then?"

When half the starting gate failed to fall away, resulting in a "false gate," the second moto was delayed even further. After additional delays for regridding and starting-pad preparation, the officials flagged off the race once again. This time U.S. Suzuki National rider Darrell Shultz grabbed the holeshot, trailed by Belgian Ivan van der Broeck mounted on a factory single-shock Maico and Marty Moates on his now-repaired Suzuki. First-moto winner Broc Glover, who got off to a slow start, was quickly thrown to



Clockwise from left: a first-turn get-off dashed Marty Moates' chance for a repeat of USGP victory. Despite a well-engineered starting ramp, Andre Malherbe DNFed the first moto. Yes, that is "The Man" acting as Malherbe's bike stand. U.S. Suzuki's Darrell Shultz led half of the second moto before crashing out.



Portraits of two American winners: Yamaha's Broc Glover (left) won the first moto; Honda-mounted Chuck Sun took the second moto and the overall win at Carlsbad.

Carlsbad USGP

the back of the pack by a couple of mishaps.

"It was real dusty," Glover explained, "and I was running twelfth or so behind Lackey. Going up The Ledge, I squared off the turn and passed Jean Jacques Bruno by cutting underneath. Then he gassed it, thinking he could hold me off. In the next turn he hit the dirt bank and bounced right into me, knocking a few of us over. This put me back to sixteenth or so, but I started working back up. Then on the third lap, I was in the corner right before the drop-off that leads to the sandwash. Someone bobbed, and Toon Karsmakers tipped over and pinned me against the fence." By the time Glover had dug his way out and restarted his bike, he was hopelessly mired in backmarkers. Much to his credit, Broc persevered, working up to eleventh place by the end of the moto.

At the front of the pack, things had settled down a bit. Shultz, who sat out the first moto because of a broken clutch lever bolt, pulled out a strong lead. He stayed between six and eight seconds ahead of Malherbe, who had worked his way to second. Trailing the Honda rider were Sun and Lackey, and also Danny LaPorte. Danny had charged from dead last to ninth in the first moto.

Out in front, Shultz was looking fast,

stylish—and wild. This year in the National and Supercross events Darrell has tamed his "wild man" reputation and has found finishing—and winning—to be much preferred over crashing. But at Carlsbad, as one racer later commented, "He looked like the old Darrell." Almost inevitably, at about the halfway point, Shultz overcooked it in a fast corner, got sideways and plowed into the fence for his second DNF of the day.

Malherbe inherited the lead with a small lead over Sun and a substantial lead over Lackey. Sun, however, was far from out of the hunt. After the first moto he had his mechanic, Eric Crippa, replace the rear shock and adjust the rear end springing. The change was dramatic. After fading to fifth in the first moto, Sun was now a contender for the lead and the overall win.

"I caught up to Malherbe," Sun recounted, "and I kept right on him. I knew the heat would be a factor today, and I felt I would have an edge on the Europeans because I would be more accustomed to it." After a period of watchful waiting, Sun pounced. On the short straight leading to the mechanic's area, Sun wicked it up and pulled even with Malherbe. As the pair sailed side-by-side over the small jump, Sun took the inside line and gassed it to the tight left-hand corner, where he executed a perfect block-pass to take the lead. The Ameri-

can quickly pulled out a small lead, then lengthened it and was never challenged again.

"As the moto continued," Sun said after the race, "I paced myself, counting down the minutes. I had to dig down deep, but the crowd really helped by cheering me on. I knew I had it wrapped up, and as I made that last lap it felt just great!"

Malherbe trailed Sun to the finish line, followed by Lackey, LaPorte and Bell. Next came the contingent of Europeans that had finished together in Moto One, but in a different finishing order: Noyce in sixth ahead of Wolsink and Carlqvist.

By day's end, the "local boys" had laid ruin to many a European racer's hopes. No less than four Americans had led the Carlsbad USGP, and National riders Glover and Sun had won one moto apiece. Sun's 5-1 finishes were good for the overall win and Lackey's 6-3 placing netted him second overall and 15 points in the World Championship points chase. Seven of the top 10 overall finishers were Americans, a record on par with the 1980 USGP results. If the Europeans learned one thing in 1981, it's this. Of the three key elements, the track and weather are nothing compared with American riders.

For 1981, then, the message to World Championship contenders is loud and clear: the Carlsbad U.S. Grand Prix ain't gonna get any easier. ●