



STILL ALIVE & WELL

Goodwin granted a reprieve

By Mike Webb

Mitch Payton was burned out. After 60 hours of grinding barrels, Mitch was beginning to get a case of the terminal crazies. The phone call from Team Yamaha surely didn't help matters. "No, I'm sorry, I have too much work to do, nothing on this earth will get me to do your entire team's barrels. Forget it, let's just forget we had this talk. What's that? You're willing to pay how much per barrel? Oh, what the heck, send them over."

In the cut and thrust world of Supercross, there can be no advantage, no matter how slight. When word leaked out that Pro Circuit was grinding the ports for Ricky Johnson of Team Honda, the boys over at Yamaha had to have the same porting, no matter the cost. As they say, money talks.

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Mike Goodwin needed something spectacular. After the Rodil Cup fiasco, the sport of Supercross needed a big-time transfusion of good old-fashioned race action. No gimmicks, no promotional brainstorming; just a winning course, and the riders would do the rest. Anaheim was his last chance. The previous five years had sold out, marking this race as the granddaddy of indoor motocross. How much damage the Rodil Cup had caused would be determined at the gate. Goodwin kept his fingers crossed.

IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

Much to Mike Goodwin's pleasure (as well as Mitch Payton's), the first heat race set the stage for what would prove to be the finest night of indoor racing this country has ever witnessed. Jeff Hicks took his Pro Cir-



The Red Wave sets the pace at the start of the 20-lap Main event. David Bailey (6) and Rick Johnson (5) would go on to wage a battle that kept the 70,000-plus fans on the edge of their seats.



In the Main event, which saw the lead change six times, the two Honda superstars were nothing short of a tandem Honda advertisement, and consistently freight-trained the technical Anaheim tarmac.



◀ Keith "Bones" Bowen was the only rider capable of breaking the Honda sweep. Bones fought tooth and nail for fourth place by matching every antic the Honda boys displayed.

WHAT HEROES ARE MADE OF

Three weeks prior to the Anaheim kickoff, Team Honda's Johnny O'Mara sustained a painful knee injury while contesting the California Golden State series. After repeated doctor visits and massive quantities of physical therapy, Johnny was ready to race, or so he thought. Halfway through his qualifier, the O>Show planted his tender leg to set up for a turn, and *wham!* the leg collapsed like so much straw. Johnny lay on the ground while a team of medics attempted to comfort the Honda star. After several anxious moments, he slowly got to his feet. That was it for the O>Show, or so everybody thought. But when the gate dropped for the Last-Chance qualifier, there was Johnny O, not only in the race, but leading it. With the thunderous approval of the crowd supporting him, Johnny went on to win the qualifier.

ROCKY IV

After displaying some of the most spectacular racing ever captured within the confines of a stadium, and then providing the mad, crash world of the awesome Class 10 single-seater buggies, as well as a wide-open Suzuki Quad race, Mike Goodwin could very well have gone home and slept quite comfortably without seeing a lap of the Supercross Main. It would be too much to ask for a Main event full of the same nonstop action provided thus far in the night's activities. But somebody forgot to tell this to David Bailey and Ricky Johnson. The 20-lap Main was a knock-down, drag-out affair that saw the lead change no fewer than six times. Both riders circled the rough and technical Anaheim circuit at breakneck speeds, neither willing to grant the other a hint of breathing space. Lap after lap the two Honda heroes swept the titanic triples in beautiful sweeping arcs that raised the adrenaline level of the hysterical crowd to the boiling point. In the end, David Bailey sustained his lead long enough to take the checkered flag.

TONIGHT'S SHOW IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY...

Team Honda was ecstatic after capturing four of the top five places. They were in the driver's seat for the start of the '86 season. Team Kawasaki was bummed. Their top gun, Jeff Ward, started the year with a big fat zero. Team Yamaha was able to save face only because of the tenacious ride put in by Keith "Bones" Bowen. Mitch Payton was one happy camper, with his initials stamped on the cylinders of two of the top five bikes. But much more important than all that, every one of those 70,000 screaming fans went home with an ear-to-ear grin. Supercross is alive and well and breathing fire. □

RESULTS: ANAHEIM SUPERCROSS

1. David Bailey	Hon
2. Ricky Johnson	Hon
3. Johnny O'Mara	Hon
4. Keith Bowen	Yam
5. Micky Dymond	Hon
6. George Holland	Yam
7. Broc Glover	Yam
8. Ron Lechien	Kaw
9. Billy Liles	Kaw
10. Jeff Leisk	Hon



Bowen and '85 Rookie of the Year Danny Storbeck in action over the sand pit. Bowen gave Yamaha their only happy moment, while Storbeck suffered the fate of a dismal start.



Newly signed to Team Yamaha in '86, Scott Burnworth looked brilliant in his heat race but got the big snuff from Ricky Johnson at the start of the Main.



Johnny O'Mara's heroic night started with his painful victory in the Last-Chance qualifier, which he accomplished after reinjuring his knee in his first heat race. The O>Show would go on to keep his Honda bosses happy by taking an inspirational third place in the Main.

cuit Suzuki to a well-deserved victory after shutting down the fanatical assaults of A.J. Whiting and Yamaha's Russ Wageman. The racing bordered on lunacy, the pilots were wild with desire.

In heat number two the battle lines were drawn, and black knight Scott Burnworth lofted his Team Yamaha bike past fellow Yamaha pilot Jim Holley to secure his spot for the Main. Rounding out the top three was Louisiana go-faster Alley Semar.

It was heat number three that would prove to be a prelude to the final race of the night. Up to this point, no one had attempted leaping all three jumps that marked the boundary on the north side of the course. With a flight of 65 feet, the world's top indoor riders grimaced at the thought of "casing out" on the final obstacle. All eyes focused on David Bailey and fellow Team Honda rider Ricky Johnson when they decided to show the troops what "pedal to the metal" truly means. Blasting off the gate, Bailey cleared the doubles on the front straightaway and set



What happened to Jeff Ward? The number one hope for Team Green was aced by, of all things, a broken throttle cable. Not completing a full lap in his heat race, Jeff was unable to qualify for the Last-Chance qualifier. Nineteen eighty-six could not have started off on a worse note.

his sights on the sloping right-hand berm that lay at the entrance to the triples. Then, in one incredible motion, he aimed the Honda straight, and nailed it big-time. Seventy thousand fans roared their approval as David kissed the backside of the third jump. The "impossible" was no more.

The fourth heat of the night blew out of the gate headed by Kawasaki's new kid, Ronnie Lechien—that is, until pre-race favorite Jeff Ward decided to give the kid a lesson in respecting his elders and claimed the front spot at the halfway point of lap number one. But as quickly as Wardy had gained the lead, it was lost when his potent Kawasaki crawled to a stop. A highly distraught Ward stood helpless, the victim of a faulty throttle cable. That throttle cable just might prove to be the most expensive cable in the universe by year's end: In the AMA rule book it states that the last-place rider of a heat race cannot transfer to a Last-Chance qualifier. Mr. Ward would sit out the night's activities with zero points for the new year.