



America's first Individual Speedway Champion in 44 years, Bruce Penhall.

# BRUCE PENHALL: THE NEW WORLD CHAMP

*Young American conquers the World Individual Speedway Championship*

By Tom Webb. Photos by Trevor Meeks.

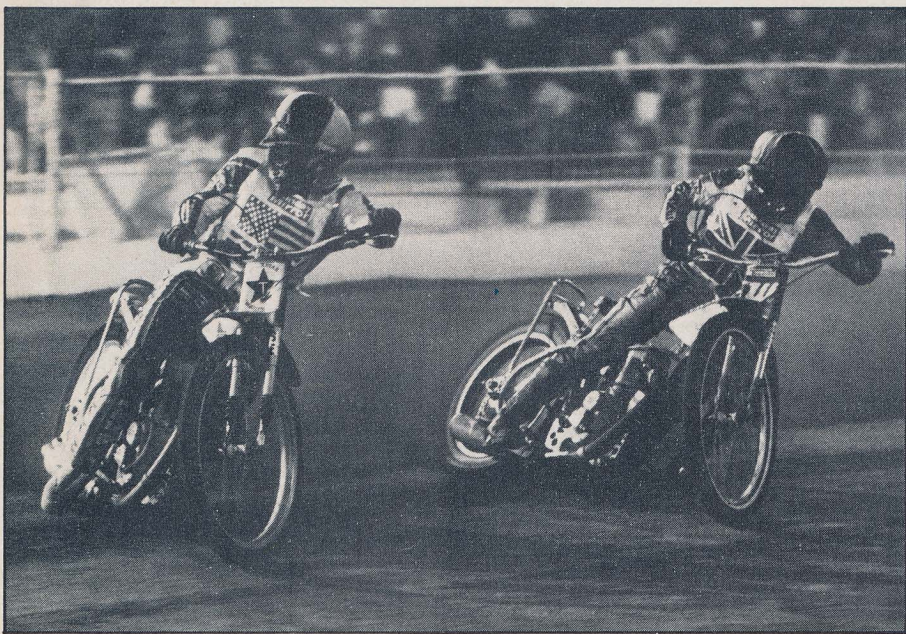
The stage seemed strangely odd for a World Speedway title race. Rather than a stadium jammed full of sports-minded heavies ready to watch a soccer game, Wembley Stadium was packed with full-blown sideways freaks for the 1981 World Individual Championship Speedway races.

Think back to 1980; Bruce Penhall traveled to Ullevi Stadium in Sweden with hopes of topping the world's best speedway riders. It wasn't to be. Bruce ended up a mediocre fifth and was sorely disappointed with himself.

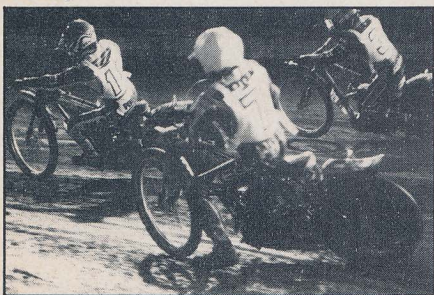
For the final ride of the night, Bruce had to switch to his number-two bike due to mechanical problems with his good one. With odds totally against him, he went out and scored the necessary points to garner the World Championship that he'd worked so hard for.

Because of Bruce's aggressive, charismatic style, he not only won the championship, but also the support of the 92,000 people on hand. Thousands of fans cheered him on to victory, the only American to win the speedway title since 1937.

Last year's champ, Michael Lee, had a dismal night, finishing last in two of the heats and falling in another. Englishman David Jessup was touted as Penhall's main competition. He won his first two rides, then was put down by mechanicals.



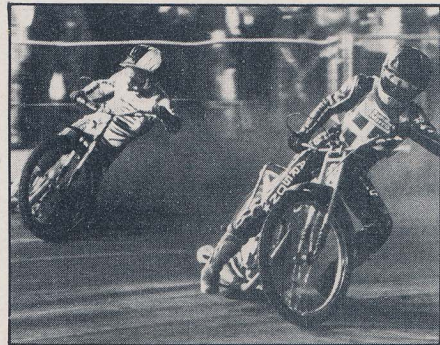
Here's Bruce leading Englishman Dave Jessup.



Third place went to Tommy Knudsen, here battling with Penhall.

Ah, but how quickly the tide can change in the space of a year. The 24-year-old Californian stormed the famous stadium with a vengeance. Out of five races, he controlled only two of them completely; the rest were won on total determination and the skilled riding abilities of Penhall.

In two of the heats, Bruce worked his way from the back of the pack to steal the victory right at the finish line. In the process he electrified the crowd with seemingly impossible passes and his clear mastery of the sport.



America's speedway champion leading Egon Muller and Ole Olsen.

Bruce's next goals are winning the 1982 Speedway Championships to be held in his home town of Los Angeles. He's been picked as a heavy favorite to retain the title.

Congratulations to a World Champ—Bruce Penhall.

## RESULTS: 1981 WORLD INDIVIDUAL SPEEDWAY CHAMPIONSHIPS

Penhall (14), Ole Olsen (12), Tommy Knudsen (12), Eric Gunderson (11), Kenny Carter (11). □