

# RELIVING THE GLORY DAYS

*The legends return on vintage bikes*

By Tim Tolleson

**R**ick Doughty had a vision. Roger DeCoster needed a halftime show that would keep the 500 USGP spectators interested, something that would provide better action and star appeal than between-moto beer fights. So, DeCoster and Doughty, the most prolific vintage-bike restorer on the continent, if not the planet, came up with the ultimate halftime show. Why not get all of the early heroes of motocross, put them on pristine examples of the machines they rode in their heyday and hold the ultimate vintage race?

DeCoster would keep the fans' eyes glued to the track, Doughty would get to showcase the fruits of his vintage labors, the heroes would get a family reunion of sorts plus another day in the limelight and the fans would get the chance to get autographs and pictures of their heroes of yesteryear. Vintage racing would also get a big shot of adrenaline, so Doughty couldn't lose. Unless the moto turned into a bar-banging, bike-bending war of egos.

The search began and riders were recruited for what would turn out to be the most star-studded moto in the last 15 years. Former World Champions Brad Lackey and Gennady Moisseev signed on, as did multi-time National Champs Marty Smith, Kent Howerton and Gary Jones. DeCoster elected not to ride, saying he'd rather look at the old bikes than ride them, but John DeSoto, Marty Tripes, Jim Pomeroy, Peter Lamppu, Tommy Croft, Tim Hart, Barry Higgins, Gunnar Lindstrom, Goat Breker, Bruce McDougal, Greg and Kelly Owen, Rex Staten, Kenny Zahrt, Rich Thorwaldson, Morris Malone, Jim Fishback, Jr., Gary Chaplin, Jim O'Neal, Bryar Holcomb and Eddie Cole decided to relive the old days for a moto.

Doughty would also ride. Why not? After all, he supplied every bike in the Past Master's Invitational, except for Gary Jones' Can-Am 250, the bike he rode in his last-ever National in 1974, and Norm Bigelow's works '74 KX250, which former Kawasaki rider Goat Breker would race. The rest of the riders would be on Bultacos, Hondas, Yamahas, Maicos, CZs, Husqvarnas, Ossas and a Montesa. The Vintage Iron pits drew more spectators and autograph hounds than the HRC pits of Geboers, Leisk, Johnson and Guekens!

Many of the Past Masters hadn't ridden a bike in years, so they treated the invitational more like parade laps. Other riders got



**Rubbing elbows:** Rich Thorwaldson (26) prepares to take Goat Breker (18) to the fence at the start of the USGP Vintage Iron Past Masters Invitational. Goat recovered to take the win over the likes of Jones, Tripes, Lackey, Moisseev, Howerton and Smith.

caught up in the heat of battle and crashed or broke, to the dismay of the Vintage Iron support crew. After things thinned out, Breker, Jones and Tripes poured it on to the delight of the crowd and took the top three positions.

Afterwards, the Past Masters posed for photos, traded war stories, cracked jokes and signed autographs until their hands seized. Doughty's invitational had stolen the show in many fans' eyes, and had given vintage racing the best moto it's ever seen.

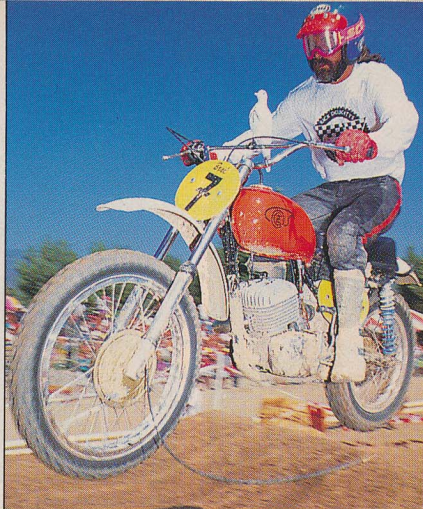
## THE PAST MASTERS WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

- Is there life after being a factory motocross racer? When that last checkered flag falls on a racing career, what is a guy who has lived practically his whole life in the fast lane to do? Sell aluminum siding? Let's take a look into the post-race life of some of the sport's greatest riders.





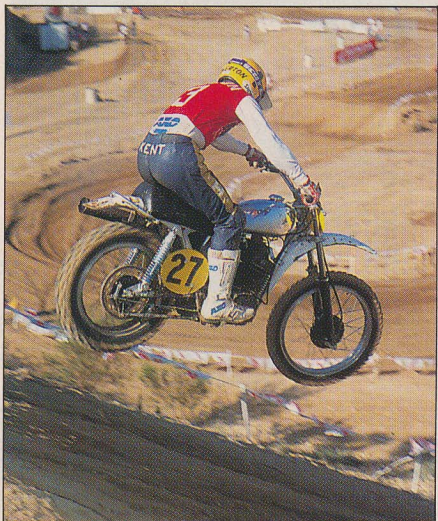
**Gary Jones**



**Brad Lackey**



**Marty Smith**



**Kent Howerton**



**John DeSoto**



**Gunnar Lindstrom**

**GARY JONES,  
FOUR-TIME NATIONAL 250 CHAMP**

"Nothing at all. I was doing construction, but I sold that company. Now I'm helping my wife out with her escrow business. I'm thinking about starting another business but haven't decided yet what I want to do. I'm still test riding for *Motocross Action* and racing every now and then."

**KENT HOWERTON,  
THREE-TIME NATIONAL CHAMP**

"I used to do riding schools pretty regularly, but I bought into VP Racing Fuels, which is really active in car and drag racing. I've been working to develop fuel and products for racing motorcycles. After I quit racing bikes, I tried a lot of stuff that you're afraid to do as a professional athlete. Now I'm interested into getting into car racing but it's pretty hard, going up against sponsored racers and monied people. I still ride a lot and race a few hare scrambles races in Texas. I enjoy riding and have my own track at my house. I may get back into doing private schools. I have the facilities and like taking the time to help people."

**BRAD LACKEY,  
1982 500cc WORLD CHAMP**

"For the last three years, I've been in the auto wholesale business, selling to dealers and buying at auctions. I sell classic cars to



**Tommy Croft**

Europeans and modern cars here. I used to be involved with the Redneck Roosters M.C., but I don't have a dirt bike any more. I have a Harley and just went to Sturgis. That's what I do for fun now."

**JOHN DESOTO,  
THE FLYIN' HAWAIIAN**

"I like to race hare scrambles and enduros now, because you can ride for six or eight hours instead of sitting around waiting for your next moto. Once in a while I'll race a local motocross on my XR250R. I also ride with my son a lot. I'm a Honolulu City Councilman now, Chairperson for the Finance Committee and vice-chairman of the council, and I was successful in getting Hon-

olulu's Motorsports Park re-opened, so I'm still very much involved with motorcycling, but on different levels."

**TOMMY CROFT,  
FACTORY HONDA RIDER**

"After I hurt my knee in 1980, I sat out a year and decided what I wanted to do. I decided to go car racing, so I bought a super 1600 and started racing. I proved myself and picked up sponsorships, then won the '86 super 1600 class championship in the Mickey Thompson stadium races. This year I'm racing 1600s for General Tire and the ultracross buggies for Jeep. Next year I'm taking the Barber-Saab school and hope to make the jump to that or the Super Vs on pavement."

**MARTY SMITH,  
THREE-TIME NATIONAL CHAMP**

"I have a surf shop now, called Smitty's Surf & Sport, in Rancho San Diego [California], and I do some private riding schools to help promising riders. I still ride for fun, surf and go dune-ing with my sand rail."

**GUNNAR LINDSTROM,  
FORMER DIRT BIKE EDITOR**

"I've been working for Honda for over 12 years. I started in motorcycles, then moved to automobiles in '81. I've been through service and publications, putting my experience as a *Dirt Bike* editor to good use in writing

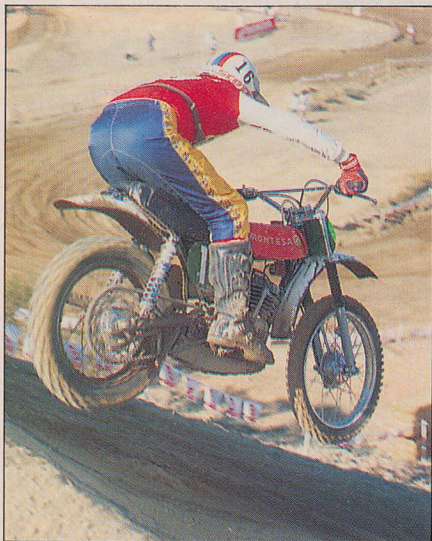




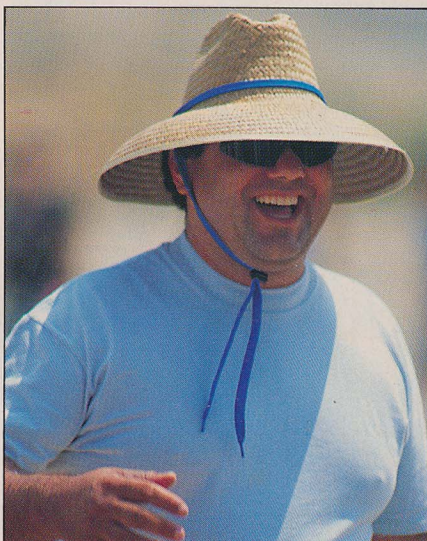
Rich Thorwaldson (26) and Bruce McDougal



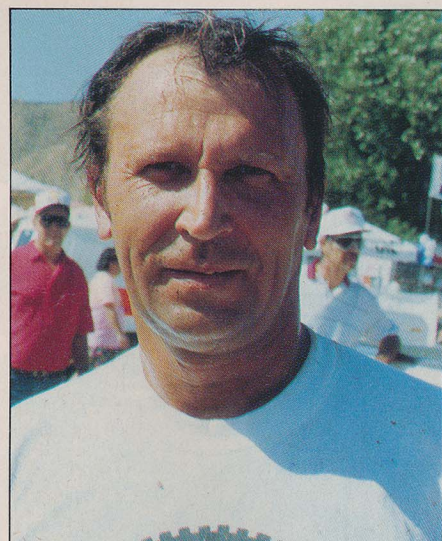
Ron Pomeroy (12) and Tim Hart



Peter Lamppu



Marty Tripes



Gennady Moisseev

service manuals and other repair information so that our dealers can fix the cars. Just recently I moved to our development group, which is looking at what we're going to be doing in the next few years. I'm still in pretty good shape and ride a little, with my kids."

#### **RICH THORWALDSON, 4TH IN 1972 500 NATIONALS**

"I live in Reno, Nevada, and own a Honda dealership there. Vic Wilson [of Saddleback fame] and I started a track in Carson City three years ago and we recently sold it to Jim Holley. Now I can just have fun riding. We race somewhere almost every weekend, either in Nevada or Northern California, and I hit Mammoth every year."

#### **BRUCE McDOUGAL, 1974 125 NATIONAL RUNNER-UP**

"I work for a framing company, called Davis Brothers, out of Cucamonga [California]. I've been doing that for five years. I always race the Virginia City Grand Prix and Mammoth Mountain MX and I ride some local stuff at Goat Breker's Perris Raceway and GPs at Glen Helen. I was riding a CR500, but now I have a KX250. It's a little lighter and easier to handle."

#### **PETER LAMPPU, FACTORY MONTESA RIDER**

"I work at Universal Studios and am in charge of building the sets for the movies.

## GLORY DAYS

Right now I'm working on Arnold Schwarzenegger's new movie, called *Kindergarten Cop*. From about 1981 on, I've done all of the Universal features on the lot, so I'm the manager or whatever. I haven't ridden at all lately. In the last 14 years I've ridden two times—with Super Hunky."

#### **MARTY TRIPES, WINNER OF 8 NATIONALS**

"I'm into this new game called Pursuit, which is played with guns that shoot paint balls. It's like cowboys and Indians, or an adult game of Capture the Flag. I'm working with JT, which makes all of the safety gear—goggles, gloves, headgear, clothes. It's a great sport that is growing everywhere. I used to race off-road cars and won the 1985 Mickey Thompson Championship in the unlimited buggies. After 20 years of racing, I'd had enough, so I got out."

#### **JIM POMEROY, AMERICA'S FIRST GP WINNER**

"I got busted up pretty badly in an automobile accident over in Hawaii a few years ago, so I'm just getting back into riding. I

didn't ride today because I'm taking this Oriental therapy called Rolfing and I have a couple of months to go before I can ride. I've ridden a couple of vintage races and did well but paid the price physically afterwards, due to the accident. I'll never give up riding; I like the vintage stuff and trail riding. I'll get back into teaching schools soon, plus I'm going to take some college courses for a couple of years. I've been working as an expert witness and want to understand more of what's going on in court, so I can be sure I'm helping the right people."

#### **TIM HART, 1975 125 NATIONAL RUNNER-UP**

"I've been golfing, playing a little tennis and building kitchen cabinets and entertainment centers. That's about it, just trying to have fun. I ride a couple of times a year at Gorman or Kennedy Meadows with friends and family. No competition, though."

#### **GENNADY MOISSEEV, THREE-TIME WORLD CHAMP**

"I have been able to import KTMs into the USSR since 1988, so I am a KTM distributor. I am teaching motocross schools and training promising riders. I'm here at the USGP to manage two Soviet riders, Gaushis Viesturs and Krestinov Andres. I hope to make the Soviet Union a force in motocross once again in 1991." □