

GEBOERS BEATS THE HEAT

The new champ outlasts Johnson, O'Mara & Matiasевич

By the DIRT BIKE Staff

"I hadn't ever ridden a 500 until three days ago," Jeff Matiasевич said between practice sessions for the 500cc USGP. "I went about two turns, did a big faceplant right into a berm and the bike swatted me like a fly."

"Chicken" Matiasевич, who had been concentrating on the 125 Nationals, was riding his KX500 like a 125, pinning the bike out of the corners and ripping around the track at a pace good enough for sixth in timed practice. However, Matiasевич wasn't used to 45-minute motos on *anything*, especially a 500. He would later play a big part in the outcome of the Roger DeCoster-promoted 500 GP, the last of the 12-race championship series.

His part would not win him a lot of new fans.

GEBOERS' TRIUMPHANT FIRST MOTO

Some 10,000 spectators roared their approval as Johnny O'Mara rounded the first turn with the lead over new World Champ Eric Geboers, MXA's Larry Brooks, Finn Kurt Ljungqvist, KTM's Kees Van der Ven, Brit Mervyn Antsie and Rick "Hammer" Johnson. Aussie Jeff Leisk was behind R.J. but crashed on the first lap, and Chicken was back in 11th. Geboers stuffed his way past O'Show on the second lap, while Johnson and Matiasевич worked their way through the pack.

O'Mara was all over Geboers, and the two left the pack as their duel raged. O'Show would close in in the grandstand supercross section, but Geboers would squirt away in the Euro-like back section. O'Mara put on his best ride of the year, but the wily World Champ dug deep to hold off O'Mara. He dug so deep in the Southern California heat that he vomited in his helmet on the last lap, but he held off O'Mara for the win. Meanwhile, R.J. moved up to third but was nowhere near the leaders, and Matiasевич took fourth over Brit Kurt Nicoll.

JOHNSON RETALIATES

Matiasевич holoshot the second moto over an ailing Leisk, while Geboers was back in the pack and Johnson was fifth. O'Mara's clutch had heated up on the line, so his start was dismal. Leisk grabbed the lead from Chicken. Geboers poured it on while the pack was sorting out, taking chance after chance, and he worked his way past Johnson.

Chicken took command on the second lap and Leisk started fading. Johnson latched onto Geboers and the two started working the pack. KTM's Kurt Nicoll, just ahead of the Geboers/Johnson battle, tried to make a move on the fading Leisk, but he lost his front wheel over a berm and went down.

Leisk and Geboers plowed right into Nicoll, and R.J. found himself in second and in a position to win the overall. He poured it on and reeled in Chicken, then passed for the lead. If Geboers stayed in third, Johnson would win the overall, 3-1 to Geboers' 1-3, and Matiasевич would take third—but Chicken did the big fade after R.J. passed, and Geboers wicked it up.

Chicken let Geboers by without a fight.

Geboers claimed the victory with a 1-2, ahead of Johnson's 3-1. Later, Matiasевич would allege that the KX500 had turned his shoulders to putty but, when Nicoll made a move on him a few laps later, Matiasевич suddenly found some extra energy to put up a fight. The partisan crowd was definitely not pleased with Matiasевич's lack of patriotism, but Geboers, the now five-time world champ, definitely earned the win and deserved to retire a victor.

RESULTS: 1990 MOTUL 500cc USGP San Bernardino, CA 500 GP

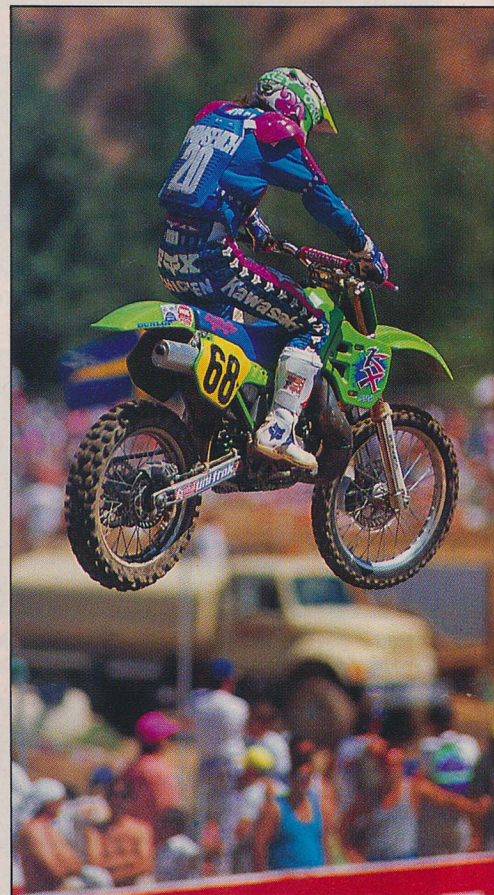
1. Eric Geboers (Hon, Bel) 1-2
2. Rick Johnson (Hon, USA) 3-1
3. Kurt Nicoll (KTM, Eng) 5-3
4. Jeff Matiasевич (Kaw, USA) 4-4
5. Johnny O'Mara (Kaw, USA) 2-8
6. Jacky Martens (KTM, Lux) 6-7
7. Kurt Ljungqvist (Hon, Fin) 9-6
8. Dirk Guekens (Hon, Bel) 8-9
9. Jeff Leisk (Hon, Aus) DNF-5
10. Jo Martens (Kaw, Bel) 10-11

125 SUPPORT

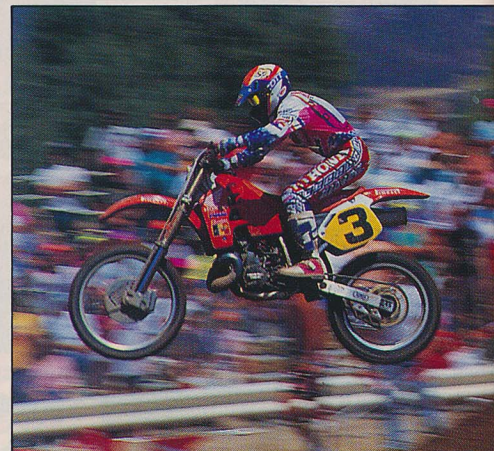
1. Mike Kiedrowski (Hon) 1-3
2. Mike LaRocco (Suz) 3-2
3. Damon Bradshaw (Yam) 6-1
4. Larry Ward (Suz) 2-4
5. Ryan Hughes (Kaw) 4-6
6. Doug Dubach (Yam) 5-7
7. Michael Craig (Kaw) 9-5
8. Mike Chamberlain (Yam) 11-8
9. Dana Wiggins (Yam) 12-9
10. Michael Young (Yam) 10-11

FINAL 500 GP POINTS

1. Eric Geboers (Hon, Bel) 393
2. Kurt Nicoll (KTM, Eng) 294
3. Dirk Guekens (Hon, Bel) 247
4. Jacky Martens (KTM, Lux) 240
5. Dave Thorpe (Kaw, Eng) 233
6. Billy Liles (Kaw, USA) 156
7. Kees Van der Ven (KTM, Hol) 149
8. Franco Rossi (KTM, Ita) 128
9. Kurt Ljungqvist (Hon, Fin) 118
10. Jeff Leisk (Hon, Aus) 111



Jeff "Chicken" Matiasевич jumped to a 500 to support teammate O'Mara's bid for a third USGP title. Kawasaki's main man, Jeff Ward, sat out the race because he didn't want to jeopardize his 500 National effort.



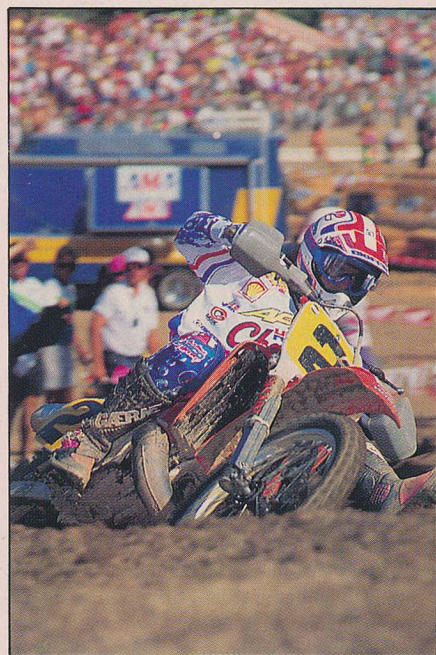
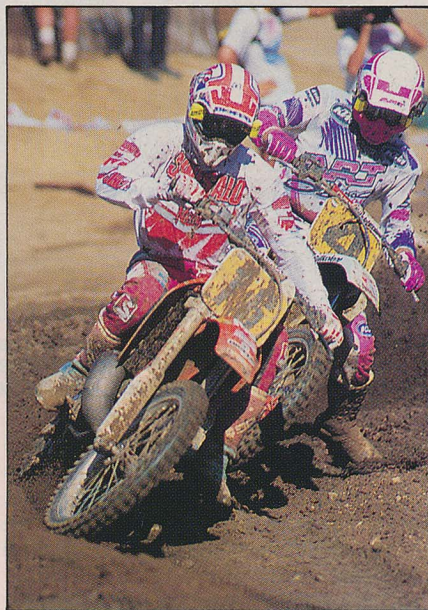
Geboers officially retired from GP competition after claiming the USGP victory, his second in three years. Next year the five-time world champ will manage the HRC/Chambers 500cc team and race selected events.

Geboers and O'Mara whipped the spectators to a frenzy as they duelled throughout the first moto. O'Mara would later claim that a lack of tear-offs late in the moto was all that stood between him and victory. ►



Slice and dice: Eric Geboers (3) looks like he's got the first moto holeshot at the Motul 500cc USGP, but Johnny O'Mara sliced inside for the lead. O'Show and Geboers then ran away and hid from Rick Johnson (65).

Matiasevich was all over KTM's Jacky Martens for the first half of the first USGP moto, then roosted past for fourth. By then, Rick Johnson was long gone.



Kurt Nicoll (4) sliced through the pack for fifth in the first moto but gated better in the second race and took third. The Brit finished the season in second ahead of newcomer Dirk Geukens.

Jeff Leisk had a horrible season after finishing the 1989 series in second. A broken finger forced the Australian out of several rounds and he finished 1990 in tenth after fading in California's last round. □