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**KAWASAKI KX80:
FASTER THAN
A 125?!!**

**NATIONAL ENDURO
CHASE: "SNAKE"
RATTLES & ROLLS**

**HONDA
CR500R:
IT SCARES
MAGOO!**

MIKE BELL

**HONDA
XR250R:
MORE TORQUE,
LESS PORQUE!**

**BAILEY'S HOT TIPS:
"BURN THAT CLUTCH!"**



ISSN0064-1546

DIRT BIKE

FEBRUARY 1984

VOLUME 14, NO. 2



KAWASAKI KX250



SAN DIEGO SUPERCROSS HONDA CR500



KAWASAKI KX80

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WARNING: Much of the action depicted in this magazine is potentially dangerous. Virtually all of the riders seen in our photos are experienced experts or professionals. Do not attempt to duplicate any stunts that are beyond your own capabilities. Always wear the appropriate safety gear.

ON THE COVER:—"Too Tall" Mike Bell styles for the ever-alert DB cameras. Aboard the YZ250, Mike gets aggressive on the production/works Yamaha. Photo captured by Paul Clipper. Inset photo of Clipper getting muddy on the XR250R by R. Sieman, who, incidentally, didn't shoot last month's cover, as previously credited. Stating that "A cover credit is the only thing I live for!" Clipper wants you to know that the January YZ shot was actually his. Valley Film gets the credit for transposing the dots into a real picture.

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SNAKE EYES!



Despite minimal sponsorship from Kawasaki, Jeff Fredette hauled his KDX200 to most of the runs, finishing tenth for the year.



"I know Mark Hyde can keep time better than me, but he doesn't want to go fast in the woods!" says Melton. Even so, Hyde finished fifth for the year.

◀ The Snake gets airborne at the Bear, Delaware, final round. He took home another overall win, even though the title was already his.

"You make most of your own luck in this business, whether it's good or bad." — Mike Melton

Mike Melton rolls to the title; everybody else craps out

By Paul Clipper

By now, the National Enduro series is history. A stormy season, studded with runs that were hardly typical; not at all what we would have expected.

We expected Terry Cunningham, last year's season champion, to come out strong and defend his title. He would be aided and abetted, and occasionally topped, by his teammates on the Husqvarna enduro team—Mike Melton, Mark Hyde, Dave Bertram, Kevin Hines, Ron Ribolzi, and others

—and fight openly with the members of the competition—John Martin of Can-Am, Fritz Kadlec and Jeff Fredette of Kawasaki, and non-factory riders who get smarter every day.

But it was not to be. A simple crash in the snow put Cunningham on the no-show list for the first round, and the resulting broken thumb would turn out to be a bad omen for the rest of the season. In his words:

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IMPORTANT: Helmet size _____



SNAKE EYES!



Six Days rider Ron Ribolzi broke up the Melton/Martin/Cunningham battle by winning the overall at the rain-soaked Bonner Creek National. (Brian Palormo photo)



Fritz Kadlec concentrated on the Six Days qualifiers this year, but still finished the season in ninth.

“Let me tell you—to Mike, winning is everything. He is a man who does not like to lose.”—Terry Cunningham

“In '82, I put everything together and won seven out of 12 Nationals. This year, it seems that everything I did just wasn't right. I went out to do a little training in the snow before the season, and I fell over and broke my hand. I went to a National when my hand started feeling good and got lost and threw away a 33-point lead in the last 20 miles (Bonner Creek, Louisiana). At Tennessee, I burned a check. The next race, I borrowed some gas when I didn't think I could make it to the gas check, and there was something wrong with it, and I wound up seizing (Redneck, Louisiana). I won the next three races, then I was winning the Iowa race and broke down; I rode the Black Coal and nearly died of heat stroke, and then what happened—I went to Six Days, entered a new class with a chance to win it, and I fell down and broke my leg. Some kinda year!”

With Cunningham out for the start, the number two man in line becomes top dog, and so it was Mike Melton's job to hold off the competition. The competition could be nearly everybody—there are at least 20 people in the country who are capable of winning a National—but the main trouble-

maker outside the Husky camp is Johnny Martin.

Martin has been riding Can-Ams for years now, and he is always there, waiting for anyone to make the smallest mistake. He is capable of moving through the woods like a lizard on nitro, but when we talked to him at the end of the season about his second-place finish, he was less than thrilled about his season start.

“I didn't do a whole lot right this year. What I did wrong was not sit myself down and say, ‘Hey, I gotta get off my buns here and get serious!’

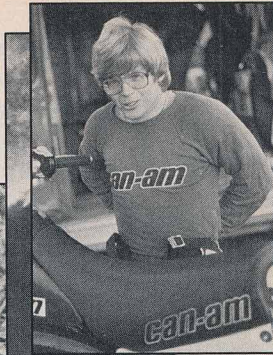
“I did pick up a lot of burn points this year, but that's not the bike's fault. There's a lot of room for brain fade in timekeeping, especially getting used to the new computers—you know, where you match the mileage with the odometer. I can do the timekeeping really well in my head, but one time I looked down at the computer and saw it as minutes. I went crazy—I jumped on the bike and rode out of the reset two minutes hot!”

Martin did indeed start out slow, but worked his way up to win round five of the series in Saline, Louisiana. But not by

SNAKE EYES!



The 1983 champion! You will never find Mike Melton out for a Sunday drive in the woods. He races to win and is very serious about following arrows through the woods.



John Martin makes his living riding bikes that are bigger than he is. Second place was not what he had in mind this year, and he promises to get serious in '84.



much. Melton, who is known in the enduro world as "Snake," slithered to a win in the California and South Carolina openers, and wasn't about to give away all the rest of them.

Mike was on a roll, but the question remained: What would have happened if Cunningham started out healthy and got a good shot at defending his title?

"If Terry hadn't started out the year on the wrong foot, he would have been the man to beat, that's for sure," says the Snake. "I finished second in the standings last year, and when he beat me, he got me by a number of points. I started out on the right foot, and that got me pumped. This year, in the runs that he won, the point spread was a lot closer.

"I just take each race and say, 'Well, I can beat everybody here' and do it. A lot of times in an enduro you're riding by yourself, and it's real easy to look at the scenery or think about what you're gonna do next week, but you can't do that. You have to concentrate and try hard to win.

"Seconds make the difference. In the Red-neck race this year, I went into a check and the checker marked me a minute hot by mistake, so I had to mess around with him for ten or 15 seconds, and that was the race right there. I had a lead going into that section, and Johnny Martin beat me through there by ten seconds or so, and he wound up winning the race by two seconds."

At the halfway point, Terry "T.C." Cunningham started showing signs of returning to his old form by winning the Abingdon, Virginia, Lonesome Pine run.

"I was 100 percent that day," says T.C. "The bike wasn't carbureting correctly, but I was riding well."

"It was a little greasy that morning; it took me a little bit to get going," Mike replied, "but he was riding better—he started off better than I did. I beat him at one tie-breaker, but the other two tie-breakers were his."

The season moved on, and T.C. started picking up steam through the Little Burr and the Jack Pine, for the second and third times in a row, pushing Melton to second place.

"T.C. won the Little Burr by two points, and down there I was real happy to stay that close to him. That's his home turf, and if he hadn't gotten lost for a couple of minutes, he would've beaten me a lot worse than that.

"At the Jack Pine, he beat me by five seconds, but that was my own fault. They had the tie-breaker checks in zero sections, and at the first one I just did not see the green flag, and I drove right into it and hit it on 19 seconds. That's enough to lose a race right there."

Cunningham's streak was broken at the Winterset, Iowa, National, a very fast run through endless tight trees. T.C. was lead-

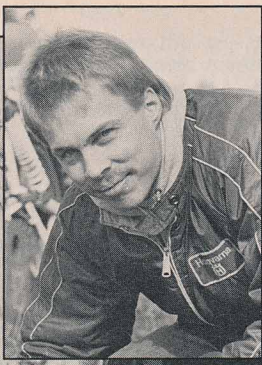
ing the field until four miles from the finish, when his prototype 500 Automatic gave up for the day. Terry doesn't like to talk about this one much, but it was another win for the Snake, and his points lead was starting to grow out of reach.

T.C., Melton, and Martin had split all the overalls this year—seven to Melton, three to Cunningham, and one to Martin—with the exception of one particularly nasty run in Enon, Louisiana.

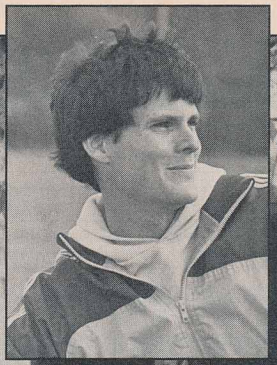
That was round three, the Bonner Creek National, and the Saturday before the event it started looking like kayaks would be the best way through the course. Everybody had problems at this run, but Six Days star Ron Ribolzi had the least of them and picked up his first National win.

"The first part of the Bonner Creek National was really wet, but the rest of it was nice riding," recalls Melton. "I came up on this creek crossing where everybody was watered out—Martin was there, Mark Hyde was there—and Mark showed me the way across, but I didn't make it. I spent 15 minutes draining all the water out, and there's no way you can make up 15 minutes. Ron Ribolzi is really good—the nastier the weather, the better he likes it—and he just rode very consistently and picked up the win."

The Black Coal and Oklahoma Nationals both fell to Melton, with a frustrated Martin falling scant points behind. The



A long-time hare scrambles and ISDE rider, Kevin Hines finished fourth for the season. Melton claims that Hines will be tough competition next year.



Northern California rider Dave Bertram is the only bright spot in a pack of lackluster West Coast riders. Bertram gave the established leaders some real trouble on his Husky Automatic, netting a seventh overall.

season came to a close at a truly classic run on the East Coast in Bear, Delaware. This was the Delaware Enduro Riders 20th Annual State Championship enduro, and their first National. They proved themselves

capable of putting on a National-caliber event beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Once again, Melton took the win, following two points behind by Martin. The riders were tested on their trail savvy, their

knowledge of the rules, and their timekeeping ability, and many riders were afterward heard praising the event as the perfect end to a good season.

(continued on page 66)

**1983 AMA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
ENDURO SERIES
FINAL STANDINGS**

1. Mike Melton (Hus)	285
2. John Martin (C-A)	227
3. Terry Cunningham (Hus)	182
4. Kevin Hines (Hus)	178
5. Mark Hyde (Hus)	129
6. Ron Ribolzi (Hus)	114
7. Dave Bertram (Hus)	110
8. Dwight Rudder (Hus)	95
9. Fritz Kadlec (Kaw)	75
10. Jeff Fredette (Kaw)	73
11. Rich Scharphorn (Hus)	71
12. John Fero (Hus)	64
13. Darryl Kuenzer (C-A)	58
14. Kevin Brown (Hus)	39
15. Mike Toole (Hus)	37
16. Ed Keen (Hus)	36
17. Terry Seales (Hus)	31
18. Jimmy Garmon (Hus)	27
19. Darryl Bell (Yam)	27
20. Jim Stanfield (Hus)	27

**ROUND ONE
CLEAR CREEK, CA**

1. Mike Melton
2. John Fero
3. Larry Roeseler
4. Fritz Kadlec
5. John Martin
6. Mark Hyde
7. Jeff Henning
8. Mark Lucas
9. Scot Harden
10. Kevin Hines

**ROUND TWO
COLUMBIA, SC**

1. Mike Melton
2. Terry Cunningham
3. Kevin Hines
4. Jeff Fredette
5. Drew Smith
6. Clay Stuckey
7. John Martin
8. Fritz Kadlec
9. Rich Scharphorn
10. Ron Ribolzi

**ROUND THREE
ENON, LA**

1. Ron Ribolzi
2. Terry Cunningham
3. John Martin
4. Jeff Fredette
5. Mike Melton
6. Terry Seales
7. Kevin Taylor
8. Darryl Bell
9. Barry Bell
10. Rich Scharphorn

**ROUND FOUR
BUCKSNORT, TN**

1. Mike Melton
2. John Martin
3. Terry Cunningham
4. Kevin Hines
5. Dave Bertram
6. Mark Hyde
7. Rich Scharphorn
8. Jeff Fredette
9. Darryl Kuenzer
10. Ron Ribolzi

**ROUND FIVE
SALINE, LA**

1. John Martin
2. Mike Melton
3. Kevin Hines
4. Dave Bertram
5. Terry Seales
6. Darryl Kuenzer
7. Darryl Bell
8. Mark Hyde
9. Kevin Taylor
10. Dwight Rudder

**ROUND SIX
ABINGDON, VA**

1. Terry Cunningham
2. Mike Melton
3. Dave Bertram
4. John Martin
5. Kevin Hines
6. Mark Hyde
7. Dwight Rudder
8. Darryl Kuenzer
9. Chris Ratliff
10. Kevin Brown

**ROUND SEVEN
LAKE HOPE, OH**

1. Terry Cunningham
2. Mike Melton
3. Ron Ribolzi
4. Kevin Hines
5. Mark Hyde
6. Darryl Kuenzer
7. Mike Frazee
8. Benny Means
9. Jeff Russell
10. John Fero

**ROUND EIGHT
MOORESTOWN, MI**

1. Terry Cunningham
2. Mike Melton
3. John Martin
4. Mark Hyde
5. Ron Ribolzi
6. Mark Burley
7. Fritz Kadlec
8. Eddie Keen
9. Mike Keen
10. Kevin Hines

**ROUND NINE
WINTERSET, IA**

1. Mike Melton
2. Kevin Hines
3. John Martin
4. Fritz Kadlec
5. Alan Randt
6. Ron Ribolzi
7. Myron Freund
8. Mark Hyde
9. Mike Toole
10. Alvin McCannon

**ROUND TEN
LYNNVILLE, IN**

1. Mike Melton
2. John Martin
3. Terry Cunningham
4. Kevin Hines
5. Jimmy Garmon
6. Dave Bertram
7. Mike Keen
8. Jim Stanfield
9. Fritz Kadlec
10. Ron Ribolzi

**ROUND ELEVEN
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK**

1. Mike Melton
2. John Martin
3. Jeff Fredette
4. Rich Scharphorn
5. Dwight Rudder
6. Chuck Cooper
7. Ray Mungenast
8. Rusty Reynaud
9. Jim Stanfield
10. Dave Bertram

**ROUND TWELVE
BEAR, DE**

1. Mike Melton
2. John Martin
3. Kevin Hines
4. Mark Hyde
5. Rich Scharphorn
6. Chris Puff
7. Don Tomlin
8. Dwight Rudder
9. Ken Yankowski
10. Jack Lafferty, Jr.

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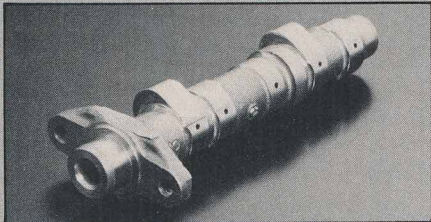
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SNAKE EYES
(continued from page 49)

MELTON TELLS ALL!

• The Snake packed up his truck with a huge grin, happy at his fortune and a little relieved that the season was over. Before he could floor it back to Columbus, we cornered him for the final details.

What do you use for timekeeping gear?
“For timekeeping I use the Countdown clock or the Performance Products Programmable computer. A lot of times I use

“I just take each race and say, ‘Well, I can beat everybody here’ and do it.”—Mike Melton

both, so I can look down at the clock and see the seconds without having to hit the button on the computer. I wear a wrist-watch and carry another one in my tool bag. It doesn't do you any good to carry just two clocks, because if one of them is wrong, you don't know which one it is.”

Which of the Huskys is best for the enduros?

“This year I rode three different bikes—a 250WR in the first few races, a 430WR in the majority of them, and a 500WR in the last two, and it didn't seem to make any

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difference. I used to think that there was no way you could get a big bike through the woods very fast, but now I know that it's all in your head."

What kind of enduros do you like best?

"I like races that are wide open and fun, where there's plenty of traction, and you can just gas it up between the checks. But every now and then it's nice to ride a really nasty survival run."

Who will be your main competition next year?

"Johnny Martin is going to be the main competition next year, just like this year. And Kevin Hines is going to be tougher to beat. Mark Hyde is really good. I know he's a better timekeeper than me, but he doesn't seem to want to go fast enough in the woods. I don't know how soon Terry is going to be ready, and you never know who else is going to come up out of the blue."

What are you going to do to beat them all next year?

"I'm gonna go with the same attitude next year that I had this year, and keep up with the training. The attitude is just to not get bummed out about things—I think Webb once printed something about me not being able to ride in mud, and that kind of stuff can work on you a little if you let it. I used to let it bother me, but now I don't care what anybody says. I know I can win! I'll have my bike prepared, have everything organized, and I will be the man to beat!" •

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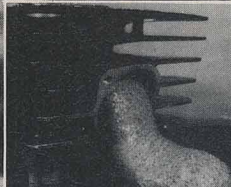
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