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ON THE COVER: Hold onto your ports, the '92s are here! Photos courtesy of Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha. Color design by DeWest; color separations by Valley Film; drool marks by . . . what's your name, anyway?



MAGNIFIQUE!

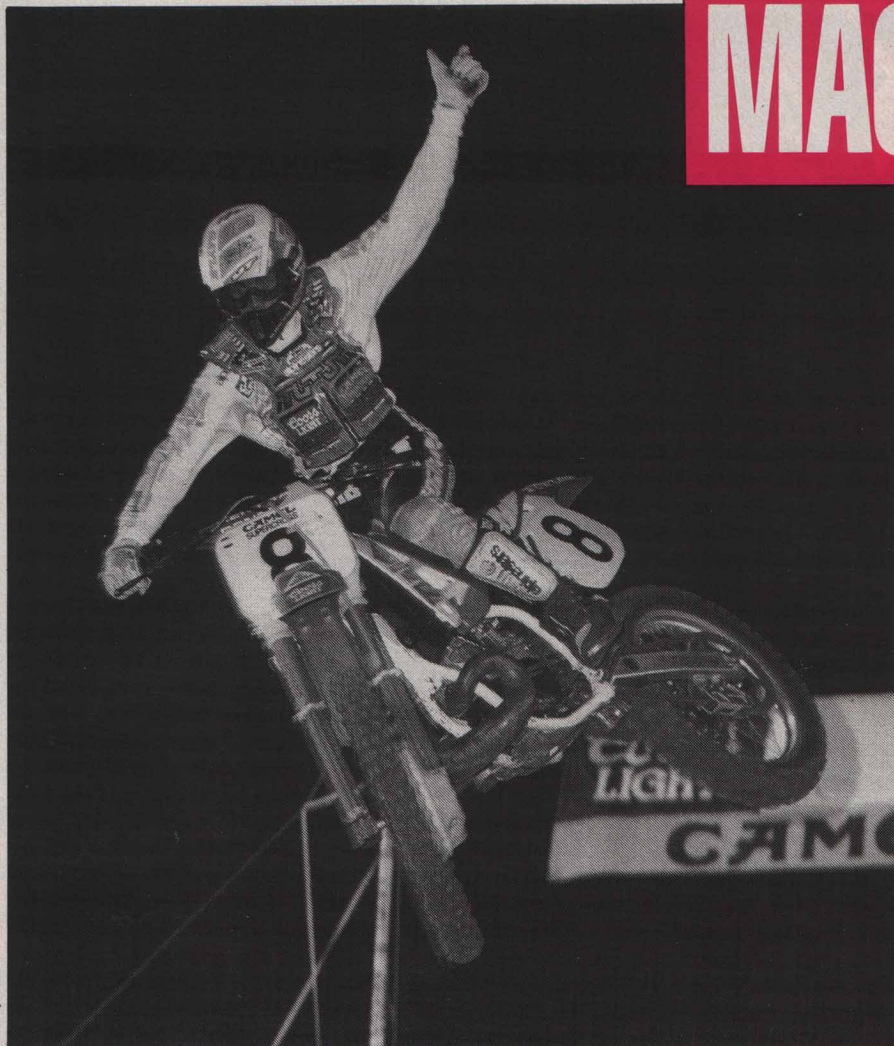
The Frenchman & Team Peak clean up

By the DIRT BIKE staff

Jeff Ward sat on an Oklahoma City hay bale, alone and dejected. He'd just won the main event and ended a season-long dry spell, a drought that threatened to end his yearly supercross win record at seven. He'd run away with the main event, riding a flawless race, but he looked like he'd failed to qualify at all.

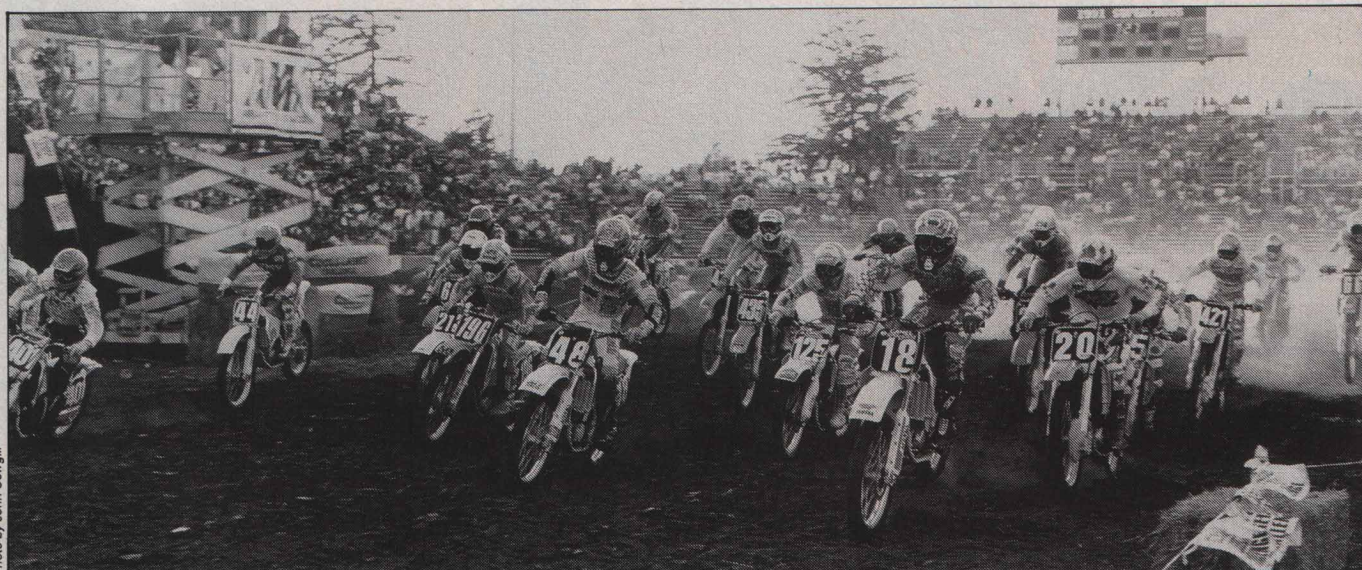
Damon Bradshaw was also on the victory podium, alone and visibly bummed. He'd fallen in the third turn of the first lap and streaked from 17th to third. Damon was the fastest guy on the track, but he stood on the outside looking in, like a fan without a pit pass. Bradshaw and Ward were also rans, because Jean-Michel Bayle had just clinched the 1991 Supercross Championship and was already counting the million-odd dollars the title would bring. As journalists and VIPs swarmed Bayle, Ward and Bradshaw looked on from the darkness. They were not happy campers.

Bayle had only needed two points to clinch the title at Oklahoma City, round 16 of the 18-race series. All he had to do was make the main and not fall down. He finished second and squashed Bradshaw's hopes of an end-run to the championship. A foreigner hadn't won the AMA Supercross crown since Pierre Karsmakers took the first series title in '74, so JMB's accomplishment



Jean-Michel Bayle clicks off his eighth AMA Supercross win of the year at Los Angeles, breaking Rick Johnson's record of a seven-win season. Johnson did it out of ten races, though.

◀ Jeff Emig came on strong in the last three races of the series, winning his heat and main each time out, plus bagging the \$10,000 Camel East/West Shootout.



Jeremy McGrath (125) broke his leg two weeks before San Jose but rode with a special CTi brace to clinch the title. He cruised to ninth in the main.





Photo by John Cowgill

WHO WON WHAT?

THE RACES AT A GLANCE

250 MAINS

Orlando, FL..... Jeff Stanton
 Houston, TX..... Jean-Michel Bayle
 Anaheim, CA..... Jeff Stanton
 Seattle, WA..... Jean-Michel Bayle
 San Diego, CA..... Jean-Michel Bayle
 Atlanta, GA..... Damon Bradshaw
 Daytona, FL..... Jeff Stanton
 Phoenix, AZ..... Jean-Michel Bayle
 St. Petersburg, FL... Jean-Michel Bayle
 Pontiac, MI..... Jean-Michel Bayle
 Pontiac, MI..... Damon Bradshaw
 Charlotte, NC..... Jean-Michel Bayle
 Dallas, TX..... Damon Bradshaw
 Las Vegas, NV..... Mike LaRocco
 East Rutherford, NJ..... Jeff Stanton
 Oklahoma City, OK..... Jeff Ward
 San Jose, CA..... Doug Dubach
 Los Angeles, CA.... Jean-Michel Bayle

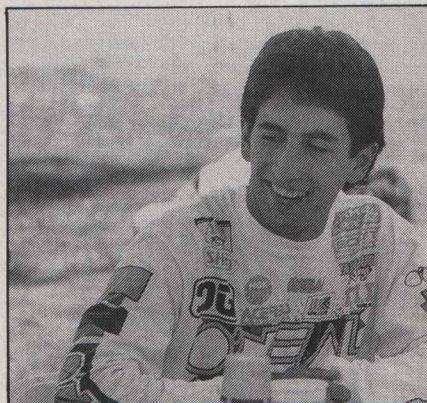
125 MAINS

Orlando, FL (E)..... Brian Swink
 Houston, TX (E)..... Tallon Vohland
 Anaheim, CA (W).... Jeremy McGrath
 Seattle, WA (W)..... Jeremy McGrath
 San Diego, CA (W) ... Jeremy McGrath
 Atlanta, GA (E)..... Brian Swink
 Daytona, FL (E)..... Brian Swink
 Phoenix, AZ (W)..... Jeff Emig
 St. Petersburg, FL (E).... Jeromy Buehl
 Pontiac, MI (E)..... Brian Swink
 Pontiac, MI (E)..... Jeromy Buehl
 Charlotte, NC (E)..... Jeromy Buehl
 Dallas, TX (E/W).... Jeremy McGrath
 Las Vegas, NV (W).... Jeremy McGrath
 East Rutherford, NJ (E) ... Brian Swink
 Oklahoma City, OK (E/W)... Jeff Emig
 San Jose, CA (W)..... Jeff Emig
 Los Angeles, CA (W) Jeff Emig •

Chicken Matiashevich (7) was fined \$1000 for taking out Guy Cooper during the San Jose main. Damon Bradshaw and Chicken battled for the Coors Light Super Challenge \$25,000 bonus, which went to the rider with the most fast-heat wins. They tied, but Chicken took the cash on heat wins (8 to 6).

◀ JMB bagged his third world championship at Oklahoma City. There may be an "official" world supercross championship, but it doesn't have 18 rounds against the toughest supercrossers on the planet.

Doug Dubach is still smiling after nailing down his first-ever AMA Supercross win, at San Jose. After a season of injuries and crashes, the win tasted incredibly sweet. ▶



was worldwide news. A Euro had come to America and beat the locals at their own game, and the homeboys didn't like it one bit. The last two races of the series would be for second-place points, among Bradshaw, Jeff Stanton, Mike Kiedrowski and Ward—and, as Hannah says, second is like kissing your sister.

THE MILLION-DOLLAR MAIN

Hometown favorite Guy Cooper whipped the crowd into a frenzy as he took the lead

on the first lap, with Ward, Chicken Matiashevich and Stanton in tow. Bayle entered the first turn in 13th but, by the third turn, he had berzerked it to fifth, where he spent most of the main. Cooper bobbled and dropped to fourth, then recovered his composure and passed Stanton. Chicken was leading Ward, but the senior Kawboy soon wicked it up and took the lead. Ward left Chicken to block anyone who broke from the pack.

That anyone was Cooper. Airtime picked up the pace, looking for his first supercross win in front of the hometown crowd, and closed on Chicken. He pulled alongside Matiashevich, but he was on the outside of the upcoming turn. Chicken took Coop to the hay bales. Coop braked. Chicken braked. Coop gassed it. Chicken gassed it and took both players out. About this time Stanton crashed over the back triples.

Bayle, who'd been riding a very conservative race, was suddenly in second place, and Bradshaw had *banzai'd* his way to third. Stanton recovered for fourth, ahead of Cooper. Chicken dropped way back, and every time he went down the front straight, 21,000 fans booed him. Later, we'd hear some Oklahoma fans calling him "Chickens-t." He'd done his job—keeping the others off of Ward—but it didn't earn him any fans there. They didn't care about Bayle or the title or Ward's win streak—they just wanted Cooper to win.

THE RACES FOR SECOND

The Cooper/Matiashevich battle carried over to the San Jose main. Larry Ward led until Ward took over, with Chicken mov-

Photo by Brian Halweg

ing into second. Wardy tweaked his wrist in the whoops, which put him off of the pace, and Chicken took over. Cooper moved into second, leading Doug Dubach, Stanton and Mike Fisher.

Bradshaw and Mike LaRocco had gotten stuck in the gate, and the two blitzed into sixth and seventh. These two were the fastest guys on the track. Bayle had been running seventh, but he crashed back to 12th. Coop and Chicken dueled on the last lap and exchanged the lead several times; then Chicken tried an inside move over a tabletop. The two tangled bars and went down, handing the lead and win to Dubach, who had held off Stanton the entire main. Bradshaw moved into second at the checkers, giving Yamaha a one-two punch, and stretching his lead over Stanton to eight points heading into Los Angeles.

At L.A., Matiasovich picked up \$25,000 from Coors Light for racking up the most fast heat wins in '91. Bradshaw almost threw away second in the standings. He broke in his heat, while leading. He broke in his semi, while leading. Damon then started midpack in the Last Chance Qualifier and moved up to win.

Chicken holeshot the main and put on the battle of doom with new champ Bayle, while Bradshaw fought frantically to get within sight of third-place Stanton. Chicken dropped



Jeff Emig (18) and Steve Lamson dueled at OKC, San Jose and Los Angeles, with Emig taking the win each time.

off the pace but picked it up again when Stanton started applying pressure. He moved up on Bayle, but the Frenchman wicked it up another notch. Chicken faded again, and Stanton zapped him late in the race.

Stanton crossed the finish line in second and looked back to see where Damon was. Bradshaw finished sixth, which gave him second in the series and an extra \$10,000 from Camel (the difference between second and third). Chicken and Coop ended the year where they ended Oklahoma and San Jose—tied in a knot—for sixth.

TEAM PEAK CLEANS HOUSE

Honda's new 125 team devastated both the 125 East and West series, with Brian

Swink sweeping the Eastern Championship and Jeremy McGrath taking the West. The four-man Peak team was so strong that only Tallon Vohland and Jeff Emig could keep them from winning every single round. Vohland took Houston, and Emig won Phoenix, Oklahoma City, San Jose and Los Angeles, vaulting him to second in the West. It was too little too late, though, as McGrath clinched the title with a ninth at San Jose, riding with a broken leg! When the smoke cleared on the 125 series, Team Peak was one-two in the East and one-three out West. Not bad at all for a first-year effort.

However, with McGrath out of the East/West Shootout, it was three on one against

BRIAN SWINK

THE 1991 125 EASTERN SUPERCROSS CHAMP

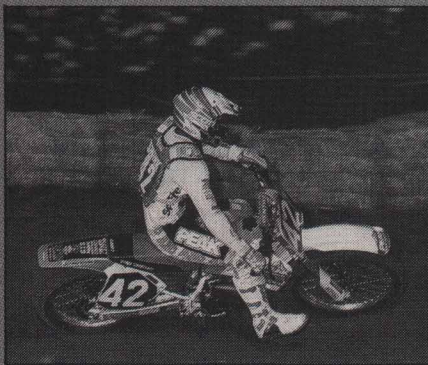
• Brian Swink clinched two Loretta Lynn's AMA Amateur Nationals on 80s in '87, then returned in '88 to take another title. Then disaster struck. Three weeks after moving to the 125s, he broke his leg badly and sat out almost a year. His doctor said it was healed enough to ride a qualifier for Loretta's, but it wasn't. He broke the leg in exactly the same spot. Swink sat out the '89 Amateur Nationals but returned in '90 to win all but one of his motos. He took the 125 and 250A Stock Championships. Then he turned pro.

Dirt Bike: How did you get the Team Peak ride?

Brian Swink: Last year Roger DeCoster was at Loretta Lynn's, and we talked a bit. He was talking about a new 125 team Honda was putting together, and I talked to him after winning all my motos but one at Loretta's. I followed through, we talked some more, and everything fell together.

DB: What was the biggest hurdle you had to clear this year on the way to the title?

Swink: Everything was going really well, but I had some problems at Pontiac and hurt my knee a bit. So I was kind of off the pace at Charlotte and Dallas. I got a little worried, because I was losing a lot of points, but then we had a couple of weeks off, so



Brian Swink dueled with teammate Jeremy Buehl throughout the Eastern Regionals and took the title with five wins to three. The kid is hot!

I got strong. After that, no problems.

DB: Last year Denny Stephenson won the Eastern Championship, then crashed here in Oklahoma, ending his season. You've already wrapped the title and are leading the 125 Nationals—why come here?

Swink: I just want to ride and win. Titles are really important, but I want to win all the races I can, to prove I'm as fast as or faster than the West Coast guys. [*Editor's Note:* Swink and Emig were putting on the battle of doom for the OKC 125 main win until Swink landed on a hay bale over the triples and almost crashed. He settled for second.]

DB: What makes Brian Swink so strong?

Swink: I just like to practice a lot. I ride a lot more than most other guys. I don't do a whole lot of off-bike training, like some do. I just try to ride a lot more than anyone else, and I think that helps a lot more than jogging or whatever.

DB: Are you the fastest guy on Team Peak?

Swink: [Laughing] I think so, but some of the other guys don't.

DB: Who are your heroes, who's had the most influence on your career?

Swink: My parents have helped a lot. They took me practicing every day. We didn't have any property, and I didn't have a license, so they'd drive me an hour to practice. I don't have any heroes.

DB: Which was your most rewarding win so far in '91?

Swink: Definitely the Mt. Morris National, my first National win. Supercrosses aren't that big a deal for me, because I've raced against these guys all my life. To ride a National with Cooper and Kiedrowski, guys I've watched over the years, and to beat them feels great.

DB: What kind of toys are you going to buy with the title money?

Swink: I just bought a Jet Ski, and I'm putting the rest in the bank. That's it.

DB: What are your plans for '92?

Swink: I plan on staying in the 125s next year, to defend my Eastern Supercross title. Hopefully, I'll win the 125 Nationals this year and again next year. •



Jean-Michel Bayle (8) gated near the back of the Oklahoma City pack but snaked to fifth two turns later. He would later move up to second to clinch the '91 title.

JEREMY McGRATH THE 1991 125 WESTERN SUPERCROSS CHAMP

• Jeremy McGrath almost won the '90 West Coast series, after coming practically out of nowhere and picking up a Team Green ride at the last possible second. He crashed out at Houston but came back the very next weekend, riding with a concussion, to finish second behind Ty Davis. McGrath won the Las Vegas main and finished the season a scant seven points behind Davis. This year, Jeremy returned to Hondas to win the 125 Western Supercross title, but not before breaking a leg at Mt. Morris, Pennsylvania.

DB: Describe for the readers what happened at Mt. Morris.

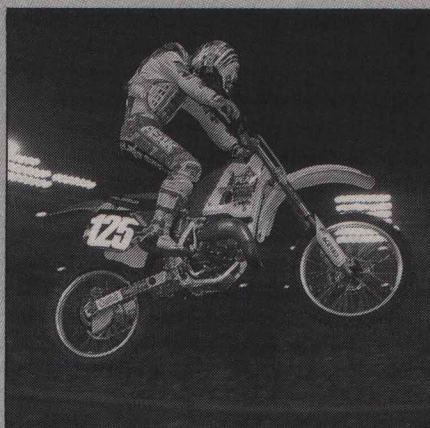
Jeremy McGrath: I was going around the finish-line corner and was going to jump this step-up tabletop, and I just miscalculated. My bike wasn't running right all moto, my ignition was going bad, and it was breaking up and popping. It bogged when I went off of the face, and I went straight over the bars. I fractured the tibia and spent a day and a half in the hospital, because I bruised my chest, too. I came home on Tuesday and went directly to Jeff Spencer's. I stayed there a week, doing therapy. Then I went home and had a cast made, then cut it off, so we could make a brace. I missed Oklahoma City, so Steve Lamson made up some points on me.

DB: So what do you have to do to take the title?

McGrath: I'm going to try to ride San Jose, and I have to finish tenth or better to clinch the title. If I don't I'll have to ride Los Angeles, too. I just need 11 points to win it. *(Editor's Note: Jeremy cruised to ninth at San Jose, three weeks after breaking his leg, and clinched the title. He sat out the East/West Shootout so that he could heal for the Nationals.)*

DB: How did you get the Peak ride?

McGrath: I had talked to Roger DeCoster and Dave Arnold before the Peak deal, at Ponca City, and I had already signed with Honda before Peak came into it. Honda wanted to have a 125 team but didn't want to take care of it. Mitch Payton put the team



Jeremy McGrath won the '91 Western Regional Supercross championship with five wins over Jeff Emig's four. His margin of victory was three points.

effort together and landed Peak Antifreeze as the main sponsor, so it all worked out.

DB: Which was your most rewarding win on the way to the title?

McGrath: San Diego was my best race. I was in last place off of the start and worked up from there. I passed Phil Lawrence, and he passed me back, which was surprising, so I had to pass him back. It was a good race, a good battle, then I took the lead two laps from the end. It was a cool race, and I liked the track.

DB: What happened to you at Dallas?

McGrath: Jimmy Gaddis took me out in my heat. He was leading and I was in second, and I was setting him up for the pass up the finish-line tabletop. I got beside him but he moved over on me so bad I had nowhere to go. I landed on the hay bales, way over to the left of the track. I rode over four hay bales then went over the bars. I picked up the bike, clutched it and spun it around, then dropped it again. I just pulled off of the track and said, 'Forget this.' I won the Last Chance then started the main in fourth. I battled with Emig for about five laps, then got him over the step-up tabletop.

DB: You were the only 125 jumping that.

McGrath: Yeah, I got him there, then went on to win. I passed Swink, too.

DB: Team Peak is one-two in both series and is leading the 125 Nationals. Why are

you so dominant—is it the bikes or the team effort?

McGrath: I feel that my bike is the best bike out there, no matter where we're at. The bikes are awesome, and I'm sure everyone else feels the same way. I think we also have the best riders out there, except for maybe Jeff Emig.

DB: Are you the fastest rider on the team?

McGrath: It's hard to say, it just depends. It could be me one week, Brian one week, Steve one week. You never know.

DB: Which series do you think is tougher?

McGrath: I'd have to say the West is the tougher series.

DB: Who are your most respected rivals?

McGrath: I'd have to say Steve Lamson. It seemed like supercross wasn't his strong point, he's always been an outdoor guy, but he proved he can ride supercross this year. He's really strong. Jeff Emig is good, too. I thought Buddy Antunez would be doing better than he is; he's having problems. Jimmy Button is going good, too. He's a really good rider and has been coming on really strong lately. Tyson Vohland is really strong, but he's been inconsistent this year. After Anaheim, I thought he'd be in there. Mike Craig, too. He jams, he's a really good rider, and he can win, just like me. He doesn't have to get a good start to win, but he's concentrating on Ultracross this year.

DB: What makes Jeremy McGrath so strong?

McGrath: I feel really strong and don't let things get me down. I don't let one bad race get me down. I try to keep an open mind and train to build confidence. I ride a lot every day, a whole lot, and train at the gym. I run once or twice a week and do some mountain biking. Mostly, I just ride.

DB: Who are your heroes?

McGrath: Rick Johnson and Jeff Stanton. Rick and I are good friends, and I look up to him. He's helped me a lot mentally, and it's good to be around someone at that level. I used to ride with him a lot, but he's retired now. We still talk. Jeff Stanton is a good friend, too. He helps me out a lot. We hang out at the races and talk about racing. Stanton wasn't winning a lot when I was growing up, but he is now, and it's fun to hang around with him. He's a cool guy. •

Jeff Emig. Swink put on a great race, but Jeromy Buehl and Steve Lamson were way back. It was Emig versus Swink, Team Peak versus Team Yamaha, and Emig held it on for the \$10,000 win. Emig won the last few battles of the season but lost the war due to early-season injuries. He lost by three points. □

JEAN-MICHEL BAYLE
THE 1991 250
SUPERCROSS CHAMP

• Jean-Michel Bayle is hard to read. He's very confident but not cocky, polite on and off the track, and soft-spoken. He doesn't chase women or have a garage full of boy toys. On the return flight from Houston, the site of his first '91 win, he was so reserved that you'd never guess he'd just taken the points lead. Jean-Michel is nothing like any other rider on the circuit. He's, well, French.

Dirt Bike: *Of the 125 GP, 250 GP or Supercross Championships, which is the sweetest?*

Jean-Michel Bayle: Oh, the supercross is definitely best for me. Europe was easier for me than this championship because I had to change countries and work a lot more. I had to change a lot of things in my life to come here.

DB: *When did you decide you wanted this title?*

JMB: Since I was 12, I wanted to come to America, I was dreaming about coming here and being the best. My dream was to ride here, to be a factory rider, and to be a champion in America.

DB: *Which win this year was best for you?*

JMB: Phoenix. I had a very bad start and crashed again on the first lap. I came from the back and won. I passed a lot of people and made a good pass on Stanton. It went great.

DB: *Which was the most memorable race of your career?*

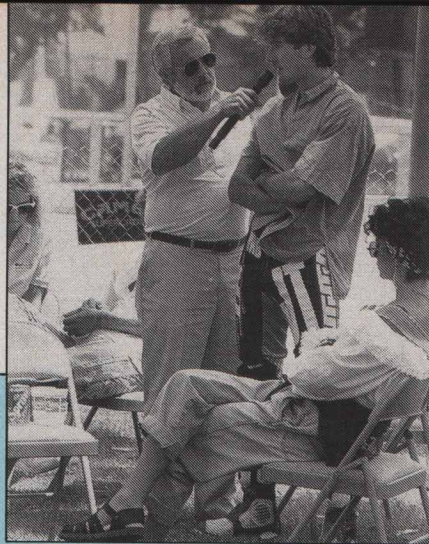
JMB: It was in '88 in Switzerland, at the last race for the 125 World Championship. I was in second for the championship, seven points behind. I won the first moto, and [Davy] Strijbos finished fourth. We went into the last moto tied for the championship. It was very close, and I won the championship.

DB: *Who is your most respected rival here?*

JMB: Jeff Ward, because he is here for a long time and has won a lot of races. A lot of times he's second, and he's won a lot of championships. He likes to ride and is a very good rider. I like to ride with him.

DB: *When you were growing up, who were your heroes?*

JMB: David Bailey. He was a very smooth and technical rider, and I try to ride like him. I never saw Roger DeCoster ride when he was good. He still goes good now, when



JMB's girlfriend, "Edwige" Malusza, looks on as Larry Maiera interviews the new champ.

we're testing, and I like Roger a lot, but you cannot have a hero that you haven't seen ride at his best. For me, it's David Bailey.

DB: *You're very confident. What makes you so good?*

JMB: The first year I rode, I was a little bit worried, going to all the new tracks. I was scared about my results. After a year I feel like I'm one of the best riders in the world. If somebody does a jump, I know I can do it, and I know I can make the pass. Sometimes I have a bad day, but mostly I have good days. I know I'm always going to be in the top five, so I'm confident. I know I'm one of the best. I try to be happy all the time with my results. If I finish fourth in a race, and I give it all I have, I'm happy. I just say, 'I'm gonna win next week.' You cannot win every race.

DB: *What are your plans for '92?*

JMB: I have one more year with Honda in the U.S. I want to ride next year with my #1 plate. In '93 I'd like to get into the road race 250 GPs, for Honda.

DB: *No chance of racing the motocross 500 GPs, to beat Eric Geboers' record of championships in three classes?*

JMB: No chance. Factory support is not good in the 500s right now. After the American Supercross Championship, racing the 500 GPs is going downhill a little bit, so I'm happy racing here right now, and I don't want to go back for MXGPs. I want to go back to Europe but not for motocross. I want to try something different. I've ridden a road bike many times, and I like it a lot.

DB: *So, after the 250s, you'll try 500s?*

JMB: Yes. I'll learn the tracks on the 250s and learn how to ride them. I hope for the 250 Championship, then I'll go to the 500s.

DB: *What do you think about the movement in Europe right now, with the FIM wanting to eliminate the 500s?*

JMB: I don't think it's good. The 250s are a good class, but the 500s are like Formula 1. It's a lot more expensive, and the bikes are a lot bigger, but I think it's the best motocross race series in the world. The 250s make a good race, but the 500s are the best bikes.

RESULTS:
1991 AMA SUPERCROSS SERIES
Final Points

250s	
1. Jean-Michel Bayle (Hon)	385
2. Damon Bradshaw (Yam)	313
3. Jeff Stanton (Hon)	312
4. Mike Kiedrowski (Kaw)	292
5. Jeff Ward (Kaw)	284
6. Jeff Matiasovich (Kaw)	232
6. Guy Cooper (Suz)	232
8. Mike Fisher (KTM)	214
9. Mike LaRocco (Suz)	211
10. Larry Ward (Suz)	160
125 EAST	
1. Brian Swink (Hon)	237
2. Jeromy Buehl (Hon)	201
3. Doug Henry (Yam)	166
4. Tallon Vohland (Suz)	155
5. Mike Brown (Hon)	150
6. Barry Carsten (Suz)	146
7. Ryan Hughes (Kaw)	114
8. Cliff Palmer (Suz)	93
9. Grayson Goodman (Suz)	81
10. Eric McClear (Yam)	69
125 WEST	
1. Jeremy McGrath (Hon)	179
2. Jeff Emig (Yam)	176
3. Steve Lamson (Hon)	171
4. Michael Craig (Kaw)	152
5. Jimmy Button (Suz)	120
6. Phil Lawrence (Kaw)	97
7. Kyle Lewis (Yam)	90
8. Tyson Vohland (Kaw)	85
9. Jimmy Button (Yam)	83
10. Buddy Antunez (Suz)	77
125 EASTWEST SHOOTOUT	
1. Jeff Emig	West
2. Brian Swink	East
3. Jimmy Button	West
4. Buddy Antunez	West
5. Michael Craig	West
6. Jimmy Gaddis	West
7. Doug Henry	East
8. Steve Lamson	West
9. Barry Carsten	East
10. Cliff Palmer	East

DB: *So you're looking forward to the 500 Nationals?*

JMB: Yes. I hope to win the 250s, then the 500s. I won a 500 National in '89, and I rode very good two years ago, so I feel very confident on the 500. Right now the Supercross Championship is most important to me, then I can ride fast again and win races. It's not my main goal to take all three titles, but if I can take them, I'll take them.

DB: *Assuming you go road racing in '93, what will you miss most about America?*

JMB: In Europe, you're always traveling to new countries, and you try to discover new things. I've been here almost two years now, and a lot of things are good here, just like a lot of things are good in France. I'll miss my new American friends. When I'm in U.S., I like to be in U.S., and when I'm in France, I like to be in France. I try to adapt. I'm going to miss a lot of things here, but my home is in France. I live in a good part of France, so the weather is like here. I'll miss the freedom to move around. Here, you're always in the same country. In Europe, each race is in a new country, so you have to change borders and money—and language. I speak French and now English, which does me no good in Germany.

DB: *I heard you used to practice crashing into a lake by your home. Do you still practice crashing?*

JMB: [Laughing] I did that when I was young, when I was a little bit crazy. When you're young you try everything. I did that for journalists, to look good, for pictures, but now I don't have to do that to make pictures. I just make good results. •