
TWO YANKS IN THE TOP TEN

*Yrjo Vesterinen
remains champion;
Bernie Schreiber
is seventh and
Marland Whaley
takes tenth*

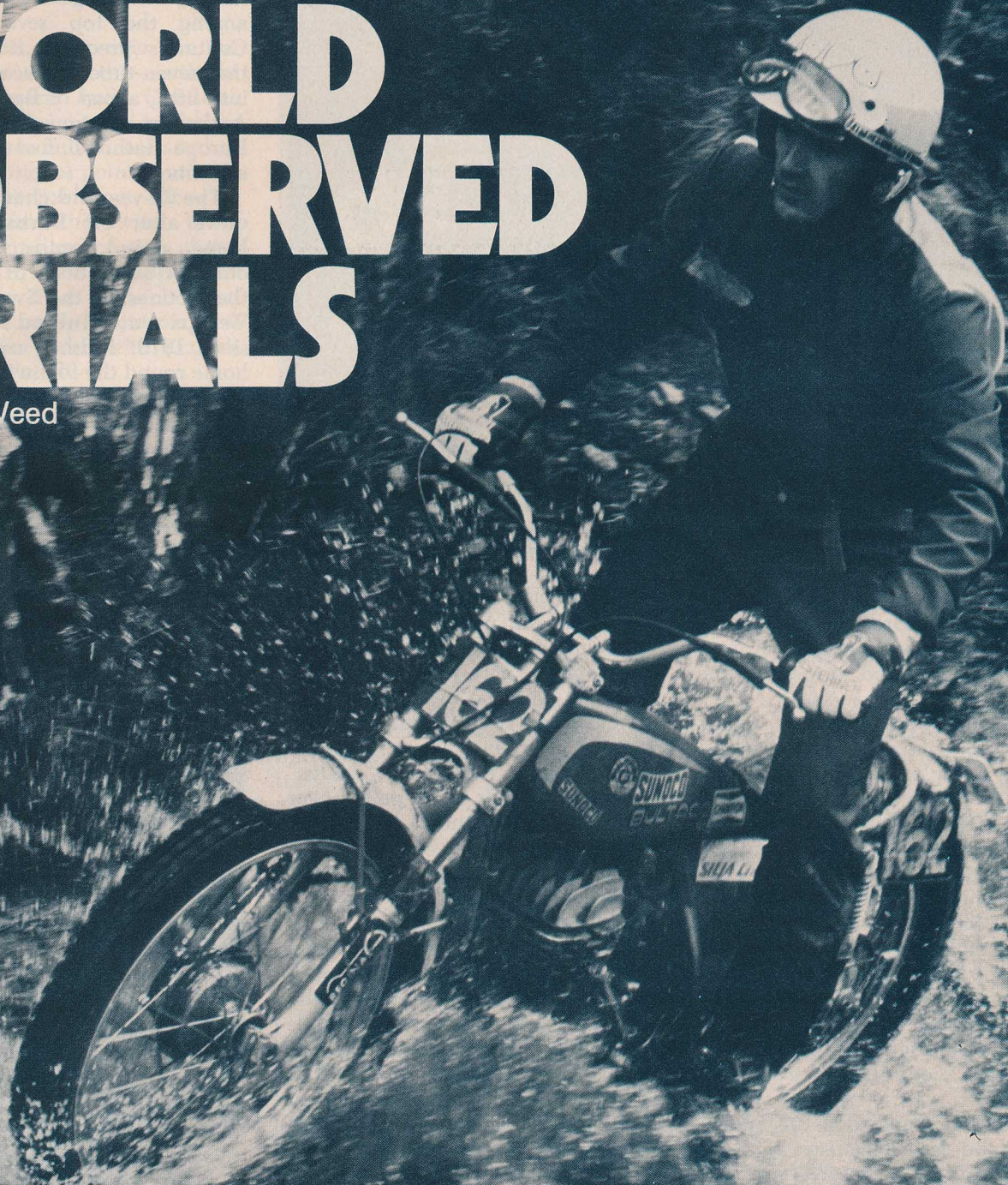
There's an old Finnish saying that goes: the more you eat, the hungrier you become. Doesn't quite have the flair of the Yorkshire chant: 'tis first on t't linen that counts, but Yrjo Vesterinen abides by both. He doesn't want any more than he already has — and once again he is atop the world trials heap. And, surprise, Ulf Karlsson made it a one-two Nordic sweep for Finland

and Sweden.

The next three spots went to Yorkshiremen. Malcolm Rathmell was third, Martin Lampkin finished fourth and Rob Shepherd claimed fifth. England still boasts more of the world's best riders than any other nation, but the days of unchallenged world domination appear doomed. One might say that the 1977 version of the English

WORLD OBSERVED TRIALS

by Len Weed





Ulf Karlsson made it a one-two Nordic year.



Malcolm Rathmell won the first three rounds, then finished third.

Armada had been scuttled by the Scandinavian horde — all two of them. And, lo and behold, is that a flutter of stars and stripes on the horizon?

Vesti has been the total points leader for the last three years. Martin Lampkin, who won the first official world championship in 1975 when the half-the-rounds-plus-one points method was used, scored less gross points.

The championship was the fifth straight for Bultaco and the sixth in the last eight years.

There were two major rules changes for the 1977 series. The FIM counted all championship points and also made the "two" official, recognizing 0-1-2-3-5 scoring.

Two Americans rode the opener in Ireland last February — Lane Leavitt and Don Sweet. Lane also rode the second round while Don stayed overseas for the first six, scheduled on consecutive weekends.

Malcolm Rathmell won that opening round by the margin of one-tenth of a point. Talk about

cutting it close. He started the last loop into his penalty hour. Two more minutes and the win would have gone to John Reynolds. Rathmell won the next two rounds in Wales and Belgium to surge to a 22-point lead over Vesterinen. In the preceding two years "Rastus" had opened leads of 19 points over Lampkin in 1975 and 21 points over Vesterinen in 1976.

The Belgian round, the toughest of the year, marked the debut of American Bernie Schreiber, who had just turned 18. Bernie slogged through the muck with the world's best and scored a fifth that really startled the European trials community. The continent is not accustomed to teen sensations. The two-time SoCal champion followed with a third in Spain, a fifth in France (he led after the first loop but mud soured his engine) and a second in Germany, where Martin Lampkin posted the highest winning score of the year, 136.3.

Bernie came home ranked fifth in the world after riding four of the first six rounds. Rathmell's lead was

down to three points with six rounds to go and his back, injured during early motocross days, was giving him problems.

Charles Coutard won both the U.S. and the Canadian rounds. His winning score of 15 in Canada was the lowest of the year. His 23.2 in Michigan was the second lowest.

National champion Marland Whaley repeated the second he scored in the 1976 U.S. world round, heading five Americans among the top seven finishers. Coutard's precision riding moved the seven-time French champion into fifth, ahead of Barging Bernie. As the feet-up circus headed back to Europe Rathmell had a two-point advantage.

The 24-year-old champ made his move after Ulf Karlsson won his home round, midst rumors or outright accusations of practice in the sections by the Swedish riders. Vesterinen, Finland's champion since 1970, finished second in his home round the following weekend, while Rathmell placed eighth, dropping him into a second-place tie with Lampkin, five points off the pace. The win went to Rob Shepherd, who posted the first four-stroke victory in official world championship competition, aboard the older long-stroke factory Honda.

Vesterinen won the penultimate round in Czechoslovakia, opening a



1975 champion Martin Lampkin slipped to fourth in the final round.

ten-point lead. He clinched it with a cautious sixth in Switzerland. Karlsson's win there allowed him to swap places with Lampkin.

Two-time European champion Mick Andrews, who finished fourth overall last year, dropped out of the top ten, finishing 13th on the year.

Bernie placed seventh in his rookie year. Ironically, the only round of the ten he rode in which he failed to score points was the U.S. event in Michigan. He ripped off a fingernail there and finished 12th.

Marland, 19, went over for the final four rounds on the continent after Michigan and Canada. Hampered by carburetion problems and a condenser failure, he failed to score any additional points until the final trial in Switzerland. There he was going for the win, tying Rathmell for the lead on each of the first two laps, before slipping to fourth on the final circuit. Those eight championship points upped him to a tie for tenth with English rider John Reynolds.

Whaley's placing gave the U.S. two riders in the top ten. England, with five, was the only other nation to place more than one rider.

Six Americans scored championship points in 1977. The other four were Don Sweet (15th), Mike Griffiths (16th), Mark Eggar (19th) and Lane Leavitt (20th).



Bernie Schreiber became the first American to score points overseas, finished seventh overall, best ever by an American.



National champion Marland Whaley rode half the series, posted a second and fourth to finish tenth overall.



Rob Shepherd posted the first four-stroke victory, finished fifth.

After winning seven events in the two preceding years, Vesterinen managed just two wins in '77, while Rathmell and Karlsson won three each. But the champ's consistency — two seconds, two thirds, two fourths, a fifth and two sixths — turned the trick.

So, once again, Finland, with a population of under 5 million, has two world champions as Vesterinen remains on the victory rostrum beside Heikki Mikkola. Like the saying goes: the more you eat, the . . . Or is it: the less you feet, the more you beat? 🍌

	Feb. 12, Ireland	Feb. 19, Wales	Feb. 26, Belgium	March 6, Spain	March 13, France	March 20, W. Germany	May 29, U.S.A.	June 5, Canada	Aug. 28, Sweden	Sept. 4, Finland	Sept. 18, Czechoslovakia	Sept. 25, Switzerland		
1. Yrjo Vesterinen (Fin)	BUL	8	5	10	15	10	6	1	12	8	12	15	5	107
2. Ulf Karlsson (Swe)	MON	6	3	12	8	15	5	3	5	15	6	8	15	101
3. Malcolm Rathmell (G.B.)	MON	15	15	15	4	-	8	2	10	10	3	6	12	100
4. Martin Lampkin (G.B.)	BUL	2	6	3	12	12	15	8	8	6	10	10	6	98
5. Rob Shepherd (G.B.)	HON	3	-	8	3	2	10	-	-	5	15	12	10	68
6. Charles Coutard (Fra)	BUL	5	2	-	6	8	-	15	15	4	8	-	-	63
7. Bernie Schreiber (U.S.A.)	BUL	-	-	6	10	6	12	-	4	3	5	3	4	53
8. Manuel Soler (Spa)	BUL	-	12	-	5	3	3	-	2	-	-	5	-	30
9. Nigel Birkett (G.B.)	SUZ	4	-	5	2	4	4	-	3	1	-	1	2	26
10. Marland Whaley (U.S.A.)	HON	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	8	20
10. John Reynolds (G.B.)	OSS	12	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
12. Jean Lejeune (Bel)	MON	-	4	4	-	5	2	-	1	-	-	-	3	19
13. Mick Andrews (G.B.)	YAM	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	4	4	-	13
14. Bo Nilsson (Swe)	MON	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	12
15. Don Sweet (U.S.A.)	MON	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	6	-	-	-	-	11
WINNING SCORE		78.9	24	116	64	88.3	136.3	23.2	15	77	58.8	42	82	