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ON THE COVER: Jim Holley was told to kiss the CR300's front fender. He tried, but almost got his face slapped. Photo by The Lump. Design by DeWest. Grayson Goodman holeshots Daytona on this page. Separation by Valley Film.



DAYTONA OFF-ROAD

*Cultural
chaos at Cycle Week*

By the DIRT BIKE Staff



Larry Roeseler is doing more enduros this year. He's won everything else—why not add the National Enduro Championship to his collection? At the Alligator, he was third.

◀ Daytona is longer and tougher than any other supercross in the country. That's just the way Jeff Stanton likes 'em.

It happens with whales along the Mexican coast. It happens with swallows at San Juan Capistrano. It happens with lemmings, salmon and birds of all sorts. Most of all, though, it happens with bikers every March at Daytona Beach, Florida.

It's a mass migration. Every winter for the past five years bikers swarm south, driven by some sort of biosociological instinct that continues to baffle scientists. They travel alone and in groups, but they come from all over the country and the world to gather at Daytona. Traditionally, the masses are drawn from the species *Motorcyclistus*, and more specifically, the subspecies *Streetus Riderus* and the phylum *Harleyus Riderus*. However, something strange has been happening recently. There is a subspecies *Comingling*. Along with the trailers and pickups loaded with Shovelheads, Panheads, Springers and Softails, there's an odd KX or CR heading south. At first they stood out like zebras in a herd of buffalo. Increasingly there are more, though. Now it's an official trend: Dirt riders are invading Daytona!

HOW IT STARTED

In the beginning, there was dirt. It's understandable. In 1937 when it all started, Daytona wasn't a road-racing event at all—it was a dirt race. Back then, it was the closest thing to a motocross that America had seen. The original Daytona race was a 200-mile beach race, more along the lines of La Touquet than any racing that happens on the pavement. The track was 3.2 miles long, and aside from one short strip of blacktop, it was entirely deep sand. "There were huge ruts," recalls the winner of the 1937 event, Ed Kretz. "When you came off the hard sand and went into the corner, there was about 50 feet where, if you stopped, you'd get stuck."

To make matters even gnarlier, that first race lasted so long that the tide came in and submerged half of the course. Imagine what would happen today if a road racer came off the banking of the superspeedway and saw a school of dolphins swimming across the front straight. He would turn in his leathers and take up chess. Kretz just laughs about it now.

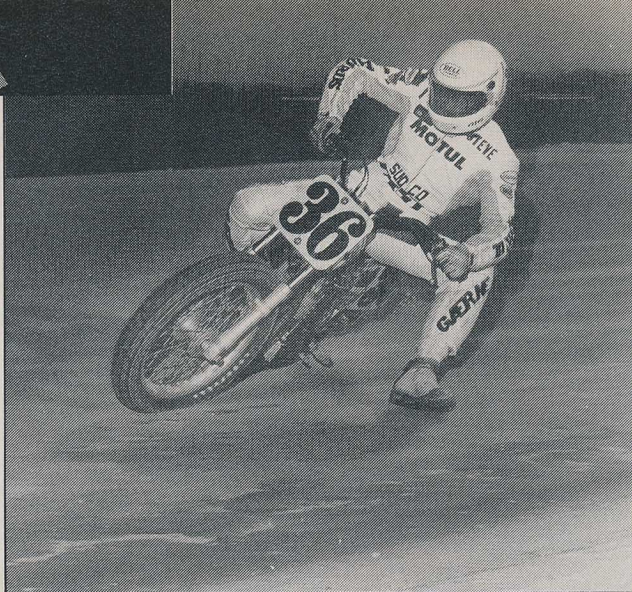
For the next four years, the race took place on the beach in the same fashion, although officials were a little more careful to start it when the tide was on the way out. World War II put a temporary stop to the racing, but from 1947-1960 the race again took place on the beach.



DAYTONA

◀ **Knowing how to ride mud was only part of the equation. Todd DeHoop looked good but couldn't make the main.**

Daytona in the dirt: Steve Aseltine makes his best performances every year at Daytona's dirt track series. ▶



He might be considered the fastest man in motocross, but Jean-Michel Bayle still doesn't have the strength or consistency of Stanton. At Gainesville and Daytona he had to take a back seat to the Michigan madman.

During that time, the migration started. Riders would flock to Main Street near the beach for a gathering that grew and grew every year. The race almost became secondary to the happening. Then, in the course of time, several strange phenomena started happening. First of all, there was the trailer syndrome. The bikers who wanted to be a part of the scene, but didn't want to actually *ride* motorcycles, would just show up with a bike loaded on a trailer. Maybe they would unload it on Saturday night just to sputter up and down Main. Daytona was in the process of changing from a gathering point for dirt racers into something else altogether.

STRANGE DAYS INDEED

During the '60s, Daytona didn't have much to offer, especially for the serious dirt bike enthusiast. The partying that took place on Main Street and the road racing that happened inside the superspeedway

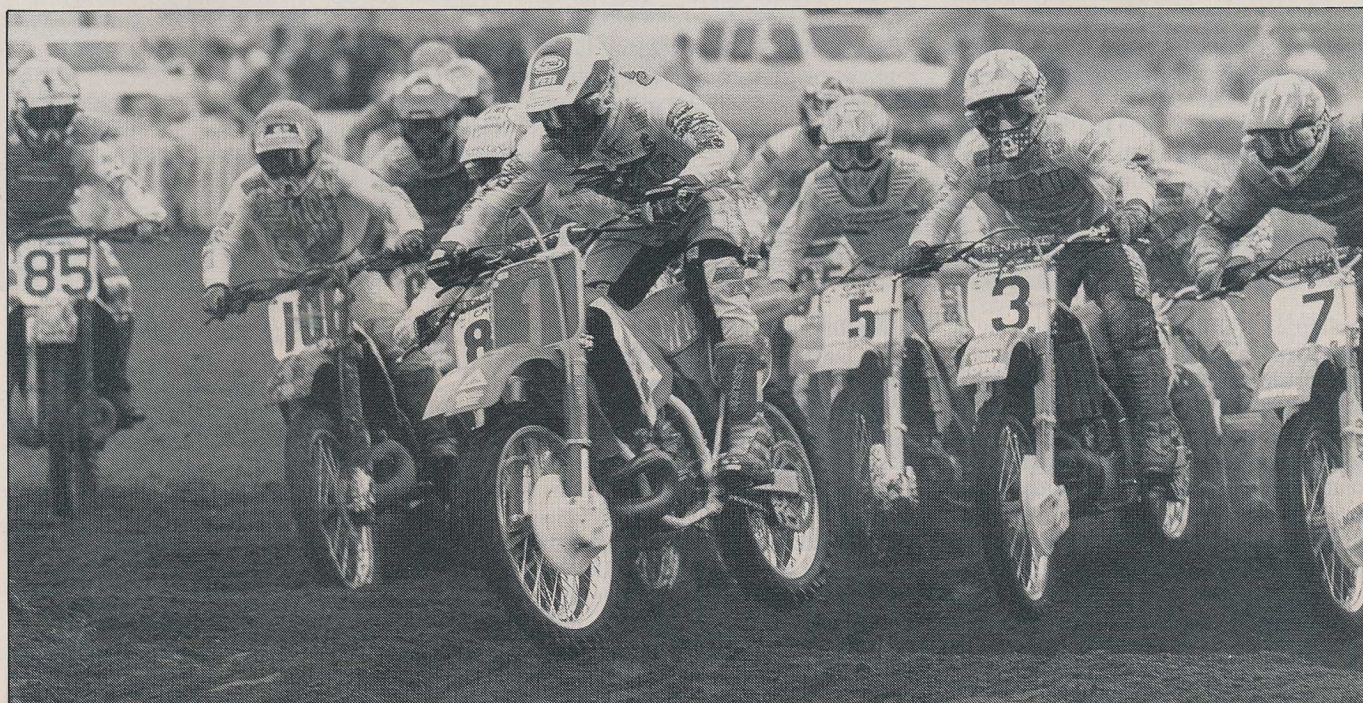
were two different worlds, and neither one of them was closely related to the original Daytona. Well, there were several traditions of note that started in that era. One was the rent-a-car submersible contest. This is a tradition that features racers (who are, after all, racers) taking the best from Hertz and Avis down to the site of the original track and seeing who could drive their car the farthest into the ocean. Pierre Karsmakers and David Aldana would emerge as champions in later years.

Another reputation that Daytona was famed for was as a carnivorous mosquito habitat. Super Hunky swears to this day that he has seen them carry away dogs and cats. "They could carry away small pets with no problem," he remembers, "but two or three of them would have to get together to carry away a road racer. The mosquitoes used to look forward to the road races because they never saw so many little guys in one place."

RETURN OF THE DIRT ERA

It wasn't until 1971 that dirt racing returned to Daytona. That was the birth of the Daytona Supercross. Only back then, it wasn't called supercross. "We never thought of it as anything but another outdoor motocross at the time," says Gunnar Lindstrom, former *Dirt Bike* editor and winner of the very first Daytona motocross. "The track wasn't in front of the grandstands like it is today; it was on the infield of the speedway. The spectators would just stand around on the flat ground like any other event.

"As I recall, they made a few jumps with



Many people claim that the supercross is the biggest attraction at Daytona. True, it fills up the stands better than any of the road races, but officials maintain that road race fans still are more numerous because they are scattered all over the infield.

DAYTONA

DAYTONA SUPERCROSS STANTON'S THREE-PEAT

• Jeff Stanton was getting tired of the analogy. Every newspaper in Florida would see that he was from Michigan and make an instant connection. The Detroit Pistons were going for their third straight championship and so was Stanton. The Honda rider also was going for his third straight Daytona Supercross win. It was more than a story-hungry newspaperman could resist.

Before the race, though, Stanton put an end to it over the Daytona P.A. system. "What the Pistons are doing doesn't have anything to do with what I'm doing. I just like basketball, that's all; but I don't think about what they're doing once I get out on the track."

Stanton's chances didn't look all that good, anyway. If you look back in the Daytona history book, you see the track is notorious for having different and unexpected riders come out on top every year. There was 1987, when Rick Ryan became the first privateer in the modern era to stand on top of any supercross podium. It was a muddy, rainy day, and Ryan outlasted all the factory stars to take the win. If you're a privateer, Daytona is the right supercross to win, too, with a purse that's three times larger than that of any other race in the country.

Another unexpected winner was Stanton himself, back in '89. Back then, Rick Johnson was expected to win anything he entered, but the week before at Gainesville, the Johnson era suddenly and unexpectedly ended. That was when another rider landed on him, breaking the Honda star's wrist. That injury eventually led to Johnson's retirement and opened the door for the Stanton era, which officially began the following week at Daytona. Stanton won again in '90, becoming only the second back-to-back winner in the history of the race—the first being Darrell Schultz in '81 and '82. The only rider

a bulldozer. Nothing very big, especially by today's standards. The whole thing was very amateurish—but all motocross was amateurish back then. They did let us stand on the same victory podium that the road racers used. They asked me to say a few words, and I remember very clearly what I said: 'This is going to be big. It might not be long before the Daytona 200 is moved to Saturday as an opening act for the main event—the motocross.' That didn't go over too well. Most of the people who were watching were either road racers or road-race fans—but I had heard talk of moving the Supercross to Sunday.'

That first year Lindstrom took the 250 class over Barry Higgins and Gary Bailey,



Jeff Stanton is on his way to inking his name in the motocross history book. This year he won his third consecutive Daytona Supercross, something that no one else has done.

to win three Daytonas was Bob Hannah, but that wasn't three in a row. It took him eight years. So it seemed like too much to expect Stanton to win back-to-back-to-back on the most unpredictable track on the circuit. After all, *Hannah* couldn't even do it.

Saturday morning the rain began to fall. It looked like '87 all over again. Bike-eating ruts formed, swampy sections grew larger and larger. "The track has only one line," complained Jean-Michel Bayle. "It's very difficult to ride, very muddy." Just staying up was a challenge. That was proven in the first turn. There was a massive pile-up that took out Mike Fisher and Bayle, among others. In the meantime, Stanton was in front.

while Bryan Kinney won a separate 500 class. Daytona makes no claim at being the first supercross, even though technically it predates the Superbowl in L.A. Later, however, Daytona was part of the first Super Series of Motocross, which also consisted of Los Angeles and Houston. Within three years, the motocross was moved to its present location in front of the grandstands, and at that time you could say that Daytona was a real supercross, by today's definition of the word (even though that term didn't exist until much later). In those early years Gary Bailey took his place as Daytona's official track builder, a post he still holds. He would use many of the techniques that indoor track builders were pioneering at the

All he would have to do is stay up and he would be the first three-in-a-row winner at Daytona.

In the following laps, Stanton did just that. While Bayle charged through the pack, fell, got up, fell and charged through the pack again, Stanton kept a steady pace to win the race. Bayle was the fastest man on the track, though. Toward the end of the race the Frenchman passed Jeff Matiasovich to move into third despite his setbacks.

So Stanton proved that he deserves a place in the history books. Of course, the real test will come next year. Will Stanton become the winningest rider in Daytona history? Stay tuned. •

time, plus some unique ones he thought up on his own.

One feature that got a lot of attention was the use of telephone poles for whoops. Much of the soil around Daytona is loose sand, and Bailey complained that his hard-built obstacles were deteriorating long before the race was over. He countered that by placing telephone poles under the sand. Unfortunately, the spoke still hasn't been made that can stand up to the impact generated when a hard-charging Bob Hannah hits one of those Ma Bell whoops. Eventually, the poles went away.

MORE DIRT

Soon the Alligator Enduro was added to the week of motorcycle-related activities at

R.J.'S DAYTONA MEMORIES JOHNSON'S FLORIDA ROLLER-COASTER

• "I remember the first time I went to Daytona, which was in 1982. I remember flying in and going to the hotel, and I could hear the superbikes from my room. I wasn't old enough to rent a car yet, so I had to walk down to the track. I recall seeing Freddie Spencer, Eddie Lawson, Fred Merkel and Steve Wise. Those guys were going *soooo* fast—I'd never seen a road race before. They were practicing and doing timed qualifying, and they were going so fast it amazed me. To this day, whenever I think of road racing, that's the memory that comes first, my walking up to the fence and seeing these guys come by at 180 mph.

"As far as the motocross goes, I've had good times, bad times and terrible times at Daytona Cycle Week. The good times were '84, '86 and '88. In '84 I passed Johnny O'Mara for second on the last lap, and he tried to jump over my head at the finish, but I ended up with second place. I won in '86 and '88, and both were great days. I think '88 was one of my best rides ever—I got a great start and left everybody so far behind that I felt I was in a race by myself. Every-



Rick Johnson's two-wheeled career officially ended at Daytona, but the "Bad Boy" may still see action on the high banks, in a four-wheeler (see "Rick's Pit-board Special" in this issue).

thing just felt right—the training the week before, bike setup, everything felt just perfect. Those were great times.

"The bad times were '87 and '90. In '87 Ron Lechien crashed in front of me on the start, and my head got caught in his rear wheel. It cleaned off my visor and goggles, and I had to come from behind, from 40th to tenth place, with no goggles and no visor. Worse than that, though, was '90, which was terrible. I felt I'd finally regained my composure on the bike at Gainesville the previous week, and I won. It felt good to win at the place where my '89 season was cut short, but I didn't have my bike set up right for the supercross and I came up short over a jump and crashed. I ended up breaking my right hand again.

"That was my worst time at Speed Week, because that injury closed the book on my two-wheeled racing career. I arrived in '82,

to the big time, and had the door closed in '90. I've had great times with good friends down there, helping Kenny Roberts and Eddie Lawson pit in the 200—I think that was '84 or '85—and Bubba Shobert in '88. Bubba's bike vapor-locked or something on the line, and wouldn't restart. He was almost a whole lap down, and he came to finish second, which was a phenomenal ride.

"Florida has always been like a second home, because I've spent more time there than I've ever spent at any other place. We always spend the whole week there, so you learn where the good restaurants and happening places are. Everywhere else, we just fly in, race and leave. Daytona has had some great memories, and hopefully it'll have some great future memories for me. With luck, I'll be there, racing the Daytona 500, someday." •

RICK JOHNSON'S DAYTONA FINISHES

1982	.....	22nd
1983	.....	6th
1984	.....	2nd
1985	.....	9th
1986	.....	1st
1987	.....	10th
1988	.....	1st
1989	.....	Did not race
1990	.....	DNF, 28th
1991	.....	DNR, announced retirement

Daytona. The Alligator always has been kind of an outcast. Daytona people didn't (and still don't) know how to deal with a race that isn't a spectator sport. They just knew that there was some sort of motorcycling activity called enduro riding that they didn't have happening in the speedway, and they wanted to cover all the motorcycle bases for the Cycle Week theme.

In the early years the Alligator was a survival run. The Daytona Dirt Riders would just walk through the swamp with a handful of ribbon to lay out the course. There are motorcycles still stuck out there from those years. Later, they would lay out pallets as makeshift bridges in the swampier sections, and still later there were full-on bridges. More recently, the Alligator has come under fire from environmental groups and Florida's DER (Department of Environmental Resources), so the club has been using many of the same trails over and over. The enduro has been criticized for changing from a survival run to a whoop-de-doo run.

DAYTONA TODAY

Nowadays, Daytona actually starts a week earlier and 100 miles away: Gainesville is the site of the opening round of the outdoor National Motocross series. After that, there is the amateur supercross, which is held on either the actual Daytona course or at Gaines-



Jean-Michel Bayle passed everyone in the race except Ward and Stanton. In fact, he passed some riders three times—if he had stayed up, he might have given Stanton fits. ▶

◀ **The Alligator Enduro has been criticized in the past for running the same trails over and over. This year, however, the Daytona Dirt Riders just walked through miles and miles of dense jungle tying ribbon, making it the hardest enduro Daytona has seen in years. Canadian Blair Sharpless overcame it all to beat America's best.**

ville. There's also the vintage motocross, held at the same location.

If that isn't enough dirt, there's the Daytona Dirt Track Series, which is held three miles outside of Daytona. That's where the 600 Dirt Track championship, and in some years the Camel Pro Series, has its opening round.

That explains why, in the last few years, dirt bike riders have joined in the Daytona migration. Altogether, the location offers a lot more dirt than pavement. For the off-road crowd there's motocross, enduro, dirt track and supercross. For the street guys there's just road racing—and Main Street.

Give it a few more years. Who knows? Maybe soon Lindstrom's prophecy will come true, and a dirt race will be the main event at Daytona. Just like it was in the beginning. □

RESULTS 1991 DAYTONA SUPERCROSS Daytona Beach, FL

1. Jeff Stanton Hon	6. Mike LaRocco Suz
2. Jeff Ward Kaw	7. Michael Craig Kaw
3. J.-M. Bayle Hon	8. D. Stephenson Suz
4. Jeff Matiasevich Kaw	9. Tyson Vohland Kaw
5. Mike Kiedrowski Kaw	10. John Dowd Hon

Photo by Elaine Reynolds

