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ON THE COVER: What Yamaha rider won five of the first six supercrosses this year, has been on *Dirt Bike's* cover six times in the last three years and has the initials Damon Bradshaw? Give up? So do we. Photo by Ron Lawson, design by DeWest, color separations by D.I.S.C.



# SOUTHERN MADNESS

*From Gainesville to Daytona, racing days start here*

By the staff of DIRT BIKE

◀ *Even though Bayle hasn't been blindingly fast this year, shortly after Daytona he found himself leading the Supercross point standings.*

ishing and making everyone else drool. The other is for racing. The racer doesn't get unloaded until the last minute. That's the one with terribly modern-looking parts and every other advantage the rules allow.

"This bike is perfectly legal," said Rick Doughty, patting a beautiful BSA Gold Star on the tank. The bike had a Yamaha front brake, Works Performance shocks and a Mikuni carburetor. "The technology for these parts existed back when the bike was new. Actually, I think the original Amal carb made the bike run better; it just leaked." Doughty had come all the way from Fresno, California, where his business, Vintage Iron, is kept busy year-round supplying original and remanufactured parts for vintage racing.

Dick Mann also made the trek from Northern California to Florida to showcase some of his more elaborate restorations. One bike was a BSA trials bike he built for Barry Higgins. In the meantime, Higgins brought out a KTM 400 and a KTM 250 for the motocross, and he wound up using the 400 to win the exhibition race on Sunday, which was run between motos at the National motocross.

Higgins saved the Beezer for Thursday's vintage trials at Ocala Motorcycle Park. Trials already is the smallest sport in the known universe, completely overshadowed by such mass-market activities as dwarf tossing and frog leaping. When you further subdivide the sport by separating vintage trials away from mainstream (so to speak) trials, you would ex-



Photo by Paul Buckley

For normal people, spring is when the snow melts and the baseball season starts warming up. For dirt bike riders, spring is when the mud that's been crusted under your CR250's front fender since last October starts to sprout small, green buds.

For normal people, spring is when the sun comes back and birds start singing. For dirt bike riders, spring is when you realize that motocross boots that haven't been worn in four months mutate into something that will only fit a completely non-human foot, and have to be broken in all over again.

For normal people, spring is a time to ponder the wonders of life and creation. For dirt bike riders, spring is a time to wonder about the chemistry that causes gasoline to turn into a completely non-flammable, glue-like substance and how a perfectly good tire can go flat sitting alone.

Spring is a time when birds go north. Spring is a time when dirt bike riders go

south. For years, the first week of March has marked the ceremonial beginning of the motorcycle season. It's when riders pack the truck and head to Florida. Some go to watch the opening outdoor National motocross of the season at Gainesville, or maybe the East Coast's oldest supercross at Daytona. Some go to race the Daytona amateur supercross, or ride in vintage events. Others go to ride the Alligator Enduro or the Daytona Hare Scrambles. Even more go just to hang out. That's okay; spring doesn't have rules.

## VINTAGE VITALITY

The whole parade of events starts off at Gainesville with a vintage motocross. Usually, the odd thing about VMX is that no one wants to get their bike dirty. You see riders tiptoeing around the course with legs bowed to keep anything so terrifying as a scratch from appearing on the bike. However, more and more these days you see vintage enthusiasts with two bikes, or maybe even two sets of bikes. One is for showing off in the pits, for pol-

◀ *You can argue about who's the fastest MXer endlessly, but when they ask who's the strongest, there's only Stanton.*

PAGE 56—*Getting Mike LaRocco was one of Kawasaki's best moves, and it's already paying off.* ▶

PAGE 57—*When Jeff Stanton has a good week, he has a really good week.* ▶

Photo by Paul Buckley







# SOUTHERN MADNESS



*Gainesville is the first outdoor National of the year. No one knows what to expect, but everyone has an opinion.*

◀ *Surf's up: Jeff Glass will only hit a few supercrosses this year in order to make time for the arenacrosses of the north-east.*

pect maybe three or four riders to show up—not so. Ocala had a full turnout with some of the most obscure bikes you have ever seen. There were lightweight classes for the two-strokes, and heavyweight classes for the old thumpers like Higgins'. Dick Mann rode a BSA 350 himself, but didn't do all that well: "If I had some sort of sense of balance, I suppose it might help." Mann's bike eventually began running worse and worse, sparing him the indignity of being beaten, heads up, by one of his own restoration jobs in the hands of Higgins. Barry's score was a three when the dust cleared, giving him the heavyweight win.

## GAINESVILLE NATIONAL

Some go south to win National Championships. Others go south just to watch. The first outdoor National of the year always arrives amidst a storm of speculation. In the indoor races held to that point, Damon Bradshaw had been the most dominant rider since Rick Johnson, or maybe even Bob Hannah. Outdoor races, though, are different. They emphasize strength and smoothness and rarely re-



*Jeff Emig is riding a 125 outdoors and a 250 indoors. Between Gainesville and Daytona, he had two respectable rides.*

ward the raw aggression that wins supercrosses. Would Bradshaw continue his winning streak? Would last year's winner, Jeff Stanton, prove that sheer physical power is the key? The answer: both.

Gainesville's first moto was an epic battle among Bradshaw, Stanton and Doug Dubach. The three riders constantly changed positions, putting on a show that had fans delighted. It wasn't until the last laps that Bradshaw got into the lead to stay, winning the moto. The race didn't really seem to resolve anything at the time; it seemed that Bradshaw just happened to be the rider in the lead at the time the checkered flag came out. The



*Guy Cooper is Mr. Second-Place at Gainesville. Last year he had to take a back seat to Mike Kiedrowski; this year it was Mike LaRocco.*

moto win might have been strategy, but then it might have been luck, too.

In the second moto, it was Stanton, Bradshaw and Jean-Michel Bayle out in front in a much less intensive dual. Bradshaw eventually fell down, providing a very unclimactic end to his win streak. Whether it was pressure, fatigue or just bad luck, Stanton again took the overall in the first outdoor of the year.



# SOUTHERN MADNESS

## SWAMP THING

For off-roaders, the week centers around Thursday's Alligator enduro. This is a strange race for a lot of reasons. First of all, it's short—about 65 miles long—but no one ever complains that it's *too* short. It's not a National Championship event, but still, the best enduro riders in the country show up and ride it. The Alligator is important, but no one could tell you why.

In the past the event started around the speedway, right in the middle of town. There was a certain amount of pavement riding required to get to the trail, and all the sections that were easily accessible were getting rather used up. The whoops were getting so large that most Floridians were beginning to think of them as hill-climbs. This year, the event started about 50 miles west of Daytona, so the terrain was brand-new.

This year, like past years, it was an off-road all-star event. Very few other races will draw the likes of cross-country riders such as Scott Summers and Duane Conner right alongside desert stars like Larry Roeseler. Of course, all of the National enduro guys are there, like Jeff Russell, Kevin Hines and Randy Hawkins. Everybody who is anybody in off-road racing shows up at the Alligator.

Despite having new terrain, this year the enduro turned out to be a low-scoring ride. Joey Hopkins won with a one-point score. Many of the other top riders complained that they got lost, but Hopkins' win was without controversy; his only other major win was the Alligator two years ago. He proved he knows how to do it.

## DAYTONA HARE SCRAMBLES

Most of the riders who rode the Alligator packed up and headed south for the Daytona Hare Scrambles, held on Russell's Alligator Farm the next day. Weird story here. The ranch, which specializes in raising alligators for food (a legal, although controversial, occupation) was being investigated for improper practices. The money raised from the hare scrambles actually would be used to help in court costs.

The course was short and fast, but very difficult for passing. It was obvious right from the start who the top guns were in hare scrambles. The enduro guys who had the low scores in yesterday's Alligator struggled to keep up while Scott Summers, Duane Conner and Kenny Keylon pulled away. The three leaders changed positions several times a lap. "We took turns making mistakes," said Summers later. "I'd get stuck and they would both go by, then one of them would get stuck." The man who got stuck least was Conner. Keylon and Summers followed, then it was Suzuki's Czech teamster Jan Hrehor in a virtual tie with Randy Hawkins.

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*Everyone wants to beat Damon. It's tough to be on top.*

## DAYTONA SUPERCROSS

Summers, Hawkins and the rest all were in spectator mode the following day. It was time for the premier event of the week, maybe even of the entire season. The Daytona Supercross is like no other race in the world. It's an outdoor indoor, a race that requires the endurance of an outdoor National and the guts of a supercross. It also was to be the continuation of the Bradshaw/Stanton conflict. Bradshaw still had a supercross winning streak intact, but Stanton had won the last three

Daytonas in a row. "The pressure is all on him," said Stanton. "He's the one who's leading in the points. He's the one who has to win. For me, this is just another race."

Another thing that makes Daytona unusual is the size of the field. The track is big, so they put a lot of riders on it. If you don't get a good start, you have to pass unending numbers of racers, and if you get the holeshot, you have to deal with lappers by the third lap. It's usually rougher than any other race in the coun-

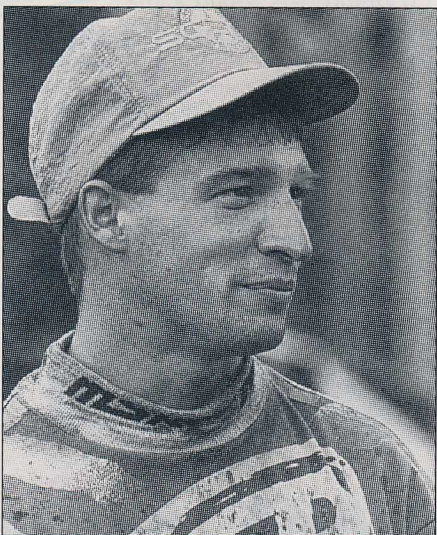


This might be the year of the four-stroke in off-road racing. Kevin Hines rode his new Husky 350 at the Alligator and at the hare scrambles. Scott Summers, Jimmy Ericson and Mark Hyde also will be making thumping sounds in the woods this year.

As if the Alligator Enduro wasn't enough, the serious gluttons for punishment ride the Daytona Hare Scrambles the very next day. ▶



Randy Hawkins can never be counted out. For him, the southern trek is a vacation from the "serious" business of winning the National Enduro Title.



Who is this man? Duane Conner is the only hare-scrambles rider who can put a dent in the Scott Summers Express.



Dick Mann, the guru of vintage racing, tries trials at Ocala: "A sense of balance might help."

**ALLIGATOR ENDURO**  
Daytona, FL

1. Joey Hopkins.....Kaw
2. Alan Gravitt.....KTM
3. George Waller.....Suz
4. Kevin Hines.....Hus
5. Jeff Russell.....KTM

**GATORBACK NATIONAL MOTOCROSS**  
Gainesville, FL

1. Jeff Stanton.....Hon  
250cc
2. Jean-Michel Bayle.....Hon
3. Mike Kiedrowski.....Kaw
4. Jeff Ward.....Kaw
5. Doug Dubach.....Yam  
125cc
1. Mike LaRocco.....Kaw
2. Guy Cooper.....Suz
3. Ron Tichenor.....Suz
4. Doug Henry.....Yam
5. Jeremy McGrath.....Hon

**DAYTONA SUPERCROSS**  
Daytona, FL

- 250cc
1. Jeff Stanton.....Hon
2. Damon Bradshaw.....Yam
3. Jean-Michel Bayle.....Hon
4. Mike LaRocco.....Kaw
5. Mike Kiedrowski.....Kaw  
125cc
1. Brian Swink.....Suz
2. Jimmy Button.....Yam
3. Doug Henry.....Yam
4. Ezra Lusk.....Suz
5. Barry Carsten.....Suz



Chris Carr has missed winning the Daytona Short track for the last two years despite being the favorite. This year, he finally won.

# SOUTHERN MADNESS

try—and then there's the weather. Two out of three years it seems to rain on the supercross, making it an anything-can-happen kind of race.

This year, Stanton would be the man to keep his win streak alive. He became the first man to win four Daytona supercrosses in a row. Bradshaw gave him a great race in the early laps, but made mistakes and couldn't catch back up to the Honda rider in the late laps. The crowd wanted a Stanton/Bradshaw race, and that's exactly what it got.

## THERE'S MORE

There were more dirt races in Florida during the week of March 1-8. There was the Daytona 600cc National Dirt Track on Saturday night, a race which fell to Chris Carr this year. There was another enduro on Sunday, there were amateur motocrosses associated both with Gainesville and with Daytona. The truth is that in no other area are there so many different forms of racing going on in such a short amount of time, whether you want to watch or just ride. This beginning-of-the season stuff is serious business in the motorcycle world, even if you live in a state like Florida that doesn't really have a winter. Spring is spring wherever you are—it's always worth a good celebration. □

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