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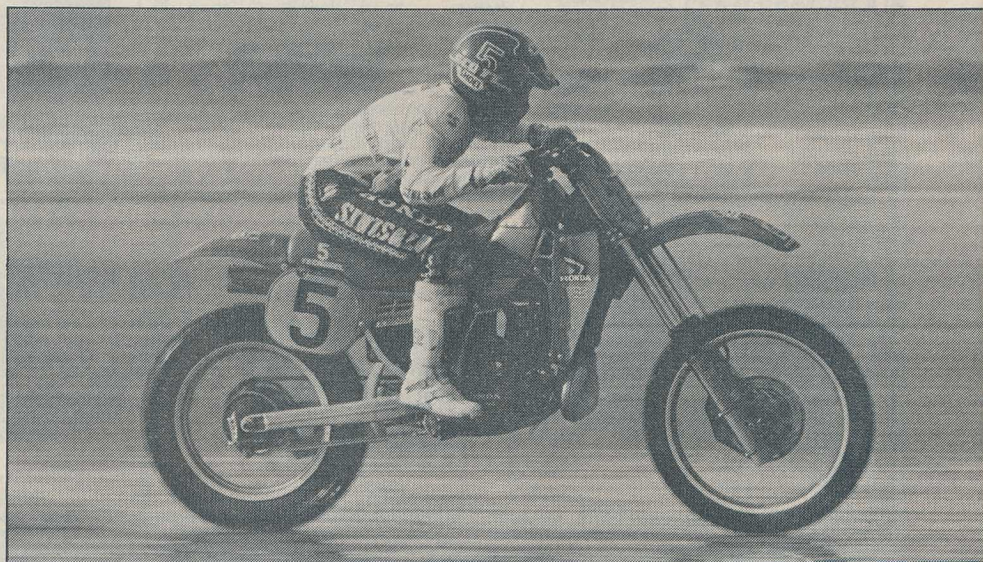
*Another Dutch master  
takes the trophy*

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*By Luc Verbeke*

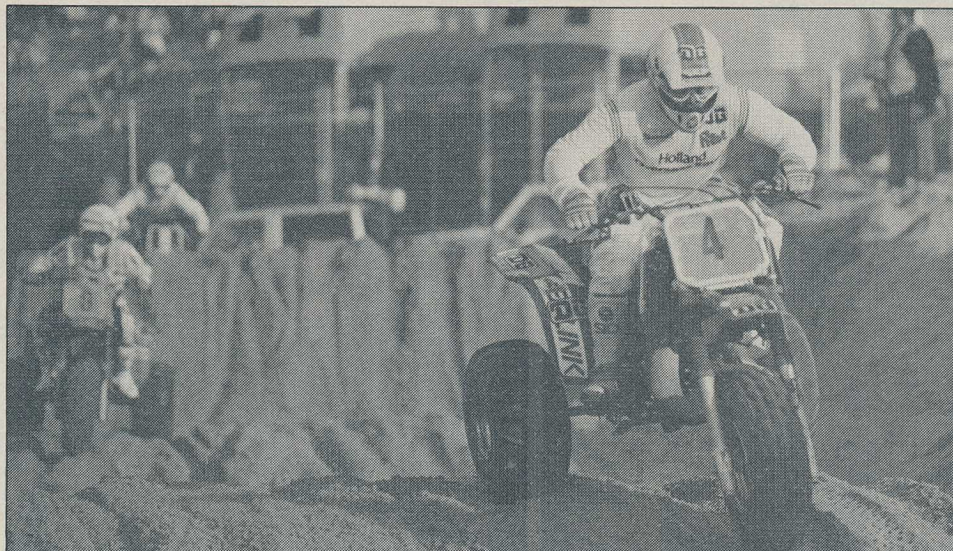
# FLAT-OUT IN HOLLAND!

In the European theatre, beach racing has become the premier form of competition during the long winter between Grand Prix seasons. Perhaps the most famous of these events is the le Touquet beach enduro, held each year in the north of France, where 1200 wildly enthusiastic riders pound each other with French sand for more than three hours during the brutal competition. Due to the enormous visual and commercial success of this event, beach racing is now exploding all over the world: Italy, Spain, Holland and even the glamorous Copacabana Beach in Rio play host to their own versions of this high-speed lunacy, but the fifth edition of the Dutch Veronica Beach race smashed all existing records, both for numbers and excitement. With more than 1000 course officials, 630 solo bikes, 100 sidehacks and 70 trikes performing for over 200,000 spectators and millions of TV viewers, the Veronica Beach event has become *le dernier cris* in beach racing.



**Belgian ironman Eric Geboers fires his works 500 Honda down the two-mile straight along the water's edge. Even the television helicopter couldn't keep up with him.**

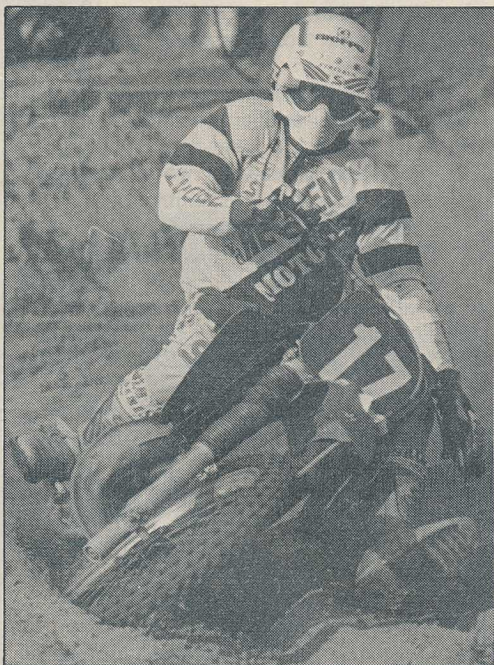




One, two, three for the USA in the trike class: Dean Sundahl (4), Alan Fox (6) and Brett Driscoll (2) beat the rest of the ATVs and all of the high-powered big-bore side-hacks, as well.

◀ Geboers (5) holeshots the first moto, followed by Sjaak Verwaayen (15), John Van de Berk (48), Leif Nicklasson (9), Franz Symans (33) and the rest of the pack.

First in the sidehack class went to the team of Jan Bakens and Theo Maessen. Just another day at the beach. ▶



Dutch boy wonder Leo Combee took the overall victory from the rest of the more than 600 maniacs entered in the sand dune free-for-all.

American Mike Beier won the Veronica classic last year and was greeted by a mob of television crews and reporters when he stepped off the plane upon his return to Holland. Mike's best placing this year was a 14th in moto one. ▶



## THE INVADERS

Most notable among the competitors at this year's event were the usual strong European contingent headed by Belgian Eric Geboers aboard a works 500 Honda, three-time le Touquet winner Kees Van der Ven, Leif Nicklasson aboard a pre-production 1986 Maico, and a strong U.S. team headed by Ron Lechien (in his first appearance for Kawasaki), 1984 Veronica Beach winner Mike Beier, JoJo Keller, Scott Manning, Andy Stacy and Tom Carson.

If there was one rider who showed more determination than any other, it was without a doubt Geboers. "The Kid" easily won the first two motos, keeping the throttle of his Honda pegged to the point where the TV helicopter couldn't even keep up with him! The local police clocked Eric with a radar unit at over 120 mph, and that wasn't even on the fastest part of the course!

Geboers' first-moto victory came ahead of Dutch youngster Leo Combee, who pulled a surprising pass on Kees Van der Ven during the final lap. Lechien, who had been running in the top ten, seized his Kawasaki and failed to finish, his bike's mechanical maladies probably caused by the salty spray from the surf working its way into the motor. The riders try to keep their machines running as close to the water's edge as possible, since that's where the best traction is found. Unfortunately, this tactic often causes more than a few mechanical failings.

## THREE OF A KIND?

As the riders lined up for the third and final moto of the day, everyone was expecting Geboers to pull off a hat trick and walk away with the Veronica trophy—which is almost what happened. Eric holeshot the final moto and immediately began to run away from the rest of the pack. Before the end of the first lap, Geboers was already running with lappers, and, along with the rest of the front-runners, started to carefully thread his way through the mass of slower riders. Unbelievably, with less than 800 yards to go in the race, Geboers tangled with a slower rider and killed his engine! By the time he was able to restart the red-hot Honda's motor, the Dutch shadow, Combee, had passed and taken the final win of the day—and, incredibly, the overall victory as well! Geboers managed to get going again, but not before he was passed by Peter Herlings, forcing him into a points tie with Combee. According to F.I.M. rules, the tie-breaker in beach racing events is determined by the rider's position in the final moto, and Geboers' fall in the last race gave Dutchman Combee the overall victory. As they say, "Life's a beach..." □

### RESULTS: VERONICA (SCHEVENINGEN) BEACH RACE POINTS

1. Leo Combee (Holland)	5
2. Eric Geboers (Belgium)	5
3. Peter Herlings (Holland)	17
4. Jan Van Poppel (Luxembourg)	18
5. Sjaak Verwaayen (Holland)	20