

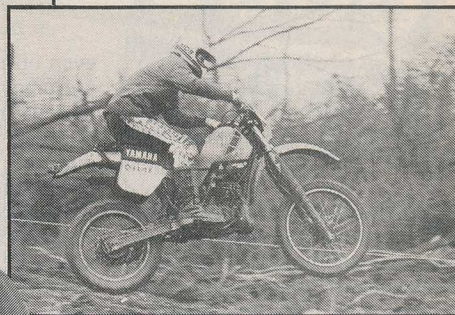
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SPORT REPORT



although the indoor boards of Holland and West Germany have attracted some adverse criticism from riders, the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham was due to host the last round of a Dutch-inspired international mini-series on January 21.

The big date on the British calendar, however, is May 28, when Stamford Bridge, Chelsea, promotes the first major outdoor event at home following promising satellite ventures at Stoke and Weymouth speedway stadiums over the past two seasons.

Also looming large is a midweek international indoor supercross on March 13 and 14 in the new *Palais Omnisports* in Paris. This shift towards the big cities is a welcome and vital one. That is

LEFT: Georges Jobe – a fast but frustrating Kawasaki debut in Genova.

BELOW: Donnie Cantaloupi lets rip with the Saturday night champs. Neither he nor runner-up Kees van der Ven (left) nor third placeman Corrado Maddii (right) tripled the major jump.

INDOOR FIREWORKS

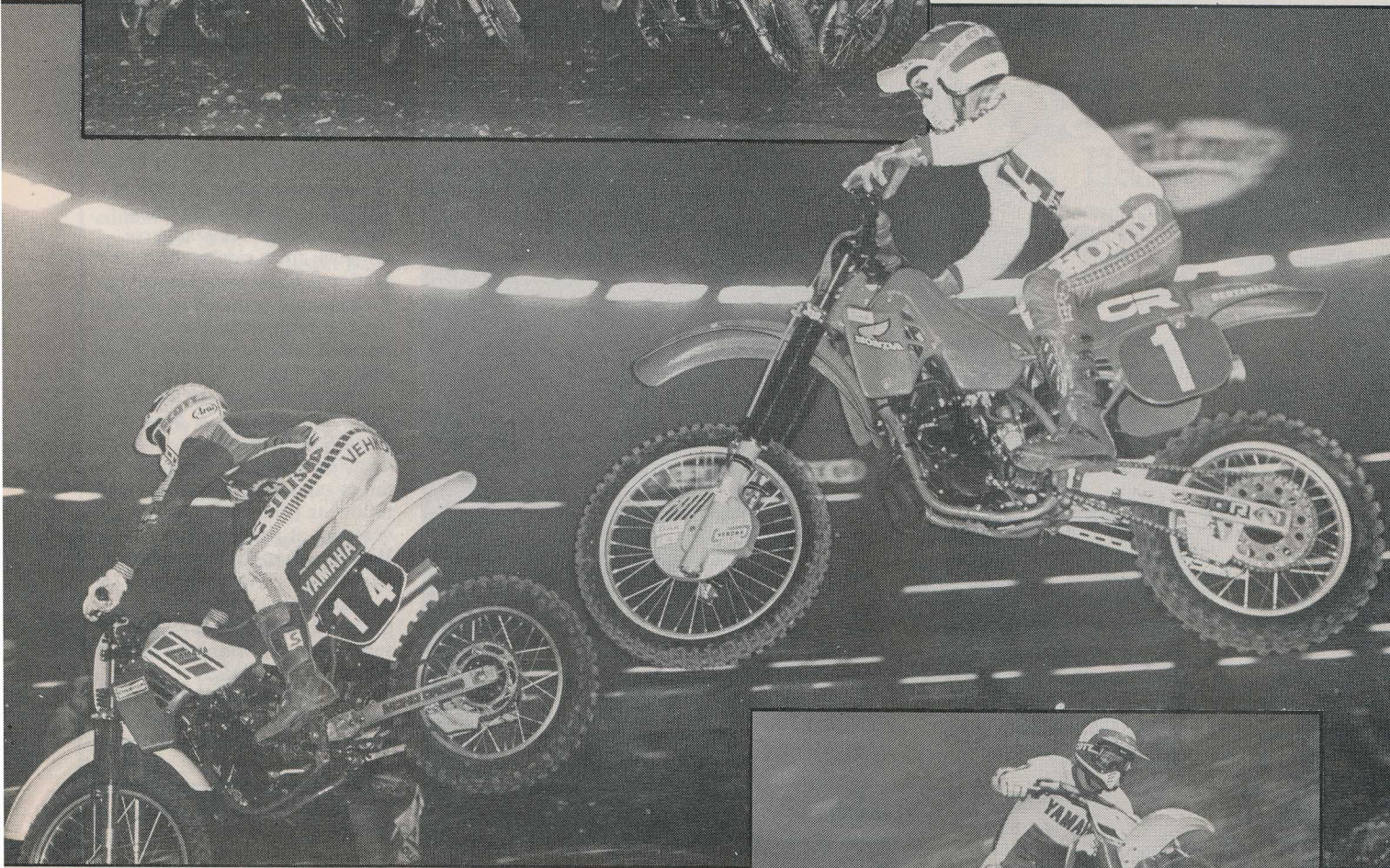
By Jack Burnicle

The emergence of Stadium motocross as a major European spectacle during 1983 looks set to continue healthily throughout 1984. Whether indoors or out, on boards or soil, large and enthusiastic audiences have been clamouring into an increasing number of arenas. The Amsterdam Olympic event is now soundly established and





LEFT: First corner action was always frantic. Andre Malherbe (Honda-5) clashes with Serges David (Yamaha-19) while Danny Chandler (Honda-1) Pekka Vehkonen (Yamaha-14) and Alan King (Suzuki-4) adopt a variety of uncertain poses.



Chandler chases Vehkonen as they cascade off the double jump. The Finnish teenager put it over the '82 winner. . .

where the greatest spectator catchment areas lie.

This winter the North Italian coastal resort of Genova echoed to the latest of its popular annual two-day spectacles in the *Palasport Fiera Internazionale*. This is where 20,000 explosive natives surge into the circular concrete stadium. Those who can't get tickets smash plate glass windows and clamber through. Others less lunatic light bonfires to keep warm in the bitterly cold wind and watch proceedings through the windows!

In '82 deranged American Danny "Magoo" Chandler won Italian hearts with an overall victory from present 250 world champ Georges Jobe. This time Magoo was back, accompanied by Honda teammate Jeff Hicks, Suzuki's Alan King and Yamaha's Donnie Cantaloupi. With no interest shown in England, where everyone is justifiably resting

or on holiday, the Continental challenge mainly came from Belgium, West Germany, Holland and Italy.

The 600 metre track was fast, hard-packed and stuffed with stones. Many riders felt it had been made too easy. Jobe summed up their feelings: "Last year only three or four of us could do the double jump. This time the track has been made too easy to give the Italian pilots a chance!"

You could have fooled Jobe's countryman Marc Velkeneers, who swept out for his first practice lap, baled off the first (easier!) double and wrecked his 250 Gilera.

Hicks was the first man to double the other, which was followed immediately by a wicked third ridge and tight right-hand hairpin. He hung on just over the ridge before floundering into the bend and through bales. But now everyone who meant business had to have a go.



Cantaloupi played it cool, found traction on the tight stoney track and took an excellent overall win. Chasing is Maddii (Gilera), third in Saturday's final.

Tall Michigan man King tried the novelty of skipping the first ridge then doubling the next two but after a pair of chest-crunching landings decided against it. Then 125 world champ Erik Geboers, throwing a playful wheelie up the rocky finishing straight, was spat off unceremoniously and broke a finger. Stadium supercross is no respecter of reputations. Erik took an early bath.

The huge Arctic-like arena was thronged by the time riders

were presented. Chandler, Jobe and Corradi Maddii elicited the loudest response and battle commenced. "MAGOO IS BEST", bellowed one banner draped over the highest balcony in praise of the obviously bionic Yank.

Battle was the word. The first bend's tight right/left switch provoked incidents all weekend. First down, in the first heat, was Magoo. While Cantaloupi cantered to victory the crowd screamed on a Chandler charge, man and bike

rarely in contact over the triple jump.

In a sizzling third heat Maddii, primly refusing the triple, was overhauled by playful Finnish teenager Pekka Vehkonen (Yamaha), Jobe and Andre Malherbe (Honda). Seemingly lobotomised German Roland Diepold (Suzuki) – a smooth and fast outdoor performer – ended horribly off the triple trying to pass Hicks but survived to win a repercharge.

Cantaloupi sabotaged all known theories up until that point by winning the first semi by half a lap from Magoo without doubling the killer jump while his compatriot berserked it for all he was worth. Calm Kees van der Ven (KTM) took the other semi but marked man Jobe was downed in a tight turn and lost a full lap restarting.

The repercharges were desperate. Diepold twice careered off the triple, the second time torpedoing a furious Ray Boven! Jobe, jammed solidly in a stack-up when an Italian stalled under his nose, smashed a way free only to find a faller in the next bend and sail over the bars. Incensed and inspired by the

howling crowd, he clawed back from nowhere to fourth. It wasn't enough, but the crowd wasn't about to let that small fact interfere with its entertainment. The crowd wanted Jobe in the final.

Georges rode a gladiatorial lap of honour, the packed house chanting his name . . . "JOB, JOB, JOB . . ." Next came the presentation of the *Trofeo FIAMM Al pilota piu spettacolare, acclamato dal pubblico*. Georges mounted the commentary platform in the centre of the arena to lead the deafening applause, winning by several thousand decibels from Chandler and Maddii.

The crowd was not content . . . "JOB, JOB, JOB . . ." The chant rose to a head-ringing crescendo. The president of the Italian Federation was summoned in his fur-lined, 14 carat overcoat. Georges came back . . . "JOB, JOB, JOB . . ." Agitated discussions took place like a silent movie against the wall of noise. Finally, to Jobe's obvious disgust, a decision was reached. But the public address system had temporarily taken umbrage! "JOB, JOB, JOB . . ." the crowd

continued. Eventually the speakers burst back into life and roughly translated, relayed the president's message: "Jobe can win tomorrow, but today he cannot ride."

Georges limped sadly away as the screams and whistles pierced fresh thresholds of pain. "If I'd been an Italian things would have been different," he muttered.

The highly physical final saw Cantaloupi win efficiently from van der Ven who survived some startling midfield shoulder-charging, while Maddii flattened King in the last banked turn to snatch third place and inspire a further breakage of the sound barrier.

Cantaloupi still wasn't doubling the major jump. What was the Californian's secret? "I'll tell you after tomorrow's final," he grinned. Yes, it was almost midnight and we had to go through the whole rigmarole again the following day!

The tale was much the same. Jobe's astonishing ill-fortune continued until, in his last frenzied repercharge, the strain told. He tried an impossible inside pass on Velkeneers and succeeded only in head-butting

a trackside barrel. Another heroic recovery failed by a bike's length but this time Georges contented himself with a peremptory reappearance and departing wave to his baying admirers.

Chandler and Malherbe led the final until vigorous little Vehkonen flatted the latter before spooking Magoo off the triple and running out an overjoyed winner. Cantaloupi, doing the triple at last, made fantastic ground with the same tight lines as Vehkonen after being trapped in the first turn, and slapped Magoo through the bales on the penultimate lap to take third place and overall victory before a whistling, hostile crowd. You don't treat their heroes like that!

Magoo went to hospital with a suspected bust rib. "Next week he'll kill me," muttered Cantaloupi. What was his secret, anyway? "I slowed my mind up, rode steady, not rushing into the turns clutching and revving it and concentrated on finding traction."

Which just goes to prove you don't *have* to go berserk to win stadium races. It just helps a bit, that's all.

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