

# DIRT BIKE

## Rider

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Win  
one-  
inside!

**ATCs-  
Are  
they  
here to  
stay?**

**Hudson  
should never  
have won-Jobe**

**Dave Thorpe-  
Exclusive  
colour feature**



**A**S YOU read this Georges Jobe is well on his way towards winning his second world 250 moto cross championship.

If I had been writing this 12 months ago I could have used the same opening paragraph.

Just a year ago you could have got odds of 500 to one against Jobe losing the title he won in 1980 at the age of 19. But I doubt if any bookmaker offering those odds would have been besieged by eager punters.

Even Neil Hudson, the man who won the title, would have thought twice about parting with his money as he watched his arch rival open up a seemingly unassailable lead in the world championship.

But Jobe didn't win the world championship for the second season. Instead it was Hudson's name that was written large in the record books as he clinched the title by one of the narrowest margins in the history of grand prix moto cross.

Now, though the immediate despair which followed his defeat has slipped away, there's no doubt that deep down there's a feeling of bitterness that will not disappear overnight.

"It should have been me," said the French-speaking Belgian as we talked at this year's series opener in Payerne in Switzerland.

"Hudson is the world champion and I congratulate him for it, but I know who the best rider is.

"OK so in real terms the best rider is the man who won the championship, but I know that Hudson never beat me all season in a straight race. I know that I rode better than him all season and I know that it should have been my title at the end."

Georges Jobe is a man who's not afraid to speak his mind.

"The two biggest disappointments of my life were seeing Hudson win the world championship in Holland and then, much later, hearing that he would be switching to the 500 class so that I wouldn't have the chance to prove once and for all who is the best."

Talking to Jobe it's clear that he feels there's been injustice done, but despite his less than flattering comments about the quality of our world champion, there's no lack of respect – just an overriding sense of frustration which stems from his sincerely felt conviction that in this case the best man did not win.

Constantly he underlines his point by first paying respectful homage to the reigning champion: "Neil is the champion but I would rather finish second than win a title like that . . ."

"He's the champion and I salute him but he can't be called a great champion – not winning like that . . ."

"Hudson may be the champion but do you realise he led the series for only about five minutes. I led for all except those five minutes . . ."

It was a very different story two years ago when Georges, who still lives in the

# 'Hudson's title should have been MINE'

Victory champagne at the Swiss GP. It was the first but not the last time we'll taste the bubbly this year . . .



**Georges Jobe, was pipped by Neil Hudson for the world 250cc moto cross crown last season. Paul Fowler finds the Suzuki star in outspoken mood, talking about the man who beat him . . .**

# 'Hudson's...

town of Retinne where he was born on the sixth of January 1961, became the youngest man ever to wear a world moto cross crown.

After a promising year in '79 when he finished seventh among those who floundered in the wake of Hakan Carlqvist's complete domination of the 250 category, Jobe grew steadily in skill and stature before finally emerging to fill the void left by the departure of the Swede to the 500s and Neil Hudson's departure first to Yamaha, then to the High Court and finally off to hospital with a broken leg.

He emerged from the pack to score the first win of his career on his native Belgian soil and sweep into a commanding series lead.

From then on he never looked back and the teenager who made up his mind to be a moto cross star when, at ten-years-old, he saw Roger De Coster win his first world title, clinched his own crown with two rounds still to go.

"It was the best thing I could have done in my life," he said. "To win the world championship at a record age, I felt as if I'd already made it big."

That all important year for Jobe was all the more impressive when you consider that when it started he didn't even have a full works contract. "I was on my own that year. I won the title by myself with no help from other riders..." Then, once more he switches the subject to the events of last August... "You couldn't say the same for Hudson at Appeldoorn. There were Yamaha riders everywhere - like Watson and Tarkkonen - slowing down to let him through and help him. I had no-one," he added, conveniently forgetting Henk van Mierlo's hastily-arranged works ride which was clearly designed as a Jobe aid.

To Jobe the whole year is nothing but a bad dream which keeps recurring despite his strenuous efforts to shake it off. However, it was only in the last month that things began to go seriously wrong.

After winning the West German grand prix, Jobe had built up a lead of 53 points over Hudson, the only other rider in with a serious chance of taking the title. If he could take eight points more than Hudson at the American round then victory was assured.

However, scheduled during the three week interval between Germany and the States was a round of the Belgian national championship. It was a round that Jobe did not need to win. He had already clinched the championship.

At that event his aggressive determination to win, coupled with an urge to put on a show for the crowd at an otherwise dull meeting, conspired to bring about his downfall.

"I had a flat tyre so I could have pulled in but I thought that would be a shame for



Jobe prepares to pounce on Britain's Dave Watson at the Swiss GP.

the crowd so I carried on fighting," he recalled. It was a decision which cost him dear. Thanks to the flat tyre he lost control of his bike, hit a tree and was carted off to hospital with concussion, cuts and bruises as well as a painful and badly swollen elbow.

While he stayed at home in Belgium struggling to get fit again Hudson narrowed the gap by winning the US GP.

"I stayed at home though I think maybe I could have ridden in the States," said Georges. "I knew all I needed was a few points from the last two rounds and I could still be OK."

The strategy worked well in the first Soviet race as Hudson went all out for a win while Jobe settled for second. But in the second race that burning will to win once more got the better of him. "I thought I could win the race. I was leading and I went into a fast corner and fell. Then when I was picking up the bike Hans Maisch ran into me." The next day Jobe's elbow, first injured in the Belgian championship crash, was nearly 20 inches round.

"I had to ride in Holland and do my

best but I knew that in the end it would not be up to me. Hudson had to do it all - the only thing I could do was try to simply score a point or two.

"I couldn't hold on it was so painful but I kept going until I couldn't stand the pain any more.

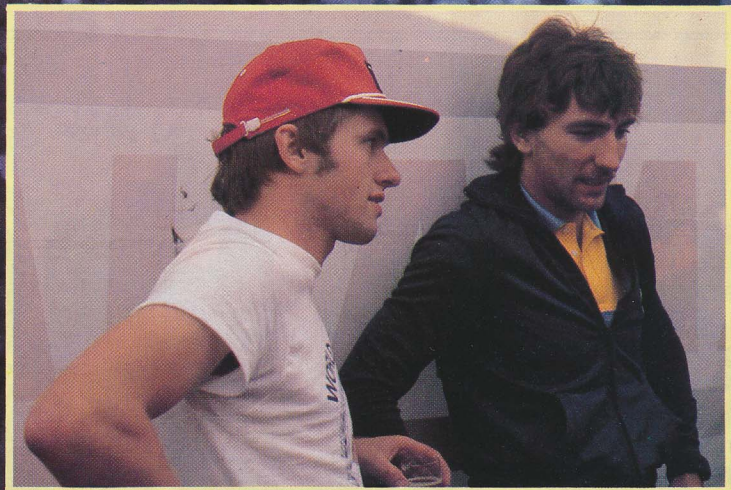
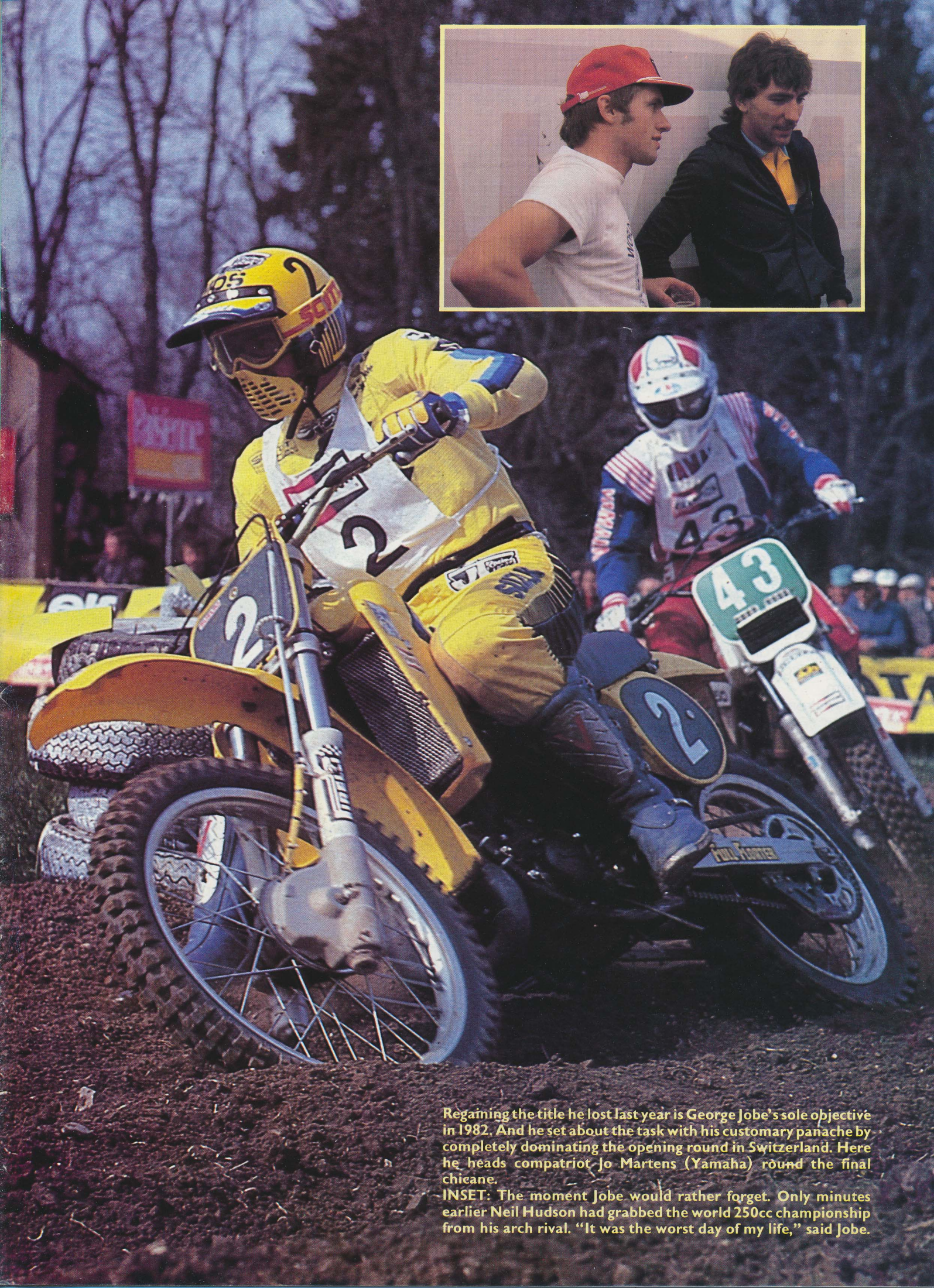
"After he had won I felt terrible. I had led the championship from the first GP until five minutes from the end of the last race. I won 11 heats out of 24, I won five GPs and I still didn't win. I kept saying to myself that it hadn't happened. Hudson won three GPs - only one of them when I was there and he was world champion not me - how can I describe how that felt?"

There was a short silence while we sat in the Swiss sunshine then suddenly his mood changed: "Last year is finished and gone," he said decisively. "I can't live in the past forever - we have to look to what's happening now and in the future. I have a great new watercooled bike, I'm in great shape, riding better than ever and this year there will be no mistakes.

"I wish Neil Hudson well in the 500s, I just wish he was still racing with me - there's something that needs proving."

And both legs and overall victory is his in Switzerland. Even the flag official is delighted...





Regaining the title he lost last year is George Jobe's sole objective in 1982. And he set about the task with his customary panache by completely dominating the opening round in Switzerland. Here he heads compatriot Jo Martens (Yamaha) round the final chicane.  
INSET: The moment Jobe would rather forget. Only minutes earlier Neil Hudson had grabbed the world 250cc championship from his arch rival. "It was the worst day of my life," said Jobe.