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34355
**HOLESHOT
SECRETS**

**125 SHOOTOUT: KX, RM & YZ
YAMAHA YZ400E & SUZUKI PE175**

DIRT BIKE

SEPTEMBER 1978 • \$1.25 UK60p

CHAIN PAINS 500 U.S.G.P.



**PLUS: HOW TO
DIAL IN YOUR
SHOCKS and U.S.
WORLD TRIAL**



DIRT BIKE

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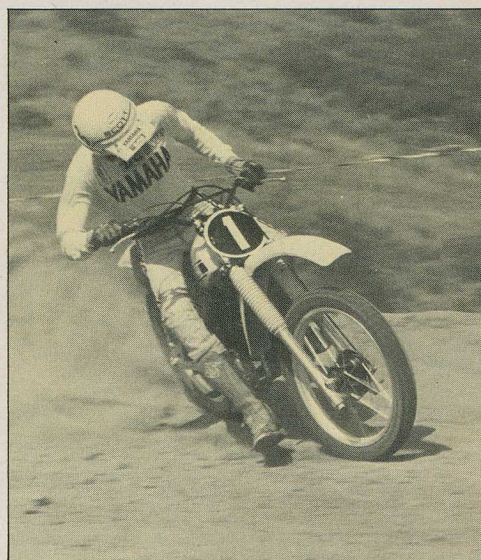
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DIRT BIKE (Sept. 78) is published monthly by Hi-Torque Publications, Inc., with editorial offices at 16200 Ventura Blvd., Encino, California 91436. Subscriptions \$15.00 for 12 issues (one year). Foreign subscriptions add \$3 per year and Canada \$2 per year for additional postage. Copyright © 1978 by Hi-Torque Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing in this magazine may be reprinted in whole or in part without the express permission of the publisher. CONTRIBUTORS: Photographic submissions must be 5x7 or 8x10 glossy black and white, or 35mm and larger color slides. Please mark each photo with owner's name and address. Manuscripts should be typewritten. Unsolicited contributions must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Unless special arrangements are made in advance, all published material becomes the sole property of Hi-Torque Publications, Inc. The publisher does not assume responsibility for unsolicited material. Second class postage paid at Van Nuys, California 91408, and at additional mailing offices. DIRT BIKE, P.O. Box 317, Encino, California 91316.

ON THE COVER:
 Roger DeCoster and Mike Bell
 at the Carlsbad Grand Prix.
 Photo by Bill Masho

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE SEPTEMBER 19

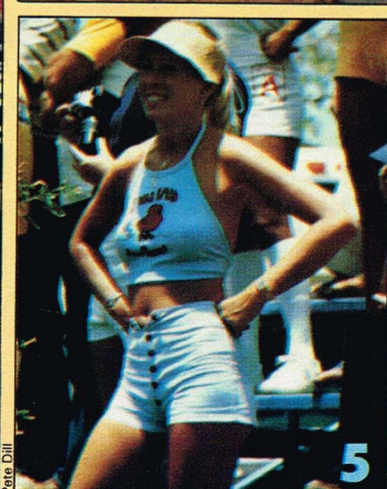
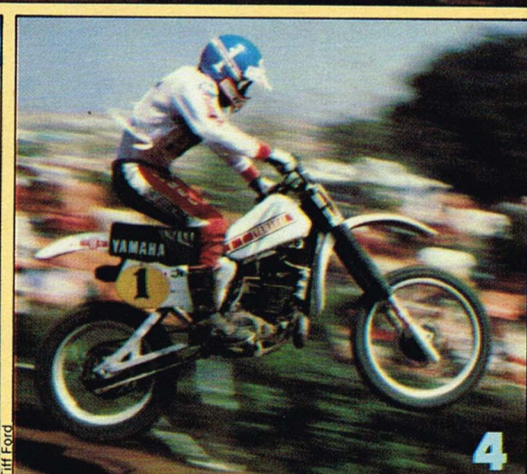
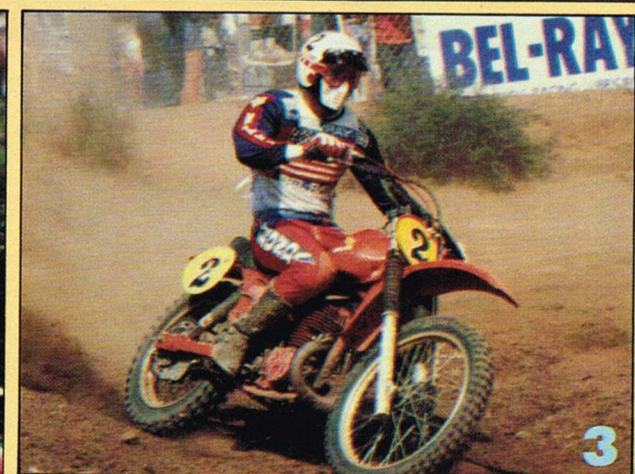
Mike Bell Top American BEL-RAY 500 U.S.G.P.

Wolsink fails as Heikki wails and the Lone Eagle derails

(1) They're off. Brad Lackey is already by with the holeshot. Roger DeCoster (3) is in pursuit.
(2) Here's one Bell that didn't crack under the pressure. (3) Brad Lackey. (4) Heikki Mikkola.
(5) Man does not live by loam alone. (6) The year in a glance. Brad hard on Heikki's tail.



Tiff Ford



□ Brad Lackey wanted to do it — be the first American to win the 500 U.S.G.P. He'd been close before, running well in 1976 until a wheel disintegrated. A year later he was holding a lead until he tipped over. Brad came home in second place, 19 points behind defending champion Heikki Mikkola, after six rounds. He had already won one GP and lost another overall on time. A chain problem doomed his dream. Earlier in the year teammate Graham Noyce had been plagued with repeated

chain-connected problems while Brad, riding an identical 450 works Honda, hadn't. The timing of fate's fickle finger was atrocious. Brad was leading when his links' luck petered out.

The trip to California meant another chance for Roger DeCoster to try to break his "jinx." An assortment of problems, mechanical and maneuverable, had so far kept him from the victor's podium: a broken shock, kinked cable, broken footpeg and a collision with a crashed Brad Lackey

last year. Roger, who was technically dead or close to it in February, had returned to racing before the GP series began in April. He had just won the Swedish GP the week before, but Carlsbad got him again. A couple of crashes and a balky throttle left him with only a remote chance of catching Lackey, let alone Mikkola, in the points race.

The sixth annual running of Carlsbad for world points race had a new sponsor for 1978: Bel-Ray. It was almost the

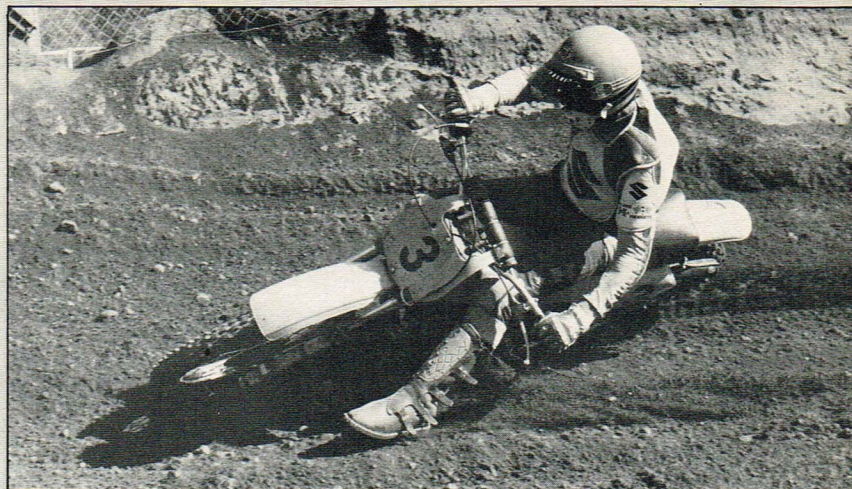
race that wasn't. The U.S. was left off the tentative championship schedule drawn up by the FIM. It took a trip to the Congress meeting in Venezuela to get it back. Rumor has it that it takes more than talk to talk a foreign promoter out of hosting an event.

So the scene was set. A few questions would soon be answered. Could Brad, who set the fastest qualifying time, score that first American win? Could Roger break his jinx? Would Gerrit Wolsink extend his

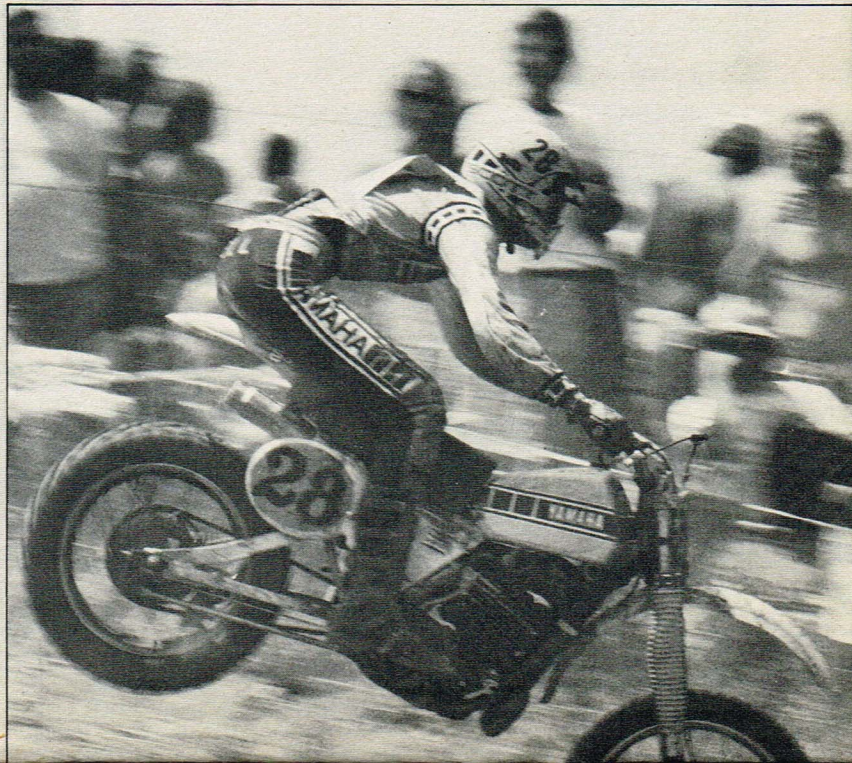
BEL-RAY 500 U.S.G.P.



Three-time World Champion and U.S.G.P. overall winner Heikki Mikkola rides his final few meters of the day, lapping Rick Burgett (20) seconds earlier. Brad Lackey is obscured by the checkered.



The Carlsbad Curse continued to plague Roger DeCoster as he bailed in moto one while chasing Rex Staten for the lead, eventually taking second spot. In moto two he got off first as he stalled and was hit by Gerrit Wolsink, and again more spectacularly with a sticking throttle that DNFed him.



Mike Bell put in an outstanding performance to finish as top American with fourth and fifth place moto finishes. This shot him into 14th spot in the world points chase. In moto one he was forced to make his charge from 16th to fourth after falling while in third when Herbert Schmitz missed a shift and they collided.



Herbert Schmitz quickly turned his so-so start into an opening moto win by taking the lead about 13 minutes into the heat and stretching it out to a very healthy margin by the checkered. His first and third placings bumped him to fourth in world points.



The ever-popular Marty Smith also had a bum day, finishing way back after running seventh briefly in the opening laps of moto one and tying for last off the line in round two with Rocket Rex.



Brad shown mid-air in his dive as he laps Sweden's Hakan Andersson.



Carlsbad winning streak to five? Would DIRT BIKE get the four photo credentials they requested? And the answer: No, to all four questions.

First moto

Brad Lackey led the field around turn one, but then his chain came untracked and the parade passed by. Noyce's earlier problems had led to the building of a super-heavy-duty chain guide. Evidently the mounting bracket wasn't quite as heavy-duty. A broken bracket knocked the chain off again later in the moto and Brad retired.

Rex Staten, who had headed the pack for quite a few laps back in 1975, took over, with DeCoster right behind. The duo duelled until Roger didn't hit a berm right and went over the bars. Another

crash involved Mike Bell, who ran up Herbert Schmitz's rear end when the German blew a shift. Mike got back in the hunt somewhere in mid-pack.

After several laps, Staten began experiencing motor problems. He could feel it trying to seize up. Rex had to drop out. Schmitz took over in front and opened a ten-second lead over Rick Burgett, Hakan Andersson, DeCoster and Gerrit Wolsink. Andersson, still not in top shape from a thumb operation, couldn't maintain the pace. Roger passed the Lumberjack. Then Danny LaPorte slipped by into third as Mikkola moved up to fourth. Danny and the Flying Finn duelled for third in the final two laps. Then, with less than a lap to go, the spline on Danny's countershaft sprocket sheared, forcing the Suzuki

pilot to push his bike to the checkered. The mishap cost him three places as Mikkola, Bell and Burgett got by.

Second moto

Lackey again took the holeshot, with Mikkola in close pursuit. Heikki was in front by the end of the first lap as the pair began moving away from the rest of the field. At the very back of the starters were Rex Staten, who fouled a plug on the start line, and U.S. 500 Champion Marty Smith. Mike Bell, who had finished so strongly in the first moto after his get-off, moved up to contest fifth spot with DeCoster and Andersson. Schmitz and Andre Malherbe had a good grip on third and fourth. Andersson again dropped back with his weak hand and Roger stalled, where-

upon Wolsink ran into him. Then DeCoster fell again, hampered with a throttle problem, and decided to pack it in.

Brad pressured Heikki, but the door was closed and Brad had to settle for second. Mike Bell took fifth behind Schmitz and Massant and his 4-5 day gave him 14 points, third overall and top American honors. Staten came on to finish seventh in the second moto.

250 Support

Darrell Schultz (Maico) and Jimmy Ellis (Honda) took the moto wins. Ellis scored the overall. Dave Taylor was away in front in the first moto, soon passed by Ellis. About halfway into the race Ellis threw his chain, dropped to third, moved back into second ahead of

BEL-RAY 500 U.S.G.P.



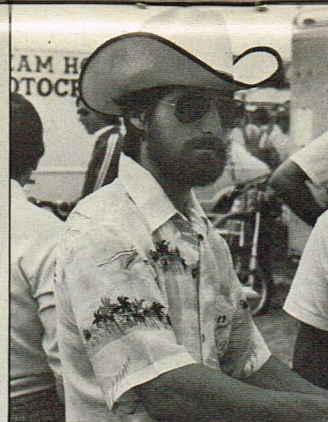
Destined to become America's first World Motocross Champion, Brad Lackey was forced out of moto one by a loose chain guide seconds after pulling off a fabulous holeshot.



Yamaha's Mike Bell displays his disgust and dejection after finishing an embarrassing third as top hoale.



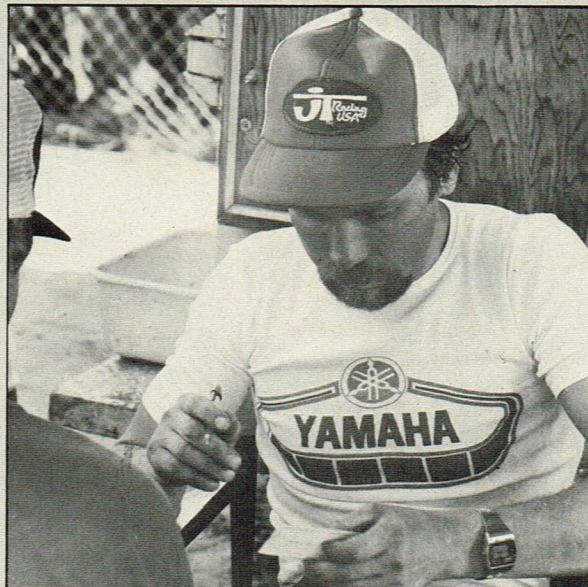
Brad and Heikki during the final stages of their intense 15-minute battle for the lead in the second half of moto two. They finished as you see them. Brad set fastest qualifying time of 2:18.4, with Heikki just a hair back at 2:19.08.



Bad Brad cleverly disguised as a Texas turkey just off the plane from Hawaii in search of John DeSoto.



Roger D's protege, Danny LaPorte, put on a spectacular riding display as he fought his way up from 13th, only to have his countershaft go south during the final lap. He pushed over the line for sixth.



"Mr. World" Heikki Mikkola figuring his winnings for the day against the cost of a new airship.



Brad Lackey fills ABC's Bruce Jenner in on some of the cold, hard realities of big-time moto madness.

Warren Reid, then tossed his chain again. Warren went after the Maico pilot but came up a bike length short at the checkered as Ellis, Taylor and Jeff Jennings rounded out the top five.

Taylor again got away fast in moto two, but Chuck Sun took over. Five laps later Ellis moved up to the front with Reid in second and Schultz in third. The overall was Warren's if he could get by.

He couldn't. The three duelled right down to the last lap, but then Schultz miscalculated a turn and had to be satisfied with fourth as Sun passed him.

Back across the pond

Brad, Roger, Heikki and the gang headed back to Italy for another set-to the following weekend. The defending champion took a comfortable 34-point

pad with him. Brad has ten championship motos left to axe that lead. Can he do it? Maybe, with a lot of luck from the gremlins. But whatever happens, it looks certain that America's only world motocross contestant has a lock on second spot, up from fourth last year. Le'ssee, the progression runs: 13, 10, 6, 5, 4, 2. Looks like 1979 might be a very interesting year indeed.

RESULTS

500 U.S.G.P. Carlsbad, California
June 4, 1978

1. Heikki Mikkola (3,1)	Yam	25
2. Herbert Schmitz (1,3)	Mai	25
3. Mike Bell (4,5)	Yam	14
4. Brad Lackey (DNF, 2)	Hon	12
4. Roger DeCoster (2, DNF)	Suz	12
6. Rick Burgett (5,9)	Yam	8
6. Andre Malherbe (15,4)	KTM	8
8. Danny LaPorte (6, DNF)	Suz	5
8. Terry Clark (DNF, 6)	Mai	5
10. Rex Staten (DNF, 7)	Yam	4
10. Gary Semics (10, 8)	Kaw	4
10. Gerrit Wolsink (7, DNF)	Suz	4

250 SUPPORT

1. Jimmy Ellis (3,1) Hon; 2. Warren Reid (2,2) Hon; 3. Darrell Schultz (1,4) Mai; 4. Jeff Jennings (5,6) Mai; 5. Mark Barnett (10,5) Suz; 6. Marty Moates (8,8) Hon; 7. Dennis Brand (9,10) Mai; 8. Mark Gregson (11,9) Suz; 9. Greg Theiss (13,11) Hon; 10. Goat Breker (12,12) Hus.