

INSTANT REPLAY

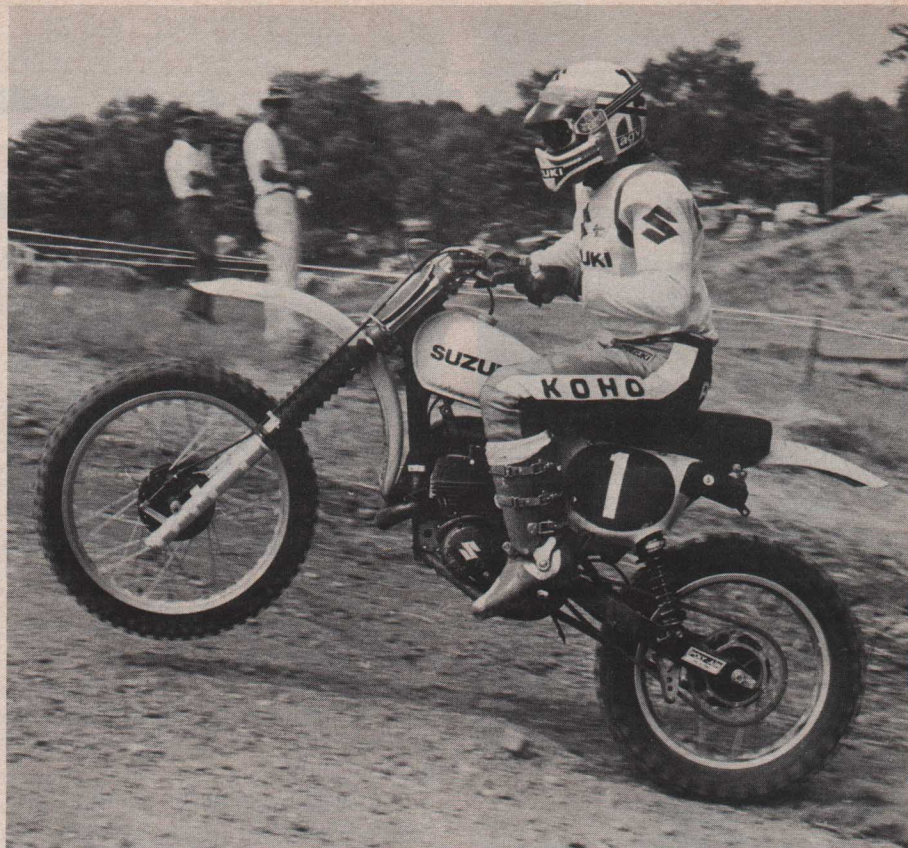
The 125 U.S. Grand Prix, 1975. Marty Smith is there. He hasn't lost a race for months. Can he beat the European champions, including the best of them all, Suzuki-mounted Gaston Rahier? He does, and then goes on to win an incredible string of victories during 1975.

The U.S. Grand Prix, 1976. Marty is there again, but the story is different now. He has hardly *won* a race all year. He is only third in the National Championship standings. He has been beaten regularly by new hotshoe Bob Hannah, a rookie who has risen rapidly from the BMX ranks. Gaston is there again, anxious to do a whole lot better than last year. Two Czechs are also there on ultra-trick bikes. The pressure is on Marty. Can he do it again?

And how will Hannah do? Is his water-cooled Yamaha OW125 faster than the rest? How fast is Gaston's bike? He has won just about everything in Europe, except Marty had won in Denmark. How fast are the CZs? These were only a few of the questions that everyone pondered before the event.

Saturday's practice showed practically nothing. It was trial and error time. Marty tried a couple of different bikes, Gaston changed suspension back and forth. Everybody had changes to make but they were made in a very relaxed atmosphere, as is common with Saturday practice. When the practice time was up, most of the crews stayed and finished the bikes for the next day; only the riders took off for the showers. Saturday was hot and muggy and Sunday turned out to be the same. The temperature was in the high 80s with humidity around 90 percent. The heat really bothered the Europeans, but the Americans went about business as usual. This bothered the foreigners even more.

The track is quite unusual, to say the least. Last year it had been a road race, but this year many turns were added, to make the track longer and to slow down the average speed. Passing is still difficult, in that the ground is very hard and doesn't change, no holes or hoops are developing. Thus the ideal racing line remains the same throughout the event. One very interesting off-camber turn was added, the only



Although he didn't win this event, Gaston Rahier became the 1976 World Champion at the USGP.



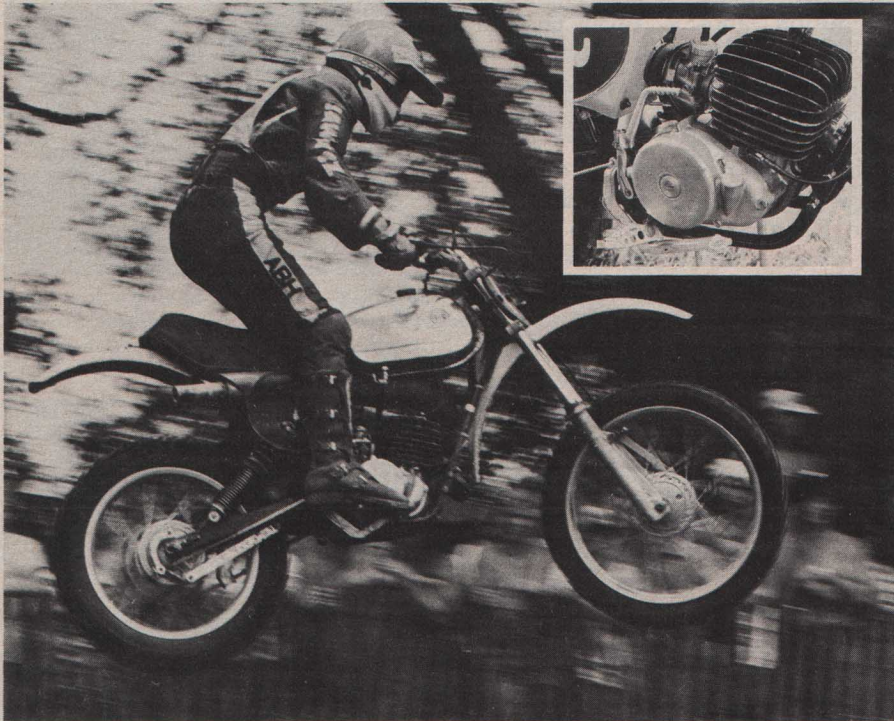
Both motos gave the many spectators at the partly redesigned Mid-Ohio track something to cheer about. The Marty Smith-Bob Hannah duels lasted from start to finish.

U.S. 125CC

But the biggest win was Gaston's



Marty Smith, on his 125 RC Honda using last year's engine, new forks and S&W rear shocks, was back in top form after a mediocre first part of the year.



Velky's (and Churavy's) factory CZs were not quite like anything you get at your local CZ store. Motor, forks, etc., are all-new, all-magnesium stuff. Very fast, but also very quiet, bikes.

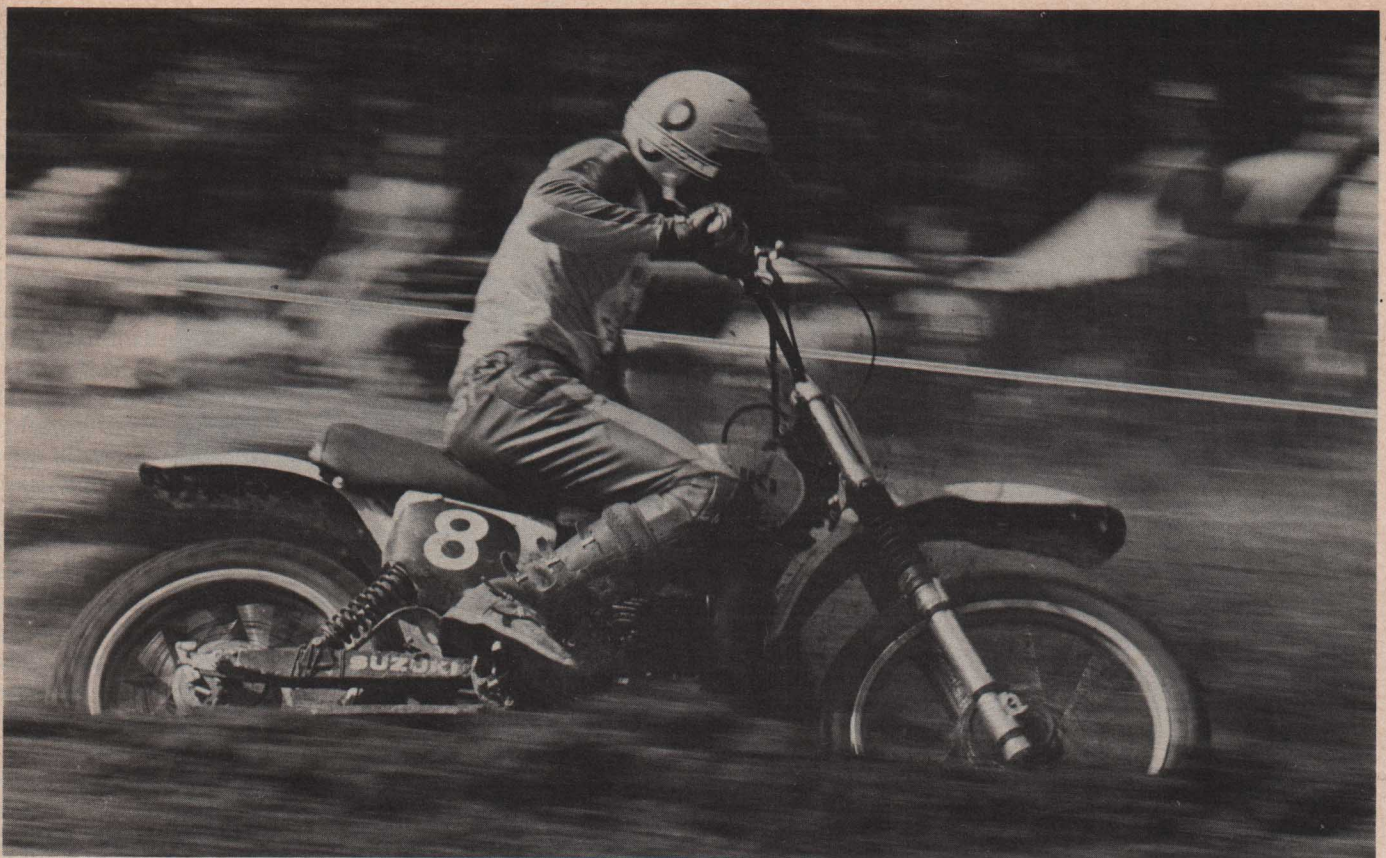


Bob Hannah and friend.

GRAND PRIX

by Gunnar Lindstrom

Photos by Gunnar and by Jim Gianatsis



After engine problems in practice Billy Grossi got a new motor installed for the first moto, and promptly proceeded to nail down two solid third places.

difficult turn on the track, and it certainly created some confusion for riders with less experience and short, hot powerbands.

Sunday morning, and laps are officially timed. Best time gets to go out first to choose his place on the starting line for the race. Hannah really pours it on and wins practice, but Marty and Gaston are right there. There are still some doubters as to Hannah's ability under pressure. He is, after all, a rookie.

It's an extremely important event for all of the riders. Gaston Rahier can secure his world title and wants to restore some of his reputation, which suffered with last year's loss.

Jiri Churavy of Czechoslovakia can maintain his theoretical chance of becoming World Champion if he wins both motos.

Hannah wants to prove that he can win anywhere.

Marty Smith wants to restore order.

Yoshi Sugio, Yamaha official test rider from Japan, has an impressive record from the 1974 Trans-Am. He is easily the best Japanese rider we have seen to date and is here to show how it's done in Japan.

Any other of the U.S. riders who did well could count on good recognition and a fairly decent placing overall in the final Grand Prix standings.

HOW IT WENT

The race is a repeat of last year's, except for one thing. Bob Hannah is there. Each moto is a carbon copy of the other. Marty holeshots but Hannah passes him for the lead after a few minutes. The foreigners are way back, hampered by poor starts. Gaston and Sugio are catching up, passing most of the riders except for Billy Grossi, who is putting in a solid ride for third. All of them are losing ground to Marty and Bob, who are really going for it. At one point Bob has a 30-meter lead, but Marty catches back up and begins to apply pressure during the last ten minutes of the 40-minute moto. This is the move nobody who has followed the 125 Nationals this year expected. Finally, Bob can't hold him back anymore, the pressure is just too great, and Marty outbrakes him into a turn and takes the lead and the win.

In the second moto, after Marty has regained the lead in the end, Bob first bumps into him from behind in one of the very slow turns and loses some important seconds before he

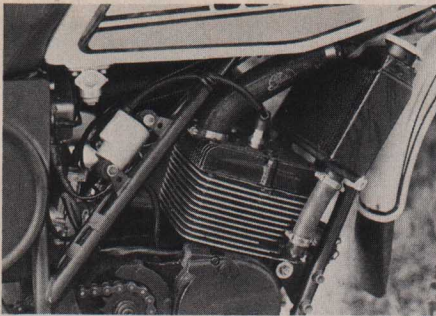


Despite the wide and open track at Mid-Ohio, passing was difficult. Jiri Churavy tries to find a way around Don Kudalsky's Honda.



Even a World Champion . . .





Can-Am is experimenting with this water-cooled unit which circulates both cylinder and head but has no pump. Jim Ellis got a tenth overall.

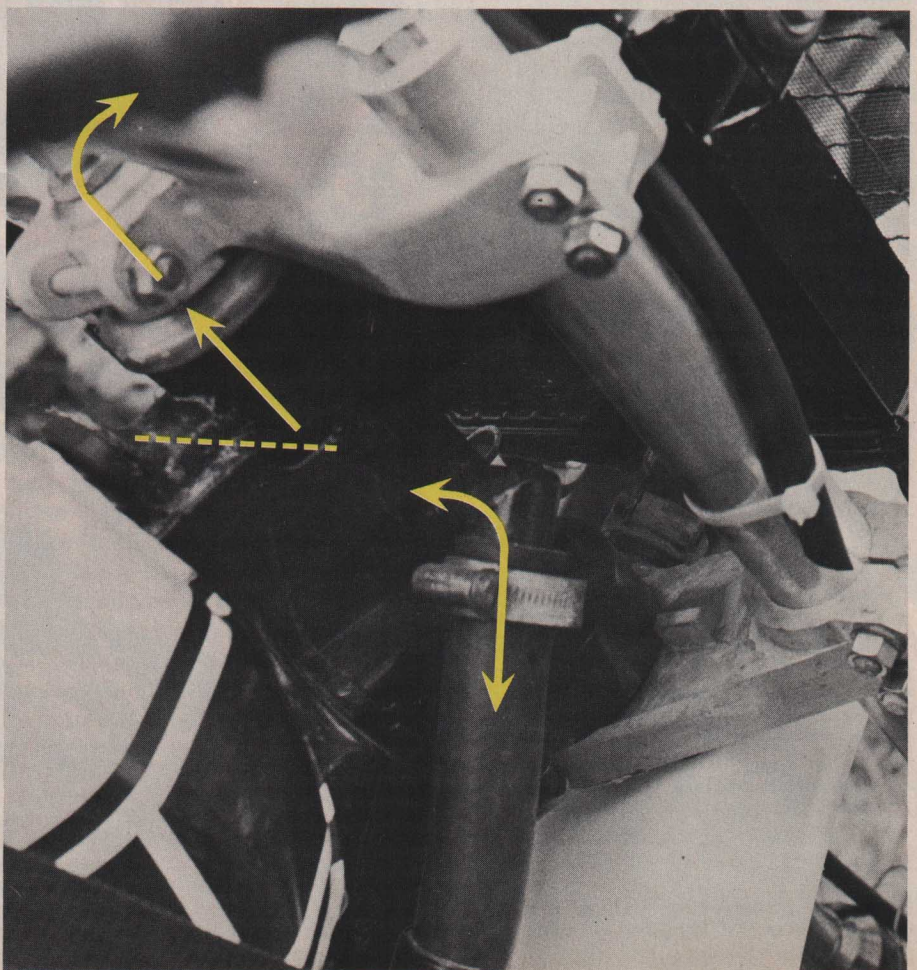
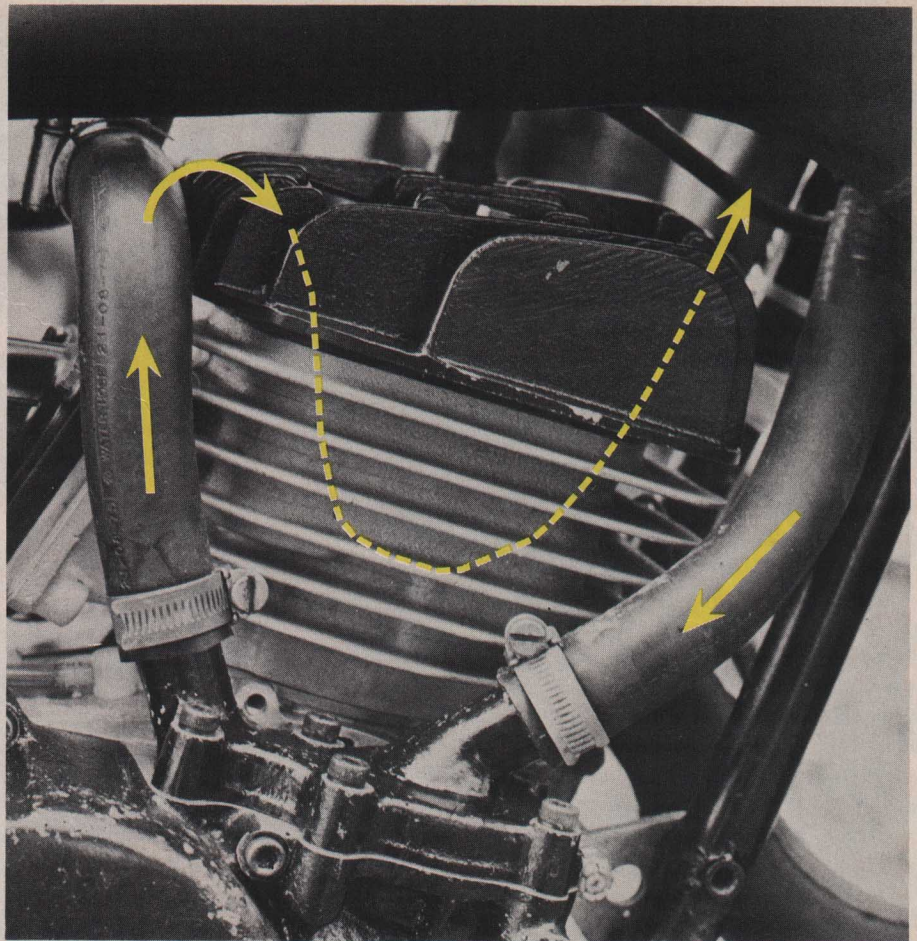
gets going again, and then loses even more time at the off-camber turn and Marty is home free. Again the internationals had bad starts, and Gaston falls down. Before he gets going again he is so far back that he goes straight to the pits. The only other American to get into the first ten in this moto is Steve Wise on a Honda. The Czechs both hang in there but can't come close to the first five.

After the race Gaston is not really happy with his performance, but since Bob and Marty did so well they prevented Churavy's winning, and therefore Gaston is the new World Champion for 1976. After thinking about that for a few seconds he goes over and thanks Marty for making him the champ.

Bob Hannah is a bit disappointed. He wanted to be in the group with Jim Pomeroy and Marty Smith, who had won the first GP that they ever entered.

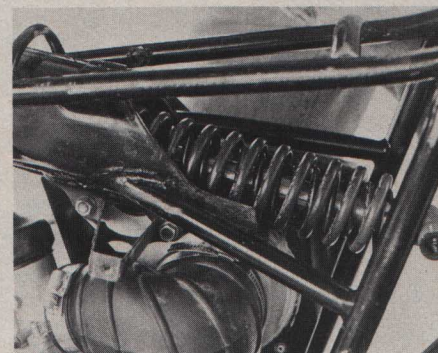
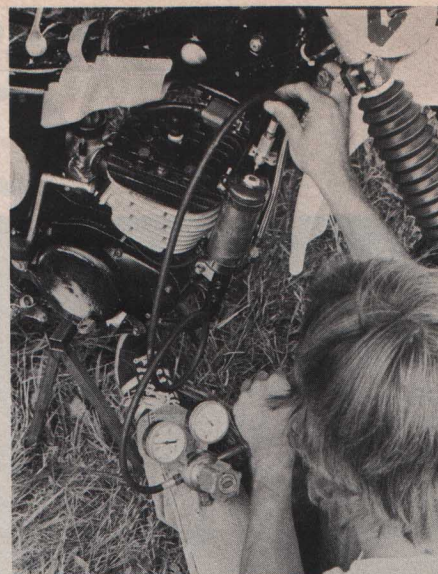
The Czechs are not satisfied either. They had expected to do better. It's a difficult race for the foreigners. A back-up bike has to be shipped in advance, so therefore they are not using their regular scooters. The jet lag has not been overcome. The weather conditions are unusual. At the French Grand Prix this year many riders didn't go out for the second moto, because they felt it was too hot, but the conditions were almost identical to the U.S. Grand Prix, and here nobody even mentioned the weather. The Europeans' bikes are tuned

The water-cooled Yamaha OW125C still has fins on cylinder and head and can therefore be run at a slower pace without water. The steering head is used for the water circulation so that the hoses can't kink and stop the circulation. The water pump impeller is driven off the crankshaft at approximately half of engine speed.





Marty relaxes between motos.



Rick "lumberjack" Burgett steamrolled the competition in the Support class with his 250 factory Yamaha. A new monoshock setup was tried where the whole shock absorber was turned around, with the shaft facing to the rear of the bike, contrary to the setup on the production units. A remote gas bottle was hose-clamped to the frame and pressurized in the normal way. A lot less unsprung weight was the idea. Frankly, we have wondered all along why the first monoshock was not designed this way.

for more torque and rougher tracks and therefore not really suitable for the fast Mid-Ohio track.

But Marty was really stoked afterwards. Despite the victory in Denmark, this was his first major win of the year and his confidence got a big boost. He is ready to race for the win in the rest of the GPs and Nationals this year.

1976 UNITED STATES 125cc GRAND PRIX

		MOTO FINISHES #1 #2	
1st	Marty Smith (Honda)	1	1
2nd	Bob Hannah (Yamaha)	2	2
3rd	Bill Grossi (Suzuki)	3	3
4th	Yoshifumi Sugio (Yamaha)	4	7
5th	Steve Wise (Honda)	9	4
6th	Jiri Churavy (CZ)	8	6
7th	Zdenek Velky (CZ)	10	5
8th	Dan Turner (Yamaha)	7	12
9th	Masaru Ikeda (Suzuki)	11	9
10th	Jim Ellis (Can-Am)	6	15



GASTON RAHIER, SUZUKI ARE THE 1976 WORLD 125cc CHAMPIONS

Though the series is not yet over, Gaston Rahier has again clinched his title. And again, no one has been able to match the speed and consistency with which he goes about his riding. Having met real opposition from only two other factories, CZ and Honda, Gaston and his Suzuki easily form the most experienced team on the 125 circuit. Gaston spent a big part of 1974 in Japan as a test rider and

racer for the Suzuki factory, and when the 125cc class was given official Grand Prix status in '75, he was convinced to enter on a bike that he to a large extent had helped develop and test himself. This has been a big advantage, since development of the 125 bikes was in its early stages at that time, and Gaston's great experience from his many years on the international circuit has really paid off for the Suzuki factory, which has become the major force in international Grand Prix racing. A close look at the '77 RM series shows clearly that Suzuki's involvement in GP racing is paying off for the consumer. Gaston has played a big part in this.

Though an "old man" of 29, he races against the kids, most of them ten years younger than himself. This poses a slight problem on some of the "gassit tracks" where it's easy just to hold it wide open, but when the circuit moves to a more demanding track for both rider and machine, Gaston and his Suzuki are truly the World Champions.