

# COMPETITION

EDITED BY MARK KARIYA

# 1000 BAJA

## CLASH OF THE TITANS

The 1000, as it is popularly referred to, is undoubtedly SCORE's annual Baja biggie. It's the longest, often toughest and probably most prestigious of desert races in North America.

Winning the 1000—or simply finishing it for most entrants—is something a team/manufacturer/sponsor or friend can justifiably boast about... and they always tout such feats. Of course,

there are no guarantees of finishing in a contest like this no matter how well prepared and backed you might be. Therein lies the challenge.

Responding to that call for the 18th running of the race were 211 starters, 39 of which were motorcycles. (Also running were 11 three-wheelers and Quads, plus a solitary sidecar entry from Belgium.) Of that number,

three different manufacturers had, perhaps, six legitimate contenders for the overall win.

Encouraged by their success last year at Baja as well as at Paris-to-Dakar and other long-distance rallies, BMW returned with two teams. Primary hopes for the overall rested upon the Class 22 (Open) team of

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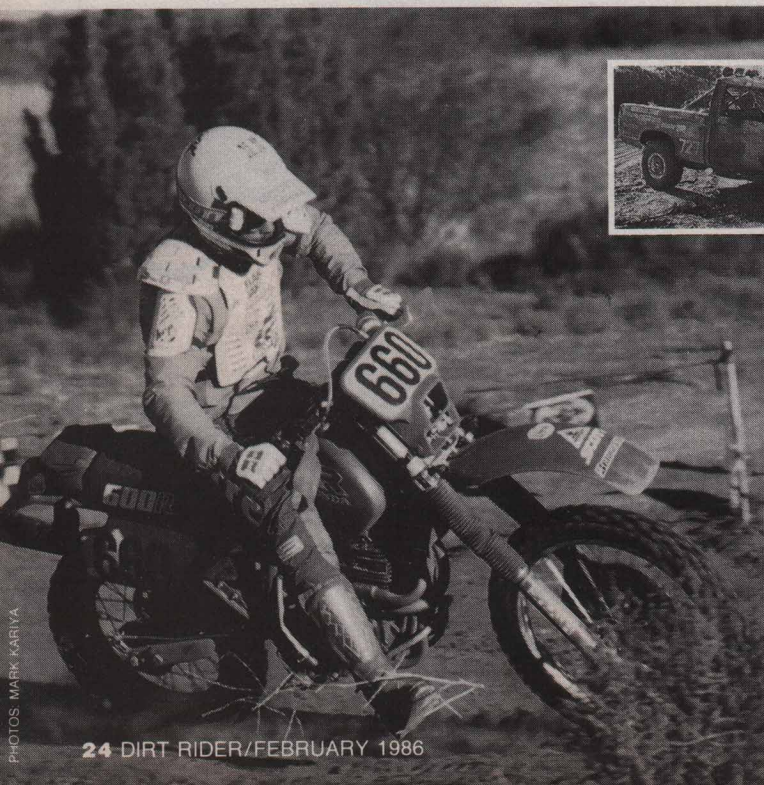
**TOP ROW, from left:** Heavily favored Dan Ashcraft and Dan Smith saw their win disintegrate at the same rate as an engine bearing, which put them out less than 200 miles from the finish. Mike Coe, Tracey Dickson and Steve Wright smoked all three-wheelers; they didn't crack the top ten this year, though. Kurt Pfeiffer and Larry Roeseler had their thumper in the hunt all day. Randy Morales and Derrick Paiement ended up with the overall win.

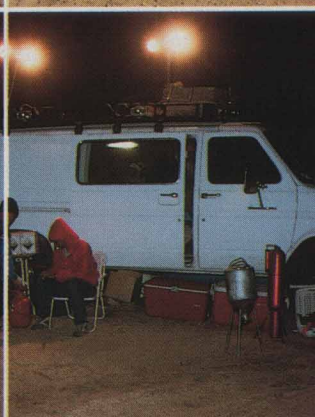
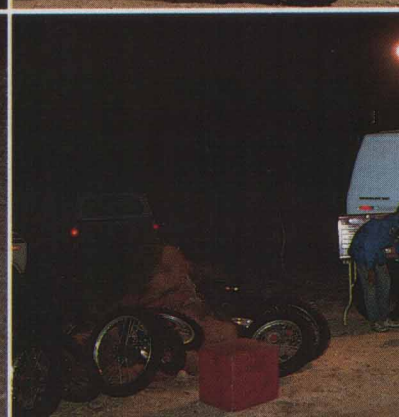
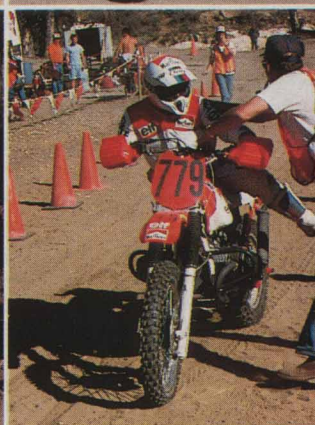
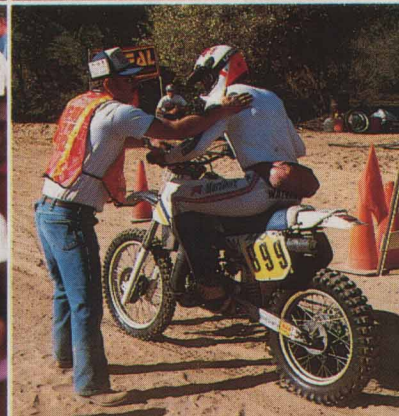
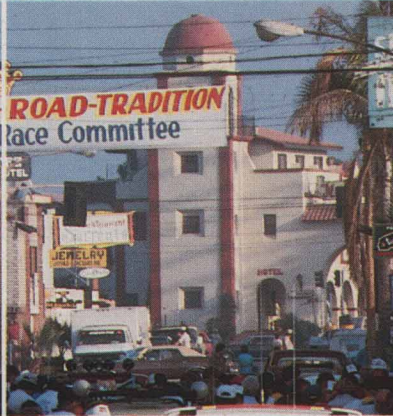
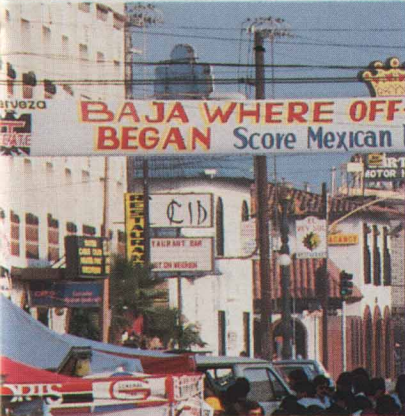
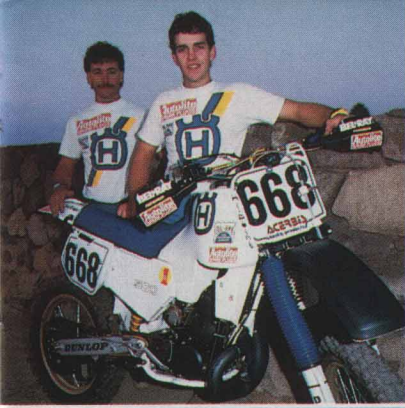
**ROW TWO:** Downtown Ensenada became contingency row and tech before impound.

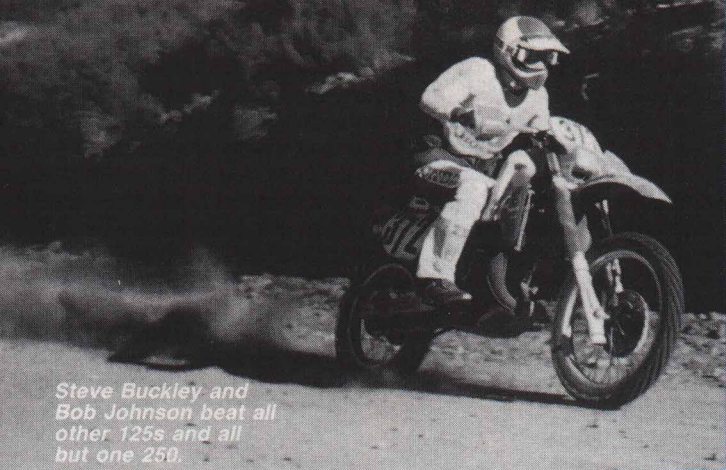
**ROW THREE, from left:** Ron Bishop teamed with John Watkins for the Class 38 victory. Joe Bolton and Mark Vanscourt won their Class 21 debut.

**BOTTOM ROWS, from left:** Roeseler ran into dark times late in the race while leading; things turned even darker the next morning when his apparent win changed to third in class for missing check three. Eddy Hau and Gaston Rahier grabbed the Class 30 win late in the race; it was their second win in a row. Diminutive Rahier wants the overall win in '86. Well-stocked and -managed pits are vital to success. Photos by Mike "Gringo" Gaspar and "Mobile" Mark Kariya.

*From left: First to start, last year's winner Chuck Miller led at several times. Not everyone makes it through the 1000 unscathed, if they make it at all. Derrick Paiement contemplates another 100-plus miles to the finish.*







Steve Buckley and Bob Johnson beat all other 125s and all but one 250.

semi-retired but still fast Tom Kelly and Warren Reid, the motocrosser-turned-speedway racer in Baja for the first time. "This was my first desert race since I was 14," said Reid. "That race was a 30-miler and my mom beat me!"

BMW backed them up with Eddy Hau/Gaston Rahier, expected to defend their Class 30 (for riders over 30) win from the year before. They made no secret of planning to win overall, though.

Honda, last year's overall winner with Chuck Miller and Randy Morales on an XR, entered two teams in Class 22—Miller and Bruce Ogilvie (both so involved in Honda's three-wheel racing they're considered semi-retired) on an XR600R; they also drew the first start position. Morales would split riding duties with District 37 hot-shoe Derrick Paiement on a one-off CR500R.

Perennial off-road powerhouse Husky also depended on a two-four (strokes, that is) punch. Dan Ashcraft and Dan Smith, the '83 winners, planned to end a long streak of bad luck on their 500 Cross Country; Kurt Pfeiffer and Larry Roeseler also had eyes on the overall with their 510 Cross Country thumper.

Soon after the sunrise start, the race up front turned into a battle between four teams—both Huskys, Miller/Ogilvie and Kelly/Reid—with each having a turn leading. It often resembled a 100-mile hare and hound, not an 822-mile endurance run.

Gradually, though, the race began to take its toll. Flat tires and finally a broken wheel dropped Miller/Ogilvie from the hunt. Unex-

pected front brake lockup slowed Kelly/Reid. That left the two Husky teams up front, with the two Dans leading, and Morales/Paiement back a ways in third.

However, the two-stroke Husky began slowing with a suspected main bearing failure; Smith nursed it until just past San Felipe, where it quit altogether. That left Roeseler on the thumper with the lead, but he had to ride across Diablo Dry Lake and up San Matias Pass very slowly since both lights on his bike were out. (Pfeiffer had to overcome front brake trouble earlier.) After replacing the bulbs at the Pass, he thundered the rest of the way to the finish line in Ensenada, beating Morales/Paiement (who re-

portedly hit a cow; Morales shook his head later, saying, "It was a long, long day; it was a real 1000,") by 26 minutes for an unprecedented fifth win at the 1000 (and Pfeiffer's first).

Unfortunately, the race was far from decided at that point. Early the following evening, Morales muttered, "We may have won this thing. Roeseler missed a check." And indeed he had... by his own admission. As Roeseler explained it, "Before check three, there was this 'Y' in the road and you had to go to the right to hit the check. I'd pruned the section and knew exactly where the check was, but there was a cop there and he pointed me to the left." (At this point, Roeseler was leading the race.)

Roeseler went to the left and joined the course a short distance later. Whether he gained any advantage depended upon who you talked to—some claimed it was a little shorter; others insisted it took the same amount of time as the course itself. After finishing, the Husky racer reported what he'd done to SCORE President Sal Fish.

To Husqvarna's shock, Fish took a firm stand on

SCORE rules, which state that racers must hit each check, and penalized the Pfeiffer/Roeseler team one-ninth of their total time (there were nine checks total), dropping them to third in class and giving Morales/Paiement the overall.

"I have no idea [if there was indeed a policeman directing traffic there]," Fish said. "It's certainly unfortunate, but rules are rules. If any other decision had been made, it would have opened a can of worms about the validity of checkpoints. Someone could pay off anybody to stand and wave racers a different way.

"If any last-minute changes had been made in the course, I would have been there to direct traffic myself.

"I know of two others who went left but cut over as soon as they were able and checked through."

Roeseler wasn't the only one who missed the check and was penalized; Class 38 racer John Etchart, a buggy team and a truck team were also docked. Husky's race team manager, Dick Burleson, on hand to observe, was predictably displeased: "I believe the overall flavor of this race has been tainted."

Whether or not it was subject to debate. Perhaps the 19th edition of the race (which, for the first time in several years, will go from Ensenada all the way down the peninsula to La Paz) will prove that challenge and tradition is a stronger lure.

—Mark Kariya



This Paris-to-Dakar-winning sidecar (above) from Belgium made it to check three. It's definitely set up for the long haul (inset). Susumu Morioka (right) was one of the several riders from Japan.

PHOTO: DON PHILLIPS





## RESULTS

### CLASS 22 (Open)

Randy Morales/	
Derrick Paiement .....	17:44:42
Tom Kelly/Warren Reid/	
David Chase .....	19:20:53
Kurt Pfeiffer/ Larry Roeseler	
(after penalty) .....	19:13:20

### CLASS 21 (250cc)

Joe Bolton/	
Mark Vanscourt .....	21:21:46
Francisco Gonzalez/	
Arturo Vazquez .....	22:08:15
David Callaway/	
John Holmes .....	23:28:07

### CLASS 20 (125cc)

Steve Buckley/	
Bob Johnson .....	21:25:59
Kevin Case/	
Keith Senn .....	26:48:15
Joey Lane/	
James Tucker .....	31:37:21

### CLASS 30 (Over 30)

Eddy Hau/Gaston Rahier/	
Kem Park .....	18:28:22
Jim Fishback/	
Chris Haines .....	18:38:01
Jimmy Sones .....	21:18:57

### CLASS 38 (Over 38)

Ron Bishop/	
John Watkins .....	20:55:43
Gene Dempsey/	
Sam Dempsey .....	21:21:49
Ron Gray/	
Steve Hollister .....	24:08:41

### CLASS 43 (Open 3-Wheeler)

Barry Mancha/	
Mike Mancha .....	33:17:30

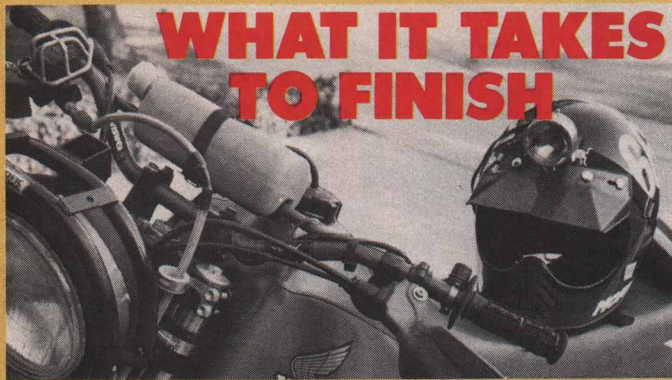
### CLASS 33 (250cc 3-Wheeler)

Mike Coe/Tracey Dickson/	
Steve Wright .....	19:44:34

### CLASS 24 (250cc Quad)

Rick Webb/	
Scott Wright .....	25:21:04

# WHAT IT TAKES TO FINISH



**P**aris to Dakar. The Roof of Africa. The Baja 1000. These are the true endurance tests of motorcycle and rider, where the real accomplishment comes in just finishing.

Let me share with you my privateer experience, which may be similar to yours. I am not a pro and never have been. I have never ridden an enduro more than 250 miles, and my racing background consists of 15 years of sporadic motocross and desert racing. My 31 years are an advantage as I look at it, since I've learned not to try to win the race in the first 200 miles.

You will have to consider the following steps if you plan to race in Baja:

**1. Join SCORE**, the organization that promotes the Baja races. To join, send your name, address and phone number to SCORE, 31356 Via Colinas, Suite 111, Westlake Village, CA 91362, along with

your check for \$35.

**2. Find a racing partner.** Seek out a person as willing and trustworthy as yourself who has similar goals and riding ability. Communicate clearly about how preparation, entry fees and repairs will be paid. Write out a contract if necessary. My partner and I have found that a "Baja fund" works best for us. We each put in \$1000; if there is anything left over after the race, we split it. If we need more, we contribute equally.

**3. Buy a fairly new, reliable motorcycle.** A good motorcycle with a selection of spare parts is a must. My partner and I take turns buying a new race machine each year. Last year's bike makes a good practice bike and is a source of spares during the race itself. When selecting a machine, consider gas mileage and its ability to run lights for the night portions of the race.

**4. Get experience in Baja.** If you are only used to riding in Florida hare scrambles, you should practice in Baja before the big race. Ideally, you should run the course months in advance, then run it again the week before at exactly the same time of day or night you'll be racing. If you don't have any experience below the border, contact the guides at Adventure Treks, a Baja motorcycle/ATV tour company. They are located at 26445 Sandy Creek Drive, El Toro, CA 92630; 714/85941207.

**5. Arrange for a pit crew.** Now is the time to find out who your real friends are. You will need a shuttle truck and driver to get the co-rider to the next swap location and to carry spare parts. The driver should have good mechanical knowledge, a cool head and first-aid experience.

You can have your own crew at some of the bigger checkpoints, or you can hire a professional pit group such as the Magnificent Seven, located at 11244 Horizon Hills Drive, El Cajon, CA 92020,

Attn: Bruce Cranmore; 619/225-6886.

**6. Get in condition.** Baja riders usually ride three to four hours before switching, and the non-riding co-rider usually has little time to rest. It's mentally tiring, too.

Strength in the legs and forearms is important, and weight training is a must.

One secret to endurance events is a good diet. I am a triathlon nut who has a moderately strict "Eat to Win" diet (from the book of the same name by Robert Haas). It works for me—but I have seen total junk-food addicts who never train win some big races, too.

The point is to begin early enough to determine what works for you.

**7. Special equipment and tools.**

• **Headlights.** A Malcolm Smith single- or double-light frame (by Pacific Racing) and a high-quality driving light (the Cibie Super Oscar or Oscar) are the Baja standard. Two-stroke engines usually require expensive (\$1000) special coils.

Headlight adjustment is critical. Also, tape a spare bulb inside the light body and put silicone sealant around the reflector to deaden the vibration.

• **Helmet lamps.** Use a battery-powered helmet lamp (or miner's headlamp) for emergencies. You can get one at a backpacking store. Some two-stroke riders (especially in small-displacement classes) use lithium battery packs to power a helmet lamp. No light is used on the bike at all. However, frequent battery-pack replacement is necessary.

• **Suspension.** Heat is the biggest enemy of shock absorbers. Large reservoirs and heavier oil, along with extra travel kits, are worthwhile.

• **Engine and exhaust.** Our experience has taught us to stay with stock equipment. Our XR had problems with an oil cooler and a megaphone exhaust. The cooler decreased pressure to the top end, causing burned valves, while the pipe and its jetting increased air flow so much that the mixture burned hotter, fritzing the oil-bathed electrics. Test any modifications very thoroughly under simulated race conditions if possible.

• **Rock and brush protection.** A full-coverage skid plate and a pipe protector are necessary. Install "brake snakes" on both shifter and brake lever. Handlebar hand protec-

tors are also worthwhile.

**8. Riding gear tricks.** The key is comfort. Here are some tips:

- Vaseline or oil on the goggle foam blocks dust and wind.
- Furniture polish on the goggle lenses will stop dust from clinging. (Don't use anything on lenses with Roll-offs, though.)
- For night riding, wear long underwear and a sweater under your enduro jacket. Winter street gloves may be needed, too. Tie a leather thong or zip-tie through the jacket zipper so you can open and close it easily while riding.

So you still want to race the Baja? If you live near Mexico, you should take a shot at the Baja 500 first. It takes place in June and finishes before dark if all goes well. The Baja 1000 traditionally takes place in November. It was something I always wanted to do, but never thought I could, because it seemed too expensive and too complicated. Now it's an annual event for me, followed by the best party of the year.

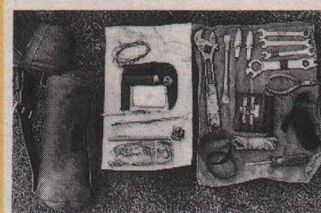
Here's to your first adventure in the mysterious and challenging Baja peninsula and your first Corona and lobster taco after the finish!

—Eric Anderson

## BAJA 1000 APPROXIMATE RACE COST BREAKDOWN\*

Entry fee .....	\$405.00
Hotel for crew/riders:	
Two nights .....	\$250.00
Tires (two front/ three rear).....	\$250.00
Wheels (spares) .....	borrowed
Gasoline, chase truck ..	\$50.00
Gasoline, motorcycle (special racing fuel) ..	\$50.00
Lights (without special coils) .....	\$150.00
Food (riders and three crew members).....	\$75.00
Spare coils, piston, shift lever, bulbs, bars, levers, cables, etc. ....	\$150.00
Miner's light for helmet with batteries .....	\$20.00
SCORE membership .....	\$35.00

\* Does not include the motorcycle, engine mods, clothing or prerun costs. Prerun expenses depend on amount of time and distance covered.



## A TYPICAL BAJA 1000 FANNY PACK

- One quart of water
- Three or four main combination wrenches
- Axle wrench
- Baling wire
- Li'l Beaver chain breaker with extra links
- Zip ties
- Extra front tube
- Patch kit and CO<sub>2</sub> cartridges
- Appropriate Allen wrenches
- Small roll of duct tape
- Compass, light and signal mirror
- Two granola bars
- \$20
- Map of the course
- Tire irons
- Rag
- Tow rope
- Two "stuck stubs" and a pen for writing notes
- Control cables (usually only throttle)