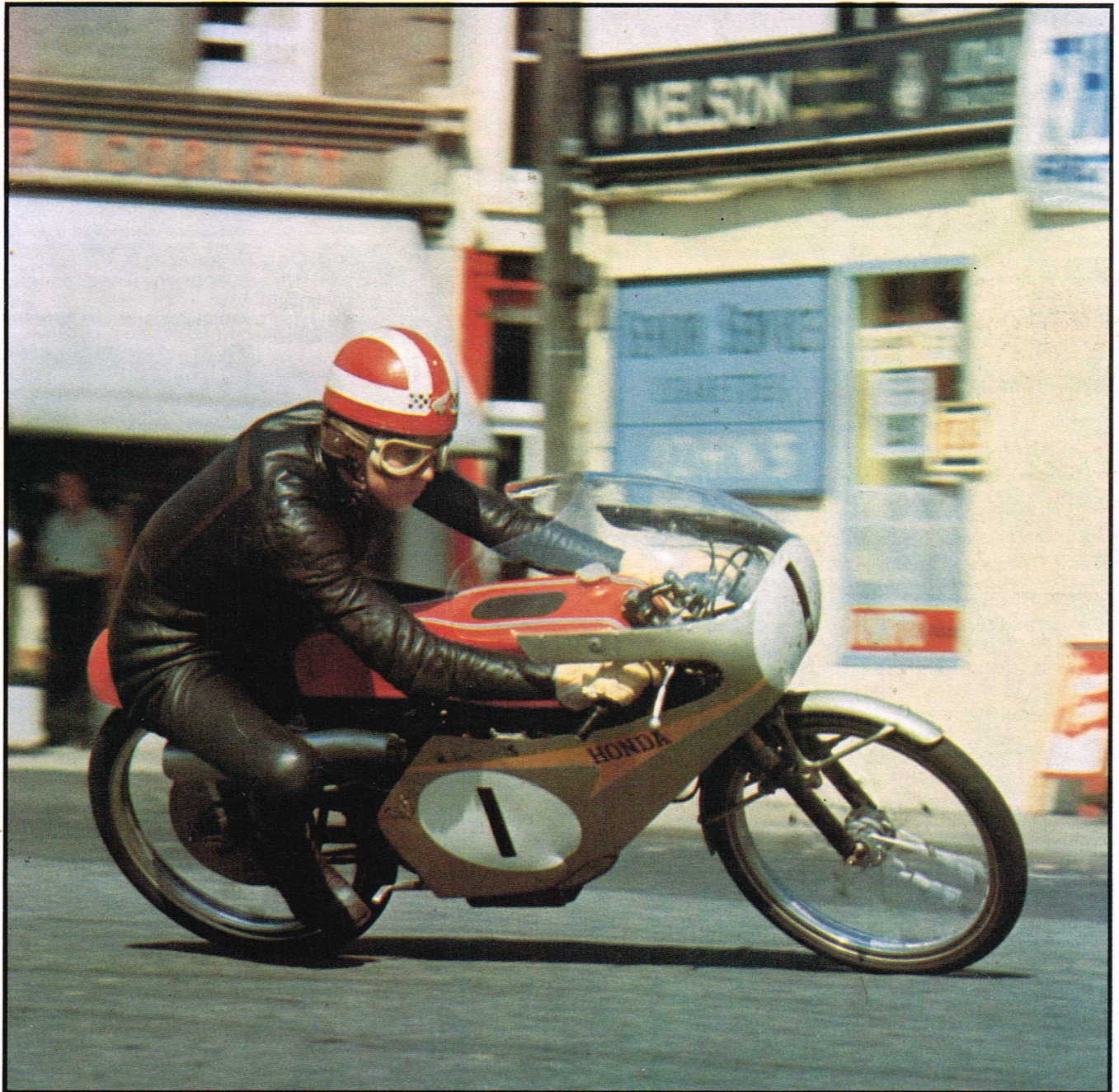


MOTORCYCLE SPORT

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Piles of logs such as this for the Czech wood burning stores were a familiar sight all round the course. British Vase team man here is Neil Buttery (250 KTM)

INTERNATIONAL SIX DAYS ENDURO

A "no win" situation

For the UK team, that is. How wonderful it would be if, in a few years, we could read (as we did so often in the past), "Britain Wins the International Again". But much will have to change before that will happen. We conclude our report of the recent ISDE in Czechoslovakia with an examination of Britain's prospects in this still prestigious event.

SO on Friday, 24 September, 1982 — the fifth day of the "International", we found ourselves in the situation where, of our original 28 entries, a mere seven had started the day and more than 75 per cent had retired, for one reason or another.

To refresh the memories of those who may have read the first instalment of this sad story some weeks ago, and not looked at it since, British team riders still going on the Friday were headed by Steven Plain — a complete outsider, riding as a member of the Welsh club team on a privately owned Kawasaki. This was really the one outstandingly good feature so far as we were concerned and, seventh in the 175 class, he appeared likely to finish as the only Britisher with a "Gold!"

The others still in the hunt were Trophy men Andre Zembruski (500 Maico) and Dougie Kerr (250 Kawasaki), Vase men Derek Edmundson (250 Yamaha) and Neil Buttery (250 KTM), Welsh team man Brad Jones (500 Maico) and South Liverpool privateer John Kitchener (500 Moto Gori).

Now came the time when we should have been seeing real team work — team work, that

is, of the sort where all the surviving Britisher's support crews got together to keep the remaining few riders going and, in particular, Steven Plain.

Unfortunately this didn't happen. Though there were 11 vehicles in use by the support personnel (whose numbers had now swollen through retirements to more than 50!), and though there were only nine time checks, at many of these checks there was no one to service the three *non* Trophy or Vase Men.

Now it's easy to be wise after the event. But the chances are that had Steven Plain had better support — someone to talk to would have been better than nothing — he wouldn't have dropped the 20 points that he lost following a spill which dazed him and also damaged his rear-chain guide. Near the end of a super tough event such as the Six Days, a word of encouragement or, better still, a cold drink or cup of tea (if there's time) does wonders to restore a rider's spirits and help keep him going. In the case of the three non-national team men left on the Friday of this year's event, this just wasn't happening. No one's really to blame, individually — it's simply that traditionally this

has always been the way the British have done it. For years now, each team has had its own supporters who have been interested only in the welfare of their own men.

As well as being very wasteful of resources and expensive — because of the number of vehicles needed — this system is wrong because *all* the riders have less than maximum possible back up, with a service vehicle at every check. It is noteworthy that nearly all the successful competing nations pool their service resources; if done properly this must be the more efficient method.

Now it was raining hard and the sticky going became even harder. After a succession of punctures poor Dougie Kerr ran out of time and so did John Kitchener. It was so slippery that he'd had difficulty just getting round the moto-cross circuit — let alone putting up a good time.

The battle for the main award — the International Trophy — was now between the Americans and the Czechs. Much would hang on the Friday night Jury meeting for, the previous night, a Czech Trophy man had been reported to the Jury for *two* infringements of the regulations, and if the Jury found him guilty then they would have no option but to exclude him.

Briefly, the situation was that the West Germans had seen the rider push his Jawa (which wouldn't start) down a side turning shortly after leaving a time control. Almost immediately he had been followed by another Czech rider and then by a "marshal" — who was also riding a Jawa. What then happened was that the Czech club team man and the marshal turned round and went on their way while Trophyman Vladimir Janous removed his cylinder barrel to free a stuck piston ring, after which he in turn got started. This incident resulted in a protest by the West Germans on two counts — first that the rider had left the marked route, secondly that he had had unauthorized communication with other people, with a view to obtaining assistance.

Now the main problem was a political one (in the normal sense of the word politics). Delegates from the eastern bloc countries were almost certainly in the situation where it would be unwise — to say the least — to vote their own allied countrymen out of an almost certain win. Delegates from the western nations were universally fed up with harassment by the Czech police and most were certain in their own minds that the Czechs had been cheating.

Against this, however, was the, possibly more benevolent, view that it would also be most unfair if the event was won as the result of a protest rather than on the course. Conveniently the East German Juryman was absent with a "stomach upset".

The rider, Janous, the club team man and the marshal were all interviewed and finally a secret ballot was taken. This resulted in the rejection of the protest, but only by a very narrow margin. Then the Jury went on to hear the second protest.

Here again the accused was the young Czech Trophy man Vladimir Janous, but the evidence was more obscure. This time it was alleged that, when he reached the check following that where the incident already described took place, he again removed his cylinder which was then taken

into a Jawa service lorry, worked on by mechanics, and then brought back out to him. But the rider claimed that this was quite untrue — that what in fact happened was that he received and fitted a "new" cylinder which *is* now allowed between the white and yellow flags at time checks.

Witnesses were called but again, when it came to the push, no one had *really* seen anything incriminating, no one had any photographs, and the only man who had apparently attempted to take pictures had had his arm jugged by a mysterious man in a grey mackintosh every time he went to press the shutter.

Once again the protest was rejected, but only after the chairman had made a casting vote.

Was the decision right? I'm sure it was, for, quite apart from anything else, the Czechs, guided under the expert hand of Jan Krivka who knows all the rules inside out, are far too astute to make elementary mistakes of this type *and be seen doing so*. They had all the spares any rider was likely to need in their back-up trucks (including cannibalized machines) and if they were forced into the situation where it was necessary to do something illegal they certainly wouldn't do it where there were lots of people watching, some of whom were just dying for the chance to find grounds for excluding a Czech rider.

Overlooked by many but still important is the fact that here we had a young rider, he looked

Third day shot of John May (500 Maico). Promoted to number one British Team after the unfortunate withdrawal of Geraint Jones, John rode well but was forced out on Thursday when his plug thread stripped



about 19 at most, who hampered with all these problems — a seize-up, many miles of riding without full power, the first bit of mechanicing when he removed his cylinder barrel to free the piston ring, and the second maintenance session when he fitted a new barrel and piston — still managed to keep within his hour. For many of our riders, just one of these things would have been enough to put him out of time.

So to Saturday, with our numbers down to five.

Traditionally Saturday — the last day — is perhaps a little easier than the mid-week part of the event and this year was no exception. Riders were faced with just one lap (100km) of roughery with 85 per cent of the going "off road", followed by the final speed test at the Sverapec permanent moto-cross circuit. There each class had to circulate for 30 minutes and riders faced more penalization if they didn't complete the prescribed number of laps. In putting up third best time in the 250 class, Derek Edmundson showed again what a good all-rounder he is.

Final drama of the week came at the last Jury meeting when delegates from all those nations with Trophy or Vase teams assembled to pass the results immediately before the award presentation. A man was missing — Curt Oberg from Sweden. Where was he? Yes, you've guessed . . . detained by the police, in connection with an allegedly illegal commercial

transaction by one of the Swedish riders!

This time the Jury were united. No Swedish delegate, then no results would be passed. This, of course, put the organizers on the spot for already seated in the stadium waiting for the presentation were some pretty high ranking party officials. No results meant no presentation, and that meant trouble for some, with a capital T.

Much muttering and whispering, then off went an official to the police station. It seems that he managed to get the point over fairly effectively, for about half an hour later Mr Oberg appeared and the Jury meeting was able to continue.

As expected, the Czechs had won the Trophy, and by quite a hefty margin over the USA. Whatever the critics may say — and they always do say this sort of thing about a national team that wins on home ground — the Czechs are exceptionally good riders who deserved their win. They had the back-up well organized, they had good — though not by any means the best — machines and, most important of all, they were 100 per cent fit after incredibly intensive training.

So, let's now look at the criticisms of our British effort and see what can be done to rectify the situation.

First, the money. For anyone to say that too much is being spent is absolute rubbish. Compared with other international sports the

The essential differences between "then" (when we were winning) and "now" (when we figure consistently among the also-rans)

sort of expenditure we have incurred is just peanuts. Total cost of taking riders to overseas training events and to the Six Days was less than £15,000 and of this a large proportion was made up of grants from the Sports Council, and hardly any came from the ACU.

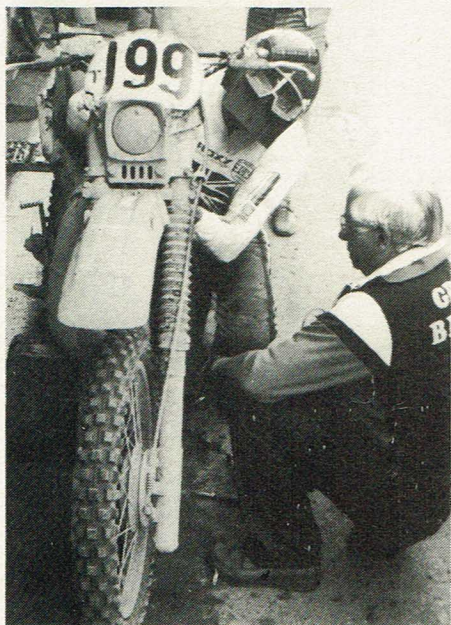
And we must remember too that the whole effort was on a shoestring basis. No four-star hotels and four-course meals for officials but £5-a-night boarding houses and fish and chips when in the UK and a spartan student hostel to live in in Czechoslovakia. Not only that, but in order to save on the accommodation bill, once they got over the Channel, Arthur Brick and his party drove through to Czechoslovakia without stopping other than for necessities like food and fuel.

The Jones / Thompson affair is an entirely different sort of problem but is really fairly typical of the times in which we live. The "long coat brigade" — ie, those ancient enough to remember the old days when trials riders wore Stormgards and waders — will also recall times when to be picked for one of the British teams was a very significant honour.

Such riders as Bob Ray, Jim Alves or Jack Stocker — privileged as they were to wear a Union Jack above the lefthand breast pocket of their (black) Barbour suits — were looked on with awe by lesser mortals, and indeed as members of a winning Trophy team they fully deserved to be regarded in this way.

But today — or at least such was the case until the Falklands crisis — national prestige is at a lower ebb and, unhappily, is far less meaningful.

Left: Invaluable contribution to the British effort was that of Comerfords mechanic Reg May. Here he gives some technical advice to Dougie Kerr (250 Kawasaki). Right: Trouble for Dougie Kerr. Seen here doing some mechanicing on his 250 Kawasaki, the Scottish member of the British Trophy team finally retired on the Friday after a succession of punctures



Additionally (without wishing to appear to condone the action of these riders in any way), it has to be borne in mind that there is a significant difference between financial arrangements then and now.

Then most of the eligible six-day team men would have been either employees of one of the major British manufacturers or they would have been "in the trade" but under contract to a manufacturer to ride his machine in trials for that season. Either way, they weren't forced to scratch and scrape in order to meet travelling and maintenance costs.

And while there were important bonus contracts around for such things as tyres, plugs, chains and oils, the bonus did not provide a rider with the major part of his income, and the sale of special off road clothing was not the big thing that it is today.

Now not one of our leading Enduro riders is on the pay roll of a manufacturer and only a handful have anything better than a "bikes and spares" contract. This means that in order to raise the £1,000 or so which most riders seem to reckon is needed for expenses contesting the British Championship — just fuel, travel and accommodation expenses, that is, and to obtain such things as tyres, chains and clothing — most riders have to seek out whatever sponsorship they can get hold of. They are not in the least likely to be "coining money", as some have suggested. Quite the contrary. Without generous sponsorship most of these riders just wouldn't be able to compete.

Unfortunately the two riders concerned omitted to ensure that their clothing contracts were so worded as to allow them to use an alternative make during the Six Days, as was planned by the ACU. And, quite rightly in my opinion, their sponsors were not keen on this happening. As a result, the riders found themselves in the situation where they had either to break their existing clothing contracts or not go to the event. They chose the latter course.

There are, inevitably, those who will say "Well, what does it matter, anyway? Why not let them wear what they like?" The answer is that,

next year, this will probably happen anyway. But this year team manager Arthur Brick had done a deal with the Finnish Yoko people for all our riders to wear Yoko gear and he felt it essential that the ACU should keep its part of the bargain if we were to maintain any credibility with future possible sponsors. It is hard to argue against that view.

Finally we come to the question of our lack of success. What can now be done to remedy the situation?

The whole point is that we need more top-class riders to chose from, and these riders need to gain experience in more events that are akin to the Six Days in severity if not in duration.

The key lies in the British Enduro Championship series but there is a desperate need to make it more attractive to a larger number of good off-road riders than compete at present, and the main problem is money.

How do we attract more money? In my opinion, there is only one way and that is to make the championship series more commercially attractive for potential sponsors. This is difficult because by its very nature enduro-ing is not a spectator sport and you haven't sufficient continuity of action to attract the crowds that go to, say, football or cricket.

What we do have, though, is a motorcycle press with a total readership approaching half a million, so successes in enduro-ing needn't go un-noticed if the events themselves can be made sufficiently interesting for the press to give extensive coverage. A chicken and egg situation, really, but if for example the makers of "Superkit" clothing know that half a million motorcycle press readers are going to be following a closely fought battle for the lead in the British Championship it could well be good value for "Superkit" to pay, say, £1,000 to sponsor one round and for "Betteryres" to pay £1,000 to sponsor another.

With an income of, say, £8,000 from sponsors, plus assistance with such things as route marking, materials and timekeeping equipment, organizers would then be in a position to reduce entry fees, and the increase in commercial glamour of the series would in turn make it easier for riders to negotiate their own private sponsorship deals.

The existing events in the UK are in many cases very good but there is room for a lot of improvement in the following areas:

- 1 Timekeeping equipment still leaves a lot to be desired and should be of an acceptable standardized pattern — if necessary available on hire from the ACU.

- 2 Timekeepers vary a great deal in experience and ability and at every event there should be at least one timekeeper who is approved by the ACU and can supervise the operation of controls and special tests.

- 3 For an event to be any interest at all to the national press (dailies, not the motorcycle press) it is vital that results should be available on the Sunday night and that the organizer's press officer should see that such dailies as are interested get the results.

- 4 It is often possible to attract some local television and radio coverage and here again the press officer must get busy.

- 5 The series is likely to attract far more importer / manufacturer interest if the status of the various capacity classes can be equalized. At the moment we have the situation where a rider has to ride a large and powerful machine to

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ISDE IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

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stand any chance of an overall win. There are two ways of overcoming this. One is to alter the special tests so that they don't favour these machines. The other is to come into line with the present European two-day series where there is no overall winner, merely class winners. This means that just as much prestige is attached to winning the 80 cc class as to winning the 500.

At the moment the situation is that some

End of the event for him. Looking here like someone who's just landed from outer space, Andy Robertson dismounts at the Marikova time check with a dislocated shoulder following collision with a car. Note the bent front mudguard.



HOW THE BRITISH FARED

Team	Name	Day	1	2	3	4	5	6	Result
Trophy	Andre Zembruski (500 Maico)		X	X	X	X	X	X	Bronze medal
	Alan Brick (175 Moto Gori)		X	X	X				Retired, out of time
	Nigel Finnigan (125 Yamaha)		X						Retired, engine seized
	Doug Kerr (250 Kawasaki)		X	X	X	X			Retired, out of time
	Bob Room (500 SWM)		X						Retired, engine seized
	John Cordery (500 SWM)								Retired, damaged chaincase
Vase	Andy Robertson (250 Kawasaki)		X	X					Retired, accident
	Derek Edmundson (250 Yamaha)		X	X	X	X	X		Silver medal
	Neil Buttery (250 KTM)		X	X	X	X	X		Bronze medal
	John May (500 Maico)		X	X	X				Retired, plug thread
Welsh	Steven Plain (175 Kawasaki)		X	X	X	X	X		Silver medal
	Brad Jones (500 Maico)		X	X	X	X	X		Bronze medal
	Colin Jones (250 Kawasaki)		X	X					Retired, out of time
South Liverpool	Michael Jones (250 SWM)		X	X	X				Retired, rear fork broken
	John Kitchener (500 Moto Gori)		X	X	X				Retired, out of time
	Alec Shennan (500 Moto Gori)		X	X	X				Retired, injured
SACU A team	P. Laing (80 Fantic)		X	X	X				Retired, loose sprocket
	A. Baird (250 Kawasaki)		X	X	X				Retired, out of time
	K. Roden (500 Maico)		X	X	X				Retired, injured
SACU B team	K. Bruce (175 Kawasaki)		X	X					Retired, collapsed wheel
	C. Chatham (250 KTM)								Retired, sick
	E. Syme (500 Maico)		X	X	X				Retired, out of time
AMCA (Army)	Gwyn Barraclough (250 Kawasaki)		X	X					Retired, gearbox
	Keith Hall (250 Cagiva)		X						Retired, accident
	R. G. B. Langmead (500 Kawasaki)		X	X	X				Retired, out of time

Note: X = still going

organizers still favour the straight blind type of rough cross-country test where, without many tight corners, the rider of a 500 is clearly in with a better chance than the man on a 125 or an 80 and where, additionally, sooner or later there's likely to be a very nasty accident.

Further, we still have the very odd situation in which acceleration test figures are multiplied by five. The object of this was originally the commendable one of increasing the points of value of a good test as against a bad test but it also had the — unforeseen — disadvantage of making it virtually impossible for a small machine to compete on even terms with a large one.

6 And finally there is considerable room for improvement in the way events are "presented". By this I mean such things as the selection and

presentation of the start / finish area, the provision of adequate refuelling, refreshment and toilet facilities and of adequate press facilities.

It has been suggested that the winner of each class in the British Championship should be offered a place in one of the two national teams. Subject to there being a minimum number of riders in the class — say 12 — this could be a good idea. It would at least add interest to the championship and would help also to squash some of the suggestions of favouritism that have been floated recently.

How wonderful it would be if, in a few years, we could again read — as we did so often in the early 1950s — "Britain wins again — Trophy team successful in International Six Days". It isn't impossible. R.T.M.

FINAL BRITISH PLACINGS

- 1 Derek Edmundson (250 Yamaha) 638:42 — Silver medal
- 2 Steven Plain (175 Kawasaki) 1815:00 — Silver medal
- 3 Neil Buttery (250 KTM) 3877:97 — Bronze medal
- 4 Brad Jones (500 Maico) 8797:95 — Bronze medal
- 5 Andre Zembruski (500 Maico) 14897:37 — Bronze medal

TROPHY POSITIONS

	POINTS
1 Czechoslovakia	35,352.22
2 USA	43,923.83
3 France	59,612.20
4 Sweden	62,100.74
5 East Germany	65,029.74
6 West Germany	90,867.42
7 Poland	125,725.69
8 Holland	136,775.68
9 Italy	151,195.98
10 Austria	153,799.34
11 Australia	226,978.11
12 Finland	316,900.61
13 Great Britain	360,718.67
14 Mexico	394,327.39

SILVER VASE POSITIONS

1 West Germany	2,993.80
2 Finland	8,358.99
3 Czechoslovakia	46,898.97
4 USA	50,896.77
5 Italy	65,102.69
6 Sweden	66,654.87
7 France	92,637.20
8 Canada	100,084.26
9 Holland	103,060.03
10 East Germany	105,795.35
11 Great Britain	110,300.47
12 Switzerland	115,617.64
13 Australia	168,182.46
14 Poland	187,016.58
15 Austria	190,348.01

CLUB TEAMS

1 SVS Svazarm, Prague 2	6,771.59
2 AMK Svazarm, Brno	33,110.77
3 Club Team Sweden	33,559.78
4 Club Team Jarva MK	36,224.85
5 RH, Prague	37,281.62
6 Brebemoler Racing Club, USA	45,398.27

MANUFACTURERS' TEAM CONTEST

1 MZ 1	561.90
2 Jawa 2	1,053.91
3 MZ 2	1,328.51
4 Team Husqvarna 2	4,749.26
5 Jawa 3	5,059.32
6 Husqvarna 1, USA	5,755.68