

WAYNE RAINEY



for a while. In Spain I had a front tyre come apart during the race, then the next round in Italy I was leading and I had a rear tyre come apart. So in Germany I chose to run a really hard compound, because everything else was flying to bits.

What caused the tyre problems?

We had been testing a lot of tyres and that was the trouble. Because Dunlop were unable to build a specific amount of

one or two different tyres, they ended up building lots of different tyres and the quality control suffered. A lot of those tyres were flying to bits and with the Spanish, Italian and German GPs being on consecutive weekends, we didn't have time to try out any new stuff.

Was there a main turning point of the season?

I don't think there was a noticeable turning point, but the race at Jarama (European



Wayne Rainey made the World 500cc Championship his own for the second year running in 1991, and the next week fell heavily during practice for the final event in Malaysia.

His injuries — a fractured right femur, three fractured ribs and a fractured bone in his left hand — resulted from the worst racing accident of Rainey's 22-year career. For the first time, his usual off-season activities of dirt bike riding and golf have been forsaken as Wayne turns his attention both to managing his fledgeling US 250 Formula 2 team and towards the battle to regain fitness in time for the opening GP of the 1992 season and the attempt to win his third consecutive world crown.

Nigel Kinrade

One week you win the world championship, the next you're lying in hospital. How did the crash affect you?

Well, it's the first time I've really broken a bone. I've never broken a leg before, so it's been a prime experience, for sure. I had a pretty rough time for a couple of days.

How is the healing process coming along?

I've had the cast removed and the leg feels pretty good. The Marlboro Yamaha team physio is currently staying with me and putting me through a rehabilitation programme in order to regain the strength and movement in the leg. The ribs and hand are OK.

How long do you expect to be out of the saddle?

I plan to be back for the pre-

season Yamaha tests in Australia in January, but only if I'm 100% fit, so that I can feel comfortable on the bike and not worry about putting my knee down on the track.

How did you prepare for 1991? Did being the reigning champion put you under any extra pressure?

I just trained the same as any other year. As far as the pressure of being reigning champion was concerned, I was No.1 for 1990 and I was going after the title just like everyone else for 1991. It was no different, apart from the No.1 plate looked nice on my bike!

You dominated the early rounds, but seemed to falter once the season moved to Europe. What was wrong?

We had a slight tyre problem

Pics: Nigel Kinrade and Sir David of Goldman (can't wait for his interview — oh my giddy aunt).

GP) was important for me. That day was really hot and the Dunlops proved they were good in the heat. The race gave me a lot of confidence in the tyres. But just beating all the other guys every week is what it took for the title.

Some critics have said that small grids and injuries to other contenders made 1990 an easy win for you. Did you find 1991 any harder?

No. They were both hard. In 1990 the other guys were out there riding to win — it's not my problem that they fell down, I still won the championship. I think 1991 was just as tough, but perhaps in some ways it was easier because I could just go out there and ride every race for the win, due to the new

points scoring system. This year I just had to race hard, whereas last year I was always trying to protect a points lead.

So you prefer the old points system where all the rounds count?

Definitely.

What is the reason for starting the 250cc team in the US? Are you planning to bring the team to Europe and the GPs?

We don't know just yet. Right now, I just wanted to start a base team in America and give these guys a chance to ride on a team, so they can get some recognition and also learn at the same time. I've got my dad working on one of the bikes, so it keeps him employed! Basically it was

something that I could do to put something back into the sport. As for next year, I'm still looking for a budget but I'm working on it.

Are you pleased with the team's performance this year?

Yeah. Our aim was to do well in the F2 series and Allan Scott would've won the championship if little Kenny (Roberts Jr.) hadn't brought him off at the penultimate round.

What happened?

Allan was running in second, riding for the championship and little Kenny forgot that he was supposed to help him. On the last lap Kenny tried to pass Allan and they both ended up in the dirt. We lost the championship, but we are

a young team and we are learning all the time. I don't think it will happen again.

What of the political troubles in the sport, between the FIM and IRTA?

I think it's just an ego problem between the two. They both need to work together to sort things out, but now as it happens the FIM are out. I think we still need them in there, but to what extent I'm not sure. The racing will take off now, because we've got people making decisions that are in the sport's best interests and not in the FIM's. The FIM is a very old body and very set in its ways. They're back in the seventies and the sport is so much bigger now. It's bigger than they can control.



Only a Californian could describe breaking five bones as "a prime experience".