

Trialst Motocross News



1980

OFF-ROAD REVIEW

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By the staff, correspondents and photographers of T + MX

This book is dedicated to the organisers, observers, marshals, course-layers, stake-bashers, scrutineers, lap-scorers, odd-job bods and amiable landowners who endure much for love of the sport.



Trials and Motocross News — or T + MX to more than 100,000 faithful readers — was the first UK newspaper to identify the strength and needs of the off-road market.

This book is a logical follow-on. The team which gave you your first off-road newspaper now presents your first off-road review. We hope you have as much pleasure reading it as we did producing it.

Many people have contributed to this book — so many, in fact, that a full credit list would be well-nigh impossible. Many of our usual outside photographers and correspondents have been involved, together with the editorial and advertisement staff of T + MX — either directly, or by undertaking extra work while their colleagues got on with the book.

And although it is probably fairer to mention no-one, we will take a risk and single out four lads for special thanks.

T + MX motocross boffin Alex

Hodgkinson made a huge contribution, while foreman compositor Keith Simpson's assistance with production was invaluable. Freelance photographers Eric Kitchen (trials) and Jack Burnicle (motocross) confirmed their reputations as the best in the business.

Having said that, I would like collectively to thank every single person whose contribution appears in these pages.

It has been a huge task to produce this book, and we hope that your interest confirms that the effort was worthwhile.

BILL LAWLESS,
Editor, January, 1980.

Bill Lawless



Like many another competitor, I have watched the progress of Trials and Motocross News with interest during the last couple of years.

No-one had ever attempted to run an off-road newspaper before, presumably because they thought there wouldn't be enough people to read it.

But T + MX proved them wrong by quickly getting established and then going from strength to strength. This Off-Road Review is further evidence that our sport is big enough and virile enough to support its own voice — and who better to speak for us than T + MX?

I hope the annual enjoys as much success as the weekly.

MALCOLM RATHMELL
British Solo Trials Champion

Malcolm Rathmell



Belgium's Harry Everts, otherwise known as "The King." Everts took the works Suzuki to 18 wins out of 22 races in Europe to add the 125cc world crown to the 250 title he held for Puch in 1975.



The way the season went . . . Harry Everts leads Suzuki team-mate and deposed world 125 champion Akira Watanabe in the Dutch GP.

King Harry ousts the Emperor

IN 1978 Gaston Rahier lost the 125cc world title for the first time, admitting defeat to his Suzuki team-mate Akira Watanabe. Watanabe was the first Japanese rider to win a world crown and inevitably he was tagged "The Emperor."

For 1979 Rahier went to Yamaha and Harry Everts signed with Suzuki in their two-pronged attack on the 125 crown. Everts proved virtually unbeatable. He won 18 of the 22 races in Europe and before the season was half-run, had acquired the title of "The King"

Everts thus became the first rider to win both the 125 and 250 titles (he won the latter on a Puch in 1975) and, after his performances in the Belgian 250 and 500 GPs he was talking of a switch to the 500 class with a view to winning all three titles — the first man to do so.

In 1978 the watercooled Yamaha of Gerard Rond had often proved itself faster than the Suzukis and Rahier hoped for a similar speed advantage in his attempt to regain the title. He found himself at a disadvantage in terms of speed right from the start, however, as the Suzuki team turned up in Austria for the first round with their own water-cooled machines.

Rahier's chances went up in cloud of dust

as he crashed heavily on a downhill section and broke his elbow. In the first race the Belgian veteran had split the Suzukis and been the only rider to keep Everts in sight.

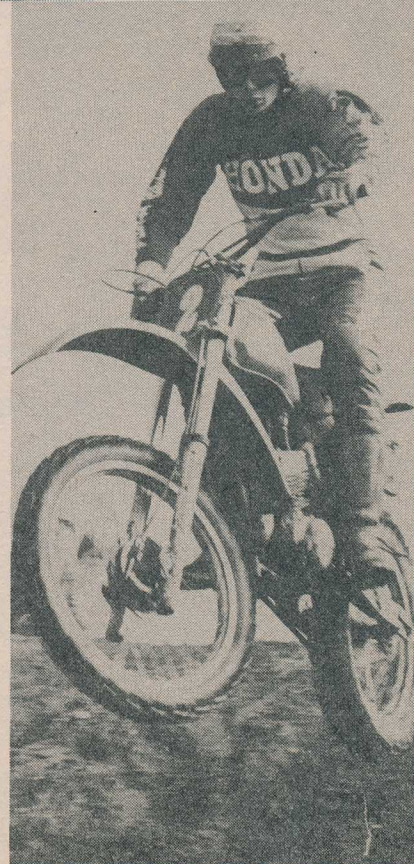
After missing the German Grand Prix, Rahier returned for the rest of the series, but it was several weeks before he was anywhere near full fitness and only in the closing weeks of the season did he even manage to oust Finn Matti Autio on a 1978 Suzuki from third place in the championship.

Even then he was no match for either of the works Suzukis and Watanabe had tied up second place as soon as Everts had won the championship.

No one could even stay with Everts in the first meeting of the year at Laundsorf in Austria, and he repeated the performance in both Germany and Holland, but only after a fall in the second race in Germany and a controversial win at Mill in Holland.

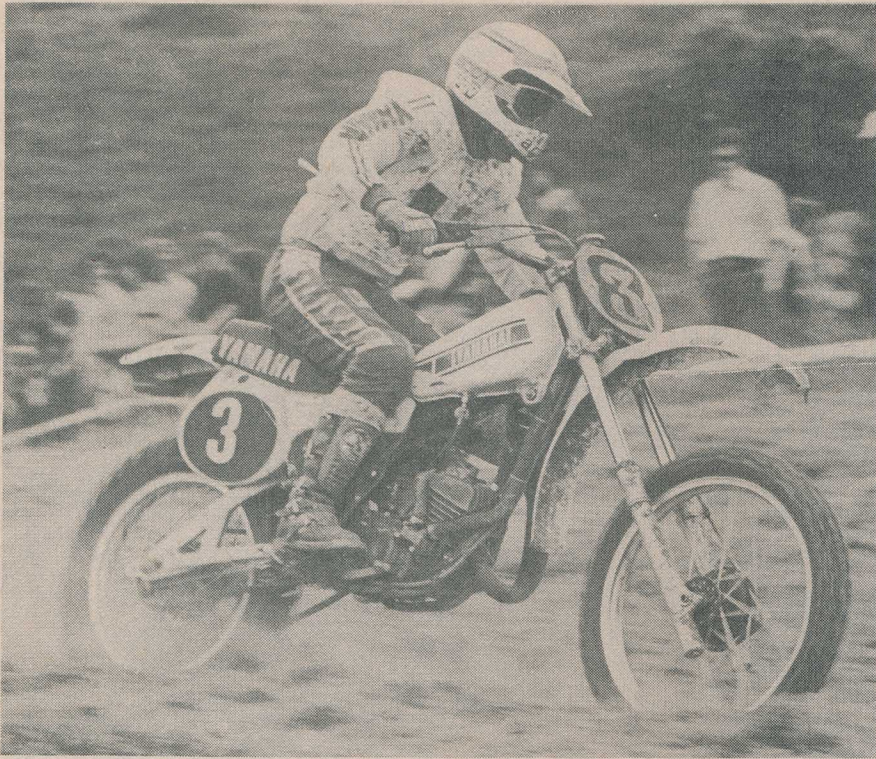
Until the Dutch round, Watanabe had been content to sit and wait for Everts to make a mistake but after four straight wins by the Belgian, he saw the title running away even though he only trailed by 14 points.

A determined effort in the sand saw the champion stay with Everts and the Emperor



Dutchman Peter Groeneveld flew the flag for Honda and finished sixth in the world placings.

GRANDS PRIX — 125cc



Gaston Rahier (Yamaha) didn't really start to score points until the Finnish round, half way through the series.

Akira Watanabe (Suzuki) dives underneath Britain's only representative in the 125 class, Perry Leask (Husqvarna) at the Dutch round of the championship.

led with two laps to go. It was then that Everts pounced for another win, but he had passed under the yellow flags, out for the unlucky Gilbert De Roover who had broken his leg for the third time in his career.

Watanabe protested, apparently with justification, but the protest was thrown out by the FIM jury and the disillusioned champion was a distant second in the following moto.

Indeed, he was somewhat fortunate to beat Rahier. After a steady ride to fourth in the first leg, Rahier tried to stay with Everts and was still in contact after 20 minutes when he went through some tape. The tape wrapped itself around the rear brake mechanism and kept pulling on the brake. The ex-champion pulled out, completely exhausted, a few laps later.

With six straight wins behind him, Everts was cruising at this stage but Italy was another story. The champion elect had a bad start in the first race and didn't take second behind the flying Watanabe from home star Dario Nani until the very last lap.

More problems came in the second race. Everts gated first but fell under pressure from Watanabe and was also beaten by Matti Autio.

The prospect of a battle royal for the rest of the season soon faded however. Two more back-to-back wins in the Finnish and Czech GPs took Everts well clear.

Nevertheless, neither event was without



GRANDS PRIX — 125cc

incident. Everts had again fallen whilst leading the first race in Finland, but he was able to catch Watanabe again when the Emperor's Suzuki lost third gear.

Rahier, too, had fallen and he only regained fourth spot in that race when Dutchman Peter Groeneveld's Honda ran out of petrol on the final lap.

Watanabe was far from happy in the mud which greeted riders in Czechoslovakia. He was a lowly fourth in the first race and only managed to get a few yards from the gate in the second before falling and withdrawing to the paddock.

He came back to share the points in Yugoslavia with Everts, both men taking their winning rides from the gate, but 27 points apiece was no good to Watanabe. This meant that Everts maintained his points advantage.

The only European GP which wasn't completely dominated by the Suzuki duo was the Swiss. They took a 1-2 in the first race, but Watanabe went through the ropes in the second race and could only finish ninth while Everts crashed out of the race. He had to receive treatment for a badly bruised leg and hip but showed no ill effects in the following rounds.

Autio was having an off-day and Rahier, too, was in trouble in the first race. A broken piston ring slowed the Belgian and he was beaten for the third place points by Mauro Miele, one of the Italian hordes, albeit on a KTM.

Miele was the centre of controversy in the second race. Having beaten Rahier handsomely in the first race he knew that a runner-up spot behind the flying Belgian would clinch things overall when the works Suzuki men went out.

The Italian was third going into the last lap, right behind Robert Greisch. He was still behind going into the last corner but he was on his own when he came out. Greisch was in the ropes and Miele had put him there. Still the win was his.

France was another double win for Everts and he went to Ireland knowing that he could clinch the title. He almost didn't get the chance. The summer had finally arrived in the British Isles and so had the dust.

The riders sat down in the track and refused to ride until the problem was eased and it wasn't until mid-afternoon that the racing got under way. When it did the inevitable Everts first — Watanabe second, race developed but with the title all but lost, Watanabe lost his remote chance in sad style by crashing out of race two.

The annual trip to America was now a waste of time for the Europeans and only the big three travelled to the States. Even they couldn't match the pace of Mark Barnett, US champion Broc Glover and Bob Hannah, invited to start but unable to score points.

Rahier was the top scorer apart from the home men with two consistent rides, while Everts retired in the first race with mechanical problems.

After a three-week break, the final round took place in Spain and put the seal on the series. Both races ran the same course — first Everts, second Watanabe, third Rahier.

Peter Groeneveld (Honda), kicks up some Irish dirt at the Slane GP in July.



Matti Autio (Suzuki) finished fourth in the championship with his best results at the Dalecin (Czechoslovakian) round where he secured two second places behind Everts.