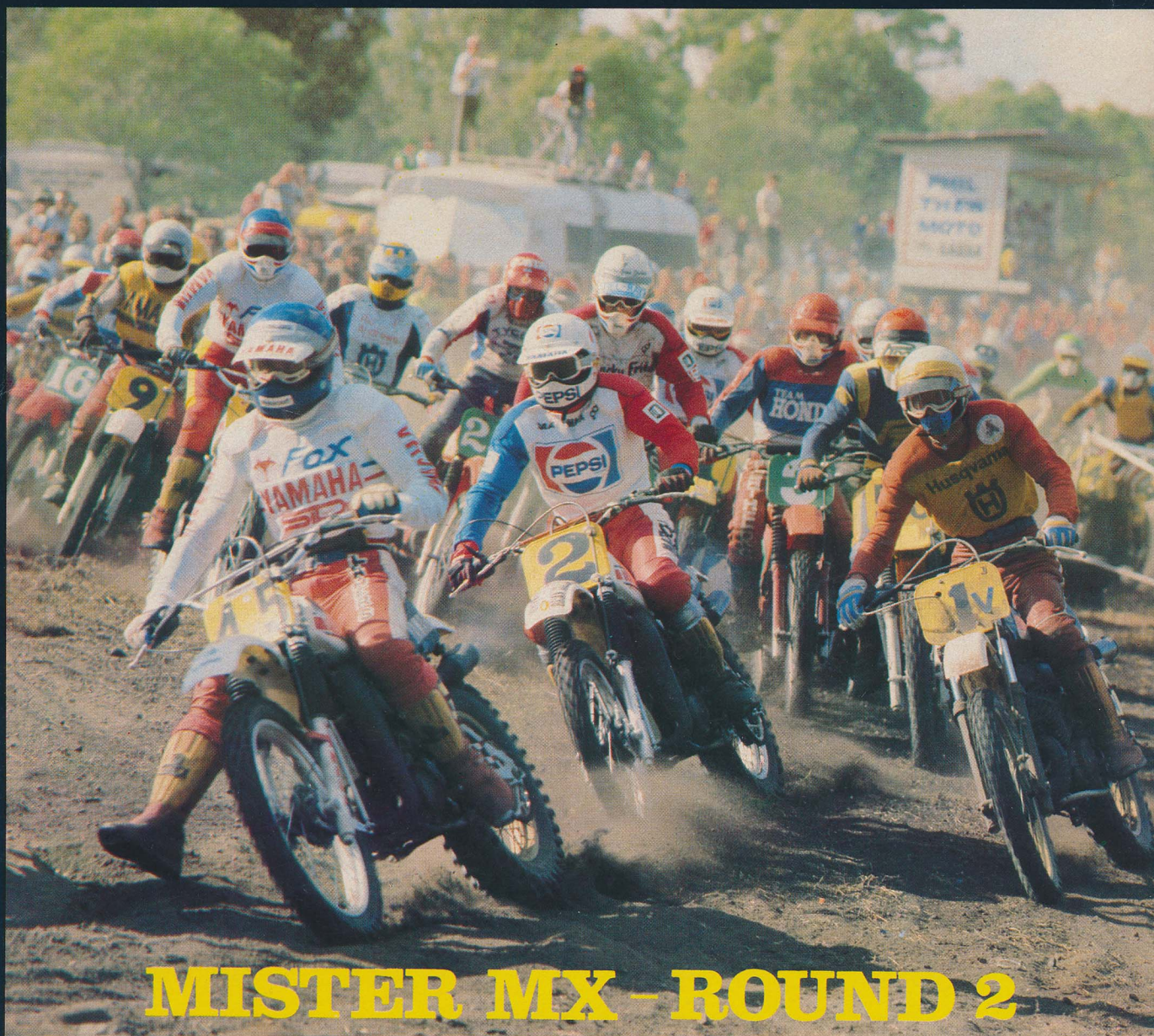


# TRAIL & TRACK

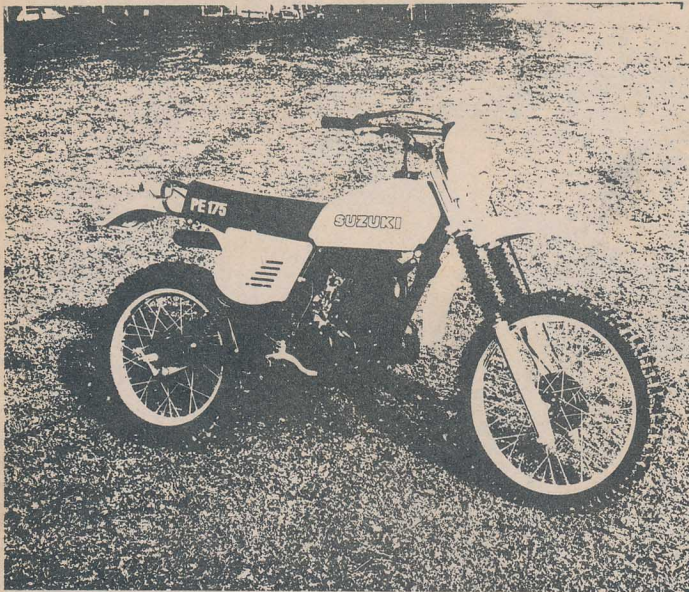
**WE RIDE PENTONS KTM  
A.M.T.R.A. - AN ASSOCIATION FOR YOU  
IT175 vs PE175**



**MISTER MX - ROUND 2**

# TRAIL & TRACK

AUGUST 1978, No.58



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## OUR COVER PHOTO.....

Trail and Track columnist, Mike Landman leads the field during the first round of MR.MX at Tivoli, Qld.

EDITOR: Mike Hanlon

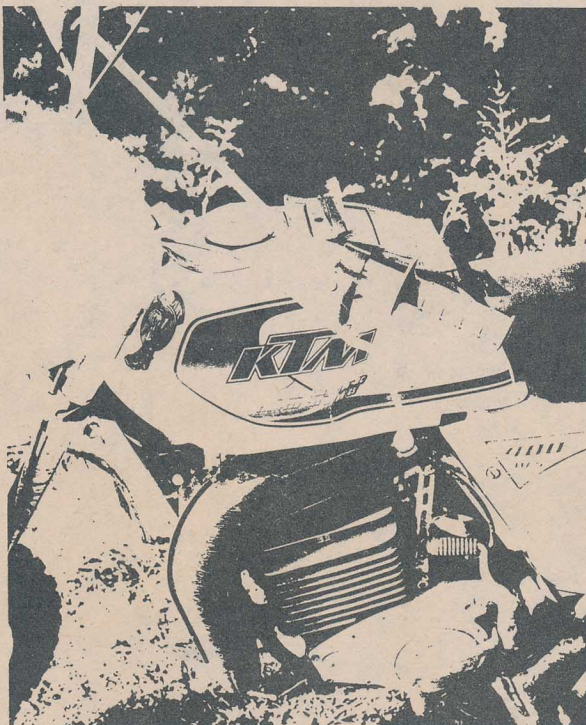
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# United States

## 500 GP

America has its first serious Grand Prix contender in the dark-eyed and bearded Northern Californian, Brad Lackey. For Bad Brad it had been a long hard road to hoe as he gave up the good life, the money, and fame in America to chase men with funny names around tracks he couldn't pronounce. Each year Brad has moved up in the world standings. A switch from Husqvarna to Honda last year brought the former free-living American hippy a little closer. This year the 24 year old is knocking on the door, but it looks like Bad Brad will have to wait until Heikki Mikkola decides to step aside. None of the other Grand old men of motocross on the continent can contain the American except the sullen Finn. With DeCoster, Wolsink, and Mikkola all approaching their middle 30's and Lackey still a young 24 The Championship will be his sooner or later.

The United States Grand Prix is a carnival affair. The Carlsbad motocross track is located just ten miles from the Pacific Ocean and 70 miles south of Los Angeles. It is a whooped-out, staircased, wide-open, two mile track that is fenced with 35,000 sunburned California motocross fans. A ticket costs \$10 (American) and you pay \$4 more if you want to sit in the packed grand stands. Carlsbad looks like the beach without any water as the Bikini and swimsuit are the formal track attire. The fans come every year lugging ice chests full of beer and Coke down the steep hillsides for one reason to see an American win. It has never happened. Jim Pomeroy won a moto back in 1977 and Rocket Rex Staten led the sucker for 35 minutes back in 1975 until his CZ vibrated apart, but no one has come close. Brad Lackey has finished first



American more times than anyone else, but it has always been behind Gerrit Wolsink.

Wolsink is a USGP phenomena. Four years in a row the Dutch dentist had pulled off victories. They have been close each year, but close in horseshoes. Lots of Americans root for Wolsink, but more root for Roger DeCoster. DeCoster has been World Champion almost as long as America has had the sport of motocross.

#### FIRST MOTO

The American Motorcyclist Association decreed that no riders vying for the 250 or 125 National Championships could race at the 500cc USGP. Riders like Bob Hannah, Jimmy Ellis, Jim Pomeroy, Broc Glover, Steve Wise and others took them at their word and didn't enter. Jim Weinert and Gaylon Mosier ignored the official word and entered



ABOVE: American Rocket Rex Staten.

BELOW: Gerrit Wolsink.

anyway. Of course they were accepted by the AMA. The AMA has a way of reversing itself after taking a firm stand that infuriates the American riders.

The Europeans consisted of Heikki Mikkola, Roger DeCoster, Gerrit Wolsink, Hakan Andersson, Graham Noyce, Andre Vromans, Andre Malherbe, Jaak van Velthoven and Herbert Schmitz. Each foreign rider had his own reason for making the expensive and long trek across the Atlantic, but few were happy about the prospect of a showdown with the blazing fast yanks.

The first moto opened with a surprising American up-lift as Brad Lackey grabbed the holeshot with Rex Staten, Mike Bell, Rick Burgett, Roger DeCoster and Herbert Schmitz rounding out the top six. Things changed for the worse rapidly as Lackey threw a chain, threw it again and then threw in the towel. Rocket Rex Staten took over the lead. Rex Staten is as wild as they come. He has very little style, but he runs WFO until he wins or breaks. Rex races for Bassett Racing, which is mainly a high-performance speed boat manufacturer which dabbles in motorcycles. For three laps Rex and DeCoster duelled tooth and nail. DeCoster thinking that Staten would soon crash tailed him cautiously. Then realizing that this was the same kid he chased for 30 minutes three years ago on a decrepit CZ finally tried to move. Rocket Rex's radical, out-of-control flights down the steep 70 mph downhill finally distracted the five-time Champs attention and DeCoster crashed. Staten, who is perhaps the fittest of the Americans, was home free with the first

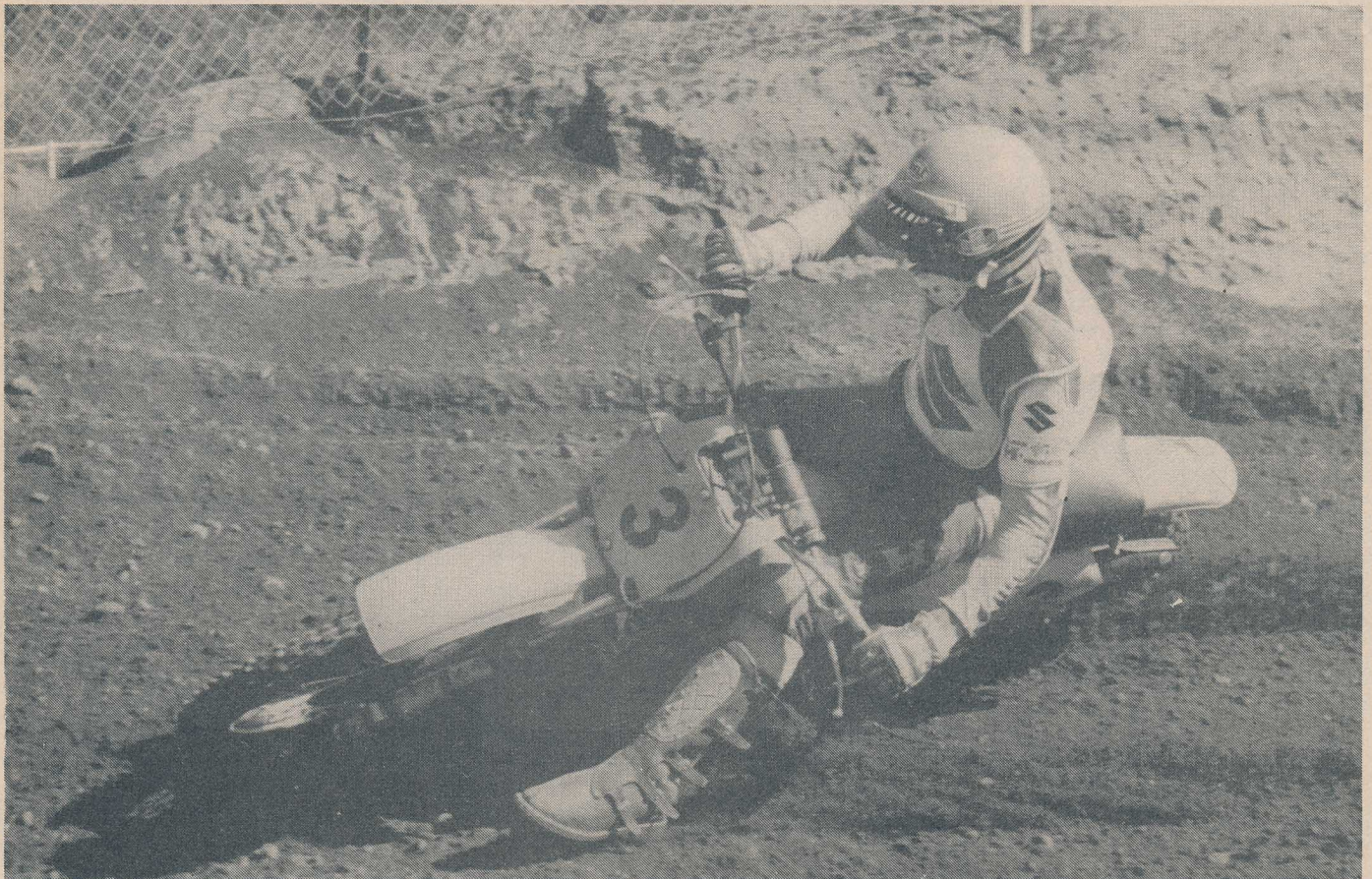
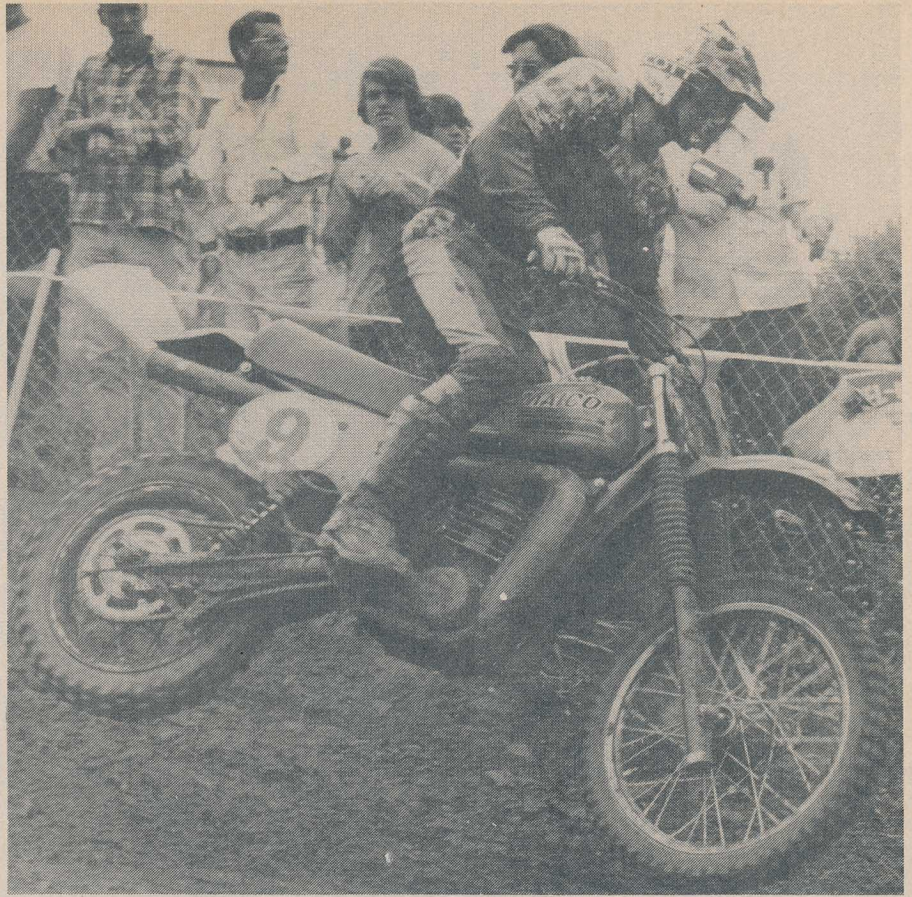


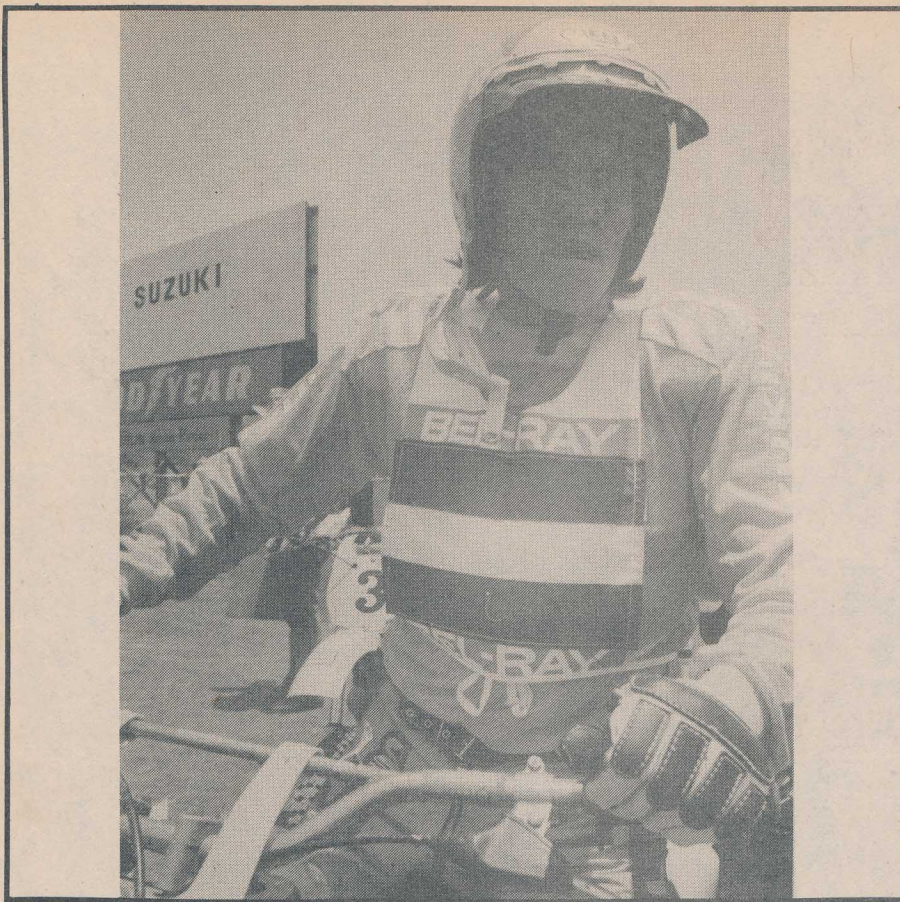


moto victory, but his motor blew up on the next lap. West german Maico rider Herbert Schmitz took the lead and stretched it out to a solid victory. DeCoster got backed up and worked his way up to second at the white flag. Heikki Mikkola recieved a gift from Team Suzuki rider Danny LaPorte as Laporte was running in third on the last lap, after a back of the pack charge, only to have his countershaft sprocket strip off the splines. Mikkola got a gift of third and Mike Bell, in his first GP race, finished fourth with even less known Yamaha teammate Rick Burgett in fifth. Burgett hails from Big Sabdy, Oregon and is nicknamed "Lumberjack" because that was what he did before becoming a motocrosser. The rest of the Europeans were pretty well out of it as Americans packed the rest of the field.

#### SECOND MOTO

DeCoster was irate about the way Rex Staten had ridden and complained verbally to his mechanics. Everybody else just shrugged because they knew that the Americans were crazy. Jaak van Velthoven told the AMA officials that he didn't think the American riders points





should count as GP points. He felt that it was unfair for them to win all the points and then not race any other Grand Prix's. Van Velthoven had a lot of support from the other Europeans.

The second moto was a classic American-European duel between Brad Lackey and Heikki Mikkola. The two riders proved why they are so far ahead in the standings as they blitzed away to a full minute lead over third place rider Herbert Schmitz. Schmitz who is unknown in America, except for middle of the pack placings, was suddenly in a position to win the USGP. But for Herbert to win Lackey had to pass Mikkola, or Schmitz and Mikkola, or Schmitz and Mikkola would tie with a 1-3 and 3-1 score. Lackey kicked out the jams at the 30 minute mark and Heikki and Brad traded paint for the rest of the race.

The 35,000 fans stood and screamed encouragement as the pair flew past never more than five feet apart. The screaming fans could be heard vibrating through the canyons over the roar of the engines. Lackey tried every pass in the book. At the vertical incline known as the ledge he tried to

*ABOVE: Gerrit Wolsink had a poor U.S. G.P. meeting although he has won the same event for the four years prior.*

*BELOW: Heikki Mikkola on his way to overall victory.*

leap across in front of the Finn, but Heikki held steady. Up the long, rough, hill known as the Carlsbad Freeway pegged his RC450 Honda to the max, but Heikki calmly stuffed him at the 180 degree turn at the top. Down the hill Brad would sail past the Finn only to be forced to use outside berm as Heikki motored up the tighter inside line. Finally with two laps to go Heikki got up and went. Brad dropped back to about 20 feet behind and that was all she wrote. Schmitz finished third, Andre Malherbe came in fourth with a covey of Americans led by Mike Bell in the rest of the top ten positions.

Heikki won the Grand Prix by a minute over Schmitz with newcomer Mike Bell third and Rick Burgett fourth overall. More importantly for Mikkola he had gained 13 points on Lackey. What happened to Roger and Gerrit? They crashed into each other on a downhill turn, and were run into by Danny LaPorte. All three Suzuki riders dropped out of the race later with various problems. Great Britain's Graham Noyce crashed often and thoroughly enough to keep him from earning any points. Jaak van Velthoven didn't make the top ten in either moto, and the only way he could earn any points was if the Americans were disqualified like he suggested; they weren't. Wolsink and Andersson only broke the top ten in one moto. Andre Vromans, who is sponsored by Roger DeCoster, might as well have stayed in Belgium as he finished out of the top twenty.

