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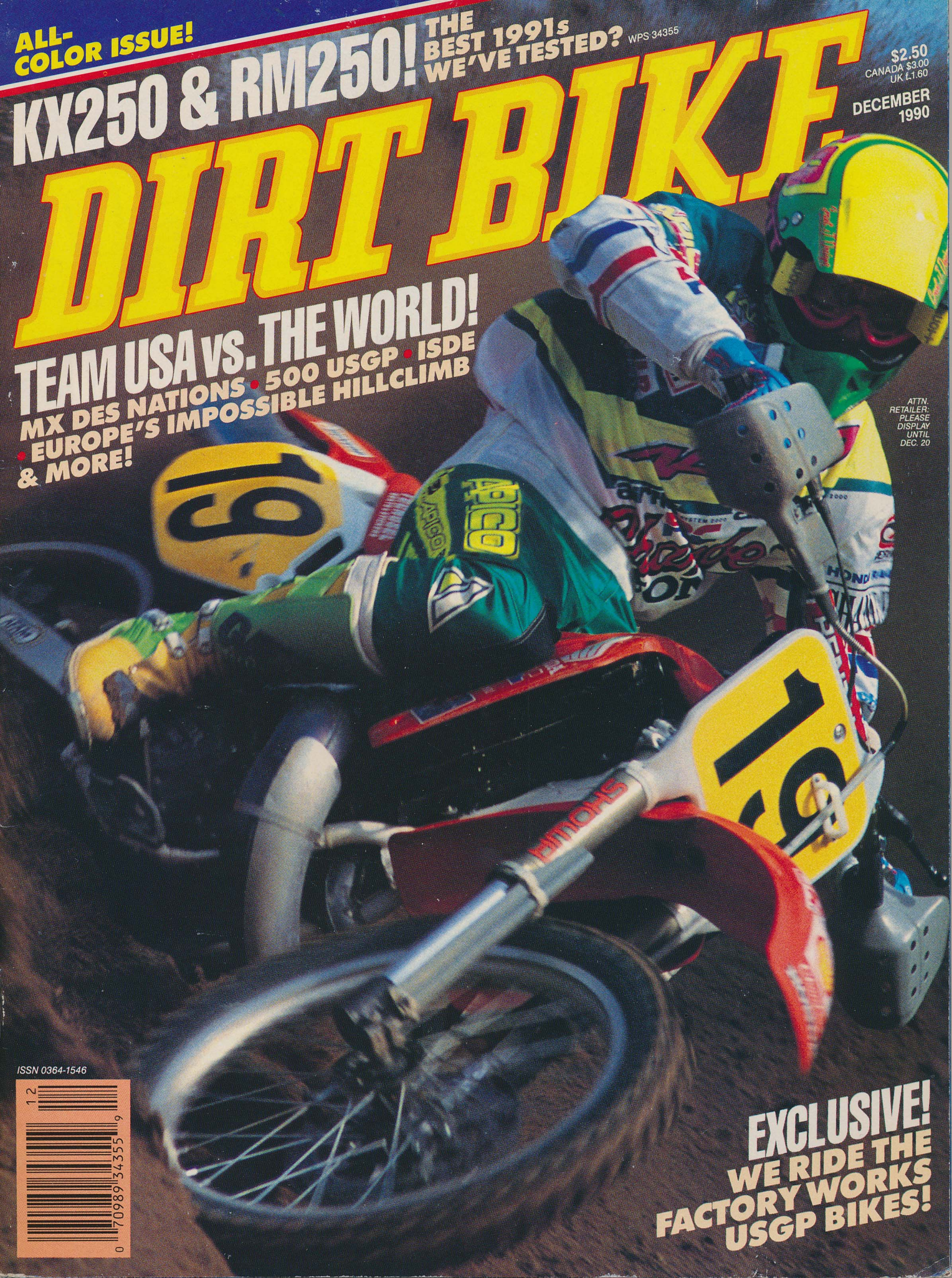
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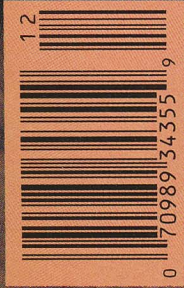
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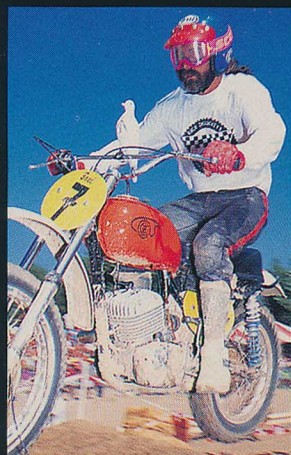


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ON THE COVER: Jeff Leisk explodes a Swedish berm for the lens of Chris "Honeymoon" Hutter. Tasteful design by DeWest; color separations by Valley Film.



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1990 INTERNATIONAL SIX-DAY ENDURO—SWEDEN

A QUESTION OF SURVIVAL

An insider's look at the toughest Six-Days in years

Nobody knows the ISDE like Jeff Fretette. He's won nine gold medals and two silver in a career that just won't stop getting better. In that time he's never DNF'd and he's never let the U.S. team down.

This year, however, a last-minute thumb injury forced Jeff to remove himself from the American Trophy Team, to be replaced by young Colorado sensation Kelby Pepper. For Jeff it was a heartbreak. It turned out to be his kind of ISDE—one that started off tough and got tougher. Of the 37 Americans who went to Sweden, only 22 finished. Our Trophy Team had its worst finish in years, mostly due to bum luck, while our Junior

World team turned in a creditable fourth. Jeff worked throughout the event to keep the Americans going, but he still had time to make some observations about the event, and the American effort. After all, he had never been to a Six-Days that he could watch before. Here's what he told *DIRT BIKE* when it was all over.

It was tough going there and not riding. The riders would come back and tell me they heard the woods calling my name—but it ended up being fun. I busted my tail, did everything I could do short of riding. I know now that I did the right thing by removing myself from the team. You had to be 110 per-

cent to ride this year. The entire course was covered with rocks the size of houses, with twisted roots holding them together. It rained most of the time and the schedule was tight. I wanted to ride so bad.

This was the event that we thought we were waiting for—really hard, really technical, but I don't think anyone really had a shot at winning besides the Swedes. Everything was fair, but they were just too good. Even if we held the event in the U.S., they would have won. At easier events we don't win because the French and the Italians are so fast in the motocross sections. Those teams lost their advantage this year because

It was just what the American team wanted—the hardest ISDE in years. Maybe it was TOO hard.



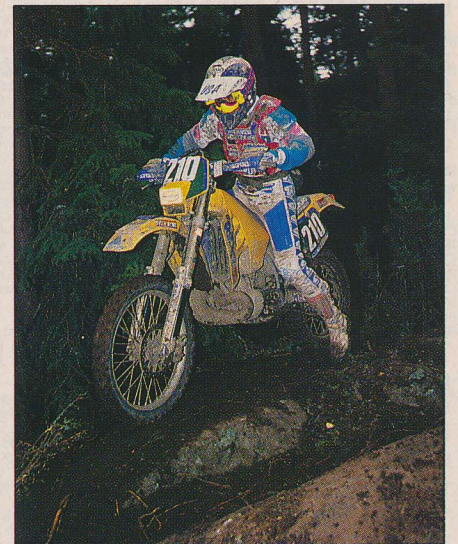
By the DIRT BIKE Staff



He might be the toughest rider America has to offer, but in Sweden Dave Bertram struggled with pain and injury and could only manage a silver medal.



The good news is that Kevin Hines was top American. The bad news is that he didn't even get into the top ten in his class.



Not all the news from Sweden was bad. Young Steve Hatch was riding his first ISDE and amazed everyone. The future looks better.

Photos by Ken Harvey



**RESULTS:
1990 ISDE**

TROPHY TEAM

1. Sweden
2. Finland
3. France
12. USA

JUNIOR WORLD

1. Sweden
2. West Germany
3. France
4. USA

TOP INDIVIDUAL

Dick Wicksell (Sweden)

AMERICAN GOLD MEDALS

Kevin Hines, 17th, 250 class (top American)
 Kelby Pepper, 10th, 125 class
 Jimmy Lewis, 13th, 125 class

SURVIVAL

the trail was so hard, but it seems like there are always other countries to take over the top positions.

We still had a shot at a top finish, though, but Randy Hawkins dropped out on day two and that pretty much ruined our chances. Both Hawkins' and Charlie Halcomb's DR350s had problems. I knew they would; they were just too built-up. Before the start of the event I picked them both to DNF. I was half right. They both ran out of luck at the same time. Randy's bike was hopeless, a valve guide broke, and Charles was having problems with his oil system. On the trail they took parts from both bikes to make one that would run, so Charles finished that day, but was way behind.

We do this to ourselves every year. In Germany it was Todd Harris' XR250 that caused so many problems. It was so tricked-out it was bound to blow up. Other years we put riders on unfamiliar bikes, trying to take advantage of weak classes, like in France when we put Drew Smith on a big KTM four-stroke. He didn't know the bike and he did not do well. We outsmart ourselves all the time.

This year, if we had kept Kelby and Jimmy Lewis on the Junior World Team [the ISDE class for riders who are 23 years old



or younger], we would have had a great shot at that class. The Swedes were awesome there, too, but we could have wrapped up second. As it was, we were in third until the final moto, when David Rhodes' chain came off.

We had some riders do great, though. Both Kelby and Jimmy are in a great position. The door's wide open for them for the future. The only thing that can hold them back is if they lose interest. I see a lot of that—Kurt Hough, for example. Kurt made a big splash, but now he's discovering all the things he can do if he doesn't ride motorcycles. He didn't go to the Six-Days and now it doesn't look like he'll go to the last few national enduros because he doesn't have a shot at winning the title. Kelby, Jimmy and

Less than a third of the riders who started this year's Six-Days made it to the finish. The rest are still out there.

◀ *Dick Wicksell was the fastest man in the ISDE. His country? Sweden, of course.*

Steve Hatch all have the speed to become great riders as long as they stay interested. It's actually easier for Jimmy Lewis because he's from the West Coast, right in the center of the industry. Kelby and Steve will have a harder time, but they can do it if they really want to.

David Bertram rode real well, too. I see him kind of like I see myself. We're both getting old, but we both hang in there. Other riders who are faster come and go, but we'll both finish every chance we get. This year David didn't lose any points on the trail, but just couldn't go fast enough in the special tests to get a gold.

We have the riders, though. We just have to make our races more like the Six-Days. This race had really hard trail, but the motocross tests were all on ribboned-off tracks. None of our races at home are like that. If we set up our race exactly like the ISDE, of course we'll do better. By the same token, if they came over here and rode in one of our time-keeping events, we would kick their butts. Support is always a problem, too. It was minimal in Sweden. After the first day, the team managers already were begging for more support people to help at the checks. More than one person said they really missed all the stuff Kawasaki did last year. This year

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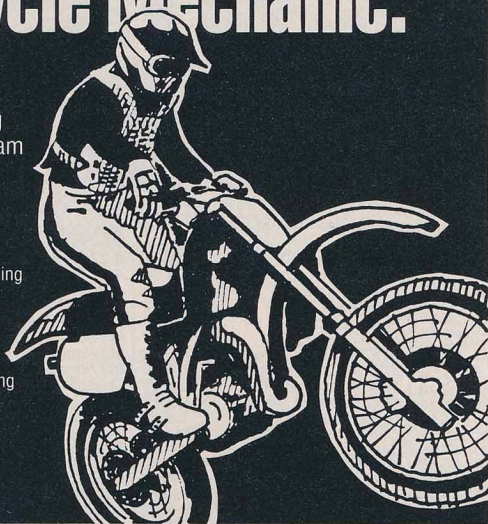
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SURVIVAL

it was kind of bare. Suzuki had some support, but it didn't do you a whole lot of good if you weren't riding a Suzuki.

I'm not sure if this was the toughest ISDE in years or not. Back in '83 it was in Wales, and that one was really hard. No Americans got gold medals. The trail speed was so fast you had to ride like a madman to stay on time. Nobody could go fast enough. Czechoslovakia was tough in '82, but I didn't ride that one because of an injury. That's where it's going next year, and I'm sure I'll be riding. I can see myself settling down after that, though. You can only keep this up for so long.—**Jeff Fredette.**

OTHER COMMENTS

• **Kevin Hines**, top American: "I almost didn't make it. Everyone was congratulating me before the start of the final moto, and I was saying, 'Not yet. It's not over.' Sure enough, I had to push-start my bike for the moto.

"It was difficult but it was a fair event. The Swedes just rode really well. In past years we've looked at the special tests before the event and it was obvious that the local team had been practicing there. This year the tests were all virgin terrain. It was tough, but it *should* be tough."

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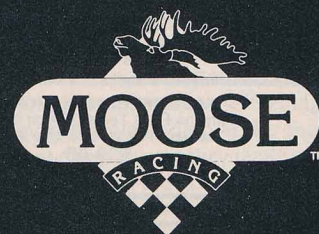
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SURVIVAL

• **David Bertram, Trophy Team:** "I tore a ligament in my knee before the start. That didn't slow me down, it just made it uncomfortable to bend my knee. I was amazed at how well our Junior World Team did. They were a bunch of complete rookies and they had the world on the run in one of the toughest events ever. If not for some stupid bad luck they might have gotten second."

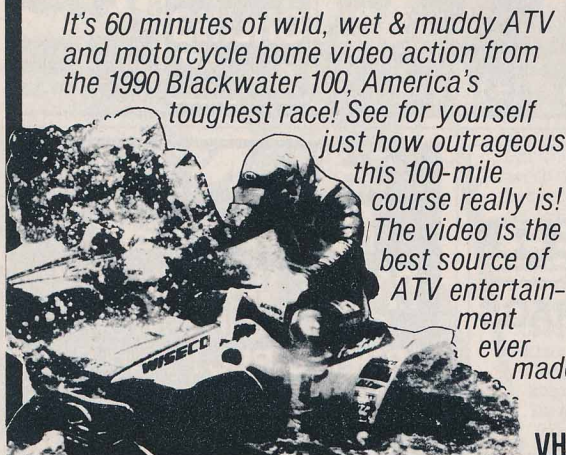
• **Charles Halcomb, Trophy Team:** "I lost ten pounds over there. It was unreal. Rocks were piled on top of other rocks, with slimy roots sticking out of the ground because they had nowhere else to go. The killer section was between checks two and three on day three. You had to ride for all you were worth just to stay on time, so you burned yourself out for the rest of the ride. It was brutal."

• **Steve Hatch, top Junior World rider:** "I rented a Suzuki for the race and it was flawless. Riding there was a little like riding at home in New York, but the rocks at home never get that big and ugly. I had to learn how to ride all over. There were some Swedes on my minute so I had a chance to watch them. They just seemed to float over all the bad stuff. Man, I wish I could ride like that." □

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