

COMPETITION

EDITED BY
MARK KARIYA

SUPERBIKERS

Asphalt ace stuns dirt riders

Motorcycle racers are a pretty proud lot; due to the nature of the sport, no one wants to lose. So after being beaten by the likes of Kent Howerton, Steve Wise and Danny Chandler over the past four years, the dirt-trackers and roadracers were getting just a bit edgy whenever asked, "Hey, why aren't you guys the Superbikers champions? I thought you were fast!"

It hasn't been for lack of trying or talent. The created-for-ABC's *Wide World of Sports* race at Carlsbad Raceway in sunny SoCal is set up to theoretically favor no one particular type of rider. One-and-one-tenths miles of the two-mile track is asphalt, while the rest is graded, hard-packed dirt. But all of it is fast.

Every year it's been the same ol' story—some factory motocrosser comes out on a factory-prepped Open class bike with tall gearing, disc brakes and dirt-track tires and leaves the roadrace wizards and dirt-track boys wishing the race was at Daytona or San Jose.

Nearly all of the roadracers and dirt-trackers play around on motocross bikes during the year to relax, but there's a big difference between roosting around in a field and doing 120 mph on the same sort of bike on pavement. Motocrossers needed little adapting to the bikes and were soon comfortable with the higher speeds.

Now, they've had their unbridled confidence broken.

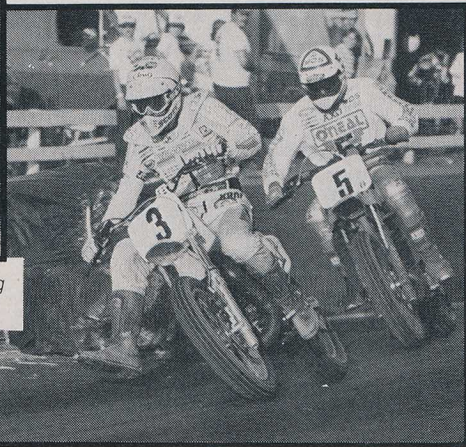
Eddie Lawson, a factory Yamaha roadracer who finished fourth in his first year of 500cc GPs after two U.S. Superbike championships, wiped the smug grins off the gritty MXers' faces in the fifth edition of the Superbikers. He easily won the roadrace heat and led the 10-lap final from start to finish, feeling great about beating the motocrossers at their own game.

"Well, this is a motocross race—it's set up for the motocrossers, we ride motocross bikes," voiced the former dirt-track racer. "This is run-it-in, stop, slide-it, accelerate out and sliding. It's not what we do in roadracing."

"I think that after five years, everybody finally found out what they needed to do," claimed Wise, the former Honda factory motocrosser who joined their



Danny "Magoo" Chandler, the defending champion, had to settle for second this time.



PHOTOS: MARK KARIYA

roadrace team. "They needed to get in training, work out and stuff, and I imagine Lawson's been doing that (he had) after getting beat for four years."

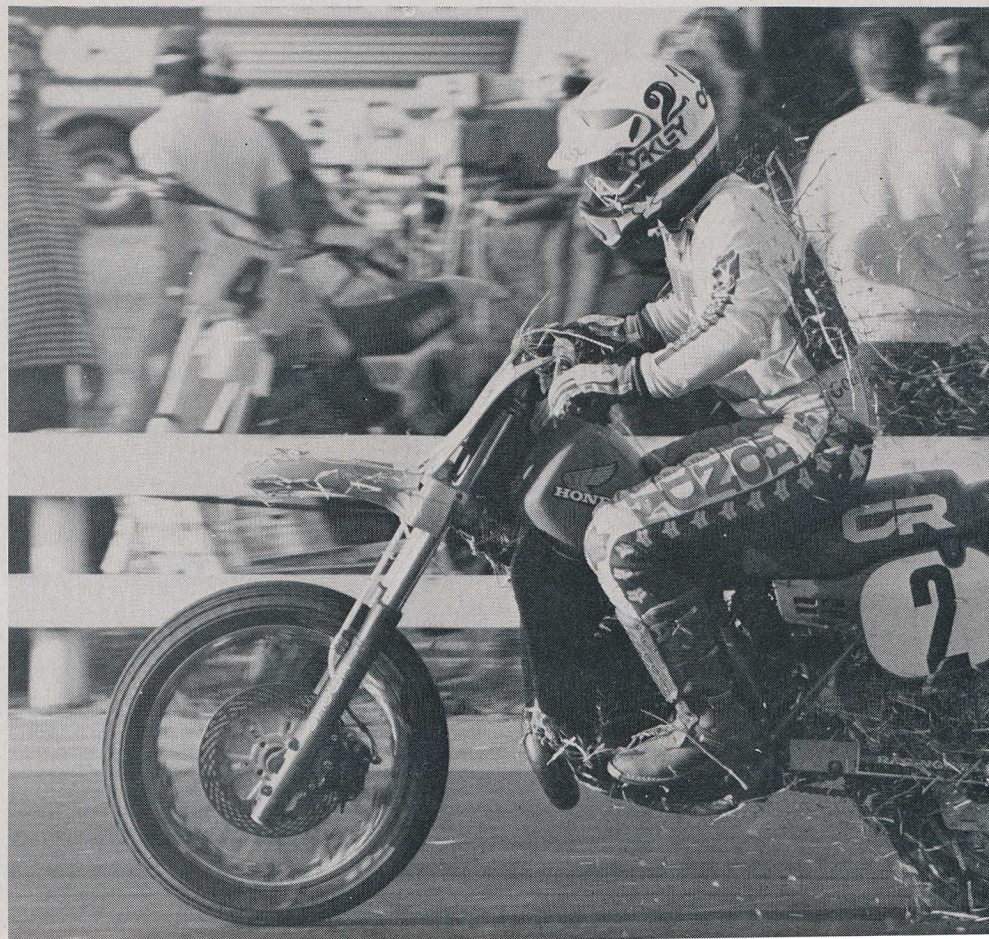
Magoo, the defending champion and MX heat winner, settled for runner-up this time around. "I think what I did wrong was bide too much time at the beginning—I let Eddie get too far away from me—and when I realized he was walking away from me, then I started going harder. I started catching him a little bit, then I came into the (chicane on the paved straight) and clipped the hay bales. That

Broc Glover (3) and Andre Malherbe waged a battle for third, ending in Glover's favor.

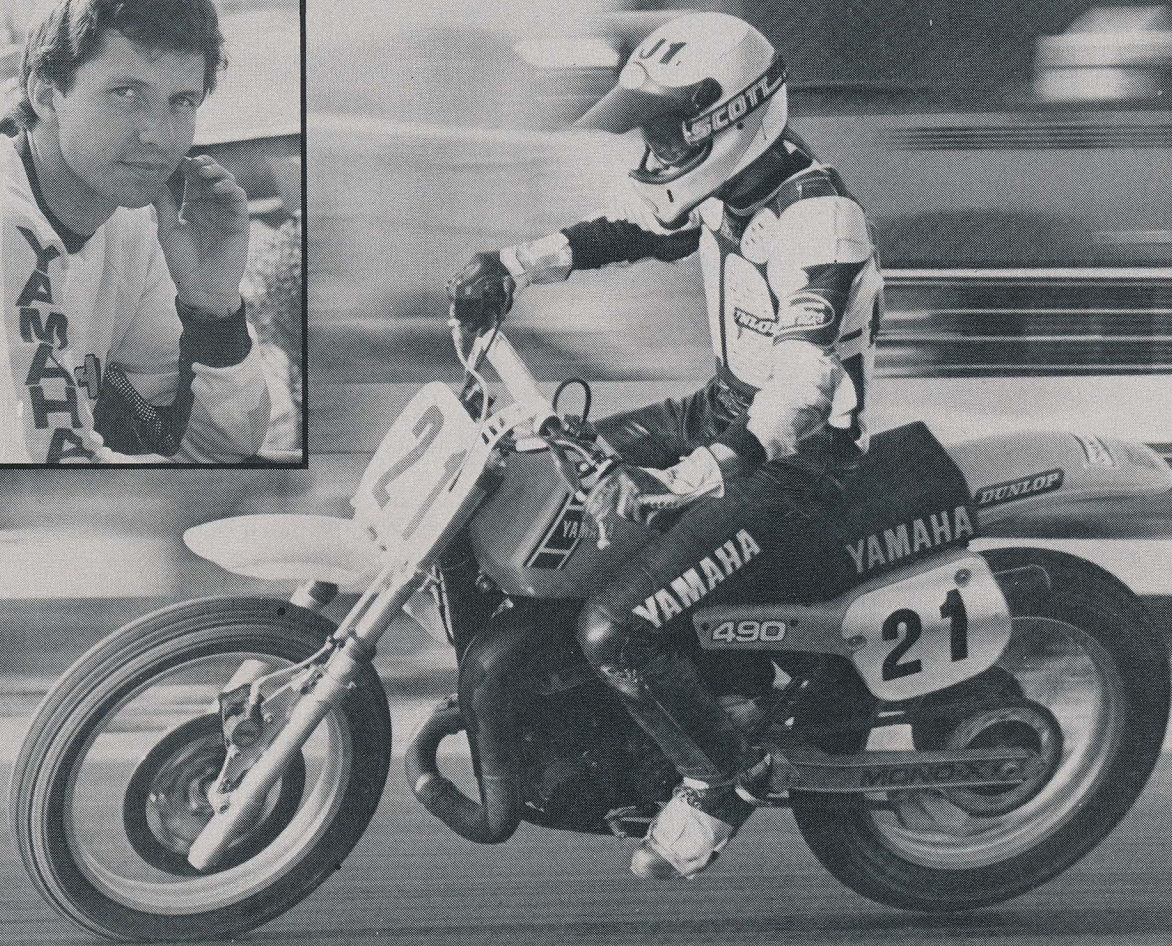
folded my shift lever up (around) the foot-peg. Then I was done."

An impressive trio of motocrossers rounded out the top five, with Yamaha's Broc Glover holding off Belgian Honda ace Andre Malherbe for third. Eric Geboers, the '83 World 125cc MX Champion, took an RM500 to a respectable fifth, just to let the roadracers know that motocrossers haven't conceded a thing yet.

—Mark Kariya



Two-time race winner Steve Wise had a bad start and a worse—at least hairier—finish.



Superbikers winner Eddie Lawson combined dirt track experience (note the steel shoe), recent European roadrace smoothness and a YZ490K to break the MXers' grip on the race.

