

Women's Motocross History



CYCLE NEWS

WEST

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NEWSPAPER



PHOTOS BY JEFF PECK

In two days of all out racing Teri Kezar walked away with everything but the ownership to Carlsbad.

Teri Kezar walks away with controversy-shrouded Yamaha Womens Motorcycle Championship

By Theresa Hannon

CARLSBAD, CAL., JULY 4-5

The second annual Women's National Motorcycle Championships were held this fourth of July weekend at Carlsbad Raceway.

There were a great many improvements over last year's program, but unfortunately a couple of rip-offs were added.

The one that seems to be the biggest burn was that Yamaha paid for promotional rights. This in itself was pretty neat — the trouble started when all riders were given bibs at signup to wear with their number on it and in great big letter also included was *Yamaha*. The rider's name was not on the bib. The complaints started at the first rider's meeting on Friday with some of the riders stating they had worked hard to get a sponsor and now the sponsor's name would be covered with Yamaha and it could mean their sponsor might drop them. They were told if they did not wear the bib they would be disqualified. This really upset a lot of riders and sponsors.

Sambo's restaurants were also big contributors, but Sambo's was not written on the bib. Sambo's should be

applauded for their efforts. Not only did they help contribute to the event, they had personnel present handing out little gifts to spectators and riders without forcing underhanded advertising tactics for the riders.

Although this Yamaha rip-off probably won't happen again the damage has already been done. Cherry Stockton added, "I think we got sold out. Your sponsor does all the work and Yamaha reaps all the benefits. If we would have gotten start money then that's different, but we didn't."

Unlike last year when one rider (Nancy Payne) dominated the whole event, this year there were several winners. Arizona rider Teri Kezar, who won the title of Grand National Champion, did so by a slim margin of one point over second place finisher Lori Watson. Johanna Stenerson, who was a strong contender, had more than her share of mechanical problems and still did quite well. Sue Fish, whom many thought would be this year's winner, was out of the event early with

bike trouble. Last year's winner Nancy Payne did not ride the event and has retired from racing.

On Friday the Grands Prix were held on a five mile course that consisted of tight turns, jumps, narrow trails and asphalt. Many riders did not ride this event, because of the punishment it has on bike and body. They wanted to save it for the motocross. One rider that stood out was an entry in the granny class named Patti Hulse who rode a 500 BSA and was cheered by the whole crowd as she took a second in her class.

The motos ran on Saturday and again like last year most of the excitement was in the 125 and 250 Expert classes.

The first 125 Expert moto Johanna Stenerson (Hon) took the lead and was challenged by Lori Watson (Yam). After a few laps Stenerson grabbed a huge lead all the way to the finish. Watson

took second, and third was 13-year-old Teri Bender (Yam).

In the second moto something unusual happened. Nancy Thomas (Hon), an Oregon rider, had blown up in practice. Her pit crew was able to get her bike running, but not until about halfway through the first moto and she was only able to ride the finish of the first race. In the second moto Nancy took the lead while Watson and Kezar dived it out for second. Kezar did pass Watson once, but was passed back, and although Watson was right on Thomas' rear wheel she couldn't pass her. If Lori Watson could have passed Thomas or Thomas hadn't ridden, Lori Watson would have been the Grand National Champion, that's how close things were.

In the first 250 moto Teri Kezar (Yam) dived it out with Lori Watson again and after a few laps went on to a

Starts were a rough affair with all riders in contention for the lead.



MIKE HANNON



Johanna Stenerson won the moto of the 125 Experts but dropped out of second round with a flat tire.

Lori Watson (14) took the title of National Champion in the 125 class but was not invited to the Superbowl.



easy win. Teri was riding a 250, Lori was riding a 126cc Honda. She was protested by Dawn Grant who claimed she was riding a 125, but after tearing her bike down it was proven she was legal. In the final moto Kezar took the win, with second going again to Watson and third place to Cherry Stockton (Bul).

The final race of the day a girl could have a guy ride for her in a special men's race that was a fun event. Would you believe there were more than 80 entries! The Pro-Experts got their own race and it was pretty exciting with all the women yelling for their rider. Mike Hannon (Bul) was riding for Nancy Thomas and took the lead only to go over the jump and have his handlebars snap. He took a nasty spill, but was uninjured. Marty Moates (Hon) had a good lead for about half the race, but his bike gave out and Wayne Boyer (CZ) went on to win, riding for Johanna Stenerson. The second race was a real nightmare with about 60 guys in the race. The winner was Johanna Stenerson's brother who managed to survive.

The trophy presentation was too long and drawn out with lots of people leaving halfway through it. There was no loud speaker and Jimmy Weinert who was supposed to help pass out trophies never showed. Seventeen-year-old Teri Kezar was the Grand National Champion and walked away with most of the contingencies. Lori Watson was the 125 National Champion.

There was to be given out as part of this event 10 tickets by invitation to ride in the Superbowl of Motocross to 10 different women. They were to be awarded on basis of sportsmanship and riding ability. Lori Watson did not receive an invitation to ride. It seems only fair that the 125 champion should have received one. Lori proved her riding ability and was sportsmanlike at all times. The riders feel this should have been done by points and not left up to one individual to decide who should ride.

Lori Watson commented, "I was really hurt that I didn't receive an invitation to ride, but I'm not going to be a sniveler about it. What I would really like is to be an inspiration to women over 35 to get out and do all the things they think they are too old for."

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