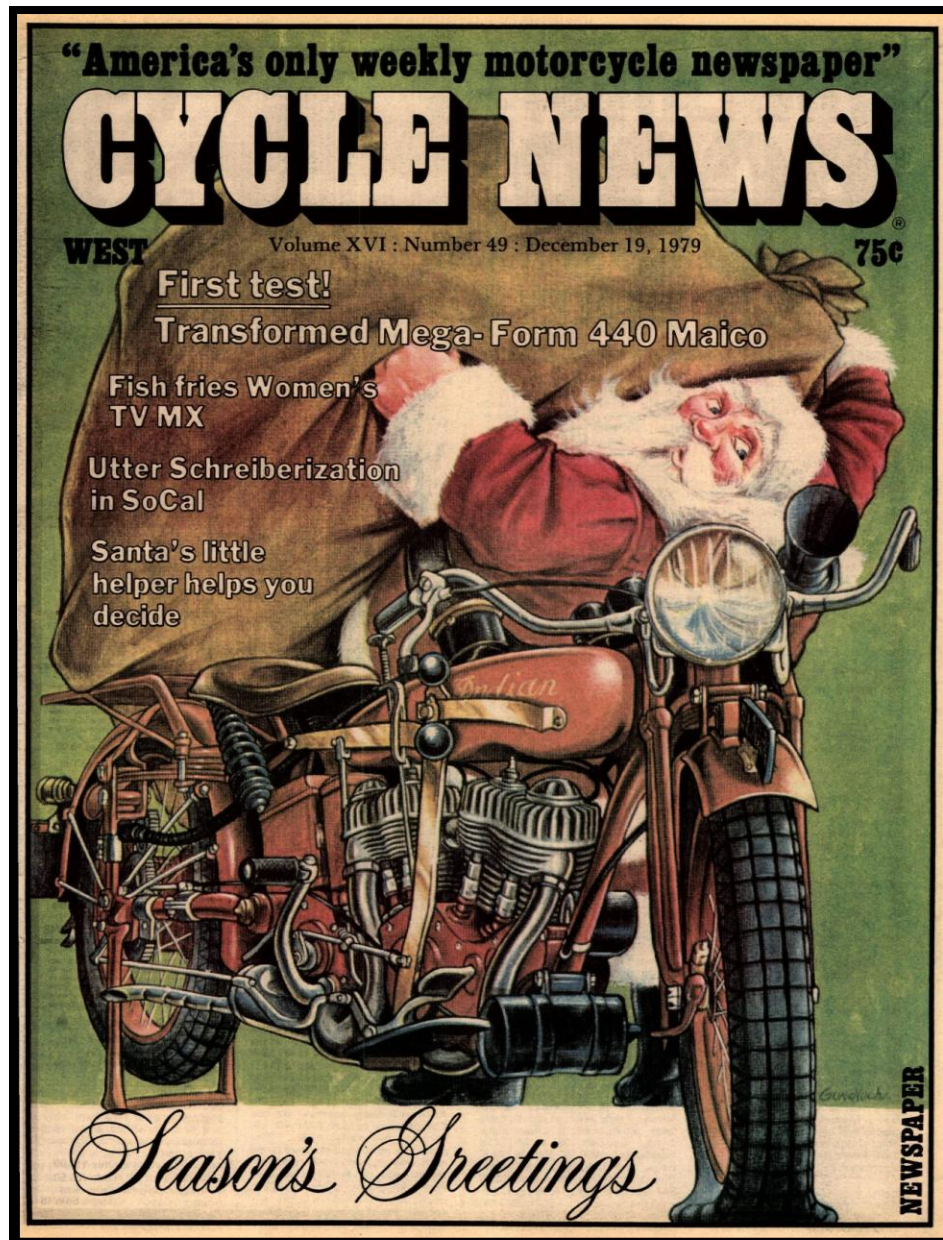




1979 U.S. Women's Invitational Motocross Event

December 2, 1979

Carlsbad International Raceway





Winning two motos in front of the TV cameras brought a grin to the face of Sue Fish.

U.S. Women's Invitational MX

Fish fries the competition

By Dale Brown
 Photos by Mark Kariya and Brown
 CARLSBAD, CA, DEC. 2

Recovered from injuries that kept her out of racing for over a year, Sue Fish stormed her Yamaha/Malcolm Smith/Crown Cycle-sponsored YZ 125 to win both motos of the Expert class.

in the U.S. Women's Invitational MX at Carlsbad Raceway.

Finishing second after two 25-minute-plus-one-lap motos was 15-year-old Suzuki pilot Lisa Akins from Niles, MI, with a 4-2 tally. Women's National MX Champ Dede Cates looked like she might pull off the overall win after finishing second in

the first moto and racing to a strong early lead in the second moto. But a pair of crashes midway through the second moto dropped her to fifth, and she finished third overall.

The first moto started with Cates pushing her Suzuki/R&D Racing engines-sponsored RM 125T to the holeshot. Fish was hot on Cates' rear fender as they exited the first turn. Kimi Douglass and Charlene Higgins held third and fourth as they set off to complete the first lap.

At the end of one lap Cates was still in the lead with Fish about 15 feet back. Kawasaki-mounted Barbara Spielman had taken over third, and was followed by Douglass, Dorene Payne, Michigan's Peggy Hall, Cindy Dumo, Texas' Kathy Holman and Higgins.

The following lap saw Cates and Fish pull out some distance on Spielman, who in turn had a good margin over Payne. Douglass had slowed noticeably with some sort of problem.

Working her way up to fifth was Lisa Akins after a fall in the early going.

Four laps into the race, Cates and Fish were still fighting hard for the lead. Finally, going through the first half of the course, Sue took the lead. "I just waited for the right time," she said later. "I didn't want to take her out, and I didn't want to crash."

Fish led the remainder of the race, pulling out to an 11-second lead over Cates. Cates, meanwhile, had little to worry about in her second place position, since she was 55 seconds in front of Spielman.

Akins, a Team Dynamic rider who also gets help from RPM and Hi-Point, had taken fourth from Payne, who was riding a Moto-X Fox Kawasaki. Rhe Helms (Yam) took sixth in front of Kathy Holman (Yam), Cindy Dumo (Kaw) and Mercedes Gonzalez (Suz). April Dunlap rounded out the top 10.

Dede Cates again took the lead as the pack hit the first turn. Shadowing her this time was Kathy Holman, with Lisa Akins, Barbara Spielman and Sue Fish in her wake. Trying to get to the front, Fish had her troubles on the first lap: "I went down at the bottom of the downhill and kinda got stuck under the bike."

Still, Fish recovered and was running sixth at the end of the first lap, behind Cates, Akins, Holman, Spielman and Douglass.

At the completion of two laps, the top 10 order read: Cates, Akins, Spielman, Fish, Holman, Dorene Payne, Cindy Dumo, Tracy Evans, and Jan Murray.

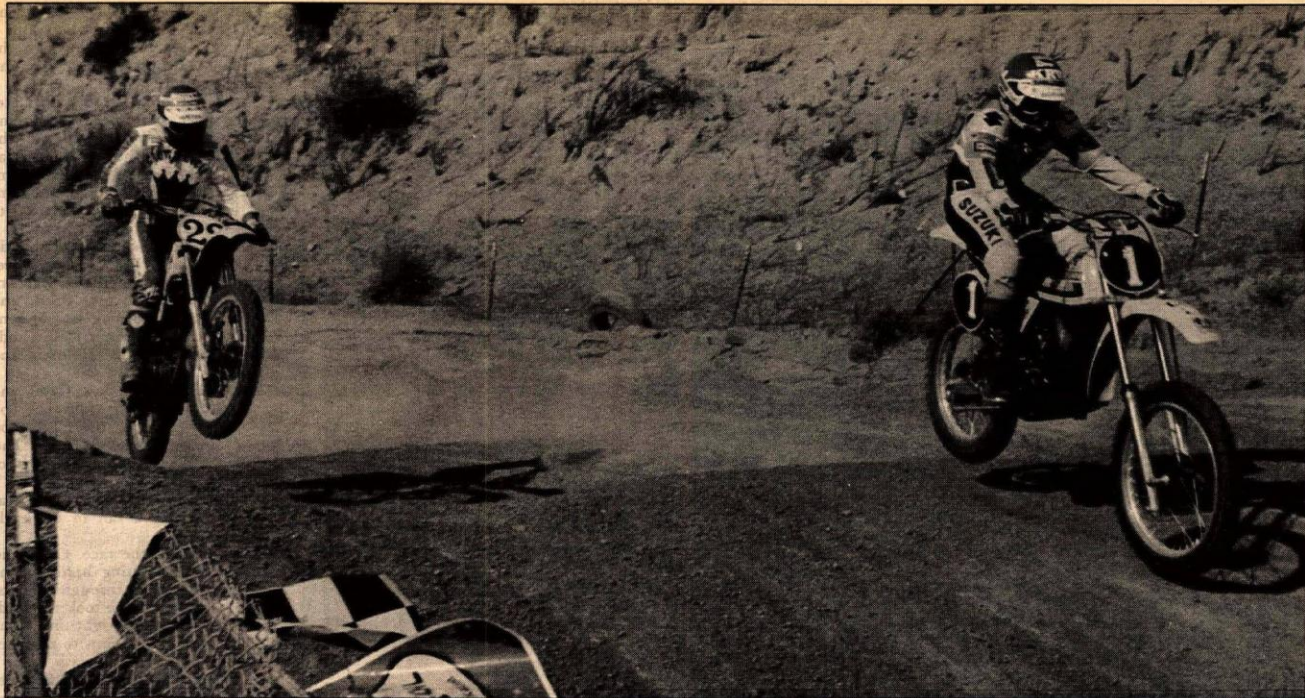
Coming by to start the fourth lap, Spielman had slowed drastically and would drop out shortly afterward, in pain. Later, before going to the hospital for a check, she said, "I hurt my back. The bike hopped up and hit me just right."

When Spielman slowed, Fish picked up third and started after Akins, passing her a lap later. Meanwhile, Cates had pulled out to a strong lead.

Fish appeared to be gaining on Cates, but whether there was enough time left to catch the leader was unknown. Suddenly, it was a moot question — Cates tangled with a lapped rider and went down in the turn before the finish line. "I came up to her in the corner," said Cates later, "and she just stopped!"

The fall relegated Dede to third behind Fish and Akins. Half a lap later, though, Cates tumbled at the top of the ledge, dropping three more places while she fought to restart her bike.

Fish rode smoothly — though she admitted later that she was getting



Early in the first moto, Women's National MX Champ Dede Cates holds a slim lead over Sue Fish.



Kathy Holman, fourth overall, leads Lisa Akins (29) and Fish.



(Above) Runner-up Lisa Akins. (Below left) Debbie Jamerson and Dena Decker each won an Amateur moto, but Lynda Ledlow (right) won overall.

tired — and took the moto win 25 seconds in front of Akins.

Finishing third was Holman, followed by Rhe Helms. Cates took the flag in fifth, pursued by Cindy Dumo, April Dunlap, Mercedes Gonzalez, Jan Murray, and Kay Attwood from Canada. Dorene Payne had been running third after Cates' crash, but dropped out late in the race.

Fish took the largest chunk of the \$500 purse donated by Dunlap Roofing Co. Taking fourth overall behind Akins and Cates was Holman. Fifth through 10th in the overall order was Helms, Dumo, Dunlap, Gonzalez, Payne and Attwood.

Lynda Ledlow took the overall win in the Amateur class with a 2-3 score. Moto winners Debbie Jamerson and Dena Decker both had problems in the motos they didn't win. Debi Irby (6-2) took second over Susan Brennan (4-4).

Karen Leitinger took first in the first Novice moto, then backed it up with a second in the second moto for the overall win. Second moto winner Elizabeth Hollenshead took a fourth

the first time around to garner second overall. Mimi Selly posted a 2-3 effort for third overall.

Dede Cates' brother Dean won the Pit Tootsie race with little trouble.

The Expert class was filmed by ABC's *Wide World of Sports*, and preliminary plans call for the race to be aired in March or April of 1980.

Working with little advance notice, promoter Vicki Miller Haag and AMA referee Butch Lee pulled off a smooth-running event. ●

Results

EXPERT: 1. Sue Fish 1-1 (Yam); 2. Lisa Akins 4-2 (Suz); 3. Dede Cates 2-5 (Suz); 4. Kathy Holman 7-3 (Yam); 5. Rhe Helms 6-4 (Yam); 6. Cindy Dumo 8-6 (Kaw); 7. April Dunlap 10-7; 8. Mercedes Gonzalez 9-8 (Yam); 9. Dorene Payne 5-13 (Kaw); 10. Kay Attwood 11-10 (Suz); 11. Jan Murray DNF-9; 12. Joyce Lancer 16-12; 13. Jennie Miles 14-16; 14. Charlene Higgins 12-18; 15. Pauline Pitt 17-17.

AMATEUR: 1. Lynda Ledlow; 2. Debi Irby; 3. Susan Brennan; 4. Evelyn Hodges; 5. Debbie Jamerson; 6. Dena Decker; 7. Myriam Kubat; 8. Sherry Lowery; 9. Denise De Vines; 10. Tandy Jenkins; 11. Maria Gonzalez.

NOVICE: 1. Karen Leitinger; 2. Elizabeth Hollenshead; 3. Mimi Selly; 4. Diana Tweedy; 5. Nona Richardson; 6. Marci Michalee; 7. Candee Haag; 8. Kathy Anglin; 9. Cindy Monohan; 10. Debbie Whitt; 11. Jamie Gasser; 12. Crystal Calderon; 13. Rockita Ellingson.

PIT TOOTSIE: 1. Dean Cates; 2. Kevin Graves.



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