

# Trials Notebook

A monthly course in the art of trials riding.

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Spectators at the U.S. Round of the 1974 World Trials Championship at Saddleback Park will probably remember "The Grand Canyon." Bob Nickelsen did, and after the trial went back to scope it out. Sections of this type are not uncommon in arid parts of the country, so Bob felt that the techniques needed to ride this section would be a valuable addition to his bag of tricks.

## PROBLEM

The major problem with sections like this is the lack of traction resulting from

constant camber changes as you move through the section.

## SOLUTION

The approach here is to use choice of line and momentum to make centrifugal force work for you. Your momentum is converted into a force that counteracts the pull of gravity and helps you avoid side-slip.

Key points: 1. Pick a line for your

## VIEW A



### ONE A

Nick lines up for turn out of bottom of gully. Weight slightly outside, but evenly distributed on pegs; eyes ahead on the bank.



### TWO A

Weight back to keep front end light, throttle rolling on smoothly to build momentum.



### THREE A

Front wheel starts up on wall, kept light to avoid washing out.



### FOUR A

Front wheel is now fairly high up on wall, and turning on around to drop into the "track" on the climb out.



### FIVE A

Throttle is being eased; weight is still to outside, but evenly distributed on pegs. Weight is now more forward; this helps bike to straighten out—a light front wheel tends to keep on turning.

## VIEW B



### ONE B

Rear tire compression indicates rearward weight bias, light front end. Note rut where rear wheel will go.

rear wheel to follow; ideally, your rear wheel should track around the turn and drop gently into the gully track on the uphill with a minimum of side-slip or disturbance. 2. Front wheel tracks on outside line, actually up on the wall—it's a controlled version of the old "wall of death" trick. 3. Front end is kept light—just enough weight for steering—to avoid plowing. 4. Approach slow, roll throttle on to build momentum. 5. Keep weight equally distributed on pegs, body to outside, don't put weight too far to the outside, however, or you may end up "over committed" and

unable to recover if you bobble. If you err, err on the side of simply keeping your body vertical to the ground (imagine it as level). 6. Watch out for over-turn, a common ailment sometimes known as "squid syndrome." Two factors contribute to this affliction: too much weight on the downhill peg, and the camber of the turn, which makes you unconsciously want to continue on around. You must be ready to make a conscious transition out of the turning mode into straight-line travel.

In this instance, pictures are worth more than words, so we've shown you

the same turn from several views. Note how Nick, in addition to keeping the front end light to avoid front wheel washout, also uses outside and rearward weight to help the front end on around in the turn. When straight-ahead travel is desirable, his hips move forward to help straighten the bike out. As a saving move if you get in trouble, try this forward hip thrust, coupled with a goodly handful of throttle, rather than putting a foot down. This technique can save you a bunch of points!

Be sure to practice this type of turn in both directions. 

## VIEW C



### ONE C

This shows what Nick is talking about regarding weight bias: weight is outside, but borne equally by each foot.



### TWO C

Compare to A-3 and B-1.



### THREE C

Compare to A-4 and B-2.



### TWO B

Weight slightly to outside, still back, body nearly vertical. Rear wheel tracking right into rut.



### THREE B

Front wheel coming down into gully parallel with it, not at an angle. Weight has moved forward to bring front wheel down, regain steering, help bike to straighten out. Weight is dead even on pegs. Compare to A-5.



### FOUR C

Compare to A-5 and B-3. Nick has thrust his pelvis slightly forward to shift weight.