

Below

Rich Eierstedt leads his lanky Honda teammate Tommy Croft. They finished the series in 3rd and 4th places in the Support class.

Photo by Steve Clark



1976 TRANS-AMA WRAP-UP

Most of the battles were ours, but THEY won the war.

BY FERNANDO BELAIR

The handwriting is on the wall. For years and years the American motocross riders have been used as mere fillers in a program of battling foreigners in the annual Trans-AMA series. Although beaten again this year by the Europeans, who still show more consistently, American riders took six, *that's right six,* out of the 10 events.

The series opener belonged to Jim Pomeroy and was followed immediately by a Jim Weinert victory in the second event. Four-time World Champion and defending Trans-AMA victor Roger DeCoster finally started getting it together by the third round, thereby capturing the overall win. But our boys weren't ready to give up yet. Marty Smith blasted to an overall at Omaha, Nebraska. Then, DeCoster and his Suzuki teammate, Pennsylvanian Tony DiStefano, divided the last five; two for Roger, three for Tony. That included a double moto sweep for Tony at the series finale at Saddleback Park.

Although he won only four events, DeCoster still stole the show. Whenever an American won, Roger was usually right behind in 2nd or 3rd, piling up points. His consistency is what saved the series for him. Had Roger not won any at all, but rather finished as far back as 3rd in the four events he actually did win, he still would have seized overall

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Left

Fourth overall was Honda's wonder kid, Marty Smith. This series was Marty's first ever on a big-bore and he beat everyone at one time or another.

Color photo by Paul Webb

Photo by Steve Platt

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Color photo by Paul Webb

Top

The Roger DeCoster of the Support class, Jimmy Ellis dominated the 250 events from the drop of the first starting gate. High-flying Ellis has had a pretty good year.

Bottom

Gerrit Wolsink finished 2nd overall, but won only one of the 20 motos and never did get an overall win. Proof positive that consistency is the key in motocross.

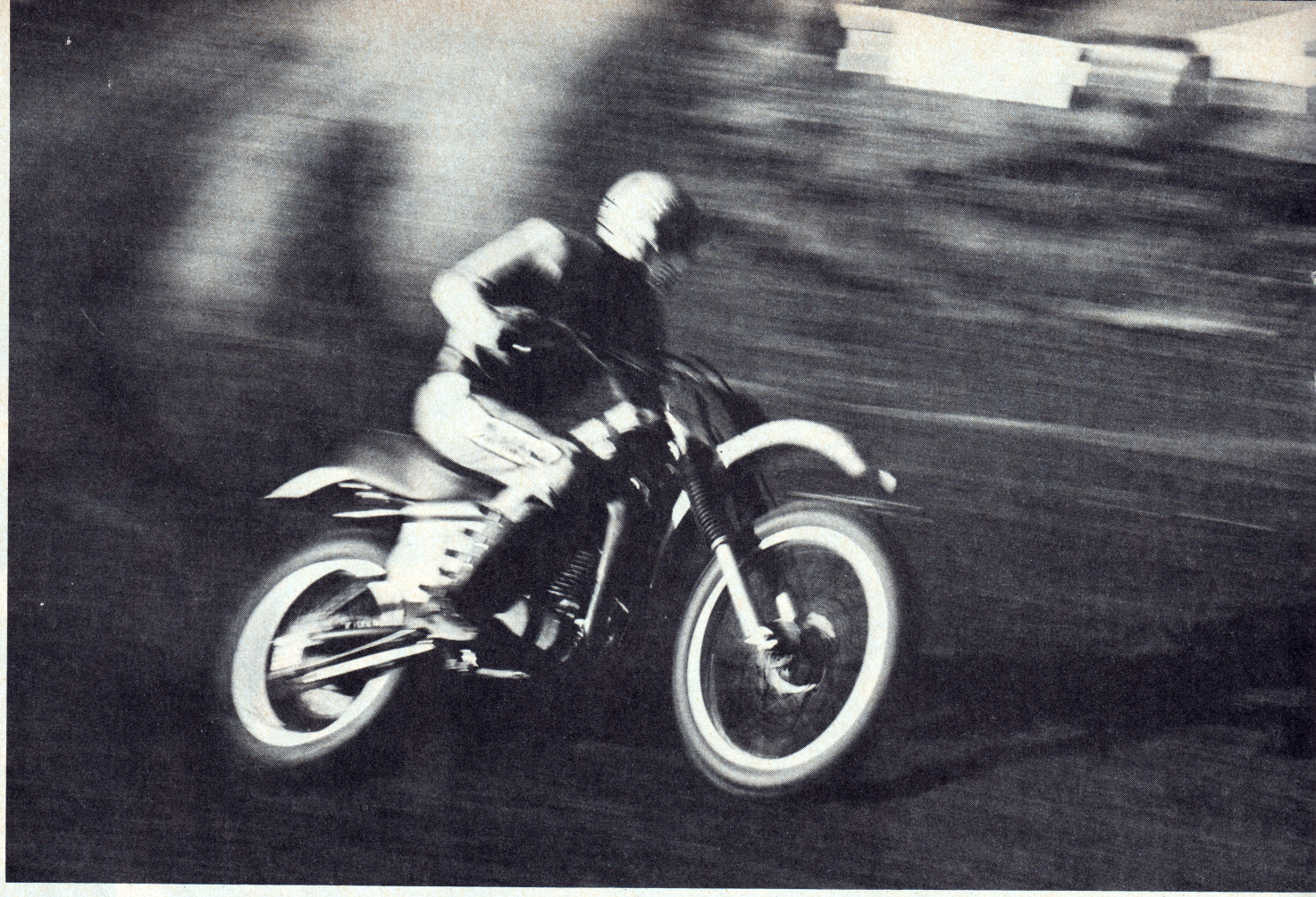
Far Right

What more can be said about this man? He's a four-time 500cc World Champion, two-time Trans-AMA Champion, several-time Belgian Motocross Champion and even a former Belgian Trials Champion. Put two wheels under Roger DeCoster and he will win it. . .whatever it is.



Staff photo






Di STEFANO
3

Photo by Mike Brown

Left

U.S. National 500cc Champion Jim Weinert took the Mid-Ohio event for Yamaha. At the end of the series, Jammin' Jimmy was right up there among the top Americans.

TRANS-AMA RESULTS

ROAD ATLANTA

1. Jim Pomeroy ..... Bultaco
2. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki
3. Marty Smith ..... Honda

MID-OHIO

1. Jim Weinert ..... Yamaha
2. Jim Pomeroy ..... Bultaco
3. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki

UNADILLA, NEW YORK

1. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki
2. Gerrit Wolsink ..... Suzuki
3. Brad Lackey ..... Husqvarna

BUCHANAN, MICHIGAN

1. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki
2. Jim Pomeroy ..... Bultaco
3. Brad Lackey ..... Husqvarna

OMAHA, NEBRASKA

1. Marty Smith ..... Honda
2. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki
3. Gerrit Wolsink ..... Suzuki

ST. PETERS, MISSOURI

1. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki
2. Gerrit Wolsink ..... Suzuki
3. Tony DiStefano ..... Suzuki

LAKE WHITNEY, TEXAS

1. Tony DiStefano ..... Suzuki
2. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki
3. Gerrit Wolsink ..... Suzuki

PUYALLUP, WASHINGTON

1. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki
2. Gerrit Wolsink ..... Suzuki
3. Gary Semics ..... Kawasaki

LIVERMORE, CALIFORNIA

1. Tony DiStefano ..... Suzuki
2. Jim Weinert ..... Yamaha
3. Marty Smith ..... Honda

SADDLEBACK

1. Tony DiStefano ..... Suzuki
2. Gary Semics ..... Kawasaki
3. Brad Lackey ..... Husqvarna

Overall

1. Roger DeCoster ..... Suzuki
2. Gerrit Wolsink ..... Suzuki
3. Tony DiStefano ..... Suzuki
4. Marty Smith ..... Honda
5. Jim Weinert ..... Yamaha
6. Brad Lackey ..... Husqvarna
7. Kent Howerton ..... Husqvarna
8. Jim Pomeroy ..... Bultaco
9. Gary Semics ..... Kawasaki
10. Pierre Karsmakers ..... Honda

Support Class

1. Jimmy Ellis ..... Can-Am
2. Mike Runyard ..... Can-Am
3. Rich Eierstedt ..... Honda
4. Buck Murphy ..... Can-Am
5. Tommy Croft ..... Honda

Left

Top American, and winner of three of the last four Trans-AMAs, Tony DiStefano and his factory Suzuki took their most impressive victory in the series finale at Saddleback Park.

Color photo by Paul Webb

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honors. Even so, it was delightful to see the Americans pile up more victories than the Euros for a change.

The 250cc Support class was owned by Can-Am's Jimmy Ellis. While the Connecticut youngster dominated the racing, his teammates Mike Runyard and Buck Murphy were involved in a battle with Honda's Rich Eierstedt for 2nd, 3rd and 4th. Runyard finally came out on top, with Eierstedt spacing Murphy back to 4th.

Coincidentally, both class winners, DeCoster and Ellis, were injured before the end of the series. Roger unloaded when a triple clamp on his Works RN370 Suzuki broke while tapped out in fifth. He landed on his face, suffering some pretty serious lacerations. His hurts kept Roger out of the results at Livermore, where the accident occurred, and also prevented him from riding at Saddleback.

Ellis high-sided while leading the first Support moto at Saddleback, dislocating his shoulder and putting him out of the fray.

Fans in 10 locations across the country saw this group of International and National riders compete for the series title. While the Europeans have traditionally dominated, the much tighter competition this year had everyone going WFO. That's the way spectators like to see their racing...with all the stops pulled out and ON THE GAS!