

YOU'RE NUMBER ONE, SON!

the CAMEL PRO SERIES

Harley-Davidson Springs a Winner!

by Woods



Jay Springsteen put the pack behind him consistently all season.

We were lucky. Considering the number of races in the Camel Pro Series, and considering that these races work their way back and forth across the whole of America, and considering, especially, the financial limitations of the Great Yellow DIRT BIKE travel budget, it seemed extremely unlikely that we would be able to view the race that decided the Championship. As things happened, however, the Number One plate was won right in our backyard, at dear old Ascot Park. The three-way end of the season clash, between Kenny Roberts, Jay Springsteen and Gary Scott, was a long time in building, though. That

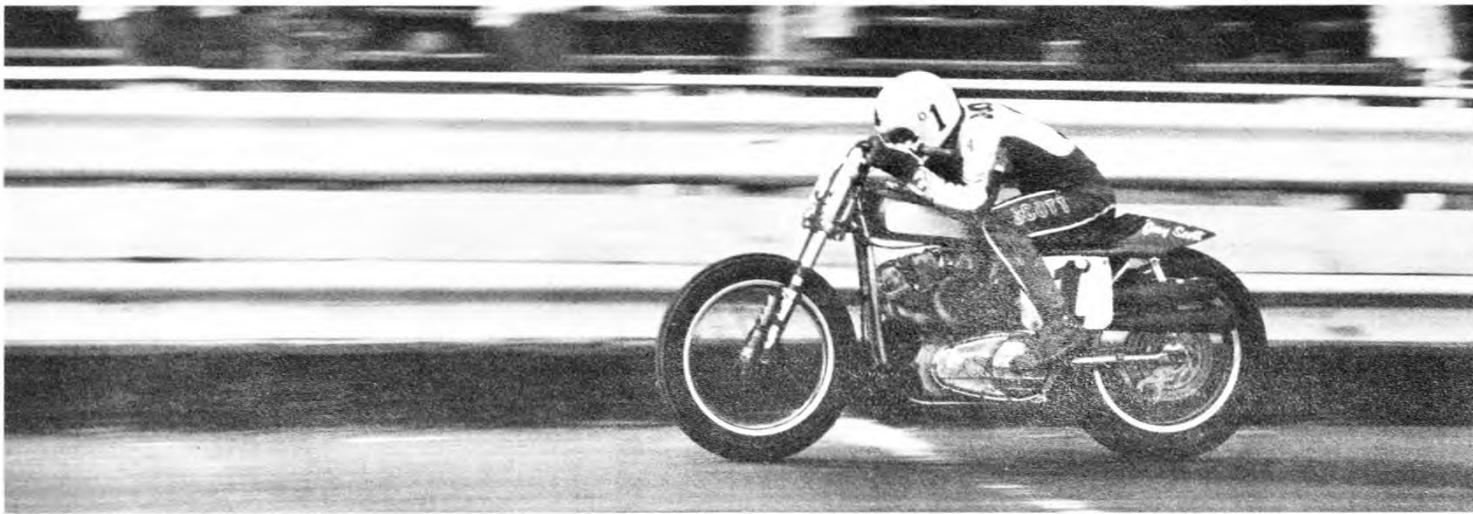
last race only becomes important in light of the season behind it.

Before the Series started on January 26 in Houston's Astrodome, most knowledgeable fans would have predicted a two-way fight. Kenny Roberts and Gary Scott have been battling each other for the title for years now, and there was little evidence that this year would be any different.

Or was there? Kenny, for the first time since 1973, would be starting a season without the magic "One" on his bike. Would this have a psychological effect on the Yamaha ace? If so, would it help or hurt him? Also, the declining importance of

road racing (Yeesh, sorry about that. We'll try to keep mention of it to a minimum) would hurt Roberts, who is superb on a road race course.

Gary Scott must have that increased emphasis on dirt tracks as an advantage. Also, Scott began the Series as reigning champion, an edge which never hurts. Scott, however, had broken with his sponsor, Harley-Davidson, and was riding as a privateer. Recent years have shown us that privateers, unless their name is Dick Mann, do not become Number One. Harley's Racing Manager, Dick O'Brien, wasn't about to make it easy for Gary, either. Scott had taken Number One



Gary Scott, riding as a privateer, swapped the lead in the points race all season.



Twice Number One Kenny Roberts was always in contention, fighting a rash of mechanical troubles all year.

with him when he left. Harley-Davidson wanted it back.

Back-to-back TT and Short Track Nationals at Houston did little to ease the predicting. Rick Hocking, a 23-year-old privateer, won the TT riding a modified TT500 Yamaha. Roberts picked up a second, Scott a fourth. The Harley team was not much in evidence. The Short Track went to Bultaco-mounted Bubba Rush, his first-ever National win. Roberts seized, and could manage no better than 13th, followed by 1975's rookie of the year, Team Harley's Jay Springsteen.

After an obscure pavement race in Daytona, Florida, Roberts moved to second in the points standings. Gary Scott was involved in a three-way tie for tenth. Not one member of the Harley team was in the top ten.

They headed back to Texas. Kenny took the Stadium Short Track from wire to wire. A consistent Rick Hocking scored a third, enabling him to hold on to a slim points lead over Roberts.

If you were paying attention you read about the May 16 San Jose Mile some months ago in Dear Ol' DB. To refresh your memory, Scott came in third, moving up to an identical position in the points race, behind Hocking and Roberts. Rex Beauchamp, Gary's former teammate, took the win, finally fighting off a pressing Springsteen on the 24th lap. Roberts' Yammer didn't have the beans for the fast Mile track. Scott assured himself that his bike *would* in the future, by claiming the winning Harley.

Half-Miles made up the next two races on the circuit, first at Oklahoma City and then in Louisville. Scott led the first, and won the second. His crash while leading at Oklahoma City was followed one lap later by a four-rider crash in the same location. The race was red-flagged, and the results for positions two to 11 were thrown into limbo for some weeks by a scoring protest. Gary's brother, Hank, took the overall. Roberts dropped out with engine trouble.

Pontiac, Michigan's TT and Short Track Nationals, allowed the rookies to shine, with Steve Eklund and Ted Boody respectively scoring their first Series wins. Roberts, with a disqualification in the TT and an 11th in the Short Track, moved into the points lead for the first time this season, passing Hocking, who was



DIRT BIKE's favorite lady flattracker, Diane Cox, finally got a competitive bike under her when Scott loaned her his back-up Harley miler . . .



. . . and she rode it until she dropped. Diane was unhurt, though the Hog was slightly misshapen.

injured in the TT. Scott picked up points for a fourth in the TT, following Harley kid Springsteen across the line. The 19-year-old "Springer" thus moved into seventh in the points standings, which still did not include the protested Oklahoma City event. Team Harley's youngest star seemed to be on the rise.

Corky Keener won the Harrington, Delaware, Full House Half-Mile, but Gary Scott was the big winner of the weekend. The AMA appeals board upheld his protest of the Oklahoma race, awarding him points for fourth. That, coupled with a third place at Harrington, put Gary atop the heap in the

standings. Second place in the Delaware race went to Springsteen, who was suddenly second in the points race as well. Roberts could only manage a seventh, dropping back to third in the standings.

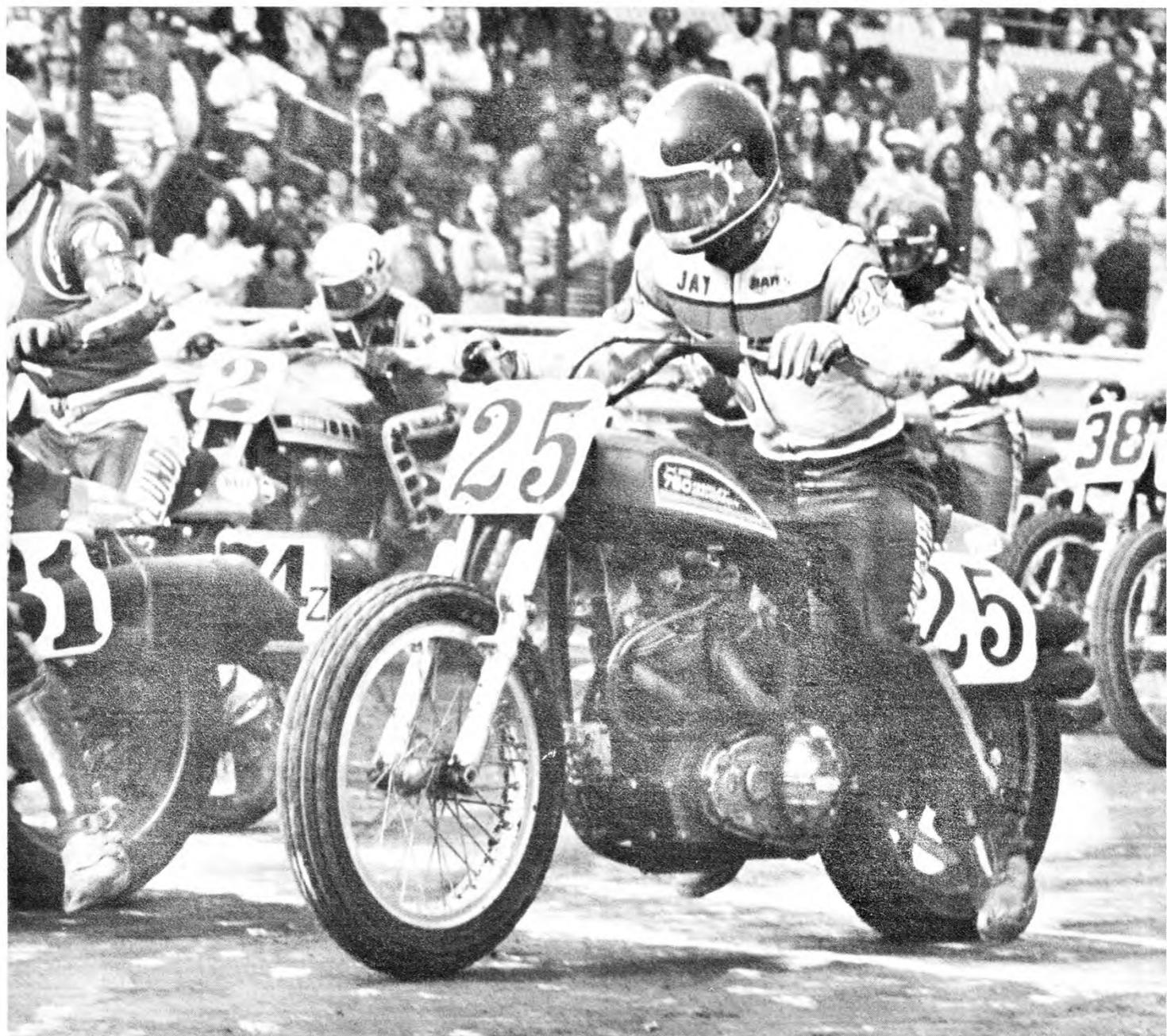
Back on the pavement at Loudon, Roberts broke, Springsteen didn't ride (he is not licensed for big-bore road races) and Scott picked up a seventh. Enough of this asphalt scratching.

Springsteen's win at the Columbus, Ohio, Half-Mile moved him up to a tie with Gary Scott. His victory a week later in the Albuquerque Mile put him on top of the points race for the first time in his career. It was a short-lived lead. Springer

crashed the following week at the San Jose Half-Mile. Roberts won the race, but Scott took second, winning the first leg of the Series and \$5000.

Gary Scott went back to a Triumph to take seventh at the Castle Rock TT and hold onto his points lead. The race itself went to Chuck Joyner, his third Castle Rock in four years. Roberts dropped out after crashing. Springsteen's 11th was good enough to drop Roberts down to third. One week later Kenny moved back to second in the standings by virtue of a third place finish at something called Laguna Seca. Hmmm, no dirt there, it's best we say no more about it.

Scott went to British iron again for



Last year's rookie of the year, Jay Springsteen, about to go for it at San Jose.

the August 7th Ascot TT. His Triumph carried him to a first place finish. Roberts took second, Springer fourth.

Following Ascot there was a spread of 30 points between the top three riders. The Santa Fe Short Track narrowed that considerably, with Springsteen (second) and Roberts (fourth) both gaining points on leader Scott (eighth). Two nights later, at Terre Haute's Half-Mile, Roberts and Springer scored again, taking first and second, while Gary was held back to fourth. Roberts took over the points lead by one. Springsteen was only 17 points off the mark in third.

Gary Scott must have been feeling

affection for the British motorcycle industry after the August 22 Peoria Steeplechase. His Trumpet won him a second, behind Steve Eklund, who already was establishing himself as a rookie of 1976. Springer accidentally shut off his gas with his knee, dropping him from first to fourth. Gary's win put him on top of the points race again.

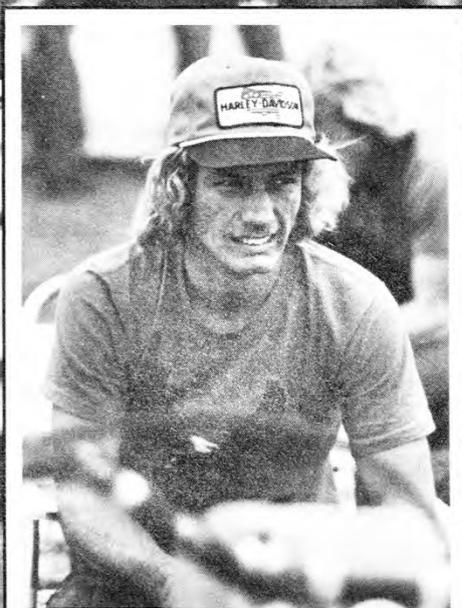
Springsteen and Mike Kidd swapped first and second places at the back-to-back Indy Miles. Scott finished well enough to hold onto a six-point lead over Springer and Roberts, who were suddenly tied for second.

Rookie Terry Poovey of Garland, Texas, took the Talladega Short

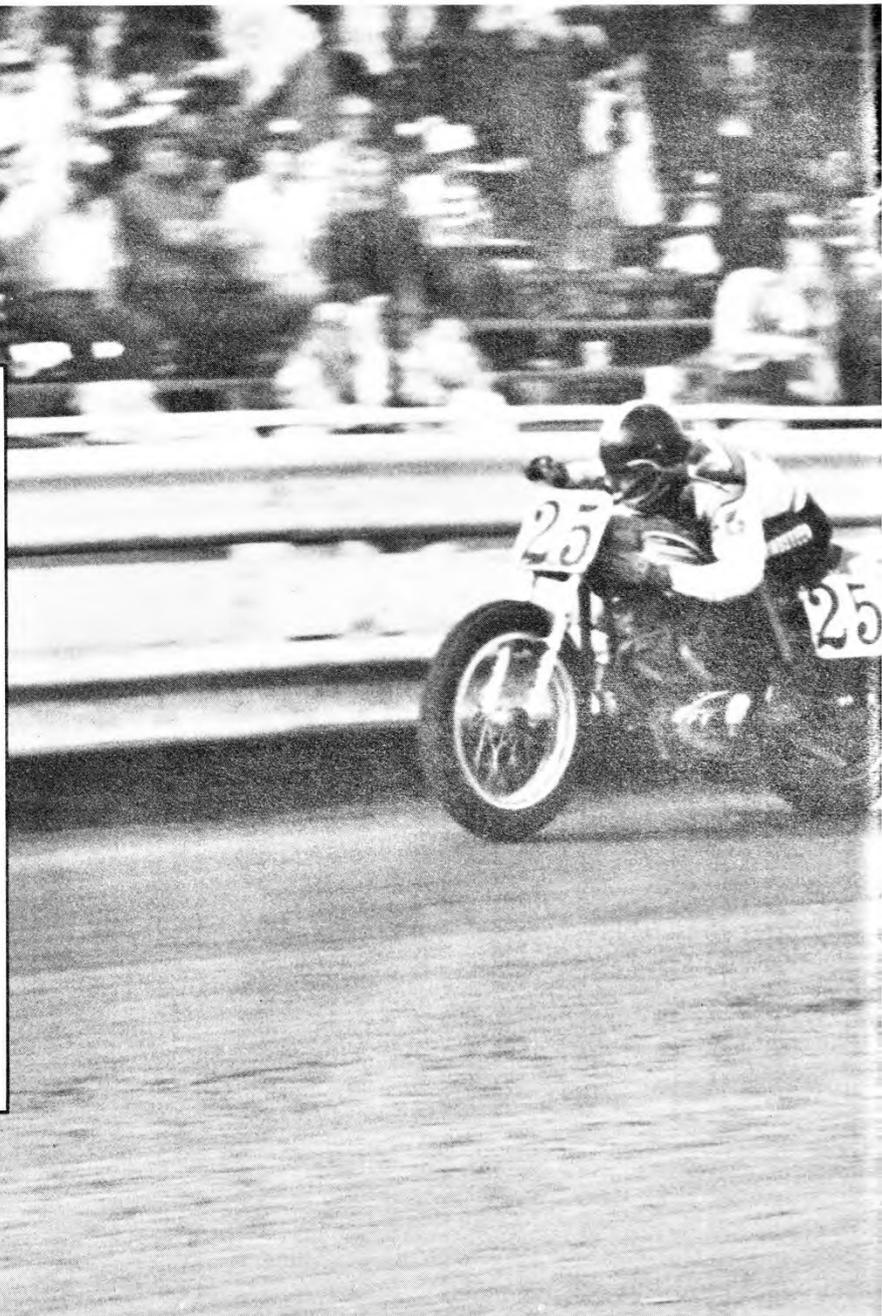
Track on September 5, but of the contenders for the throne it was Springsteen, in fourth, who picked up the points advantage, displacing Roberts from the second place tie. One week later, at the Syracuse Mile, he took the win and the points lead, never to lose either that lead, or a dirt track National, for the remainder of the season.

At the Toledo Half-Mile he won, Gary took a second to stay within 12 points. Roberts, finishing ninth, dropped back to 29 points from the top spot.

At San Jose it was Springer again, again Scott in second. Roberts' fifth place finish put his chances for the title back into the miracle category.



When it all came down, Jay Springsteen ignored advice to be cautious and went for the win. He became, in the process, the youngest Number One in the history of the Series.



Springer (25) and Scott (1) were this close in the points race, as well as on the track, for most of the season.

But the DIRT BIKE staff, begging your pardon for intruding in the summary, would like to add a few observations of our own. We were at this one, excited now that we were sure the title would be decided in our home territory. But the story of the September 26 San Jose Mile, for us at least, had little to do with the points standings.

Diane Cox, Princess Diane, did it to us again. Amazingly, Gary Scott, in a wonderful display of sportsmanship, loaned Ms. C. his back-up Harley. Think on that a minute: he was in second place in the points race, with only two dirt tracks (and one of those *other* races) to go, and he loaned his back-up bike, which

he might have needed to chase those valuable points had anything happened to his first string miler, to another privateer. Gary, we took our helmets off to you.

And to Diane, who, on her *first* race on the unfamiliar Harley, finished fifth in her heat, one position too far back to make the final. Then, in the semifinal, she moved from back in the pack to take third, again one position too low, just missing nipping Rush at the finish. Having to settle for the Trophy Final, Diane got another bad start, likely as a result of her unfamiliarity with the machine, and proceeded to literally fly up through the pack. With one lap to go she was

safely in second. The fans, who had been losing their voices cheering her, breathed a sigh of relief. Too early. Diane was not going to settle for second. Going into the last corner deeper, she actually pulled alongside of leader Gleason before the Harley broke traction, and then found it again, pitching Diane over the highside. At 100 miles per hour! She was not seriously hurt, and walked back to the pits beaming, while the stands exploded. Diane had finally had a chance to show what she could do. Next month, she'll talk to DIRT BIKE about her plans for the future. We hope, by then, that we can report the good news that she has gotten the first-rate ride that she deserves. Write your favorite factory if you agree.

And then there was Ascot. The finale. Anticlimax, we guessed, figuring that Springsteen needed only a better than eighth place finish to clinch the title, regardless of how Scott or Roberts did. The consensus among the DIRT BIKEers was that he would do just that, under orders from wise old man Dick O'Brien, and circulate in mid-pack with the title in the bag.

It didn't turn out that way. The first indication came in practice. In a moment which must have had everyone connected with the Harley effort chewing on their left ventricles, Springer collided with teammate Beauchamp, spraining a finger. We were assured that it was not serious.

"Now he'll for sure be careful," we said. "No one comes *that* close to losing it all on the final night and still takes chances."

Wrong again. In his heat Jay grabbed the holeshot and ran away with it. Gary Scott, riding his heart out on a Harley after his faithful Triumph had developed difficulties in practice, could do no more than follow Springer home.

And it all came down to the final. Call him reckless, call him what you will, Springsteen made a lot of converts. He went for it, grabbing the holeshot, pulling into a lead. The only person to pass him in the entire final was Jorgenson on his Norton, who got by briefly on the 15th lap. Jorgy amazed everyone by sticking with Springsteen, but Jay was also amazing, winning the Number One plate, and the race.

Cautious, hell, he set a new lap record while winning it.

