

The Spectator Connoisseur

BY GENE TRUMP

CAN'T AFFORD TO RACE? THEN LEARN HOW TO WATCH RIGHT

For all of you who are seriously considering becoming a highly skilled spectator, let me first say this: Over the past years I have strived to become the top spectator in my field (my field of course being that of motorcycling), and I have painstakingly made a lot of embarrassing mistakes that could have been avoided. Hopefully this article will help you to overcome such unhappy events and turn you into a connoisseur of

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observing. If you heed my advice, you will no longer have to face those laughing fellow spectators and explain red-faced that you just didn't know how it was done. Read on, friend, and I will teach you the fine art of spectating.

First you must decide what exactly you plan to spectate, and let me say

right now you have many fields to choose from. Anything from cock-fighting to voyeurism, and I've tried them all, but none can compare to that of a good motorcycle race. For this reason I suggest that the motorcycle event should represent the threshold of your success; for if you learn to spectate motorcycle races, I can assure you that you will excel in voyeurism. But another problem does arise. There are a multitude of motorcycle competitive meets to choose from, and all provide more than the emotions possessed by most good spectators can stand. But in the interest of keeping this article short, I will delve into the favorite event for the majority of motorcycle spectators. The event is called Motocross . . . not Motor-Cross, or Moto-Crossed, but Motocross.

This type of competition, in contrast to your "roundy-roundy" sport of flat track racing, consists of a multi-terrain track that contains any number of obstacles that most Tiger tanks could not manage, but our MX racers somehow do. They range in all age groups, class groups, and all have the same thing in common. Every one of them seems to be on the constant verge of disaster or nirvana, depending upon whether you are a relative or a competitor. But ours is not to question the motives of such maniacs, even if they



do seem to turn into Mr. Hyde-markers everytime they hear the Pavlov Dog sort of stimuli that they get when the thud of a starting gate hits the dusty ground. But no matter. A spectator does not question; a spectator specs.

Therefore, because I have suggested motocross as your first spectation, you must take the first step on your way to becoming a perfect spectator. You must figure out where the race is going to be and when. I need not stress the importance of this enough. Heaven knows how many potentially good spectators are to this day wandering around aimlessly looking for a race that they neglected to accurately locate in their atlas before blindly going out to look for Gofers Gulch or Crammers Corner, or those other obscure areas that most prairie dogs can't find. You must know where you are going and what you are doing at all times. As a hint, I suggest that you refrain from any alcoholic beverages before preparing for your day of spectation, and just as an extra precaution, I also suggest that you carry a compass and an altimeter. They put these tracks in some very strange places. I remember I had to hire 40 porters and 3 guides to find one once, but no matter.

Already you have doubts. Already you are saying, "Where do I start, how do I find out about these events?"

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But fear not friends, you are not lost yet. The first thing you have to do is actually quite simple. You must go down to a motorcycle retail dealership and ask to see his motocross posters. If he objects, and they do on occasion, just step closer to his most expensive cycle and grin. He will show a wondrous change in attitude, and after a fashion, he will hand you a grease-smudged, semi-colored piece of cheap poster paper and let you have at it. Caution: If he did in fact talk you into purchasing the most expensive machine he sells, you need not continue reading this article any further. You can no longer afford to be a spectator.

But if you did avoid that predicament, then your next task is to decipher the coded poster that he just handed you. You will probably notice right off that the type doesn't match any known form of printing. This is because most posters are actually hand printed by 15 different M.C. members, most of whom had joined the club for fun and profit,

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not work; after all that is the American way. But that is a different study in itself. As a matter of fact, I have just completed a new book on the art of decoding club motorcycle race posters, motorcycle service manuals, and the silver warning stickers that grow all over new Hondas.

The second thing you will notice is in one corner of the poster where there will be some lines and a strange looking diagram that looks like it was drawn in Early Cave Style. At first you may think that this is a map showing how to get to the track. Chances are that it is in fact not a map but a mechanic's written explanation to a customer as to why the shifting cam does no longer shift. To be on the safe side, ignore the entire poster and ask someone the directions.

When you are sure that you know how to get where you are going and at what time the gates open, (an important factor when you live 400 miles from the location of the track . . . remember, a spectator on time doesn't wait in line) you are now ready to start compiling the things you are going to need to spectate. These initial things are as important to a spectator as a shift adjusting tool is to a DKW owner. But that also is another story. (And hopefully I'll never write a book on that.) But to make it as easy on you as possible, I have applied my years of experi-





“For those of you who are self-conscious about your legs and are male, I know of a great leg toupee shop”

ence and my superior knowledge of what is likely to happen, to come up with a spectator's equipment list. Upon reading this list you will suddenly become enlightened and advance towards your goal as Spectator Extraordinaire. Most of the equipment can be purchased for much less than that crafty dealer's most expensive machine, and a lot of it can be traded in for food stamps. Something to think about with things as they are.

I must caution you again at this point. Do not deviate from this list. God only knows what can happen to an unprepared spectator, and after all, a good spectator is a well prepared one. So on with the list:

1. *A dirty "T" shirt with local beer slogan:* This is a must. You may, however, exchange the beer slogan for something dirty. This gives the appearance that you are a regular at the track.

2. *A pair of bleached cut-offs (with or without crotch patch):* For those of you who are self-conscious about your legs and are male, I know of a great leg toupee shop that guarantees its hair to cover all the knob you want to hide. Just send \$30 to my address and I'll set you up. If you don't have any problems and you are female, send your address anyway.

3. *Ten-year-old tennis shoes:* These will come in very handy, especially when you take part in that great spectator participation sport known as Track Crossing during the open class start. A great sport that a lot of spectators enjoy. Caution: If you are not experienced in motorcycle dodging, I suggest you take up chess.

4. *Camera:* This is something that most spectators forget to bring, and

with good reason. Seventy-five percent of all cameras taken to motorcycle races are either stolen, broken, or they get so dirty that most people mistake them for YZ air filters and dunk them in Filtron oil. (A mistake in itself.) If you do take your camera, be sure to avoid using it.

5. *Sunglasses*: Handy if you do not have polarized eye membranes that slip into place on command.

6. *Umbrella*: This is a very excellent item. If you stand beside a jump, you can use it to catch falling Maico parts. And if you stand beside a mud hole, it saves wear and tear on your sunglasses.

7. *Water canteen*: A great place not to put water. But who's to know what you have in there. Also a handy device when the porta-cans are full.

8. *First aid kit*: Carry one of these at all times, unless you have an ambulance, and in that case be sure to park next to the Track Crossing event. If you charge by the body, you can pay for your leg toupee in no time.

O.K., let's not kid ourselves. To be a most efficient spectator, we are going to have to face facts. Nobody can predict the weather. I can't even predict the weather. But I do have a solution. You must prepare for anything. And I do mean anything. These race promoters don't even think about terminating a race until the mud holes turn to icebergs and the ducks start putting on skates. So, you'd better be ready. The following list is some precautionary equipment you can bring, and I guarantee that you'll be ready for most anything. Most of it can fit into a 20-foot camper.

1. *A parka*: This is not as drastic as it sounds. If the time comes when you do need a parka, you'll be glad you have one.

2. *Snow boots and snow shoes*: For the same above reason.

3. *Gloves, sweaters and insulated underwear*: The gloves and sweaters are also for the same above reason. The insulated underwear should only be worn if you sleep in the nude. Also do not attempt to wear the cut-offs and the underwear alone! If you do, most people will mistake you for the Silver Surfer and ask you to do the damndest things.

4. *Face mask and goggles*: These can be interchanged with electric socks. But remember that most electric socks use "D" size batteries. The same as a 1972 175 CZ enduro.

5. *Quick unzip fluid*: To assist you just in case the sun does indeed shine after you have all this junk on.

6. *Oxygen tank and respirator*: This is in case the Quick unzip fluid does not work.

7. *Emergency flare*: This is in case both the fluid does not work and some nut has used up your oxygen to fill his gas shocks and you are slowly beginning to seize.

8. *Bar-B-Q sauce*: If the flare does not work, you won't need this, but if you have weird starving friends they may appreciate it.

These are some of those added extras that really make the art of spectating a joy. They are not mandatory to your survival as a spectator, but they sure help.

"Anything from cockfighting to voyeurism, and I've tried them all, but none can compare with a good motorcycle race."

1. *Dummy camera with 1000mm telephoto lens*: This is a great tool for watching other spectators spectate.

2. *Address book*: This is in case the spectator spectating pays off.

3. *Small caliber pistol with silencer*: This is one of those things that you'll really appreciate having around. Especially if you have a favorite rider who isn't doing so well. Everybody can use a little help now and then.

4. *Helicopter*: This doesn't help much at watching motocross, but the rooftop sunbathers are something you really shouldn't miss.

5. *Rocket powered pogo stick*: Almost as good as the helicopter, but is actually most useful for jumping over fellow spectators to rapidly change your spectating vantage point.

6. *One pound of TNT*: You can never tell when they might short-change you at the Rip-Off Hot Dog Stand, and spectators love revenge.

7. *Black plague make-up kit*: Within seconds you can convince even the brightest pre-med student that you are deathly ill. A neat way to get a free ride in the ambulance and beat the end-of-the-race crowd.

Well, doesn't just reading over the list make you want to go out and spectate? You bet it does, but I'm afraid that I've run out of space this time, so I'll have to continue this in the next installment of the Spectating Connoisseur. Be sure to keep your list handy and with just 378 more educating lessons, you too can become a Spectating Connoisseur with honor.