

HOW TO RIDE

by DAVE EKINS

DOWNHILL SLOTS..WET OR DRY



Figure 1



Figure 2

The slot is one of nature's little ways of getting even with dirt bike riders. In Las Vegas they pay the rent and light bill, but they're a different kind. The slots we're dealing with are usually found on some horrendous downhill where the task of just getting to the bottom upright is a major accomplishment.

Slots come in two varieties, wet and dry. Coping with either is the same; the wet ones leave you less room for error. The first rule is to stay out of slots if at all possible. This is done simply by concentrating on that imaginary line between the ruts where you want

the motorcycle to go. Looking directly into those magnetic grooves invariably puts one into an hypnotic trance, and he steers right into it. So don't do it!

The most common mistake riders make is over-use of the brakes; skidding tires lose what little directional stability they might have had. Lock the brakes up and the bike slides right in the slot, front wheel first or rear wheel first—it doesn't matter, when you're in, you're in!

At this point, with both wheels locked in a downhill trench, you might as well stick both feet out in order to stay upright. (Better riders will leave

one foot on the brake and the other on the edge for balance.) All you can do is ride it out unless there's a chance to climb up on the ridge again. Sometimes the front tire can claw its way out but it will only do it without brake application. The back tire will follow, but it also has to roll out.

How do you skid the back tire when both feet are hung out for balance? Easy, just stop the engine, shift to first and use clutch engagement for drag. Works every time. Slots are no mystery, you've just got to keep your head about them and eventually you can become smarter than they are. ●