

BITTERS RACING ANNUAL REPORT CONT...

Pridmore. I was frankly amazed at Wes' ride and consider myself lucky to have won.

Next race was the Pocono, Pa. National. It was a complete disaster. We took the 905 (yes it was ready!) and Cook's bike since Pocono is a high speed track. We left the Stocker home. In practice the 905 pulls out of the corners better than Cooks' bike but will not run clean at the top end. The question of which one to run is settled without a doubt when one of the valves on the 905 breaks. The valve head was spit out the exhaust, fortunately doing very little damage to the 60° heads (whew!) Cooks' bike is running great at the top end, pulling all the other twins and most of the fours down the straight. In the final I spoil it by falling over when it starts to rain. (I was holding 4th on lap 2). The race is stopped while it pours rain all over the track. Dale and I put intermediate rain tires on the bike during the pause, but by the time the AMA gets restarted the rain is long gone and the track is dry. Running rain tires on a dry track is not too smart, I discover, and fall over again. Twice in one day is enough and I call it quits, although the bikes is still race-able.

Now the crunch is on. Both Dale and I are behind on our work. We have two options, one, go to the second Loudon and fall further behind at work and forget about the 905 until next year, two, Forget about Loudon, stay home and fix the 905 for Laguna Seca, which is only one week after Loudon. It's a tough decision as I'm still third in the points standings and the Championship is not out of reach. After much soul-searching and consulting we decide to take the second choice. I'm glad we did. Dale discovered the cause of the broken valve and fixed the problem and one week prior to Laguna Seca we take the 905 to a Sears Point club race. I turn 1:51.4 on an oily track. We are ready.

The 905 ran great at Laguna! We lead the heat race for 4 out of 5 laps before Wes Cooly came past. In the final I muffed the start, letting five Japanese fours get off ahead of me. By lap seven of 20 laps I had finally worked into third place. Wes (Suz) and Steve McLaughlin (Kaw) were about 6 seconds ahead of me.

I caught them in 5 laps. Once there was clear track ahead of me the 905 could run consistent sub 1:12 sec laps. My best time was 1:11.55, compared to Wes' best of 1:11.9.

From lap 12 to lap 20 the three of us were never more than 1 second apart. The 905 lost ground coming out of the slow turn 9 but was clearly faster through the turns. It was great racing! On the last lap I zipped past McLaughlin to claim second behind Wes.

So that was the 1978 season. What's in store for 1979? I really don't know yet, but as soon as plans are formed I'll let the club know.

Paul Ritter.

GROUP 4 RACING TAKES ANOTHER 24 HOURS OF NELSON LEDGES

by DONALD G. VELCIO

As I'm sure you are aware, the Tenth Annual 24 Hours of Nelson endurance road race was won by a team riding a Ducati Desmo. There were a number of Ducatis in this very prestigious amateur event, as well as a Moto Guzzi, a Moto Morini, a Harley Davidson and a Honda CX 500, a BMW, and the balance of the field of fifty bikes being various types of rice grinders.

The winning team, Group 4 Roadracing of Ashtabula, Ohio, was sponsored by Kemp Manufacturing and Quaker State Oil. The riders were John Samways (holder of the Nelson Ledges track record lap time on

his TZ 750), Jonathan K. White, Steve Pearce, and Dave Belknap, with Don Bartram being the team manager. The bike was a Ducati Desmo 860cc Super Sport and was reported to use only 1½ quarts of Quaker State oil during the entire twenty four hours while traveling 1,928 miles, an average speed of over 80 MPH. The Group 4 Ducati was 56 miles ahead of the second place bike a Kawasaki 1000cc Z1 which was sponsored in part by Kawasaki Motors of Canada.

A Ducati Desmo 860 Super Sport sponsored by Silvestri's Cycle and ridden by Richard Silvestri, David Ellis, Jim Elliott and Charlie Wheeler was the machine which captured sixth place in the Open Class, completing 1,770 miles, for an average speed of nearly 74 mph.

The Ducati entered by GT Racing (who joined with Group 4 Roadracing to win the 24 hours of Nelson last year) was forced to drop out after Malcolm Tunstall crashed in the very fast turn 11 on Sunday morning. The only other Ducati in the race, entered by Team Wopper, completed only 639 laps, or 1,278 miles.

The moto Guzzi entered by Team Kermie completed 1,414 miles when forced to retire due to a defective oil seal. The Moto Morini 350 completed 1,128 miles. The Harley Davidson Cafe Racer sponsored by Metro Harley Davidson of Mansfield, Ohio completed 1,576 miles to capture 9th place in the Open Class, and was the fastest and only bike built in the USA. The Honda CX 500 (a V-Twin) completed 1,688 miles and was perhaps the quietest bike in the race. The only BMW entered in the race, a 1,000 model, completed only 472 miles before retirement. (so much for reliable German machinery)

The winners of the 500 cc class were mounted on a Yamaha RD 400. This Yamaha was very fast and well ridden by Vaugh Killin, Scott Lin Stol, Edward Carroll, and Paul Stokes, who placed third overall after twenty four hours completing 1,854 miles. The 350 cc class was won by a team mounted on a Yamaha RD 350 (1,748 miles), and the 250cc class was won by a Cam-Am effort with 1,752 miles.

Other Ohio Racing News-

The WERA Mid-Ohio National Amroc III roadraces took place at Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course on July 29 and 30, 1978. The winner of the Open Superbike race was Eric Buell on a Ducati Super Sport. Eric moved quickly into the lead and never relinquished it. There was much stiff competition in this race, but Eric made it look easy on his Bucati with a flawless ride.

The AMA Amateur National Championship Road Race was held at Nelson Ledges Road Course on Sep. 30 and Oct. 1, 1978. The winner of the Open Production race was Tom Glasser on a Ducati SS. The Glasser Ducati was ridden brilliantly, showing the championship potential in the bike and rider. The Heavyweight Production class was run combined with the Open Production. Don Velcio finished fourth in the Heavyweight class on his 750 Sport for a tenth place overall finish in the combined class. The Modified Production Open and Heavyweight classes were also combined in this event. Tom Glasser was running approximately in third place in the combined race on his tuck Ducati when he ran off the track and fell in the muddy infield. Tom and the bike were not hurt but were unable to continue at the time. Bill Root finished third in the Heavyweight Modified Production race on his Ducati Sport. He was followed by Don Velcio on another 750 Sport.

In summary, I can only say that Ducatis which have been racing in the Ohio area have been doing quite well. Let's all hope it continues here and elsewhere