

**Sunday
Mirror**

7.30pm
WEDNESDAY
JUNE 20th 1979

**WORLD COVENTRY
SPEEDWAY
CHAMPIONSHIP
BRITISH FINAL**

**SOUVENIR
PROGRAMME
30p**



Three former Champions talk about

THE BIG

John Louis, Malcolm Simmons and Michael Lee have one thing in common.

They have all become British Champion on the Brandon track — and are the only three riders still riding today who have had that rare feeling.

It was in 1975 that the Ipswich-born and raced Louis succeeded the retired Eric Boocock as Britain's undisputed champion.

A year later he had lost the title to Malcolm Simmons. And in the last two years Michael Lee has taken over.

What has it meant to each of them to be crowned British Champion?

Said Louis, who earlier this month, revived golden memories of his title win by becoming the fastest rider this season at Coventry: "It's not like winning the World Championship — but it can be the next best thing.

TOUGHEST LEAGUE

"It's a big thing to win because we race in the toughest league in the world. I still remember it well. I remember the last win when I came from last to first on the first lap to win.

"It was one of the greatest nights of my life. Apart from the time when I came third in the World Final at Wembley it's one of the meetings I can never forget....Those are the two nights I can remember.....

"It gives you a big boost. Straight away it gives you the confidence because you know that there is no-one in England who should beat you. You go into the World Final full of that confidence.

BEATEN THE BEST

"In speedway a lot is confidence and if you have just beaten all the best — and consider at the time England were getting strong then — it means you are halfway there.

"There is more pressure — for the rest of the season everywhere you go after that you feel you have still got to put on a show. You have 'British Champion' shouted about a bit and you have been paid a little bit extra so you know you must live up to that British Champion name.

"You tend to rise to it most of the time so the pressure can help you."

THIRD OF ERA

Louis was only England's third modern era British Champion — Ray Wilson took the first title at Sheffield in 1973 and a year later when the meeting had moved to Coventry current Belle Vue manager Eric Boocock was the winner — and since then only two riders have shared the same spotlight.

Youngster Michael Lee is the first Englishman to actually retain the championship. What did it mean to him?

Confesses Michael: "It means a lot. It's nice to go anywhere with the title of British Champion, it's a good title to have.

"Obviously you are wanted a lot more in the individual meetings — promoters obviously want you there. Once you have got the title people are always there to take it away from you and I suppose this is a good thing as it gives you another incentive.

SPECIAL ENGINE

"We are preparing an engine especially for Coventry. Everyone knows what you need. I think it a matter of having good equipment and a little bit of luck on the night.

"Obviously I want to go and win. I've been fortunate in the last two years that I have done well enough in my first two races so I've been able to forget about having to qualify for the next round and instead concentrate on trying to win the title. Some of the other boys have had to start worrying about getting through.

"I'll go to Coventry trying to win it for the third time and I'll be a lot happier to go away

BRITISH NIGHT

as a winner but I will still be half happy if I get to the Commonwealth Final."

Luck doesn't always run alongside the reigning champion and no-one has had more misfortune in defending his title than Poole's Malcolm Simmons.

An injured shoulder not only deprived him of a possible second title in 1977 — it also effectively ruled him out of the World Championship.

Admitted Malcolm: "That was one of the worst nights in my life. There aren't that many titles a rider can win that can always be remembered. There's the World Championships — and then the British Final. No matter how many years pass you will still be the British Champion.

"In that sense it lasts longer than finishing runner-up in the World Final. Psychologically it's a great boost — I finished second in the World Final the year I won the British title ..."

MICHAEL LEE

Photo: Mick Kilby



Sunday Mirror

1979

WORLD SPEEDWAY CHAMPIONSHIP

BRITISH FINAL

Coventry Stadium

Rugby Road, Brandon,
Nr. Coventry
Tel: Wolston 542395

Meeting organised by Mr. Charles Ochiltree (in association with Midland Sports Stadiums Limited) on behalf of the British Speedway Promoters' Association and the Speedway Control Board.

TRACK OFFICIALS

Clerk of the Course

G. Snooks.

Coventry Track Manager

P. Storey

Announcer

P. Morrish.

Machine Examiner

A. Croome.

Start Marshal

N. Keightley.

Pit Marshal

A. Croome.

Colour Marshal

M. Jessup.

Medical Officers

Drs. J. O'Brien, P. Kenyon

Coventry Team Manager

P. Adams.

Coventry Mascot

D. Owen.

St. John Ambulance Brigade
[South Warwicks] in
attendance.

Speedway Control Board
regulations apply. Track
Licence No. 25/79.

This meeting is held under
the 1979 Speedway Regu-
lations and Supplementary
Regulations Appendix G
[as amended].



Keith Fisher writes...

The character of British speedway goes on trial tonight. That much is certain. Because never, in recent history, has so much criticism been levelled at our track stars. It all stems from a mean, murky, miserable, Sunday afternoon at Reading's Smallmead Stadium last month.

When England were unceremoniously dumped out of the World Team Championship — beaten, bruised and bewildered by the power, determination and refreshing enthusiasm of New Zealand and the United States.

But the writing was on the wall for England's ailing aristocrats as long ago as last September when Ole Olsen — fresh from his momentous Wembley triumph — inspired Denmark to one of the biggest upsets in speedway by overwhelming England in the World Team Cup Final in Germany.

Subsequent defeats have, therefore, merely underscored the fact that this was no "flash in the pan" success by Ole's Great Danes.

Hurts? Of course, it hurts. Any true English supporter worth his salt can hardly be pleased when we're labelled "also-rans" before the international season has really begun.

British speedway has, for so long, been held up as an example to the rest of the world.

Quite right, too.

The sheer competitiveness and unquestionable quality of our League system is unrivalled.

If you don't believe that, then ask some of our American riders who simply wax lyrical about the standard of racing they've entered into.

But why has it gone so horribly wrong at international level? England speedway boss, John Berry would dearly love to know the answer!

The most likely, logical verdict put forward from a mountain of suggestions is this — that many of our stars, after three years of non-stop graft and sweat have been simply overworked to the point where slipping on that international vest no longer carries the same venom, pride and passion.

It is a view that has been endorsed by many leading promoters. It is not meant as a slight. But an honest reflection of intense, present-day schedules.

Of course Reading was a disaster. But the easy thing to do now would be to tear everything apart in the name of "re-building".

Nonsense. That is the easy way out and such a foolish one.

Are you honestly going to tell me that lads like Peter Collins, Malcolm Simmons, Dave Jessup, Gordon Kennett and Michael Lee, are suddenly international flops overnight? Of course not.

Our rival international selectors would literally jump for joy at the prospect of picking a Test side from English riders.

If anybody doubts the talent and ability that exists within our ranks, then take a long, hard look at the boys on parade tonight.

It makes this British Final all the more significant. That's why tonight, I firmly believe, could and should go a long way to restoring the tarnished, international credibility of British speedway.

The message is clear. Let's start now to get it right. To show the world that there is nothing too much wrong with our speedway that a little confidence wouldn't put right.

The Sunday Mirror is, indeed, proud to be at Brandon for a meeting that always rates one of the most popular in the speedway calendar.

The meticulous presentation of Charles Ochiltree and the tension of the riders to overcome another hurdle on the way to the World Championship Final will, certainly, add up to an evening to remember for one and all.

From here, the Sunday Mirror World Championship trail moves on to the Commonwealth Final and then the Intercontinental Final, both to be staged at London White City.

And wouldn't it be ironic that, in a season in which our speedway has been condemned out of sight, we could all end up by cheering an English World Champion in Katowice, Poland, on September 2.

Now that would create a few red faces.



TONIGHT'S MATCH MAGAZINE was prepared by Sportsdata, 1, Piermont Place, Dawlish, Devon, and printed by Duplex Litho Press Limited, King Street, Newton Abbot, Devon.

The Editors wish to thank Alf Weedon [Speedway Mail], Mick Kilby, Mike Patrick [Speedway Star], Keith Fisher [Sunday Mirror] and Charles Ochiltree for their contributions.

All facts and figures used in this match magazine are courtesy of the 1979 Daily Mirror Speedway Yearbook.

TALKING TIME with Charles Ochiltree



GROWINGLY evident is that there remains little doubt but that, whatever is going on elsewhere in the competition in the world, and whatever preceding stages there may have been in the United Kingdom, the F.I.M. Speedway Championship of the World only truly bursts into life for the majority with the BRITISH FINAL stage.

Because probably it has for so long been established one of the greatest hurdles in the tremendous annual marathon for individual global domination.

Because the "British" holds not merely the key to British competitor hopes, but the key to the strength of opposition our foreign competitors will have to face if they expect success.

So naturally we find a continuing — and annually growing — vast interest in the British Final from afar; from Australasia, Scandinavia, Germany, Eastern Europe and North America.

It's the stage our riders most worry about.

It has had the likes of immaculately styled, in-form and accomplished Dave Jessup incredibly out of contention because of nerves:

unaccountable inability to concentrate because of the importance of the occasion.

It has had the unbelievable, inexplicable elimination of meeting favourite Peter Collins, in an extraordinary drama of machine failures in circumstances of total mystification.

It has the polished, supremely magnificent success of John Louis; the successive seasons powerhouse triumphs for the youngest title holder ever, teenager Michael Lee.

There is everything at the British Final stage, and it's a meeting that holds everything for the competitors. Their hopes, their dreams of that casket of gold and glory at the end of the Championship rainbow — all are at the mercy of events at this nail-biting National stage.

Although there are stages aplenty in what has become a long, long haul from commencement to completion of the tournament, without doubt the greatest sigh of relief from UK riders comes when they have succeeded in progressing from the 'British'.

The assembly of folk each year to watch the meeting is tribute to spectator's appre-

ciation of its importance to the riders; evidence of an awareness of the urgency of the occasion, the vitality of a rider being "on song" not merely motorwise, but mentally and physically.

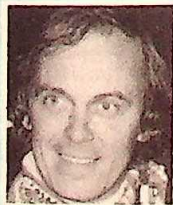
Happily it all adds up to an event that justifies the continued great wealth of support given the contest by that reliable, never failing Fleet Street friend of the sport, the "Sunday Mirror".

We're immensely pleased that among their party here this evening are the Head of Sport Mr. Don Bate; Mirror Group Publicity Director John Jenkinson, and Promotions Assistant Manager John Lewsey.

We extend the hope that along with the Chairman of the sport's controlling authority, Mr. Nelson Mills Baldwin of the Royal Automobile Club, Autocycle Union Chairman Mr. Norman Dixon, and Speedway Control Board officials of long and loyal service Mr. Dick Bracher, Mr. Harry Louis and Mr. John McNulty, they will enjoy a grand '79 British Final stage of the F.I.M.'s compelling World Individual Speedway Championship competition.

Welcome to all.

TONIGHT'S TRACK DATA



The referee this evening is Mr. John Whitaker and the Speedway Control Board timekeeper is Mr. Alan Todd. Engine and fuel measurer is Ernie Woods; A-C.U.

The Length of the Coventry track is 350 metres and the four lap clutch start track record stands to World Champion Ole Olsen (Coventry) who set up a time of 61.6 seconds on July 22, 1978, in the opening heat of Coventry's Gulf Oil British League match with White City.

BETTING AT ANY SPEEDWAY MEETING IS PROHIBITED.

WHO'S WHO

Each year the British Final of the Sunday Mirror World Championship produces its own drama.....

In 1977 the defending British Champion Malcolm Simmons bravely defied the pain of a broken shoulder to line-up at Brandon. But he was quickly eliminated when he looped at the start in his first ride to aggravate an already bad injury.

Then twelve months later it was the 1976 World Champion Peter Collins who sensationally figured among the non-qualifiers after another evening of dramatic action in twenty-one races.

Later Collins, the only Englishman to have won a world individual title in the last decade and a half, was to claim that his efforts had been thwarted by a saboteur who had emptied sugar into his fuel.

Tonight there will be more drama. Someone will be making the headlines tomorrow morning — for either the right or the wrong reasons.

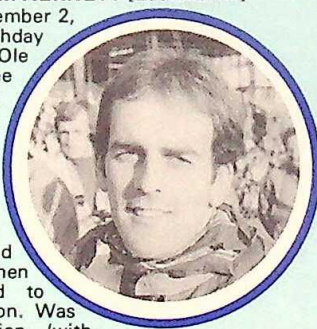
Scores of questions beg answers. Can young Briton Michael Lee make it three British Championships in as many years?....will Cradley Heath's Steve Bastable be able to overcome the handicap of an ankle broken less than a month ago?....can the mercurial Collins make up for last year's bitter disappointment?....will home track advantage help Coventry's Alan Molyneux clinch a place in the Commonwealth Final?....will ex-British Champion John Louis prove that age is no barrier less than a week after his 38th birthday?....or can one of the two surprise British Finalists Mike Lanham and Roger Johns keep dishing out the shocks?

Some of the questions will be answered during the early heats — but others may have to wait until the very last lap has been raced and the 1979 British Championship is over.....

Whatever happens these, in riding order, are the men who will be helping make those black headlines in tomorrow's papers.....

1 GORDON WILLIAM KENNETT (Eastbourne)

Born at Bromley, Kent, September 2, 1953. Celebrated his 25th birthday by finishing runner-up to Ole Olsen in the Golden Jubilee World Final at Wembley last year. Began his career at Eastbourne in 1970 and gave the Eagles three high-scoring seasons before joining Oxford on a full time Gulf Oil British League basis. Moved to White City in 1976 with the Oxford team and returned to his first track when the London club switched to Arlington for the 1979 season. Was 1978 World Pairs Champion (with Malcolm Simmons). In his fourth British Final having qualified in 1975 (sixth), 1977 (eighth) and 1978 (fourth). Qualified from rounds at Poole (11 points), Eastbourne (9 points) and King's Lynn (second, 14 points). Runner-up to Peter Collins in the Leicester semi-final, losing a run-off after both riders had tied on fourteen points. Made his World Final debut last September. Currently captain of the Eastbourne squad.



2 JOHN CHARLES LOUIS (Ipswich)

Born at Ipswich, Suffolk, on June 14, 1941. A revitalised rider in his testimonial year after a disappointing 1978. Back at the top of the Ipswich averages in his tenth season at Foxhall Heath. A former England captain who was World Pairs Champion in 1976 and a member of three gold medal winning World Team Cup sides. Has spent all his racing career with Ipswich, having joined them while they were still in the Second Division. Has four World Final appearances behind him, having finished third in 1975. Won the British Championship in the same year. One of few riders to wear spectacles. Began his 1979 World Championship campaign with 10 points at Hackney Wick but has never been out of the first three since. Was joint second at Leicester (12 points), runner-up at home track Ipswich (13 points) and



finished third in his semi-final round at Poole with 11 points. In his eighth British Final having ridden previously every year since 1972.

3 DAVID JAMES MORTON (Wolverhampton)

Born at Eccles, near Manchester, on September 24, 1953. In his second season with Wolverhampton after being transferred from his only other senior league club Hackney at the opening of the 1978 season when he was involved in a rider exchange that took Denmark's Finn Thomsen to the London track. The elder of two brothers racing in tonight's British Final and one of Britain's entrants in the European Grass Track Championship. Broke a leg in 1977 and took some time to recover. Began his speedway career with Second Division Crewe and spent four seasons at the Earle Street track before signing for Hackney. Has yet to progress further than the British Final despite three previous appearances at this stage.... 1975, 1976 and 1978. Has a highest placing of twelfth. Won the Poole semi final with 14 points after qualifying scores of 13 (at Poole where he was second), 7 (Wolverhampton) and 7 (Ipswich).



4 MICHAEL WILLIAM LANHAM (Ipswich)

Born at Ipswich, Suffolk, August 2, 1951. The only rider in the line-up without at least one England cap at senior level. Reserves his best form for the World Championship having made his British Final debut in 1976. Discovered by Ipswich in the early seventies he had spells on loan to Second Division tracks West Ham, Birmingham and Peterborough before forcing his way into the Witches' Gulf Oil British League side in 1975 after spending the previous three seasons filling in for injured or off-form riders. The only rider among tonight's top sixteen who



AT BRANDON

started his 1979 World Championship trail in the preliminary rounds — winning at Hackney with a 14 point total. Eleven points at King's Lynn — where he was equal third — helped him through to the semi-finals despite scoring only 7 at Wolverhampton and 6 at Ipswich.

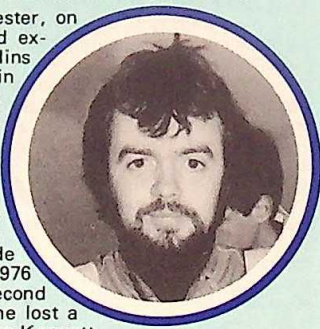
5 REGINALD WILSON [Sheffield]

Born at Grenoside, near Sheffield, on January 28, 1948. Blond England international who was discovered in training school sessions at Sheffield in 1968. Had spells on loan to Second Division Doncaster, Workington and Hull to gain experience before he established himself as a permanent member of the Tigers' Division One side in 1972. Currently top of the Sheffield averages he is facing his fourth British Final (1974, 1976 and 1978 were his previous appearances) but has yet to get past this stage. Rode solidly throughout the rounds with scores of 12 (joint third at Halifax), 8 (Sheffield) and 9 (King's Lynn) in his qualifying rounds and 10 in the Poole semi-final.



6 CHRISTOPHER JOHN MORTON [Belle Vue]

Born at Davyhulme, Manchester, on July 22, 1956. Has displaced ex-World Champion Peter Collins as Belle Vue's number one in his sixth full-time season at Hyde Road. Spent only one year in the Second Division — at Ellesmere Port — and then went on to win the Junior Championship of the British Isles and, more recently, the Volkswagen-Daily Mirror Grand Prix. Made his World Final debut in 1976 but missed out on a second appearance last year when he lost a three-rider run-off with Gordon Kennett and Steve Bastable at Brandon at the corresponding stage of last year's World Championship. Has qualified for the British Final each season since 1975 and has a highest placing of runner-up to Malcolm Simmons in 1976. Younger brother of this evening's number three Dave Morton. Reached double figures in each of his qualifiers: 10 points at Reading; 11 points at Sheffield; 11 points at Belle Vue; and 10 points at Poole in the semi-final.



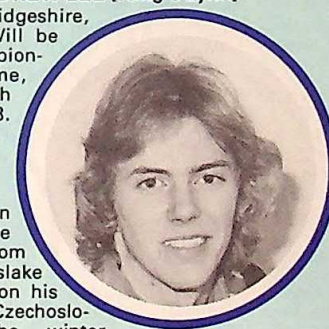
7 DAVID JOHN JESSUP [King's Lynn]

Born at Ipswich, Suffolk, on March 7, 1953. The third Suffolk-born competitor in tonight's meeting and now back in East Anglia with new 1979 club King's Lynn who paid a record £18,000 fee to Reading earlier this year. A member of England's World Team Cup squad he was considered by many to be unfortunate not to win the 1978 World Final after a mechanical let-down while leading his first race. Had his first taste of riding in front of a speedway public at West Ham when he was still at school, taking part in a series of under-age demonstrations. Joined Eastbourne in the Second Division as soon as he was sixteen and had spells with West Ham, Wembley and Leicester before moving to Reading in 1976. Qualified from rounds at Eastbourne (11 points, joint third), King's Lynn (10 points) and Ipswich (10 points) and the Poole semi-final where he was runner-up with 13 points.



8 MICHAEL ANDREW LEE [King's Lynn]

Born at Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, on December 11, 1958. Will be defending his British Championship for the second time, having won the title in both 1977 (on his debut) and 1978. Remains England's brightest young prospect and seems to have run into top form in recent weeks, witness his convincing win in the Embassy Internationale last month. Switched from riding the British-built Weslake equipment (on which he won his two British titles) to the Czechoslovakian Jawa during the winter becoming the first English rider to accept a contract from an Iron Curtain company. The 1976 Junior Champion of the British Isles he finished fourth on his World Final debut in 1977. A measure of his talent was that after only a season in the National League (with Boston) he was enjoying heat leader status with First Division King's Lynn. Won his qualifying rounds at his home track (14 points) and Leicester (13 points) after scoring nine points in his opener at Wimbledon. Qualified comfortably with 12 points from the Leicester semi-final.



...and their British Final Record

1 GORDON KENNETT (Eastbourne) — Three appearances 1975: 6 points, eighth; 1977: 8 points, eighth; 1978: 10 points, fourth.

2 JOHN LOUIS (Ipswich) — Seven appearances 1972: 11 points, fourth; 1973: 7 points, ninth; 1974: 8 points, ninth; 1975: 15 points, first; 1976: 11 points, fifth; 1977: 6 points, eleventh; 1978: 3 points, fifteenth.

3 DAVE MORTON (Wolverhampton) — Three appearances 1975: 3 points, fourteenth; 1976: 4 points, twelfth; 1978: 3 points, sixteenth.

4 MIKE LANHAM (Ipswich) — One appearance 1976: 3 points, fourteenth.

5 REG WILSON (Sheffield) — Three appearances 1974: 4 points, fourteenth; 1976: 3 points, fifteenth; 1978: 6 points, eleventh.

6 CHRIS MORTON (Belle Vue) — Four appearances 1975: 5 points, thirteenth; 1976: 13 points, second; 1977: 9 points, sixth; 1978: 10 points, sixth.

7 DAVE JESSUP (King's Lynn) — Six appearances 1972: 7 points, ninth; 1974: 11 points, third; 1975: 6 points, ninth; 1976: 10 points, sixth; 1977: 13 points, second; 1978: 12 points, second.

8 MICHAEL LEE (King's Lynn) — Two appearances 1977: 14 points, first; 1978: 14 points, first.

WHO'S WHO

9 PETER SPENCER COLLINS [Belle Vue]

Born Urmston, Manchester, March 24, 1954. The 1976 World Champion who was sensationally eliminated from last season's World Championship at the British Final. He later alleged that someone had deliberately sabotaged his attempt to reach a sixth World Final by putting sugar in his fuel or fuel tanks. Has been having an unhappy season with his machines this year but remains England's most exciting rider. Reached his first British Final in 1972 — in only his second season of competitive racing — and made further appearances in 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976 and 1978. In 1977 he was seeded direct to the Inter-Continental Final, the stage following the British Final. Has ridden for two clubs only, Belle Vue (1971-79) and the Aces' nursery Second Division track Rochdale (1971). Held the Golden Helmet Match-Race Championship for the entire length of the 1978 season. Won his qualifying round at Birmingham with a 15 point maximum and followed this with 12 points at Wolverhampton but only six at Belle Vue. Returned to his successful ways by beating Gordon Kennett in a run-off for first place in the Leicester semi-final after they had ended with 14 points each.



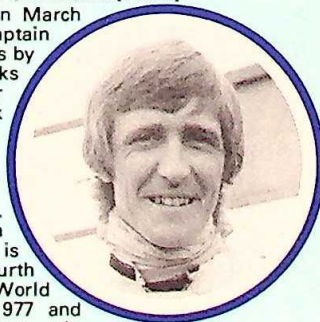
10 DOUGLAS WYER [Sheffield]

Born at Nottingham on August 16, 1947. Like so many top riders has been suffering from mechanical letdowns this season and subsequently has dropped down to number three in the Sheffield averages. Has known only one senior track, although he spent the 1969 season at Doncaster and had two seasons at Berwick racing in the Second Division. Reached the 1976 World Final in Poland after finishing third in that year's British Final — a performance he repeated twelve months later. Finished tenth on his British Final debut in 1975 and has qualified for this stage every season since. Won two of his three qualifying rounds — with a 15 point maximum at Owlerton and 13 points at Belle Vue — and scored nine points at Wolverhampton before a third place (13 points) at Leicester put him through to tonight's meeting.



11 MALCOLM SIMMONS [Poole]

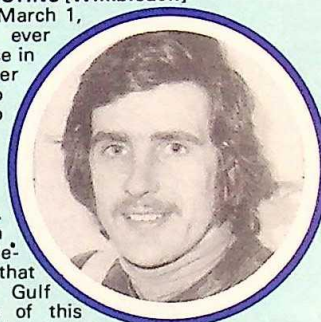
Born at Tonbridge, Kent, on March 20, 1946. Current England captain who recently hit the headlines by quitting as a Weslake Works rider to link up with former European Long Track Champion Don Godden to ride his new 500 c.c. unit. Ex-British Champion (1976) who finished runner-up in that year's World Final. Finished third at Brandon in last year's British Final he is currently chasing his fourth World Final appearance. World Pairs champion in 1976, 1977 and 1978 he has been riding longer than



anyone else in tonight's meeting. Began at Hackney in 1963 when they were in the Provincial League and since then has had spells with West Ham, King's Lynn and current club Poole. Expected to retire at the end of the season. Scraped through his semi-final on his home track at Poole as the last qualifier when he tied with two other riders on nine points. Had scored 11, 12 and 11 points at Birmingham, Poole and Eastbourne respectively in his qualifiers.

12 ROGER JOHNS [Wimbledon]

Born at Epsom, Surrey, on March 1, 1954. Enjoying his best ever season, fully deserving a place in his first British Final. A former junior grass-track rider who took a long time to adjust to First Division racing after a star-studded Second Division career with Eastbourne and Canterbury during the early seventies. Had a two-season spell with Oxford before joining Wimbledon but it wasn't until 1975 that he claimed a permanent Gulf British League place. One of this season's most improved riders but nevertheless a surprise qualifier for this evening's World Championship event. Won a qualifying round at his former track Eastbourne (13 points) and scored 10 points in his two remaining rounds at Wimbledon and Cradley Heath. Clinched his place at Brandon after finishing on nine points in a three-way tie at the Poole semi-final.



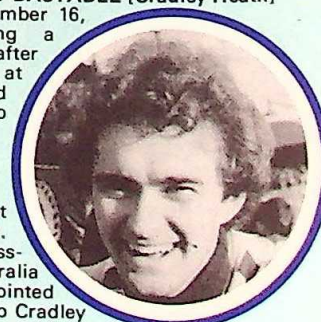
13 ALAN REGINALD MOLYNEUX [Coventry]

Born at Derby, August 12, 1950. The only rider in the field who will enjoy home track advantage tonight. Has shown tremendous improvement in the past couple of seasons and one of the sharpest gaters in the country — an asset that could see him spring a few shocks tonight. Started his speedway career at his local track Long Eaton in 1973 and rode for them and Stoke before joining the Bees in 1975. Capped by England for the first time in 1977 he helped Coventry to the 1978 Gulf Oil British League Championship. Won the qualifying round here at Brandon with 13 points and then went on to score a further 15 points — 7 at Birmingham and 8 at Wolverhampton. Ten points at the Leicester semi-final was enough to take him through to his first-ever British Final.



14 STEPHEN HENRY BASTABLE [Cradley Heath]

Born at Birmingham, September 16, 1956. Has been fighting a desperate fitness battle after breaking his ankle in a crash at Leicester on May 29. Visited Scottish physician Dr. Carlo Biagi to hasten his return to racing. Won a run-off for a World Final reserve berth in last year's British Final, his first-ever appearance at this stage of the competition. Was one of England's successful winter tourists of Australia and returned to be appointed captain of his only senior club Cradley Heath — a team for whom his father



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Harry rode. In his sixth season — the first two of those being spent at National League Stoke and the remainder at Dudley Wood. Won his qualifying round at Ipswich with a 15 point maximum after scores of 10 at Reading and 12 at Cradley where he was third. Raced through from the Leicester semi-final with 9 points.

15 JAMES DUNN TEMPLETON McMILLAN (Wolverhampton)

Born at Glasgow, Scotland, on December 3, 1945. The only Scotsman left in the World Championship he is looking for his first ever World Final race. Making his tenth British Final appearance which leaves him only one short of the all-time record of eleven British Finals jointly held by Nigel Boocock and Barry Briggs. Made his debut back in 1968, he has qualified every year since with the exceptions of 1971 and 1977. Broke into the Glasgow side when he was twenty back in 1966. Since then he has also ridden for Coatbridge, Hull and Wolverhampton. Is the only rider in tonight's line-up who has never ridden outside the Gulf Oil British League. Qualified via rounds at Hull (7 points), Sheffield (5 points) and Wolverhampton (13 points) and an eight point return from the semi-final at Leicester.



16 JOHN HARRY DAVIS [Reading]

Born at Oxford, November 10, 1954. Blond racer with a glamour reputation that has perhaps tended to overshadow his own considerable track talent. Surprisingly left out of England's World Team Cup squad on his home track and also omitted from the team to visit Denmark for the opening test of the 1979 series. Helped remind the selectors of his ability when he finished runner-up to Michael Lee in the Embassy Internationale at Wimbledon. Was reserve for the 1977 World Final in Sweden but has yet to ride on the big night. Moved on to Peterborough from Poole in



1971 to spend three seasons in the Second Division before joining Oxford and later Reading where he is current number one. Finished in the top two in each of his qualifying rounds — second at Coventry with 12 points; second at Reading with 13 points; and equal first at Hackney with 13 points to head the World Championship semi-final qualifiers with 38 points out of a maximum 45. Scored ten at Poole to clinch his place tonight.

17 ALAN WILLIAM GRAHAME [Cradley Heath]

Born at Birmingham, February 5, 1954. Lost his chance of a place in the British Final top sixteen when he was adjudged to have brought down Mike Lanham in a run-off after both had scored seven points in the Leicester semi-final. Reached this stage of the World Championship last year — his first season with Cradley Heath after a winter transfer from Birmingham where he made his debut in 1973 after a successful career in trials riding. Qualified for the semi-finals with 11 points at Birmingham, 10 points at Cradley Heath and 12 points at Ipswich. Is first reserve from the Leicester semi-final.



18 IAN DOUGLAS TURNER [King's Lynn]

Born at Isleham, Cambridgeshire, February 10, 1949. Figured in the most bizarre incident in World Championship history when he was deprived of the chance of a place in tonight's top sixteen because he took an early shower during his semi-final at Poole. Thought his nine points were enough to put him through and did not realise he faced a run-off for the last two places in tonight's meeting. Was subsequently excluded by the referee for leaving the pits without official permission. In his testimonial season after ten full seasons at King's Lynn — his only senior track. Probably the smallest rider in speedway. Had qualifying rounds at Eastbourne, King's Lynn and Ipswich scoring 3, 11 and 11 points.



...and their British Final Record

9 PETER COLLINS (Belle Vue) — Six appearances
1972: 3 points, fourteenth; 1973: 12 points, third; 1974: 8 points, eighth; 1975: 13 points, second; 1976: 12 points, fourth; 1978: 6 points, tenth.

10 DOUG WYER (Sheffield) — Four appearances
1975: 5 points, tenth; 1976: 13 points, third; 1977: 12 points, third; 1978: 4 points, twelfth.

11 MALCOLM SIMMONS (Poole) — Six appearances
1973: 2 points, fifteenth; 1974: 5 points, thirteenth; 1975: 13 points, third; 1976: 15 points, first; 1977: 0 points, sixteenth; 1978: 11 points, third.

12 ROGER JOHNS (Wimbledon) — No appearances.

13 ALAN MOLYNEUX (Coventry) — No appearances.

14 STEVE BASTABLE (Cradley Heath) — One appearance
1978: 10 points, fifth.

15 JIM McMILLAN (Wolverhampton) — Nine appearances
1968: 8 points, eighth; 1969: 7 points, ninth; 1970: 2 points, fifteenth; 1972: 10 points, sixth; 1973: 2 points, sixteenth; 1974: 8 points, seventh; 1975: 5 points, eleventh; 1976: 8 points, seventh; 1978: 3 points, fourteenth.

16 JOHN DAVIS (Reading) — Three appearances
1976: 5 points, eleventh; 1977: 10 points, fourth; 1978: 8 points, eighth.

17 ALAN GRAHAME (Cradley Heath) — One appearance
1978: 4 points, thirteenth.

18 IAN TURNER (King's Lynn) — No appearances.

The above statistics do not relate to any appearances riders may have made as local track reserves and refer purely to those appearances as genuine British Finalists.

SUNDAY MIRROR World Speedway Championship British Final

Coventry Stadium, Coventry, Wednesday June 20th, 1979

No	Rider	Track	S/F	WFA	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Pos
1	GORDON KENNETT	Eastbourne	L	1							
2	JOHN LOUIS	Ipswich	P	4							
3	DAVE MORTON	Wolverhampton	P	0							
4	MIKE LANHAM	Ipswich	L	0							
5	REG WILSON	Sheffield	P	0							
6	CHRIS MORTON	Belle Vue	P	1							
7	DAVE JESSUP	King's Lynn	P	2							
8	MICHAEL LEE	King's Lynn	L	2							
9	PETER COLLINS	Belle Vue	L	5							
10	DOUG WYER	Sheffield	L	1							
11	MALCOLM SIMMONS	Poole	P	3							
12	ROGER JOHNS	Wimbledon	P	0							
13	ALAN MOLYNEUX	Coventry	L	0							
14	STEVE BASTABLE	Cradley Heath	L	*							
15	JIM McMILLAN	Wolverhampton	L	*							
16	JOHN DAVIS	Reading	P	*							
17	ALAN GRAHAME	Cradley Heath	L	0							
18	IAN TURNER	King's Lynn	P	0							
19											
20											

WHAT THE SCORE CHART SPELLS OUT

Riders will wear the number indicated on the far left on the back of their race-jackets throughout the meeting and these numbers are indicated throughout the heat details that follow. The column headed S/F shows from which semi-final the rider qualified. Should any rider withdraw before completing his first race then his place will be taken by the reserve who qualified from the SAME semi-final. The figures under the column headed WFA indicate previous World Final appearances with riders who have qualified as reserve BUT not ridden denoted by *. All riders shall have five rides and will score 3 points for a race win; 2 points for a second place; 1 point for a third place; and no points for fourth place or if they do not finish a race. The ten riders with the highest total of race points after twenty races have been completed will go forward to the Commonwealth Final of the Sunday Mirror World Championship at London White City on Sunday, July 1.

Starting positions are indicated in each heat detail by helmet colours of the riders...red (inside lane), blue (lane two), white (lane three) and yellow and black (lane four). Reserves numbered 17 or 18 can take over all programmed rides of a rider who withdraws before completing his first race but once all riders have completed one race these reserves cannot be used. Instead local track reserves (numbered 19 and 20 in the scorechart) will be used. Riders 17 or 18 can qualify for the next stage if replacing a programmed rider numbered 1-16 but reserves who replace a rider once the meeting has started cannot qualify for the next stage. There will be short breaks after heats four, eight and sixteen and an interval after heat twelve. All races are clutch start over four laps. A yellow flag with a black cross will indicate riders are entering their fourth lap and a chequered flag indicates the finish of a race. Results are announced over the public address system and on the electronic results board. The referee's decision is final.

Heat	No.	Col.	Rider	Pts	Replacement	Pts	Time
1	1	R	Gordon Kennett				
	2	B	John Louis				
	3	W	Dave Morton				
	4	Y	Mike Lanham				
2	5	R	Reg Wilson				
	7	B	Dave Jessup				
	6	W	Chris Morton				
	8	Y	Michael Lee				
3	10	R	Doug Wyer				
	11	B	Malcolm Simmons				
	9	W	Peter Collins				
	12	Y	Roger Johns				
4	15	R	Jim McMillan				
	14	B	Steve Bastable				
	16	W	John Davis				
	13	Y	Alan Molyneux				

Heat	No.	Col.	Rider	Pts	Replacement	Pts	Time
5	13	R	Alan Molyneux				
	1	B	Gordon Kennett				
	5	W	Reg Wilson				
	9	Y	Peter Collins				
6	14	R	Steve Bastable				
	10	B	Doug Wyer				
	2	W	John Louis				
	6	Y	Chris Morton				
7	11	R	Malcolm Simmons				
	15	B	Jim McMillan				
	7	W	Dave Jessup				
	3	Y	Dave Morton				
8	4	R	Mike Lanham				
	8	B	Michael Lee				
	12	W	Roger Johns				
	16	Y	John Davis				
9	6	R	Chris Morton				
	16	B	John Davis				
	1	W	Gordon Kennett				
	11	Y	Malcolm Simmons				
10	12	R	Roger Johns				
	5	B	Reg Wilson				
	15	W	Jim McMillan				
	2	Y	John Louis				
11	8	R	Michael Lee				
	9	B	Peter Collins				
	3	W	Dave Morton				
	14	Y	Steve Bastable				
12	13	R	Alan Molyneux				
	4	B	Mike Lanham				
	10	W	Doug Wyer				
	7	Y	Dave Jessup				

INTERVAL

13	7	R	Dave Jessup				
	12	B	Roger Johns				
	14	W	Steve Bastable				
	1	Y	Gordon Kennett				
14	2	R	John Louis				
	13	B	Alan Molyneux				
	8	W	Michael Lee				
	11	Y	Malcolm Simmons				
15	16	R	John Davis				
	3	B	Dave Morton				
	10	W	Doug Wyer				
	5	Y	Reg Wilson				
16	9	R	Peter Collins				
	6	B	Chris Morton				
	4	W	Mike Lanham				
	15	Y	Jim McMillan				
17	1	R	Gordon Kennett				
	8	B	Michael Lee				
	15	W	Jim McMillan				
	10	Y	Doug Wyer				
18	9	R	Peter Collins				
	2	B	John Louis				
	7	W	Dave Jessup				
	16	Y	John Davis				
19	3	R	Dave Morton				
	12	B	Roger Johns				
	13	W	Alan Molyneux				
	6	Y	Chris Morton				
20	5	R	Reg Wilson				
	14	B	Steve Bastable				
	11	W	Malcolm Simmons				
	4	Y	Mike Lanham				

JUST IN CASE ...

In the event of a tie on points for any of the first three places or for the tenth or eleventh qualifying positions there shall be a run-off between the riders involved.

Gate positions will be drawn by ballot in any run-off and they shall take place in the following order:

RUN OFF for tenth or eleventh qualifying place (to determine final Commonwealth Final qualifier or Commonwealth Final reserve)....				
No	Col	Riders	Pts	Time
	R			
	B			
	W			
	Y			
RUN OFF for third place (to determine medal and cash awards only).....				
No	Col	Riders	Pts.	Time
	R			
	B			
	W			
	Y			
RUN OFF for first or second place (to determine British Champion or medal and cash awards only)....				
No	Col	Riders	Pts.	Time
	R			
	B			
	W			
	Y			

THE FINAL ACT...

The 1979 British Champion will receive the Sunday Mirror Trophy to retain for 12 months or until the 1980 British Final, a replica of the trophy to keep, a gold medal and a £500 cheque.

The runner-up shall receive a silver medal and a cheque for £300.

The third placed rider shall receive a bronze medal and a cheque for £150.

Riders who finish first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth and tenth shall also qualify for the Commonwealth Final of the Sunday Mirror World Championship.

The rider who finishes eleventh shall be British reserve at the Commonwealth Final of the Sunday Mirror World Championship.

All tonight's presentations shall be conducted by representatives of Mirror Group Newspapers Limited, publishers of the Sunday Mirror.

NOTICE TO PATRONS

Motor sports are dangerous and all persons attending this meeting do so at their own risk. It is a condition of admission that all persons having connections with the promotion and/or conduct of the meeting including the owners and lessee of the stadium and the competitors and officials are absolved from all liability arising out of accidents causing damages or personal injury to spectators or ticket holders.

The organisers of this meeting reserve the right to alter this programme without notice. Should it be necessary through any cause to abandon this meeting prior to the start of the sixth race in the programme re-admission tickets will be issued at the entrances and these should be available for the re-staging of this meeting. Money will not be refunded under any circumstances.

It's back to exciting Gulf Oil British League racing
as the Coventry Bees bid to defend their title



Mitch Shirra

COVENTRY v LEICESTER



Ila Teromaa

A MIDLANDS DERBY NIGHT OF HIGH EXCITEMENT
WITH OLE OLSEN, MITCH SHIRRA, JOHN TITMAN, ILA TEROMAA ETC.
THIS SATURDAY, JUNE 23, 1979, at 7.30 p.m.



THE WAY TO LONDON WHITE CITY

The reward for tonight's top ten scorers is not purely a place in the Commonwealth Final of the Sunday Mirror World Championship at London White City.

It is, more importantly, the knowledge that each and every one of them still has an equal chance of becoming the 1979 World Speedway Champion.... and succeeding Brandon hero Ole Olsen as the sport's biggest name.

No matter how many points a rider drops tonight when the tapes go up on the opening race at London White City on Sunday July 1 he stands on precisely the same footing as all his rivals.

For six Australasians tonight is purely an opportunity to weigh up rivals. For the top half dozen scorers from the early-year Australasian Final at Adelaide are already through to the Commonwealth Final.

And for two Americans and five Scandinavians even the Commonwealth Final holds no fears — all it will do is to sort out those nine Commonwealth students who remain between them and a place in September's World Final.

This year London White City, now the fairest and most neutral track in the country, takes over the mantle of Britain's leading speedway centre. The two late stages of the title-chase will be played out on London White City's spacious quarter mile track.

Such is the world-racing calendar that while tonight's sixteen British competitors fight for points on the ultra-smooth, always fair Brandon bowl elsewhere other riders have already qualified for later stages of the competition.

New Australasian Champion Billy Sanders, Australian champ Phil Crump, New Zealand national title-holder Larry Ross, five-times World speedway champion Ivan Mauger, ex-Aussie kingpin John Titman and surprise packet Steve Koppe are five rides ahead of this evening's British Finalists.

They are all certain of a place in the July 1 shoot-out at London White City. And looking even further ahead Americans Bobby Schwartz and Mike Bast are bracketed with world champion Ole Olsen, new Nordic Champion Jan Andersson, Danish duo Hans Nielsen and Finn Thomsen and sole Finn Kai Niemi as qualifiers for the prestigious Inter-Continental Final at London White City on Sunday August 5 when they will be joined by the top nine scorers from next month's Commonwealth Final.

The August date is the vital meeting—a head-on clash with reality. From a galaxy of world class talent only ten will be going further on the championship trail—the top nine who qualify for the World Final itself (this year hosted by Poland) to join the top four from the Continental Final and three riders seeded direct to Katowice by the host nation.

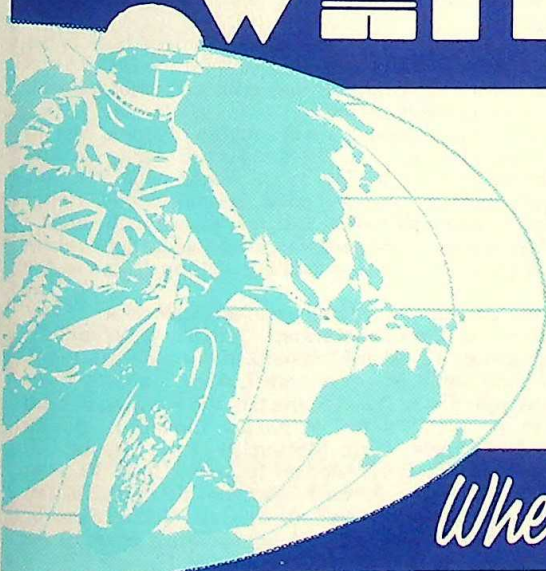
Five rides at Brandon....ten rides at London White City....and another five in Chorzow doesn't seem an insurmountable hurdle for any of tonight's competitors.

But if one of them could win all twenty races (and to do that would take less than half an hour) then he would become the 1979 World Champion.

It's not a long way....but what excitement there is between today and the September 2 night of destiny.

LONDON

WHITE CITY



It's the next thrilling stage in the golden trail to
Sunday Mirror World Championship glory

COMMONWEALTH FINAL

London White City

Sunday, July 1, 1979 at 4 p.m.

Tonight's top ten scorers join Billy Sanders, Larry Ross, Ivan Mauger, John Titman, Phil Crump and Steve Koppe at the country's new speed centre where the world races.

Tickets now on sale: £3.50, £2.50, £1.50.

Where the World Races

The World Championship so far..

Mike Lanham, going through a depressing spell which made even his Ipswich team place look in some doubt, raced to fourteen points to become the first British rider to win a 1979 Sunday Mirror World Championship qualifying round.

The venue was not as had been planned Rye House but Gulf British League Hackney which took over the round after the dreadful early season weather had ruled out the Hoddesdon centre as a staging track.

For Lanham the World Championship brought welcome relief from the struggles of team competition and he displayed the sort of form that had taken him to an earlier British Final.

With the World Championship once again being knitted into the Grand Prix pattern it was decided to run a series of preliminary qualifying rounds on National League tracks with the top scorers going through to the rounds on each of the eighteen Gulf Oil British League circuits.

Some familiar names made it through to the next round — but others dropped by the wayside.

Two riders who know what it is like to change into their leathers on a World Final night were among the sixteen starters at Boston — veteran Nigel Boocock with nine World Final appearances (including one as reserve) behind him and Belle Vue winter signing Arnie Haley who was reserve for a Final.

Boocock got through — Haley didn't. It was a similar story everywhere with some riders surprisingly making it and others, perhaps unexpectedly, being eliminated.

Malcolm Corradine was runner-up at Boston — yet highly-rated contenders Graham Jones and Alan Sage dipped out in front of their own fans.

Oxford's Pip Lamb squeezed through from Hackney even though local riders Bobby Garrad, Ted Hubbard and Kelvin Mullarkey all bowed out....exciting teenager Kenny Carter didn't make it at Boston yet Edinburgh's Steve Lomas did. Each round produced its own surprises and setbacks.

For some, like Phil Collins, there was an agonising wait as they nudged closer to a place in the next round. Originally only the top four from each of the preliminaries was guaranteed a place in the Gulf Oil British League qualifiers — but as more and more riders dropped out so the list of entrants from National League meetings lengthened.

By the end of the day riders like Carter, who had only finished in seventh position in his preliminary round, were drafted into the senior track fields to make up a full complement.

The qualifying rounds got underway under a storm of protest from promoters unhappy at the non-arrival of programmed riders.

Once again there was a pooling of resources with the top four riders from each Gulf Oil British League track being seeded — irrespective of their country of birth — into the World Championship-Berger Grand Prix rounds.

It gave some rounds, particularly those on tracks who rely on foreigners to staff their team, a top-heavy look and probably helped produce some unexpected results.

At Exeter, for example, only seven of the sixteen starters were racing for World Championship points (including Rhodesian Peter Prinsloo who was admitted to the British rounds for the first time) whereas at King's Lynn there wasn't a single foreigner in the field and five nights later at Ipswich all but one of the sixteen competitors were chasing World Championship points!

The rounds also provided plenty of talking points in the form of some of the semi-final qualifiers — and the non-qualifiers.

Those veteran campaigners Bob Kilby and Martin Ashby, Swindon team-mates, dropped out as did Eric Broadbelt, Barry Thomas and Ray Wilson. Bruce Cribb, a New Zealander given special dispensation to join the British glory-hunters because of his winter ice-racing commitments, was high among the scorers but perhaps the most unexpected name of all was Halifax's teenager Kenny Carter in only his first season of senior league racing.

Carter only came in at Halifax because of the reluctance of others riders to turn up; was quickly allocated another two rounds and ended his first series of qualifiers with a third place at Hull and an even more commendable first place at Wolverhampton where he scored 14 points to outstrip a line-up that included ex-World Champion Peter Collins, Jim McMillan, Doug Wyer and Dave Morton.

And so to the two semi-finals, again allotted to Leicester and Poole where the drama continued unabated.

At Blackbird Road Peter Collins bounced back to his best form and in an eventful run-off for the last British Final place Alan Grahame was excluded after a hectic tussle with Mike Lanham.

If Leicester provided the drama then Poole's ending was sheer farce — with Ian Turner being in the dressing room changing to go home when he was called upon to face Malcolm Simmons and Roger Johns in a run-off for the last two places at Brandon. Turner never re-appeared and the two patient racers were given a walk-over without having to leave the pits.

The British semi-final results: **Leicester:** Peter Collins 14, Gordon Kennett 14, Doug Wyer 13, Michael Lee 12, Alan Molyneux 10, Steve Bastable 9, Jim McMillan 8, Mike Lanham 7, Alan Grahame 7, Ian Cartwright 6, Joe Owen 5, the late Vic Harding 5, Tom Owen 4, Nicky Allott 4, Kenny Carter 2, Bobby Beaton 0. **Poole:** Dave Morton 14, Dave Jessup 13, John Louis 11, Chris Morton 10, John Davis 10, Reg Wilson 10, Roger Johns 9, Malcolm Simmons 9, Ian Turner 9, Craig Pendlebury 6, Colin Richardson 5, Bruce Cribb 5, Kevin Jolly 4, Les Collins 3, Mick Hines 1. Trevor Geer 0. Reserve: Nigel Davis 1.

and looking back at past finals



Action from last year's British Final with Michael Lee, John Davis and John Louis locked in combat.

1961 Wembley	1 Barry Briggs	2 Peter Craven	3 Ronnie Moore
1964 Wembley	1 Barry Briggs	2 Ken McKinlay	3 Ron How
1965 West Ham	1 Barry Briggs	2 Nigel Boocock	3 Ken McKinlay
1966 Wimbledon	1 Barry Briggs	2 Ivan Mauger	3 Colin Pratt
1967 West Ham	1 Barry Briggs	2 Ivan Mauger	3 Eric Boocock
1968 Wimbledon	1 Ivan Mauger	2 Barry Briggs	3 Eric Boocock
1969 West Ham	1 Barry Briggs	2 Nigel Boocock	3 Ronnie Moore
1970 West Ham	1 Ivan Mauger	2 Ronnie Moore	3 Roy Trigg
1971 Coventry	1 Ivan Mauger	2 Barry Briggs	3 Tony Lomas
1972 Coventry	1 Ivan Mauger	2 Nigel Boocock	3 Barry Briggs
1973 Sheffield	1 Ray Wilson	2 Bob Valentine	3 Peter Collins
1974 Coventry	1 Eric Boocock	2 Terry Betts	3 Dave Jessup
1975 Coventry	1 John Louis	2 Peter Collins	3 Malcolm Simmons
1976 Coventry	1 Malcolm Simmons	2 Chris Morton	3 Doug Wyer
1977 Coventry	1 Michael Lee	2 Dave Jessup	3 Doug Wyer
1978 Coventry	1 Michael Lee	2 Dave Jessup	3 Malcolm Simmons

The above statistics relate only to those seasons when the British Championship formed a qualifying round of the World Championship. From 1976 Australasian riders competed in their own 'Down Under' World Championship rounds and were not, therefore, any longer eligible to race in the British Championship.

Sunday Mirror

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