

1962 – A snapshot review first published in '50 Years of Cycle Speedway' by The British Cycle Speedway Council in 1996.

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Lions Limber up at London Road

Wembley Lions limbered up for their Middlesex League matches with a home challenge against East Ham Stars. The visitors were without John Butler and Del Harvey but 'borrowed' Gerry Wallis (top scorer for Stars) and Bernie Cullinane from nearby Hendon and it was this pair that brought the East London side just two points behind with a maximum in heat nine. Wembley held the lead from the first race but Stars were always in with a shout until two races from the end. Gerry Wallis and Bob Saunders beat each other once otherwise they were undefeated by an opponent. Wembley won 53 to 43.

New Track for Wallingford

In Berkshire, the recently reformed Wallingford club have been given permission to use the old track behind the waterworks for £3 per year. As the land is due to be built on, the Council will consider building a new track on Bullcroft Playing Field. Mr Wally Watts who is masterminding operations, hopes the new track will be on the lines of Hungerford. Elsewhere, Mick Watts, Berkshire's leading rider last season, will be out of the action for most of the year due to a foot injury. He has applied for a steward's licence and hopes to keep his hand in by officiating in the Southern League.

Leagues Expand

Eight teams contested the 1962 Oxford League including Abingdon, Burford, Drayton, Great Milton, Littlemore, Minster Lovell (Meteors), Wheatley and Wood Farm while top local side Horspath made their debut in the British League.

After two years in the doldrums, the Birmingham League re-formed with nine teams:- Birmingham Lions, Cradley Heath Kestrels, Hagley Comets, Kidderminster Eagles, Quarry Bank Diamonds, Sheldon Tigers, Tipton Invaders, Wolverhampton Wolves and Yardley Hawks. Cradley are to be congratulated on the hard work they have put into their track at the Plateau which they share with Quarry Bank. Complete with starting gate, the set-up is a credit to both teams.

Call for Unity

As the rivalry between cycle speedway's two "governing" bodies verged on outright hostility, one voice called for a merger between NACSA and BCSF. Writing in the April edition of Cycle Speedway gazette, columnist Barry Shapley said there should be one organisation in charge of the sport.

"Something must be done" implored Shapley. "Cycle speedway must settle its differences and become a truly organised sport. The new body should make no reference to NACSA or BCSF. It will need a new name - perhaps the Cycle Speedway Association would be as good as any" he concluded.

The following month Gazette readers shared Shapley's enthusiasm. "Barry Shapley recently suggested a NACSA/BCSF merger on the lines of the Football Association and League" wrote one reader. "This could be the solution to cycle speedway's troubles. Whether the powers that be would agree to the idea of an amalgamation we don't know. But it would certainly be a step forward for cycle speedway."

Tarmac Track for Edmonton

The Montague Road track, home of the Gold Cup and British League champions Edmonton Monarchs, has had a major face-lift. The familiar cinder circuit has been ripped up and resurfaced entirely with asphalt - Dutch style. The "new look" raceway is a carbon copy of the Hollandse Welpen track at Hilversum which was used for 1958 World championships. The track is banked six inches on the bends allowing for an "assisted overtake". Edmonton Council contributed to the cost of the project.

Team manager Vic Cowell explained "We do not feel that the best racing can be achieved on 'moving surface' tracks. Cinder is extremely hard to maintain and limited to two seasons of constant racing. Repeated resurfacing with cinders is costlier in the end than the initial price of tarmac. I am sure other clubs will follow Edmonton's lead".

Wonder-Boy Richards Takes National Title

Mike Richards was the surprise winner of the 1962 national individual championship at Hungerford, Berkshire. The relatively "unknown" from Swindon upset all predictions by out-pacing defending champ Vic Hinchliffe in a run-off after both riders had tied on 13 points. The Manchester rider won the toss for starting positions and when he selected grid two, the writing looked on the wall for Richards. But the Swindon rider got a "flier". As the two riders hit the first bend shoulder to shoulder, Hinchliffe slipped and Richards sped away for a memorable victory to become the first Wiltshire rider to win the title. It was a big disappointment for Hinchliffe in his bid to become the first rider to win the trophy twice.

First Win for Offerton

Favourites Offerton Devils easily beat Dorset's Tatnam Tigers by 58 points to 37 in the final of the national team championship at Hungerford. The under-dogs notched a consolation win in the final race when Alan Nippard took the chequered flag, the only Dorset rider to do so. Derek Garnett and Vic Hinchliffe both scored maximums and junior Eric Fletcher scored nine points from his three outings. In the corresponding junior final, Southampton Provincials licked Whipps Cross Comets by 45 points to 27. Dave Collins, on leave from the RAF Apprentice School at Halton was the star of the show scoring 11 points from his four starts.

Parkins Wins Gazette Cup

Norfolk's Mike Parkins became the first winner of the Gazette Cup, a new competition sponsored by cycle speedway's leading magazine. Most of the races at Spencer Park, Coventry, were close and exciting but the one the crowd seemed to appreciate most was the second place run-off between local boy Ken Adams and Norwich rider Barry Woodcock. All riders received a special Cycle Speedway Gazette diploma. The magazine also provided post-match tea for the riders and officials.

Mike Parkins Crowned World Champion

Mike Parkins, of Mulbarton Eagles, Norfolk won the World individual title in Edinburgh. Although Parkins was a worthy winner, the match ended in controversy after Bert Harkins, spurred on by the roaring of the crowd, consistently baulked Derek Garnett in heat 17. Steward Douglas Maxwell decided to turn a blind eye when really Harkins should have been excluded. A win in that race would have given Garnett the title outright. As it was second place was good enough to give Garnett a run off for the title but in the tie-break Parkins held his Manchester rival from the gate and never looked like losing despite Garnett's gallant efforts. The race time of 48.2 seconds was easily the fastest of the day, a tribute to Parkins supreme fitness and application. Third place went to Manchester's Brian Moston.

At the presentations, Mike Parkins was very quiet - perhaps only then fully realising the great honour he had won. Certainly it was a bewildered Parkins who received the World trophy from Edinburgh speedway promoter Ian Hoskins. The meeting was filmed for television and was shown on "Scotsport" on 12 September 1962.



Mike Parkins celebrates winning the 1962 World Championship in Edinburgh ahead of Derek Garnett (right) and Brian Moston (left)

Scotney in Form at Leicester

The Leicestershire individual championship final took place in good weather and was won by Steve Scotney of Mowmacre with 14 points. Paul Smith (Parker) 13 and Len Silver (Mowmacre) 12 were the next best. Fourth place was shared by Ian Gibson (Groby) and Mick Harvey (Mowmacre) with 11 points. This was a fine meeting with the result in doubt right up to the end. Smith, who had never been beaten on the track before, dropped points in his first two rides and then had three wins to pull up to second place. One of the pre-match favourites Bas Peel broke his frame and could only finish overall sixth. Aylestone's John Knock, the only rider to defeat the winner, also suffered from equipment failures.

Gold Cup Hat-Trick for Edmonton

Sunday 16 September saw Edmonton achieve the distinction of becoming Gold Cup champions for the third successive year when they beat Horspath in a last heat thriller at Garratt Park, Wandsworth. Edmonton found themselves ahead on points only once - at the end of the match. Riding to strict orders to go for first

Jeffrey came home ahead and team mate Westwood slotted into third place. The BCSF Gold Cup remained in North London for another year.

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Scottish Officials Resign

September was a month of mixed fortunes for the sport in Glasgow. At the beginning of the month the world championship had a stimulating effect on local events. Then came the news that housing development will force Mansewood and Eastwood off their track. The circuit will be gone by November and already both teams are searching for a new site.

The biggest shock came at the end of the month with the biggest ever resignation of office bearers in the history of the sport in Glasgow. President James Mackie, along with secretary Jimmy Cobain and chief steward Doug Maxwell, all resigned their positions. Explaining their decisions the trio said that they felt that a small group of people had for too long been left to do all the work in Glasgow. Now the time had come for a change.

Cobbin's Title

A crowd approaching a thousand people and ITV cameras witnessed young John Cobbin of Tottenham take the Senior Service sponsored British Riders Championship final at Garratt Park, London. No one gave him more than an outside chance of winning, even after he scored eight points from three rides. Nevertheless win he did and what a fine achievement this was after just three years in the sport. Ray Chivers and Roy Baker went well for second and third placings.