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FEATURE

GLEN

HELEN

MX

NATIONAL

SEPTEMBER

23

2001

by Paul Parkinson

GLEN HELEN MX NATIONAL, SEPTEMBER 23, 2001

MX racers from all over the South Western United States and National event competitors from as far away as New Hampshire converged on Glen Helen Raceway Sept 23 for the 15th round of the National MX series. The weather for the day was hot, even according to the local racers. Arriving at the race track, riders were greeted by the American flag flying high on the top of the Glen Helen race track. The nation's period of mourning was over and it was time to start resuming normal life.

Riders who had not seen or ridden Glen Helen's vintage track discovered a track that winds its way up, down and in and out of the natural terrain of the hills that make up a good part of the Glen Helen Raceway area. The act of walking the track in the already warm morning was enough to test your strength and endurance. The track is comprised of loose dirt and sand and not the expected concrete type terrain typical of the area. The track was well groomed and watered making it ideal for the days racing. The track certainly favored riders who did not have concerns cresting hills and blasting down into the gullies.

Dave Boydston started the day with a riders meeting before the practice. Dave's careful words about taking it easy to learn the track before racing the track were listened to carefully by all. Significantly Dave's advice help ensure that the race day was completed without any serious injuries, although there was a Maico on fire and a couple of other interesting mechanical mishaps.

The days racing include some awesome displays of riding skills and some tight, race long battles. Chad McIntosh motored hard all day on his Rickman Triumphs. Chad easily out jumped everyone as he crested the first knoll. Chad would cross up his bike on every lap making the author wonder if the Rickman Triumphs were really that heavy. (I checked out Chad size at the award ceremony and he is not a small lad, suggesting his size helped him make the Rickman perform like a smaller, lighter bike.) However Chad really showed off the capabilities of this famous early make. Another rider that put on a great display was Bruce McDogual. Some of you may recognize Bruce as Marty's Smiths Honda team mate for the 1975 125CC championship. Bruce is back after twenty years but hasn't lost any of his talent. While Bruce ran away in both the Classic and Sportsman 125CC races on his Penton there was lots of action behind him. Charlie Richardson kept Bruce working hard to win in the Sportsman 125 class. Jared Lange on his trick Yamaha MX125 rode with determination in both motos of the Sportsman 125 Intermediate race to earn a 2nd overall. Jared's bright Yamaha was treat to look at both on and off the track.

Other race highlights include Terry Bentley on his CZ crashing into the starting gate in the second moto of the Open Age Novice, giving up at least half a lap to the rest of the field and then riding like a madman to win the moto and get the overall for the day. Terry also ran away from the pack in the Sportsman 250 Novice race. Terry's lead was large enough that at one stage he came around paused to look back and must have though the race was stopped as he couldn't see anyone. (Terry will not be riding Novice for much longer)

The Sportsman 250 class had a large turn out with tight racing through all the pack. Sportsman 250 Intermediate was won by Robert Haag on an Ossa with second going to Mark Nearing on a Honda. Both of these riders won the honor of being reclassified as experts. The 60+ class has had an excellent turn out with John Rice making a stunning pass on the outside of turn one in the second moto. John went on to win the overall of the 60+ expert class.

The race award ceremonies had some extra items to hand out. For several riders the event marked the end of their intermediate rider classification and start of their expert classification. All of these riders easily ran away from the other competitors in the races and clearly earned the fast track to the expert class.

All participants enjoyed the event and challenge the Glen Helen track provided. Look of an expanded two day event next year and if possible include the event on your schedule. You won't be disappointed you did. For race results check www.ahma.org.

BIKES AT GLEN HELEN

While there is lots of action on the race track, there are also things to look at in the pits. Here are some of the bikes we spotted.



Lee Farby rode this beautiful Hodaka 125 in Sportsman 125 Intermediate



Chad McIntosh rode his Triumph twin to victory in both motos



Marty Tait showed up and won Classic 500 Novice on this 1969 Greeves 380



Don Kelley rode his 66 Rickman BSA 441 to second in Classic 500 Intermediate



Yes a twin pipe Greeves 380!!



Jerry Rewerts rode his nice 1955 BSA to second in Premier 500 Expert.



#72S belongs to Brian Backer on a 74 CZ but this is clearly s Suzuki TM, Help us Brian?



Anthony Loguercio rode his 72 Husky 125 to victory in Classic 125 Novice.



Dave Boydston rode his Cotton to Victory but not without his own slip ups. Check out "Stories From The Back Corner" for more.