

# Motocross: It's modern-day bronco-busting

By KEN VOYLES

A western-style rodeo and a motocross motorcycle race have more in common than dust, grime and a nomadic existence.

If you were to examine the competitors of both, you just might notice a resemblance.

Both the rodeo and motocross circuits are long and grueling. They offer little in the way of financial rewards. The competitors travel across the country in vans and trucks trying for the little prize money that is offered.

They lead tough, lonesome lives between events, often thinking of family and friends, but ever in pursuit of making a name for themselves in the world of motocross.

Rick Lupp is a motocross rider and he leads the kind of life that has been portrayed in numerous movies and books. He is more down to earth and real than would be expected. Lupp is not a cliché.

Lupp graduated from Livonia Stevenson in 1973. A year later, he entered the motocross circuit on a one-year trial basis.

Lupp is 20, and teammate Monte Anderson, 20, competed recently in the Pontiac Silverdome supercross events.

"I really started late in comparison to some other riders. I gave myself one year to get in the top 15 or 20 point getters. If I don't make it I will sit down and evaluate my position," said Lupp.

Lupp would totally agree with the rodeo comparison. "It's a lot like one in that we travel all over the country living out of our van and on a very tight budget. We compete for very little money and lead a hard life," he said.

"Not all of the races are small and offer little. Every once in awhile a Pontiac-type race comes along and that is where the money happens to be," said Lupp. "The indoor circuit is where to find the money but most of the races are outdoors."

Lupp started racing and riding motorcycles four years ago. His first love, so to speak, were small trail bikes. From there, he moved to the bigger motocross type bikes and amateur racing.

"We and my dad used to watch the motocross races in the area and I got hooked," Lupp said. "I always thought, when I'd watch the races, that I could do better than the guys racing but my parents asked me to wait a few years before getting started."



Photo: GARY CASKEY

"Finally I started to race in a few amateur events and I slowly got better. About a year ago, I got an offer from Custom Sports in Dallas to ride for them. I jumped at it and have been

riding for CSM ever since."

Lupp's sponsor covers all of the costs for both him and Anderson including cycles, travel expenses and entry fees.

This is Lupp's first year in the pro circuit. Right now he is classified a novice-pro, which is simply the designation given a rider until he earns 80 points. Once he hits that mark, he becomes a full-fledged pro.

A key element with motocross is the sponsor. The better you become, the bigger a sponsor you can get. The bigger the sponsor, the bigger the races, and the bigger the prize purses. So it becomes very important to get those 80 points quickly, obtain a good sponsor, and move into the bigger races.

The circuit year runs from February to December. The circuit goes across the country from Florida to Oregon. So far this year, Lupp has collected 20 points after riding in the Florida series-six races.

Top prizes in the smaller races run about \$250. For the larger races, like the one at the Silverdome, the top prize can be as high as \$1000. The riders keep all the prize money they win.

"We'll just have to keep working at it. A sponsor is what makes or breaks it for the riders and right now we are in good shape in that area," added Lupp.

Outdoor racing and indoor racing differ in many ways. Outdoor races run at least 45 minutes and the riders have more room, while the indoor races are shorter, run on a tighter course and more dangerous.

The motocross circuit consists of both types of races.

You have to be in shape, have your bike ready, and you have to train very hard for either race, but I'd rather ride outdoors."

Lupp has never been seriously injured, although he came close last year in an amateur race in Canada. A footpeg ripped through his side.

"After my injury in Canada, I went to the line a number of times thinking about the injury and that took away from my race. You have to be quite aggressive in motocross and not worry about anything," Lupp explained.

The road life for Lupp and Anderson is a mixture of boredom and hard work. The pair travel from race to race in a van with a trailer to haul the cycles.

Most of the time, the two live out of the van, cooking as they go and taking turns driving and sleeping.

"It's very hectic. You can't live on a schedule, you can't train and you can't ride. But I think it's worth it," said Lupp. "I have all of my money tied up

in motocross and when I don't race during those two months off, I work."

When on the road, the pair have learned to live with each other and keep the flare up down to a minimum. Lupp said that they drive straight through to the next race.

Once at their destination, the two quickly set out to prepare their cycles

and themselves for the event. Every day the two are not on the road, they run five miles and do various conditioning exercises.

Mechanics they are not, yet Lupp and Anderson are responsible for keeping their bikes in racing shape. According to Anderson, that means a lot of hours spent with wrenches.

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## State enacts auto lemon law

A state law that allows purchasers of malfunctioning cars to withhold payments will go into effect Jan. 1, 1979.

"At that time," says state Rep. Perry Bullard, "car buyers, who finance directly with an auto dealer will be able to withhold payment pending a court hearing and will be able to raise the car's substandard quality as a defense for his or her court action."

Bullard sponsored the measure recently passed by the legislature and signed by the governor. Although the state altered the holder-in-the-course doctrine for installment retail sales and home improvement sales in 1972, the automobile consumer was left unprotected. "A financial institution is in a much better position to influence dealers than is an individual consumer," Bullard said. "This lemon law will provide significant leverage."

The Michigan Automobile Dealers Association fought the bill for nearly eight years. Auto dealers claimed the law would make installment contracts harder to sell to lending institutions.

Supporters of the measure (including the attorney general's office) said other states had successfully changed the holder-in-the-course doctrine without increasing interest rates or reducing sales.

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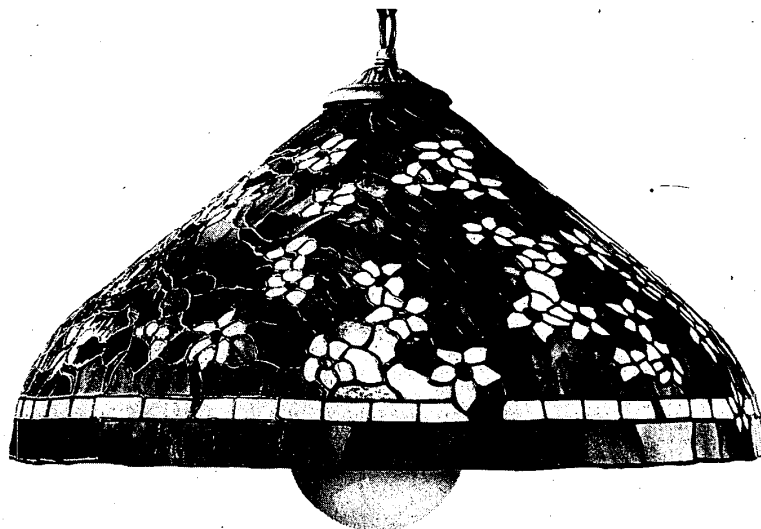
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