

IND 34485  
**REMAKE: \$58 MONOSHOCK SURGERY**

# MOTOCROSS

JULY 1979 • \$1.25 UK60p

**ACT** MAGAZINE

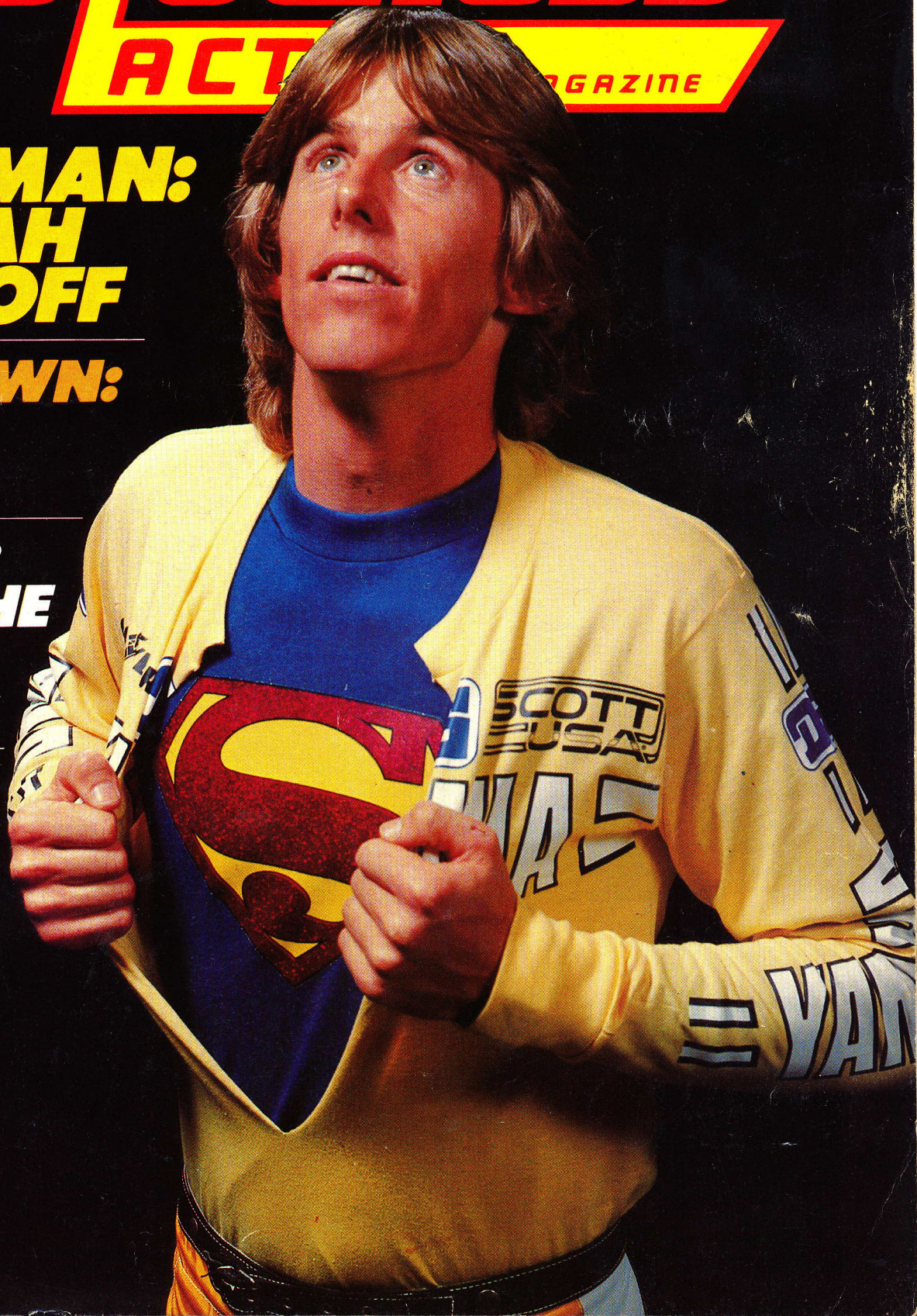
**SUPERMAN:  
HANNAH  
TAKES OFF**

**HANGTOWN:  
OPEN  
SEASON**

**EXOTICA:  
INSIDE THE  
WORKS  
BIKES**

**RIDER  
OF THE  
YEAR**

**HOW TO  
CLAIM**



(USPS 986-340)

# MOTOCROSS ACTION MAGAZINE RIDER OF THE YEAR



Dave Porter

# A HURRICANE NAMED EVAN

# Superman or tomorrow's man?

By Jody Weisel

□ He is in great demand. He is the man to know. And not surprisingly, he doesn't always know how to handle it. The harsh and bright light of popularity can be blinding, and from atop the pedestal of super-stardom rational voices are seldom heard. For Bob Hannah, the climb to the top has been a hard and rocky road. His instant surge to fame was not the least bit instant! Years of riding in the desert east of Los Angeles and on the tracks of Southern California honed him into the star that we see today.

To those who don't know him he is the greatest thing since sliced bread. To those who have met him he is a shallow, aloof, and bland egomaniac. To his friends there is no one in the world as nice, friendly or thoughtful as Bob. Which Bob Hannah is the real Hurricane?

None of them, and all of them. Bob Hannah is a product of the current times of motocross. A gymnastic magician of careening stadium bumps and jumps. A shy, unassuming kid thrust into a world of mega-bucks, and catering, lamproy-like entourages. A victim of a broken family, and slave to the American lust to make it big. He is in fact a product of this generation of American plasticized, pre-packaged cultural neurosis. Bob Hannah is a modern-day predecessor of tomorrow's man.

## THE CHILD GROWS UP

Bob Hannah was discovered. He was discovered several times. The credit for Hannah's success really goes to the men with enough vision to take the welder, chicken-packer and dishwasher, and turn him into a conglomerate; a corporate image of such magnitude that his name makes or breaks products.

A motocross enthusiast named Mick McKey discovered in teenage Bob Hannah a glitter that no one else could see. McKey took the 16-year-old into his

Whittier, California, home, prepped his machines, trained the fledgling, and coached his flaws away on the Southern California motocross circuits. Bob learned and moved on. Gary Harlow of DG Performance Specialties discovered Bob welding at a subsidiary supplier, and offered to give him a chance to ride a DG racer. Bob learned and moved on. U.S. Suzuki pulled Bob on to their 1975 farm team, at the persistent harping of Harlow, and supplied him with the biggest salary of his life (\$700), and free rein of the racing department. Bob learned and moved on. Yamaha,

shocked at the desertion of 1975 500cc National Champion Jimmy Weinert, decided to start fresh with kids. The first kid they chose was Danny Turner, another team DG alumnaus, second came Rick Burgett, a strong, bull-like Support class rider from the Trans-AMA, and finally they got Hannah.

Hannah wanted to race. Suzuki wanted him to race, but the disagreement came as to exactly where, and what, Bob would ride. Hannah wanted a works bike and a chance at the 125 National Championships. Suzuki wanted to give him a modified production RM and a chance to ride a few local Nationals. The eggs in Suzuki's 125 hopes rested with then-star Billy Grossi, not with some untested kid from Saddleback.

Yamaha, who had watched Hannah's local performances, approached him, again at the urging of DG's Gary Harlow. They offered Hannah the mighty, although unseen, 125cc water-cooler and a chance to do the Nationals. Bob wanted that more than anything, but out of loyalty he also wanted to give Suzuki a chance. He carried his unsigned Yamaha contract over to U.S. Suzuki and asked them to match it. They didn't feel that a rider who had only ridden two Nationals, and collapsed

## HANNAH GETS TOYOTA TRUCKED

After the most successful year in the history of motorsports, Bob Hannah was the overwhelming victor in the fifth annual MOTOCROSS ACTION Rider of the Year poll. Hannah's Championship wins in the Supercross Series, Trans-AMA and 250 Nationals did not go unnoticed, as one out of three readers pegged him as rider of the year. America's Grand Prix threat Brad Lackey was second, with two-time Rider of the Year Marty Smith third. In a strong showing, Roger Decoster was tied by rookie of the year Darrell Shultz for fourth.

Hannah's super-trick Toyota SR-5 long-bed pickup truck will be presented to him at the July 14th Superbowl of Motocross in the Los Angeles Coliseum.

### FIFTH ANNUAL RIDER OF THE YEAR RESULTS

1. BOB HANNAH	34.6
2. BRAD LACKEY	9.1
3. MARTY SMITH	6.1
4. ROGER DECOSTER	3.9
4. DARRELL SHULTZ	3.9
6. MARTY TRIPES	3.4
7. CHUCK SUN	2.2
8. BROCK GLOVER	2.1
9. HEIKKI MIKKOLA	1.8
10. GAYLON MOSIER	1.6

### STATE PERCENTAGES

1. CALIFORNIA	20.0
2. TEXAS	5.2
3. FOREIGN	5.0
4. MICHIGAN	4.3
5. NEW YORK	4.1
6. OHIO	4.0
7. PENNSYLVANIA	3.5
8. ILLINOIS	3.3
9. WASHINGTON	2.7
10. NEW JERSEY	2.2

from heat stroke at one of those, was much of a buy.

## THE PATTERN

Yamaha signed up Bill Buchka, Jim Weinert's and Pierre Karsmakers' mechanic, to guide the kid, and sent the two of them to Florida for the Winter-Series. Under Buchka's guidance and his own burning desire Hannah trained and raced with a fury. When the shouting was over rookie Bob Hannah was the Winter-Series champ.

But when he went to the stadium series it wasn't all that easy. Jimmy Weinert, on Kawasaki, harassed and psyched the kid at every opportunity. Weinert is the master of the put-down, and Hannah became his target. From these early days Hannah grew to dislike, if not indeed inwardly loathe, his

competitors. That he wasn't greeted warmly (no new young shoe ever is), and that his wins were discounted by others' excuses, set a deep psychological pattern of revenge into his style of racing.

This pattern exhibits itself time and time again in his victories. Hannah doesn't win a race, he *demolishes* the competition. He doesn't believe that *an inch is as good as a mile*, or that *close only counts in horseshoes*. Hannah strives to humiliate his opponents with ever-increasing leads. At Hangtown in 1978 while his lead grew beyond a minute and a half, he never backed off. As he lapped every rider in the field save one, he continued a relentless pace. There was no thought of protecting the victory, or cruising. His

(continued on page 69)

## BOB HANNAH

(continued from page 43)

assumed motive was to pile it on. He is now the master of the put-down. Hangtown 1979 was a repeat of this bravado motocross massacre.

### THE MONEY

Frank Zappa once wrote an album entitled *We're Only In It for the Money*. If Bob doesn't own a copy, he should. Winning is everything for Bob, and this raging passion to win gets its incentive, insiders say, from a deep psychological urge to compete, and an abiding interest in money. If you ask Bob, he'll say that if it wasn't for the money he wouldn't be doing it. Motorcycles hold no aura of mysticism for the National Champion. Riding for fun has been replaced by dollar signs. To do otherwise would be foolish.

How much money has he made? Nobody knows but Bob and the IRS. Whatever he made in 1978 will be a pittance compared to his 1979 earnings. A professional motocrosser is a billboard, and Bob is akin to a high-priced Sunset Boulevard billboard, while the rest of the riders represent just so many *Burma Shave* signs. Motocross money doesn't talk, it whispers and quite often lies. Figuring out what a rider makes is almost always impossible, and quite often overexaggerated. Reliable sources report that you don't get Hannah's name on anything for under \$10,000. Even companies with a reputation for not paying riders to wear their products, like Bell Helmets, clam up when Bob Hannah's name is mentioned. He will reach a life-time earning figure in the \$1,000,000 range by 1980.

### POPULARITY'S EBB AND FLOW

Bob Hannah was the MOTOCROSS ACTION *Rider of the Year* in 1977. Bob had just won the 125 National Championship in 1976 from former *Rider of the Year* winner Marty Smith. Because Hannah smote Smith he was a shoe-in victor of the readers' poll. In 1978 the tables turned and Smith smote Hannah, and Marty's 500cc National Championship made him the most popular rider in America. Hannah was in a slump in 1977 both with his machines and with his public image.

Hannah was able to pull out the Supercross Championship, but couldn't attach a National Championship to his credit that year. Whether the fans are fickle or Hannah's highly publicized tantrums with spectators and autograph seekers really hurt him is unknown, but Bob barely made the top five in the poll.

Last year started out again with several publicized incidents of Hannah being, reportedly, rude to fans. Incidents like these happen all the time,

because a rider must do his job and prepare for it in the open. He is under a constant barrage of requests, and his patience can often wear thin. If it wears through in the presence of the wrong people it becomes a major incident.

But Hannah, under gentle arm-twisting and corporate pressure, began to turn that image around. He made himself as accessible to fans as possible, and he found that as a major star he could even indulge the adoring crowds on occasion. Hannah has been known to stand in the back of the Yamaha truck and toss Scott goggles and JT gloves to the masses. He gives the jerseys and

trophies of each race day away. Hannah has loosened up with the madding crowds, and has been rewarded by their support. Skeptics always abound, whenever a rider is winning, and Hannah has as many people who despise his success as those who revel in it. But one thing is for sure. Anyone who has seen him ride can't help but be impressed.

### THE RIDERS RUMINATE

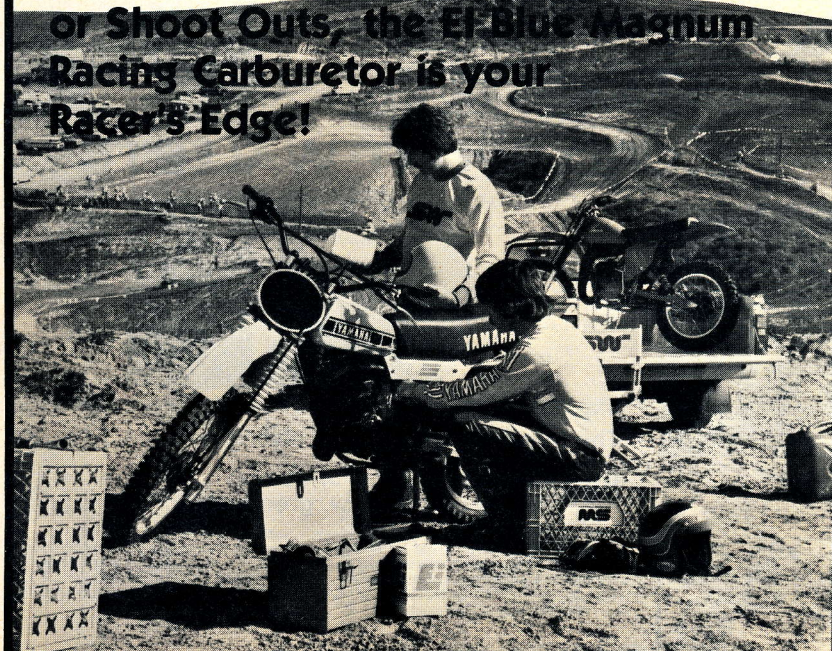
Hannah chooses his friends from out of the ranks of privateers. In the early days his best friend was Eddie Cole, who was later replaced by John Savitski.

# Get Yourself A Weapon



## Hole Shots

or Shoot Outs, the El Blue Magnum  
Racing Carburetor is your  
Racer's Edge!



## Get your own California Milk Crate Center Stand



SEND \$9.50 TO: S&W ENGINEERED PRODUCTS  
2617 WOODLAND DRIVE  
ANAHEIM, CA 92801

Freight prepaid. California residents add 6% tax.  
Allow 6 weeks for personal checks to clear.

Circle number 18 on page 71