

BRETT STEVENS DEFEATS ALL COMERS IN TOP BIKE

By John Baremans



JOHN BAREMANS

TOP BIKE QUALIFYING

#	Rider	ET	MPH
1	Athol Williams (NZ)	6.686	211.96
2	Troy McLean (QLD)	6.704	201.88
3	Ian Ashelford (WA)	6.893	206.67
4	Brett Stevens (QLD)	6.917	183.49
5	Craig Bonwick (NSW)	7.111	182.72
6	Phil Parker (VIC)	7.533	181.03
7	Rodney Salvestro (NSW)	7.653	146.78
8	Leonard Azzopardi (NSW)	7.840	132.95

Non Qualifiers:

Mark Drew (WA) - 8.389, 188.91; Dennis Grant (SA) - 9.417, 155.26; Jay Upton (WA) - 31.854, 28.39.



Brett "The Boss" Stevens (near) & Troy McLean

FULLYSIDPHOTOS.COM.AU

The opening round of the ANDRA Top Bike Championship had plenty of excitement with some old faces, as well as some faces we hadn't seen for some time. The nitro-burning V-Twin Harley's have led the way in terms of numbers and support for many years. Those that chose a different form of power were Phil Parker Shane Walker and of course Jay "The White Knight" Upton who had stepped up to Honda power late last season.

But joining them in the pits for his first competition appearance was Leonard Azzopardi onboard Europe's quickest motorcycle. Azzopardi had been extensively testing his Puma/Yamaha at WSID and while it seemed to take forever for him to earn his licence Leonard was in no real hurry. Great to see Athol Williams from New Zealand return to do battle. The word out was that Williams would be contesting the entire championship series.

The field had three Perth entries. Joining Upton and Mark Drew was Ian Ashelford. It had been some time since we had seen "Single" in Sydney and he too has indicated that he would be contesting the Top Bike series this season. Brother Mark would have joined him on this occasion however he was in Europe.

The first qualifying session opened with two Jap fuellers. Williams and Azzopardi. Both riders left on 0.2 reactions but at the 60 foot clocks the silver bullet of Azzopardi went 1.112 while the Kiwi had a 1.240. By half track Azzopardi was slowing while Williams stopped the timers in 6.967 seconds at 203.46 mph. Next pair saw local rider Craig Bonwick take on Dennis Grant from South Australia. The pair of hogs left hard but at

By John Baremans

the 330 timers Grant started to fall behind when he got close to the wall. Bonwick clocked an 8.88 to an 11-second ET from the South Aussie. The 'high boy' Puma/Yamaha of Parker lined up against Brett "Boss" Stevens. Parker took this one with a solid 7.533 at 181 which sure put a smile on the teams face. Stevens followed through with a 7.96 at only 161 mph. Drew had a solo and following his win at the Nitro Champs back in May "Tecman"

FULLYSIDPHOTOS.COM.AU

was looking for some good numbers on his Harley. Unfortunately after four stabs on the throttle and a smokin' rear slick Drew clocked an 8.389 at 188.91. Wild stuff and yet it still put him in the field in sixth place. The action continued with Rodney Salvestro and Shane Walker. "The Phantom" had problems and never received a time while Griffith rider Salvestro clocked his best pass in a while with a 7.653 at only 146.78. With some



Athol Williams



Ian Ashelford

JOHN DAVENANT



Leonard Azzopardi

JOHN DAVENANT

assistance from Stevens and crew chief Steve Stanley, the early increments of the run showed the team were on the right track. Closing out the session was Upton and his sparing partner Troy McLean. Unfortunately the problems continued for the reigning champ when a broken drive belt broke. His weekend didn't get off on the right foot when it was suspected his container had fallen or moved in transit. The result was a battered bike that needed plenty of TLC. McLean made it through to the other end with an 8.077 at 182 mph.

The second session saw 12 bikes in the staging lanes. Walker continued to have problems on the startline while Salvestro recorded a 9.35. Grant faced Parker with neither having a good time. The "Stars n Stripes" Harley clocking an early shut-off 9.417 to Parker's 8.81. Grant had a little slip in the deep end but was able to keep his bike upright. Azzopardi and Williams faced off for the second time. The bike of Azzopardi was lightning quick

in the top half of the track recording a 1.091 at the 60 but the big bike of Williams drove around him and took the run with a 6.78/197 to a 7.84/152. Bonwick went 8.13/162 while Ian Ashelford never got to make a run. McLean paired up with Drew but a fuel leak saw WSID officials shut the bike down. The JD rider carried the front wheel before clocking a 6.82/179 that moved him up into second place. The final pair saw Stevens and Upton face the tree. Again problems for Upton while "The Boss" had issues with a 9.90 at 117 mph.

The final set opened up with Salvestro and Drew. For the West Aussie he was currently on the bump and needed to step up. Again he machine smoked the tyre big time and he crossed the centreline. Salvestro recorded an 8.90 at 130 mph. Jack Daniels teammates Stevens and McLean faced each other. The pair gave the fans a great side-by-side pass with McLean improving with a 6.70 at 201 mph while "The Boss" moved in the third spot with a 6.91/183. Upton's frustration continued when he rolled through the beams in 34 seconds. The Champ was out of Saturday's racing action. Grant clocked a cylinder dropping 10.78. Ashelford was loaded for his final pass as he too was not in the field. With Walker off his bike "Single" took a single and bumped Stevens down a spot with a third place 6.89 at 206 mph. Williams set the pace with a 6.686 at 211 for Low ET and Top Speed and remained No.1 while Bonwick up two spots with a 7.111 at 182 mph. Azzopardi closed out the session with a 8.27.

In the first round Athol Williams faced Leonard Azzopardi for the third time over the weekend. And what a race this turned out to be. With the big screen showing all the action, action is what the fans got. Azzopardi left with a huge holeshot over Williams - 0.149 to 0.353 RTs. As Leonard danced along the centreline Williams shot past but hit the blocks and crossed the centreline. Azzopardi then did the same and crossed the line but was declared the winner. It happened almost at the same time and on the screen it looked like Azzopardi could have pushed Williams away with his foot. That's how close they were. The next pair was Stevens and Bonwick. "The Boss" grabbed the start with a 0.165 reaction to "Bono's" 0.232 and stayed in front recording his best pass of the weekend in 6.552 seconds at 213.43 mph for Low ET and Top Speed. Bonwick also recorded his best of the event with a great 6.808 at 199.08 mph. McLean disposed of Salvestro with a tough 6.705 to a 8.20. Parker and Ashelford closed out the round with the Victorian clocking a promising 7.655 but he was outgunned by the big Harley of Ashelford who took the win in 6.725 seconds at 211.99 mph.

In the semi finals Azzopardi faced Stevens. It had been a big weekend for the rookie and had provided many firsts. He added another with his first six - 6.98/151, but "The Boss" went through to the finals with a 6.613 at 211.63. Teammate McLean got out of jail when Ashelford red lighted, wasting a 6.714 to a winning 6.822 from the JD Harley.

The final put mate against mate. In this case we had two teammates. Stevens had the quickest bike of the event and stamped that with a 6.65/210 to a red lighting 6.74 from McLean.

TOP BIKE ELIMINATION RESULTS

Rider Name	RT	ET	MPH
ROUND 1			
LEONARD AZZOPARDI	0.149	7.155	199.35
ATHOL WILLIAMS	0.353	6.948	199.61
BRETT STEVENS	0.165	6.552	213.43
CRAIG BONWICK	0.232	6.808	199.08
TROY McLEAN	0.091	6.705	185.95
RODNEY SALVESTRO	0.275	8.207	139.75
IAN ASHELFORD	0.134	6.725	211.99
PHIL PARKER	0.219	7.655	131.14
ROUND 2			
IAN ASHELFORD	0.143	6.613	211.63
LEONARD AZZOPARDI	0.133	6.984	151.63
TROY McLEAN	0.081	6.822	170.45
IAN ASHELFORD	-0.293	6.714	195.22
FINALS			
BRETT STEVENS	0.393	6.654	210.97
TROY McLEAN	-0.378	6.740	198.79

LOW ET: **BRETT STEVENS** 6.552
TOP SPEED: **BRETT STEVENS** 213.43