



Report by John Baremans

Jay Upton

## Upton Dominates With 6.2 Second Performance And New National Record

**B**esides riding the quickest and fastest motorcycle in the country Jay Upton also leads a very busy life off the track with his Spintex superchargers business. There is not a lot of free time in his diary and with the shortened off season, well it was almost like there was just enough time to pack some undies and a travel bag for the trip to Sydney for the opening round of the season.

Over the past few years Upton has enjoyed the competition from the pair of Jack Daniels nitro Harley-Davidson with the trio of bikes usually locked in a battle for championship status. However with an influx of new and potential machines coming into the class Upton realised that he need to step

up if he wanted to remain in front.

With the arrival of the supercharged nitro-burning Suzuki of Kiwi Athol Williams at last seasons Winternationals and the 6.6 second performance it belted out, Top Bike just keeps getting stronger.

Ten entries were received for Top Bike but this dropped to eight with the retirement of Chris Jackson after one qualifying attempt and the disqualification of Brett Stevens. The meeting saw the return of Rodney Salvestro with his new Gatorz Eye Wear/Gulf Western Oil Harley, and the first time appearance in Sydney by Mark "Ice-man" Drew. The Perth rider had spent a few seasons at Kwinana riding his ex-Bill Curry supercharged Kawasaki. But what was parked in the WSID pits was a brand new Mike Romine nitro Harley from the States.

The first session on Friday saw Jay Upton, the current Australian Top Bike champ reaffirm his number one status with an out the container 6.292 at only 199.40 mph. It was obvious that he was off the throttle early because the half-track speed was 190.78 mph.

Next to stamp a position was local rider Craig Bonwick. The LA Cycles/Red Line Oil Harley left the line with a 1.08 60 foot ET and 170 mph at half-

track. Across the stripe the clocks were stopped in 6.663 seconds at 205.57 mph. The excitement for the team was a new personal best but that was short lived when the big screen saw Bonwick hit the WSID beach at a great rate of knots. The sand pulled the bike up pretty quickly but Bono was sent flying when the hog dropped onto its side. Bonwick looked winded and concerned with his ride but thankfully after a quick check-up was a-okay. The team had some work to do in the pits but felt confident enough knowing that no matter what happened they were solidly in the field.

Brett Stevens team rider Troy McLean slotted into third with a 7.58, Dennis Grant and Rodney Salvestro had problems while Phil Parker never got off the line.

In the second session six bikes sat in the staging lanes awaiting the fire-up call. Mark Drew scored his first timecard clocking a 7.34 ET which moved him into third spot.



Dennis Grant (near) & Phil Parker

Phil Parker faced Upton for the second time and while his 1428cc Suzuki was going to have his work cut out against Upton, he was pleased with an 8.96. The champ clocked a 6.53 at 211 mph. Closing out the round was Grant and Salvestro who continued to struggle although Grant improved to a 9-second pass.

The final qualifier saw nothing special when Parker stalled against McLean who was all over the track to a 9-second pass. Drew smoked the tyre against Grant who made a slight improvement to a 9.02. New Zealander Athol Williams made his first appearance on his supercharged Puma/Suzuki and while he would not have been happy with his 1.61 60 footed 8.17 ET, he was at least in the field, filling fifth spot. Last pass went to Salvestro

who launched with a 1.18 60 but that was all she wrote rolling to a 16 second pass.

Round one of eliminations kicked off at 5.30 pm Saturday. The first pairing saw Upton smoke Salvestro with an early shut-off 6.70, Grant put a holeshot on Bonwick and was never headed taking the win with an 8.20 to a cylinder dropping 8.60 from "Bono". Phil Parker had some luck on his side when his opponent Mark Drew failed to show giving the Victorian based motorcycle campaigner a spot in the semi-finals. The final pair had McLean and Williams facing the tree. This was shaping up to be a great race as both had 6.6-second potential but the big four-cylinder Suzuki of Williams dragged through beams and pulled a cherry handing the JD

Harley the automatic win.

As mentioned previously one of Upton's favourite competitors is Troy McLean and the fans were in for a treat when the pair rolled into the burnout box for the opening race of the semi finals. Both riders knew they would not be able to take it easy. On the green the Jack Daniels Harley pulled a huge holeshot on the "White Knight" with a 0.06 RT but his best of the weekend 6.65 was still swallowed up by a 6.26 at an easing off 199 mph. That gave Upton a new ET record.

On the other side of the coin was Parker vs Grant. Both had

qualified sixth and seventh so were pretty even. The turbocharged Suzuki Funny Bike took the lead but the big nitro V-Twin hammer made up ground and took the win with an 8.64.

For Grant he knew Upton was a tall mountain but he was just happy to have made it this far. In fact it may have been his first Top Bike final appearance in his career. On the green both left clean with the Stars & Stripes Harley grabbing the holeshot but his 8.68 fell two-seconds short when Upton stormed to a winning 6.28 at 219.83 mph, which was also over the national record of 219.04 mph.

### TOP BIKE ELIMINATION RESULTS

DRIVER	RT	ET	SPEED
<b>ROUND 1</b>			
JAY UPTON	0.138	6.703	173.54
RODNEY SALVESTRO	0.204	12.483	68.18
DENNIS GRANT	0.159	8.20	158.78
CRAIG BONWICK	0.211	8.604	149.31
PHIL PARKER	0.964	9.482	152.33
SINGLE			
TROY McLEAN	0.179	7.024	201.76
ATHOL WILLIAMS	NTR		
<b>ROUND 2</b>			
JAY UPTON	0.106	6.263	199.29
TROY McLEAN	0.06	6.654	198.12
DENNIS GRANT	0.294	8.644	135.97
PHIL PARKER	0.233	9.087	151.71
<b>FINAL</b>			
JAY UPTON	0.38	6.287	219.83
DENNIS GRANT	0.111	8.688	133.29
LOW ET: JAY UPTON 6.263 TOP SPEED: 219.83			



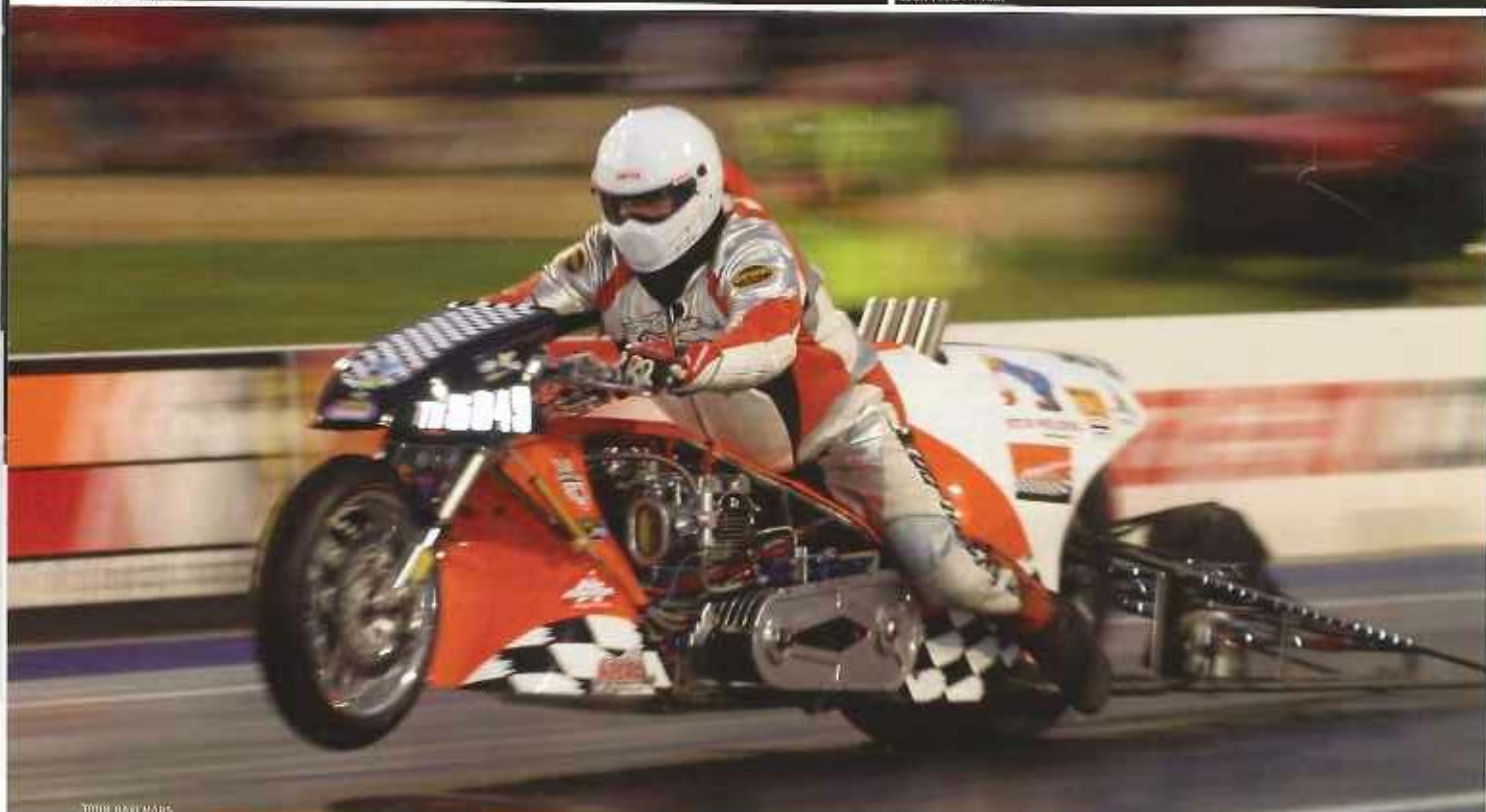
Troy McLean



LEFF SMITH/STAMP



LEFF SMITH/STAMP



TOUR RAVENHANS



PETER COLBURN PHOTOGRAPHY



ILL GIVENS/STAMP

CLOCKWISE from top: West Aussie Mark "Iceman" Drew has had no problems making the switch from a nitro Japper to a Harley-Davidson. Drew's new import from the States has only clocked a few runs on the track but it won't be long before we have another six-second V-Twin; Local star Craig Bonwick took a wild ride on a 6.66/205 qualifier when he ended up in the beach. Thankfully bike and rider came out okay; Athol Williams had a frustrating ECN. The New Zealander only got in one qualifier and then copped a red light in Rd. 1; Rodney Salverstro was back on his new ride following a frightening crash at the Nitro Champs; Dennis Grant is awarded his runner-up trophy from ANDHA CEO Tony Thornton.