

Brett "The Boss" Stevens ended the season on a high note by riding his Jack Daniels Harley to a class win, his first Winternationals Top Bike victory ever! While he may have lost the championship he recorded the quickest passes ever for a V-Twin in Australia at 6.50 seconds at 215 mph.



By John Bareman

Brett Stevens

LUKE HOLLOWAY

The Boss misses championship but takes class honours

It's been sometime since we have seen a second nitro-burning supercharged four-cylinder Jap motorcycle in Top Bike competition. The last time we saw one was the late Craig McPhee who rode a Puma/Yamaha formally owned by Jay Upton. Then there was Peter Pearce on his Trett-powered fueller, and the infamous John Hoskin's fuel Kawasaki that was last ridden by the equally legendary "Pommle Pete" Allen.

Well included in a New Zealand container full of motorcycles was the Top Fuel Puma Suzuki of Athol Williams. The ex-Chris

"Cannon" Hannam bike was imported from mother England and in January this year broke the NZ ET record with 7.61 and 7.51 passes.

At the Winter Warm-up Williams set tongues wagging with a PB of 6.79 at 210 mph.

Following a NZ tour with Jay Upton the pair kept in touch and no doubt traded stories and secrets. The fuel system was given an overhaul and seemed to have injected some new life into the bike.

Back on the local front Jay Upton only had to qualify to wrap up his second Australian Top Bike championship. His first came in 2004. His arch rival over the past season was reigning champ Brett "Boss" Stevens. There was an 88 points

gap between the pair but all Upton had to do was lay down a number and pick up 40 points to take the No.1. While that was out of reach, the "Boss" still had a Winternationals class win to go after, something that has been missing from his trophy cabinet since he first went racing 15 years ago.

Opening up the first qualifying session were the nitro hogs of Mark Ashelford and Dennis Grant. It has been some time since we had seen the Perth based Ashelford brothers at Willowbank. With Ian overseas at the time it was up to Mark to fly the Attitude Racing name. The result was piston hurting 7.252 at 179.5 mph while Grant had handling issues and buttoned off early to an 11 second pass.

Next up was Troy McLean and Phil Parker. It wasn't pretty for either with the second of the two JD Harley's clocking a 7.89 to the Funny Bike's 9.38 ET.

A pair of hogs ridden by a pair of Stevens was waiting next in line for the fire up signal. Once team mates but certainly no relation, both left side-by-side with .47 lights but at the sixty foot timers Brett was pulling ahead. The lead across the stripe was 0.093 with a 6.527/209.79 to a 6.62/210.48. Not too sure if it was the quickest side-by-side V-Twin pass in Australia, but we'd be pretty sure it would be damn close. We do know that

TOP BIKE QUALIFYING

Rider	ET	SPEED MPH (KPH)
1. Brett Stevens (Harley-Davidson)	6.527	209.79 [355.66]
2. Kim Stevens (Harley-Davidson)	6.623	210.48 [336.77]
3. Athol Williams (Puma/Suzuki)	6.776	213.17 [341.07]
4. Mark Ashelford (Harley-Davidson)	7.252	179.50 [287.20]
5. Troy McLean (Harley-Davidson)	7.897	180.65 [289.04]
6. Jay Upton (Puma/Triumph)	8.266	193.97 [310.35]
7. Phil Parker (Suzuki)	9.382	143.96 [230.34]
8. Dennis Grant (Harley-Davidson)	11.320	82.48 [131.97]

A dark horse in Top Bike, Athol Williams rode his nitro-burning supercharged Puma motorcycle to a popular runner-up spot finish. The New Zealander also recorded new PB's and put Jay Upton on the trailer in the first round thanks to a hellfire reaction.



LUKE NIEUWIKH

it was certainly a new PB for the "Boss". Closing out the set was a match up between Upton and Williams. Another side-by-side six second pass was on the cards but Upton had a pass from hell with his full-bodied machine jumping up and down and bucking its rider good. The header flame was on and off a number of times and reports from the grandstands told the story that at one stage the front end was a foot or more in the air.

Upton took a massive lead on the green over the NZ rider and while that didn't really mean anything in qualifying he was also aware that with rain coming he needed to stay with it and grab a number. The result was an 8.26 at 193 mph while the New Zealander went through clean in 6.77 seconds at 215.17 mph.

With the Saturday washout, two riders whose names were on the entry list - Neville Smith and Rhys Endicott-Davis sadly never got to fire off a shot.

The opening confrontation of round one saw McLean drill Ashelford on the tree by 0.143 of a second and remain in front all the way with a 6.52/199 to a 7.20 at 190 mph.

Kim Stevens was certainly the favourite in the next race against Phil Parker but upsets can turn things around rather quickly in the sport of drag racing. A busted transmission stopped Stevens dead in his tracks while Parker popped and had a nitrous fire

aboard his Suzuki but still took the win in 15-seconds.

The upsets continued in the next pairing with pit buddies Upton taking on Williams. The New Zealander left on the green first while Upton was quicker to the 60 foot clocks. After that the 1527cc Suzuki led the charge to the finish line. The result saw a win go to Williams by 0.041 of a second - 6.775 defeating a quicker but losing 6.745. The speed from Upton indicated he was trying to bridge the gap from the start line with a charge of 214.11 mph to a 206.02 from the victor, Brett Stevens and Grant closed off the round with the "Boss" riding into the next round with a 6.60 at 209.65 mph. The Stars n Stripes Harley collected a timing block and was out of the race.

The two JD team mates squared off in the first semi final pairing. In this case the "Boss" was too strong for McLean leading right from the green. Down the bottom end a consistent 6.51 at 211 was no match to a 6.68 at 194 mph. Both riders went deep into the breaking area.

The pairing of Parker and Williams was a David vs Goliath match-up. Following a rebuild in the pits Parker was particularly proud of his crew however the clutch wasn't adjusted right and as soon as Parker went to put the bike into gear for its burnout, nothing happened.

While the Victorian played the game and walked into stage, Williams remained cool, calm and collected and took the win with a 7.31 at an early shut off 159 mph.

Williams was no doubt attracting plenty of interest in the grandstands and had the potential to go from dark horse to white horse, but he needed to step up. His opponent Brett Stevens had been going deep into the Willowbank breaking area but it was well worth it having

recorded his quickest ever passes. On the green Stevens grabbed a slight holeshot and remained quicker at all incremental points down the quarter. While the supercharged Suzuki had the potential to have a big top end speed his 6.62/211 was caten up by an awesome 6.507 at 215.43 mph, giving the "Boss" his 50th career victory as well as his first ever Winternationals win. It may not have been the championship but it sure tasted just as sweet for the multi-talented racer.

TOP BIKE ELIMINATION RESULTS

Rider	R.T	ET	SPEED
ROUND 1			
Troy McLean	0.463	6.526	199.66 [319.46]
Mark Ashelford	0.606	7.201	190.34 [304.55]
Phil Parker	0.663	15.975	46.66 [74.65]
Kim Stevens	0.527	NTR	
Athol Williams	0.526	6.775	206.02 [329.64]
Jay Upton	0.587	6.755	214.11 [342.57]
Brett Stevens	0.504	6.609	209.65 [335.44]
Dennis Grant	0.622	NTR	
ROUND 2			
Brett Stevens	0.480	6.514	211.61 [338.57]
Troy McLean	0.532	6.689	194.09 [310.55]
Athol Williams	0.844	7.312	159.21 [254.73]
Phil Parker	Broke		
FINAL			
Brett Stevens	0.530	6.507	215.43 [344.69]
Athol Williams	0.595	6.623	211.51 [338.41]

Low ET: Brett Stevens - 6.507

Top Speed: Brett Stevens - 215.43 [344.69]