

THE HENRY LONG COLLECTION

Part 10 – 1955/'56 Season

As had become the usual pattern, the precursor to the South African campaign of 1955/'56 was a short season of meetings held at the Bulawayo Showgrounds in Southern Rhodesia. The local team, the Bulawayo Lions retained their unbeaten tag with defeats of both Springs Star and the Pretoria Eagles. The inaugural Rhodesian Open Championship was won by Fred Wills with a 15 point maximum piping his fellow Springbok Henry Long by a point.

The teenaged Doug Davies returned to Birmingham for the 1955 UK season intent on making an impression in the World's Championship after missing out on competing the previous year. Despite tearing a shoulder ligament he safely negotiated his two qualifying rounds with a 11 point score at Wembley, London and a superb 15 point maximum at his home Birmingham track and thus qualified for the final on 15th September. Expectations were high prior to the Wembley Final with Chairman of the SA Speedway Riders' Association, Buddy Fuller, confident that Davies had as good a chance as any to win the title. Sadly, a little over two weeks before the final Davies contracted meningitis and was unable to take his place in the line-up.

Stock car racing had been introduced to South Africa the previous season and a short season of stock car only meetings commencing on 30th September deferred the return of speedway at Wembley until mid-November. The honour, therefore, of holding the opening meeting of the season went to Pretoria who staged the Centenary Trophy on 5th October. The victor was Henry Long, a point clear of Roy Bester. The delay in the re-opening of Wembley also resulted in both runs of the October SA Match Race Championship challenge being staged at Pretoria. Henry Long of the Wembley Lions made light of having no home advantage and comfortably defeated Arthur Duncan of Pretoria Eagles 2-0 in each leg.

A combination of Norwegian and Swedish riders captained by Olle Nygren made up a Scandinavian team to face the Springboks in the season's Test series. It was a formidable unit and several pundits considered it the strongest to have ever toured the Union. The Nordic racers defeated South Africa 4-1 and it may well have been a whitewash but for a serious injury to Basse Hveem before the second international that forced him out of the series. Also suffering injury was the Swede Dan Forsberg who fractured an ankle and missed the last two Tests. The South African captain, Henry Long, topped the Springboks scorechart and was the equal of his opposite number Nygren but the back-up to him was inconsistent, in contrast to the solid scoring of their opponents. Scandinavia took part in two further internationals, defeating a British Commonwealth septet at Bulawayo and a South African team 55-53 at Bloemfontein.

The teams competing in the National League remained unchanged from the year before but early doubts were voiced as to Randfontein's ability to complete their fixtures. Major

SA Season 1955/56 cont'd

.... work was required on the track at the West Rand Raceway and until half-way through the season the Aces only contested away fixtures. Trevor Redmond bought the controlling interest in Randfontein in mid-December 1955 with the intention of re-opening the track in the New Year. However, this never materialised and Randfontein withdrew from the League with their results being expunged and riders re-allocated to other clubs.

As with the previous season, the title race was a tight run affair. Pretoria Eagles were unbeaten in their first five matches whilst Wembley Lions lost their first three. The fortunes of the two teams then changed dramatically with the Lions winning their last six meetings including home and away defeats of the Eagles. After all fixtures had been completed the two great rivals finished at the head of the table on 12 points each. With the precedent set in 1955 it was designated that a play-off be staged to decide the League champions. This conspired against the Johannesburg team winning their first championship since 1947, as their home season had finished at the end of February to accommodate further stockcar-only meetings at Wembley. In a one-off match at Pretoria the Eagles defeated the Lions 44-39 to clinch their first title. The National 'Knock-Out' Trophy introduced the previous year was not contested in 1955/56 but the Transvaal Cup was, although in a knock-out format rather than on a league basis. However, despite much research, it is not known if this competition was ever completed or who the winners may have been.

Three riders carved up the major honours amongst themselves, - Henry Long, Olle Nygren and Alan Hunt. Nygren topped the Scandinavian Test scorers and also captured two titles, the Wembley Open and Pretoria's big individual meeting the Laurels. Henry Long meanwhile continued his domination of the National Match Race Championship after his early season defeat of Duncan by seeing off further challenges from Rune Sormander, Hunt and Nygren to finish as the end of season holder. The Englishman Hunt arrived in the Union as a free-lance but went home with Springbok international caps, the Natal Championship and the South African Championship. Allocated to the Durban Hornets, Hunt was virtually unbeatable at his home Hoy Park track and it was there that he captured these championships. It came as somewhat of a surprise when he was chosen to represent South Africa in the second Test, but the selectors accepted that it was his intention to settle permanently in the Union and made their decision on this basis.

1955/'56 season's Roll of Honour

Test Series:	- S. Africa 1, Scandinavia 4,
SA Championship @ Hoy Park, Durban:	- Alan Hunt,
SA Match Race Chmpshp: E-o-Season Holder:	- Henry Long,
SA National League Champions:	- Pretoria Eagles,
Wembley Open Championship:	- Olle Nygren SW,
Natal Championship @ Hoy Park, Durban:	- Alan Hunt.

Victory for Lions

May 8th 1955

BULAWAYO LIONS beat Springs Stars by 39-38 in a 14-race contest at the Showgrounds last night.

Fred Willis (Lions), was highest individual scorer with 11 points, and Peter Dykes the Bulawayo captain, and Roy Bester the Springs captain, tied with nine points each.

Fred Willis (Lions) was the Golden Helmet from Roy Bester in a three-lap match race.

The second half of the programme was made up of five individual races, the winners of which compete in the final on handicap.

Roy Bester, who started from the 40-yard mark, won the final, with Toy Edwards second from the 20-yard mark and Bud Messer third.



May 9th 1955
Fred Willis, winner of the Golden Helmet at the showgrounds speedway meeting on Saturday, gives Col. J. Anderson, C.O. of the Rhodesian African Rifles, a lift round the track.

DAVIES (11) HAS CHANCE OF PLACE IN SPEEDWAY FINAL

Sat. Aug. 13, 1955

LONDON, Friday.—Nineteen-year-old Doug Davies, the Springbok speedway rider, is within sight of a place in the world final. Riding with his shoulder strapped up, he scored 11 points in the first "leg" of the second qualifying round at Wembley last night.

Davies rides the second—and final—qualifying "leg" at his home (Birmingham) track to-morrow night and should be able to get a place in the world final on September 15 if he can collect 12 or 13 points.

The little Springbok finished only three points behind the leader at Wembley last night, Brian Crutcher (Wembley) headed the "field" with 14 points.

Fred Williams, ex-world champion, and Eric Williams, both from Wembley, finished joint second with 12 points. Davies and three other riders were level with 11 each.

A smash on the pit bend put Tommy Price and Eddie Riggs out of the championship. Riggs fractured an ankle and Price's machine was damaged.

Ken McKinlay, captain of the Commonwealth team that toured South Africa last season, also misses the final. He scored nine points—enough to qualify.

Davies Gets Maximum —and £40 Prize

Monday Aug. 15, 1955

BIRMINGHAM, Sunday.—Doug Davies, Birmingham's 19-year-old South African speedway rider, last night qualified for the world's championship final at Wembley Stadium.

After gaining 11 points in his first qualifying ride at Wembley on Thursday, Davies rode magnificently on his home track yesterday to score the maximum 15 points and later the winner's cheque of £40.

Riding with his injured shoulder tightly bound, he started well by beating the strongly fancied Peter Craven, of Bellevue into second place. This was the only point that Craven dropped throughout the evening.

The young South African had a comparatively easy win in his second ride, but he had to fight all the way to beat his teammate, Ron Mountford, in his third outing.

Another comfortable ride gave Davies his fourth win in heat 16.

The final heat produced probably some of the finest racing seen on the Birmingham track for a long time. Davies was up against the present world champion, Ronnie Moore and he knew that he had to win to earn the first prize. Davies led all the way, but with the huge crowd going frantic, there was very little in it as Davies crossed the winning line just ahead of Moore.

Thus Davies becomes only the second South African to reach the World final. Henry Long reached the last 16 in 1951 and finished seventh.

DAVIES ILL—AND OUT OF SPEEDWAY FINAL

Sunday August 28, 1955

BIRMINGHAM, Saturday.—Doug Davies, the South African speedway rider, is in a Birmingham hospital suffering from meningitis. He will miss the world speedway championship final at Wembley on September 15. It is also unlikely that he will ride again this season in England.

Davies, who is 19, had defied the handicap of an injured shoulder to qualify for the final and was the only South African due to ride. He rested from the Birmingham side last week to allow his damaged shoulder to mend but meningitis developed and he was taken to hospital.

Birmingham promoter S. L. Marshal said to-day that Davies' condition was satisfactory.

Scandinavians confirm predictions of skill on speedway

Saturday Nov. 12, 1955

IN BEATING WEMBLEY LIONS 43—29 in a challenge match at Wembley last night the touring Scandinavian team showed the form which enabled them to convincingly defeat Australasia earlier this year, and why they have been rated the best team to visit this country.

Whenever there was an opportunity to indulge in team riding they gave their opponents no chance of breaking through as Fred Lang discovered in both his first heats. When one of the local riders had the best start from the gate every effort was made to deprive him of major points.

The man of the match was the Swedish champion, Rune Sormander, who dropped a point to Alan Hunt in his first ride but was unbeaten for the remainder of the programme and returned the two fastest times. Twice he defeated Henry Long and Hunt in thrilling races to make a debut which has rarely been equalled.

Lang was unlucky not to have had a drier track. In his efforts to get between his opponents he was constantly covered in cinders and he had to lift his glasses in his third ride some cinders entered his

eye and he had to receive medical attention.

Aubrey Long averted what might have been a bad accident when he threw his machine down to avoid riding into Petterson, who had fallen in a collision with Ulf Ericson.

The match showed that the reputation of the visitors is well-founded and South Africa have a formidable task to find a team capable of beating them in the test series.

The heat winners were: H. Long (W), 77.2sec.; A. Hunt (W), 76.8sec.; L. Petterson (S), 78.8sec.; R. Sormander (S), 76.5sec.; A. Hunt (W), 76.8sec.; D. Forsberg (S), 78.6sec.; H. Long (W), 77.8sec.; A. Hunt (W), 77.0sec.; R. Sormander (S), 77.8sec.; D. Forsberg (S), 78.7sec.; U. Ericson (S), 79.5sec.; R. Sormander (S), 76.2sec.

The individual scores were: Scandinavia—R. Sormander 11, D. Forsberg 9, U. Ericson 8, R. Christoffersen 5, L. Petterson 5, O. Nygren 4, B. Messer 1, Total 43.

Wembley Lions—A. Hunt 11, H. Long 9, A. Long 4, F. Lang 4, S. James 1, J. Mendie 0, J. Dekker 0, Total 29.

Record Goes Three Times

Thurs. Oct. 20, 1955

THERE was no holding Henry Long at the Pretoria Stadium last night. The South African speedway champion smashed his own four-lap record three times and beat Arthur Duncan 2-0 in the first "leg" of the national match race championship.

Long piled up maximum 12 points while captaining a Combined Transvaal team to a 47-36 victory against Pretoria Eagles.

The champion's previous four-lap record stood at 64.4 secs. Last night he strung together times of 64.3, 64.2 and 64.1 secs. to chop the time right down.

He also set a three-lap record while beating Duncan in 47 secs. in the first heat of the match race duel. He clocked 47.1 secs. in the second outing.

It was All Henry Long

Thursday Oct. 27, 1955

HENRY LONG is the South African match race speedway champion. He clinched the title when he beat Arthur Duncan in two straight rides during the second "leg" at the Pretoria Stadium last night. He won the first "leg" 2-0 last week.

Long broke his own three-lap record with a time of 46.8 secs. in the second ride after winning the first in 47.3 secs. Next Long went on to smash his own four-lap record three times.

He finished with a best effort of 63.8 secs. and piled up maximum nine points to help Wembley Lions win the triangular meeting with 22 points. Pretoria Eagles had 21, Randfontein Aces 16 and Springs Stars 12.

Swedish speedway champion beats Long in match-race

Sat. Nov. 19 1955: challenge

WEMBLEY LIONS won their first home speedway match in the National League last night when they defeated Randfontein Aces 57-27 and they could have done so without the help of Alan Hunt, a guest rider in place of Basse Hveem, who scored a maximum 12 points.

The biggest factor in the Wembley's big scoring apart from the great form of Hunt was the good riding of Fred Lang and the success of the two reserve riders.

The only heat which Randfontein could win were the 8th and 13th. Both were won by Dan Forsberg. He beat Long in one and Lang in the other.

Rune Sormander, the Swedish champion, was far too good for Henry Long in the first leg of the November match race championship. He won in straight heats and on both occasions took the leads at the first bend. His time for the first heat was 57sec. His time for the second was slower but his win was more convincing.

While other members of the Scandinavian team did not live up to their reputations, Sormander enhanced his. Even in the final event of the evening in which he was beaten by Hunt Sormander did not lose any prestige for he had to pass Forsberg before he could challenge Hunt. It was only because Hunt had had a clear field that he built up a lead which Sormander could not cut down in the last lap.

Wembley Lions meet Durban Hornets tonight and Long will meet Sormander in the second leg of their match. If Long wins the deciding leg will be run next week.

HEAT WINNERS

The heat winners were: H. Long (W.), 78.5sec.; A. Hunt (W.), 78.8sec.; F. Lang (W.), 78.9sec.; J. Bekker (W.), 85.0sec.; H. Long (W.), 78.8sec.; A. Hunt (W.), 78.8sec.; F. Lang (W.), 77.4sec.; D. Forsberg (R.), 78.3sec.; A. Hunt (W.), 80.0sec.; J. Meade (W.), 84.0sec.; F. Lang (W.), 80.9sec.; R. Christophersen (W.), 80.5sec.; D. Forsberg (R.), 77.8sec.; A. Hunt (W.), 77.2sec. The individual scores were:

WEMBLEY LIONS.—A. Hunt 12, F. Lang 11, H. Long 10, R. Christophersen 8, J. Meade 5, J. Bekker 5, A. Long 4, S. James 2. Total 57.

RANDFONTEIN ACES.—D. Forsberg 8, F. Wills 7, L. Petterson 4, T. Blokdik 3, P. McKenzie 2, T. Boshoff 1, P. Maschke 1, S. Loveland 1. Total 27.

DURBAN HORNETS HAVE 44-38 SPEEDWAY WIN

DURBAN HORNETS beat Wembley Lions 44-38 in their first national league speedway match at the Alan Ford Stadium last night.

Highest point scorers for the evening were Rune Sormander (Durban Hornets), 12 points, and Neil Mortimer (Wembley Lions), 8 points.

Herby Long set a new three-lap rolling start record of 41.9sec. in the first heat of the international challenge match against Rune Sormander, and went on to win this leg.

Other results were: Junior Hornets race: 1st, Bud Messer, time 59.8sec.

All-comers' scratch race: 1. A. Hunt; 2. N. Mortimer; 3. H. Long. Time: 56.2sec.

Points scorers were:

Hornets: Rune Sormander 12, Alan Hunt (captain) 11, Vern McWilliams 8, Roy Browning 6, Bill Dalton 4, Nick Dornmehl 3, J. Hickson and P. Hatcher nil.

Lions: Neil Mortimer 8, Henry Long 7, Reidar Christophersen 7, Fred Lang 5, Johnny Bekker 3, Jimmy Meade 3, Aubrey Long 2, B. Messer 1.

Redmond in Dead-Heat

Monday, Nov. 21 1955.

TREVOR REDMOND, the Springs Stars captain and South Africa speedway champion, dropped out half a point when he dead-heated with Fred Wills in the 52½-33½ victory against Randfontein Aces in National League fixture at Olympic Park on Saturday night.

Score: Redmond 11, Ericson 10, Edwards 7, Bester 7, Collins 6, Blankfield 5, Raats 4, Van Zyl 2. Total: 52 Randfontein: Petersen 8, McKenzie 7, Forsberg 6, Blokdik 5, Wills 3, Boshoff 2, Masche 1, Loveland 1. Total 33.

Davies Gets Speedway Test Trial at Wembley

ALTHOUGH Doug Davies, 19-year-old Pretoria Eagles speedway rider, qualified for this year's world final, he has been ordered to ride in a Test trial before the selection of the Springbok team at Wembley Stadium to-night (writes ERIC LITCHFIELD).

Davies rides in a special second-half heat following the Wembley Lions-Springs Stars National League fixture. Also in the Test trial are Arthur Duncan, Neil Mortimer and Tony Edwards.

Speedway supporters, especially those who are weekly visitors to the Pretoria Stadium track, will ask: "Is Davies an automatic selection for the Springbok team?"

The answer, on face value, appears to be "Yes." But there are two reasons for giving Davies an outing in the Test.

RECOVERING

Although he scored 11 points for Pretoria Eagles in the 57-27 win against Randfontein on Wednesday and twice broke the track record, he has not shown consistent form in recent weeks.

Obviously he has taken time to recover from the shoulder injury and illness which caused him to miss the World final and speedway officials

want to give him every chance to reach match-fitness.

If he reproduces the form shown against Randfontein, there should be no doubt about him being a heavy points scorer in the Test.

This will be Davies' first appearance on the Wembley track this season. No doubt officials are anxious to give him a practice outing before the first Test, which will be held at Wembley next week.

The dispute over the allocation of a rider to Wembley Lions has ended with the transfer of Rune Sormander the Swedish champion, from Durban Hornets. Sormander makes his first appearance in the Lions' colours to-night. He has been made a heat leader.

WEMBLEY LIONS: Henry Long, Aubrey Long, Sormander, James Lang, Christophersen, Bekker, Meade, Bester, Van Zyl, Edwards, Ericson, Raats, Simon.

Long Keeps Thurs. 24 Nov. 1955. Speed Title

HENRY LONG, Wembley Lions' Springbok, retained his South African match race championship by beating Rune Sormander, the Swedish champion, 2-0 in the third and deciding "leg" at the Pretoria Stadium last night writes ERIC LITCHFIELD.

Long set records in each of his two riders, though the first was a somewhat unusual affair. Long and Sormander were engaged in such an absorbing struggle that they completed an extra lap.

It made no difference to the result for Long was ahead at the end of three laps, which is the match race distance, but his time of 61.8 secs. for the four laps set a track record. Long easily won the second heat in the record time of 45.5 secs.

Long's four-lap record was smashed three times before the meeting finished. Ole Nygren clocked 61.4 secs. and then Doug Davies came along to register 61 secs. and 60.8 secs.

Pretoria Eagles beat Randfontein Aces 57-27 in the National League match. Point scorers: Pretoria: Nygren 12, Davies 11, Duncan, Mortimer 8, Harry Serrurier, Doug Serrurier, Naude 5, Scott 2. Total 57. Randfontein: Forsberg 7, Wills 6, Messer 6, Petersen 4, Boshoff, Blokdik 2, Collins 1. Total 27.

Scandinavians win thrilling Sat. Dec 3 1955. speedway test

THE Scandinavian team beat South Africa in the first test match last night by two points, 55-53, in one of the most thrilling speedway matches seen at Wembley.

South Africa failed because some of the Springboks were unable to match the Scandinavians at the gate, but their efforts to overcome this disadvantage were responsible for most of the thrills.

Henry Long started the match with a record-breaking four laps in 75.9sec. In the second heat Doug Davies had to stop with engine trouble when well placed and the Scandinavians gained a lead which they never lost.

Basse Hveem, riding at Wembley for the first time this season, equalled Long's record in the third heat but Ole Nygren beat Davies in a faster time—75.7sec. in the fourth. It was the last heat in which Davies was beaten. In the next three heats Davies returned 75.5sec., 75.4sec. and 75.4sec.

FROM THE BACK

It was unfortunate for South Africa that Trevor Redmond and Roy Bester could not start well. Bester had no dash until he borrowed Fred Wills's machine in his last heat and gained the better of Nygren. Most of Redmond's eight points were won as a result of threading his way through the field.

South Africa were 10 points down with three heats to be decided when Bester beat Nygren, and they had a great chance to level the scores during the last two heats. Long and Fred Lang managed to get in front in the 17th heat and were heading for a 5-1 win when Rune Sormander gave another dashing display to break through and beat Lang. In the final heat Davies rode brilliantly to frustrate Ulf Ericson and help Arthur Duncan beat the Swede in the last 10 yards.

HEAT WINNERS

The heat winners were: H. Long (S.A.) 75.9sec.; R. Sormander (S.) 76.4sec.; B. Hveem (S.) 75.9sec.; O. Nygren (S.) 75.7sec.; R. Sormander (S.) 77.0sec.; H. Long (S.A.) 76.2sec.; O. Nygren (S.) 76.0sec.; R. Sormander (S.) 76.7sec.; D. Davies (S.A.) 75.5sec.; O. Nygren (S.) 75.6sec.; D. Davies (S.A.) 75.4sec.; B. Hveem (S.) 76.3sec.; D. Davies (S.A.) 75.4sec.; R. Sormander (S.) 77.6sec.; H. Long (S.A.) 76.4sec.; R. Bester (S.A.) 76.9sec.; H. Long (S.A.) 76.6sec.; D. Davies (S.A.) 77.2sec.

The individual points scores were: Scandinavia.—R. Sormander 16, O. Nygren 15, B. Hveem 10, U. Ericson 7, L. Petterson 4, D. Forsberg 2, R. Christophersen 1. Total 55.

South Africa.—H. Long 16, D. Davies 14, T. Redmond 8, A. Duncan 6, F. Lang 4, R. Bester 3, F. Wills 2. Total 53.



BASSE HVEEM is on the band—at last the Norwegian speedway star, held up in Oslo with an injured right hand, arrived at Jan Smuts Airport by air two nights ago to join the Scandinavian touring team. Nov. 27th 1955

Hveem, who will ride for Durban Hornets in the National League, has had the plaster taken off his hand. He is now 100 per cent. fit. He will be in action in the second half of the programme at Pretoria Stadium on Wednesday night.

Here Hveem is pictured (left to right) at Jan Smuts Airport with Miss Anna Thompson, Ole Nygren, his Scandinavian tour mate, Mrs. Nina Nygren and Mrs. Freda Rabie, wife of Godfrey Rabie, the South African Speedway Association official.

LIONS MAKE SURE IN LAST HEAT Saturday 10 Dec. 1955. Henry Long Takes Lead

ALTHOUGH Henry Long, holder of the South African match race speedway championship, was headed by the challenger, Alan Hunt, in the first heat, the Springbok international captain came back strongly to win 2-1 and take the lead in the first "leg" at Wembley Stadium last night (writes ERIC LITCHFIELD).

Long appeared set to win the first heat when he broke first from the starting gate and held on to the white line. But the strong-riding Hunt, Birmingham captain, rode round the holder in the second lap to win in 57.4 sec.—the fastest time of the three heats.

Long broke first in each of the next two outings, although he was "presented" with the second heat when Hunt rode over the white line and was disqualified. There was no doubt about the deciding heat. It was Long all the way.

Hornets Unlucky

Durban Hornets will probably consider themselves unlucky to lose 44-39 in the National League fixture against Wembley Lions.

Alan Hunt, the Hornets captain, was easily leading Henry Long in the very first heat when his machine "cut." Instead of Hornets gaining a 4-2 heat win, they found themselves two points behind.

Still, they came to the last heat with no more than a three-point deficit. But Long raced away from Hunt to complete his maximum and with Sormander taking third place, Lions gained their second league win of the season.

Although listed as a reserve for Hornets, Gerry Hickson took part in four rides and ended joint top scorers—with eight points along with Hunt and Hveem.

Point scorers: Wembley Lions: Henry Long 12, Christophersen 9, Sormander 8, Fred Lang 7, Bekker 4, James 3, Aubrey Long 1. Total 44.

Durban Hornets: Hunt, Hveem, Browning 7, Bremner 4, McWilliams 3, Dornmehl 1. Total 39.

Redmond 'Buys' Track

TREVOR REDMOND, the South African Open speedway champion, has bought the controlling interest in the Randfontein track which has not re-opened this season. The New Zealand-born Redmond, who is co-track manager at Springs and captains the local Stars team, will probably re-open the Randfontein track early in the new year. So far Randfontein Aces, captained by Fred Wills, have ridden all their National League matches on away tracks.

Supporters Build Track

SPEEDWAY supporters of Randfontein Aces, Springs Stars and Pretoria Eagles are going to help rebuild the Randfontein track in time for the re-opening in the New Year. So far Randfontein Aces have ridden their matches on other tracks. Now they will be able to have home fixtures.

The re-building of the track will include new lighting, fence and additional seating.

Trevor Redmond, the South African Open champion who captains Springs Stars, has now joined the Randfontein Club committee, who control the West Rand

track. Redmond will continue to ride for Springs this season.

Meanwhile Randfontein, without a league win, travel to Pretoria to-morrow night for the return National League fixture. They were beaten 57-27 in the first round match, but with improved form from Wills, Forsberg, Petterson and Blokdik should make the league leaders fight all the way in to-morrow's match.

SCANDINAVIA WIN CITY SPEEDWAY ENCOUNTER

Dec. 29th 1955

A SCANDINAVIAN team of champions trounced a Commonwealth speedway side 46-31 at the Bulawayo Showgrounds last night in an evening's racing of a quality seldom seen in Bulawayo. Alan Hunt, of Birmingham, England, rode like a man inspired for the Commonwealth side, but they were dogged by bad luck.

The Commonwealth side had tyre trouble with their truck on the way up from the Union and took nearly 24 hours on the journey, arriving dog tired not long before the meeting. Fred Willis, their captain, never found his form and could not do better than three third places.

Then in the second heat of the 13-event challenge match, Doug Davies crashed and gashed his leg, putting him out of the racing. Local riders substituted, but were outclassed by riders of international standing and found the pace too hot.

TOP SCORER

The Scandinavian side demonstrated copybook team riding, and their captain, Olle Nygren, was top scorer of the night with a win every time out, netting a total of 12 points.

He robbed Hunt of first place

in heat six, the only man to beat the English rider in the challenge match. Hunt and Henry Long of South Africa, finished with 11 points each, way ahead of the rest.

Times were consistently good, Hunt making the best of the night in the team match with 59.8sec off the three-lap start, and next best with an even minute.

FASTEST MAN

Hunt was also fastest man in the rolling start match races for the Golden Helmet Trophy, with a time of 58sec. for the three laps. The starts were had in this event, with riders half-a-length apart when they were given the off.

Rune Sormander, of Sweden, pipped Hunt to the first corner in the final of the Helmet event and was never caught. Hunt finished second and Neil Mortimer third.

A three-lap standing start for "Rhodesian Future Stars" was abandoned after two of the riders fell on the first lap.

Individual riders totals were: Olle Nygren 12, Alan Hunt and Henry Long 11 each, Basse Hveem 8, Rune Sormander 7, Lasse Petersen, Dan Forsberg and Ulf Ericson 5 each, Bev Bird 4, R. Kristoffersen and Fred Willis 3, Neil Mortimer 2 and Neil Neilsen, who rode once each for both sides, 1.

EAGLES DOWN!

Sat. Jan 14 1956
WEMBLEY 44, PRETORIA 10

The rain came too late at Wembley Stadium last night for Pretoria Eagles losing their unbeaten National League record. Although their Scandinavian international Olle Nygren, scored the maximum 12 points, the Eagles couldn't match Wembley's all-round strength, for this was the strongest side to represent Lions' team for several years.

The rain, which caused the meeting to be abandoned at the interval, probably cost Henry Long, the Lions' captain, the chance of gaining an outright decision in the defence of his South African match-race with Alan Hunt.

Long, who won the first "leg" 2-0 a month ago, shot away from the starting gate in the first heat last night and was never headed. He won in 57.8 secs. The rain came before the second heat. Points scored:

WEMBLEY: 9. Sormander, Petersen, 10. Henry Long, 8. Trevor Bester, 8. Christoffersen; 3. James, Willis, 1. Naude. Total: 44.

PRETORIA: 12. Nygren, 8. Davies; 5. Douglas Serrurier; 4. Naude; 3. McKenzie, Mortimer, Harry Serrurier; 2. Scott. Total: 40.

Hunt is Now

All-Square Monday Jan 16 1956
ALAN HUNT the Birmingham and England speedway captain, beat Henry Long, the holder, in two straight rides when they raced the second "leg" of the South African match-race championship at Hoy Park, Durban, on Saturday night.

Long had previously won the first "leg" and was leading 1-0 when the "leg" was abandoned because of rain. Thus a decider will be necessary. Durban Hornets, beaten at Wembley Stadium last month, gained their revenge by defeating Wembley Lions 39-31 before the biggest crowd of the season. Dan Forsberg and Alan Hunt both gained the maximum points in this 12-heat league match.

Henry Long had an unhappy night. Apart from losing the match-race "leg" he was unable to find his best form in the league match and totalled only five points. Leading scores: Durban, 12; Forsberg, Hunt, Wembley, 10; Petersen; 9; Sormander; 8; Willis.

HUNT, MORTIMER IN SPEEDWAY TEST

Thursday Jan 19 1956 By ERIC LITCHFIELD

Step forward, Alan Hunt, for your first speedway international in the green-and-gold riding vest of South Africa ... and the same goes for 20-year-old Neil Mortimer, of Pretoria Eagles, the National League leaders

They are included in the Springbok team for the second Test against the Scandinavians to be held at Durban's Hoy Park track on Saturday, January 28. They replace Arthur Duncan (broken bone in the right hand) and Fred Lang (retired) compared with the team beaten 55-53 in the first Test at Wembley Stadium last month.

The Springbok team is: HENRY LONG (Wembley Lions) (captain).

ALAN HUNT (Durban Hornets). ROY BESTER (Spring Stars). TREVOR REDMOND (Springs Stars).

DOUG DAVIES (Pretoria Eagles). NEIL MORTIMER (Pretoria Eagles). Reserves: FRED WILLIS (Wembley Lions) and ROY BROWNING (Durban Hornets).

The Scandinavians, who have only six fit riders—Basse Hveem has been advised not to ride again, on the tour—will be given the choice of the reserves.

The decision to include Hunt, Birmingham and England captain, came after he had attended a meeting of the South African Speedway Riders' Association before he went out to ride in the South African match-race championship against Henry Long, the holder, at Pretoria Stadium last night.

This brilliant Birmingham rider, who is having his first season in South Africa, satisfied officials that he fully intends settling in the Union this year. He is, therefore, eligible for Test selection.

What does Olle Nygren, captain of the Scandinavians, think about this "surprise" move? He said: "I must admit that I didn't bargain for Hunt being in the Springbok Test team. I thought he was just out here as a freelance rider. But if he intends settling in the Union, I suppose we shall have to accept him as a South African rider. I've no doubt that he will be a tremendous asset to the Springboks."

Mortimer is a splendid performer on the short track. Thus the Hoy Park circuit should suit him.

Although the Pretoria Eagles man still lacks experience, the Test appearance should give him valuable practice in preparation for his journey to Britain at the end of the season. He expects to join Birmingham.

Trevor Redmond has called Mortimer "Barry Briggs the Second."

LONG CHAMPION

It would have been a happy night for Hunt if he could have taken the South African match-race championship of Henry Long. But no. After winning the first heat in 45.7 secs. he suddenly found himself against an opponent who struck peak form at the right moment—for Long—and the holder equalised with a record three-lap ride of 45 seconds.

The deciding heat was a real thriller with Long just getting across the finishing line with half a wheel to spare, winning in 45.8 secs.

No rest for Long. Immediately after the match-race it was announced that Olle Nygren, the Eagles' captain, would be the next challenger.

S.A. unlucky in fourth test on speedway

SCANDINAVIA beat South Africa 55-53 in the fourth speedway test match at Wembley last night but if the luck had been evenly distributed the score would have undoubtedly been reversed.

Before the match started it was agreed that four of the Scandinavians should each be allowed to ride in seven heats and they were given their extra positions Olle Nygren, the visiting captain, did not take his extra ride but when the match depended on the last heat wanted to take the place of Ulf Ericson. The South Africans demanded that if he did so Henry Long should also ride. The points in the heat were shared so the unusual procedure did not affect the final result.

FELL IN FRONT

South Africa's misfortunes began in the second heat when Alan Hunt fell when leading the field. Instead of gaining a 4-2 win the South Africans went down 2-4. In the fifth heat Trevor Redmond was bumped and hit the safety fence but Neil Mortimer went on to score major points for the South Africans for the first time.

Two good efforts by Roy Bester were nullified by a puncture and a seized engine and in the 11th heat Hunt had an engine failure when leading.

With three heats to go South Africa were six points down but Long and Bester scored a 5-1 win in the 17th.

The match provided the best riding of the season and the record crowd left the stadium well satisfied with the final result.

HEAT WINNERS

The heat winners were: 1. Nygren (S), 75.6sec.; U. Ericson (S), 75.6sec.; R. Sormander (S), 76.5sec.; O. Nygren (S), 78.4sec.; A. Hunt (SA), 77.5sec.; H. Long (SA), 76.6sec.; 2. Hunt (SA), 78.8sec.; H. Long (SA), 77.5sec.; U. Ericson (S), 75.6sec.; R. Sormander (S), 78.8sec.; Hunt (SA), 77.4sec.; T. Redmond (SA), 78.9sec.; H. Long (SA), 77.8sec.; Nygren (S), 79.1sec.; H. Long (SA), 78.6sec.; H. Long (SA), 78.8sec.

The individual scores were: SOUTH AFRICA: H. Long 20, T. Redmond 10, U. Ericson 10, R. Christoffersen 7, L. Petersen 6, A. Long 1. Total 55.

SCANDINAVIA: O. Nygren 17, R. Sormander 14, U. Ericson 10, R. Christoffersen 7, L. Petersen 6, A. Long 1. Total 53.

Full speedway title points for Nygren

Sat. Jan 21 1956

Olle Nygren, the Scandinavian speedway champion, won the Wembley Open championship last night by winning all his five heats, three of which provided exhilarating racing. Nygren and Henry Long went into the final heat with full points from their four rides with Alan Hunt having dropped one but still retaining a chance of a run-off. Nygren, however, won the heat and Hunt beat Long for second place to become joint runner-up with Long and Rune Sormander.

Doug Davies, the fourth rider in the final heat, lost his chance of winning the title when he fell in a desperate effort to catch Trevor Redmond in the 10th heat. Redmond, who was included in the field at the last moment, scored 11 points and gave Nygren one of his hardest races.

Sormander, however, was the rider who provided most of the excitement. He defeated Hunt in his first ride and pushed Long and Nygren to fast times. The initial defeat of Hunt was more remarkable because in two of his next three rides Hunt recorded the fastest times of the evening. His 75.5sec. in the sixth heat was only one-tenth of a second outside Davies's four-lap record.

HEAT WINNERS

The heat winners were: H. Long, 77.1sec.; D. Davies, 77.4sec.; O. Nygren, 76.7sec.; R. Sormander, 75.5sec.; D. Davies, 77.1sec.; A. Hunt, 75.5sec.; O. Nygren, 78.4sec.; H. Long, 76.7sec.; O. Nygren, 76.3sec.; T. Redmond, 77.2sec.; A. Hunt, 76.5sec.; H. Long, 76.8sec.; A. Hunt, 76.5sec.; O. Nygren, 78.8sec.; R. Sormander, 77.5sec.; H. Long, 76.5sec.; D. Forsberg, 77.7sec.; R. Sormander, 79.2sec.; T. Redmond, 77.8sec.; O. Nygren, 76.3sec.

The points scores were: O. Nygren 15, H. Long 13, A. Hunt 13, R. Sormander 13, T. Redmond 11, D. Davies 8, D. Forsberg 8, R. Christoffersen 7, L. Petersen 7, U. Ericson 6, P. McKenzie 5, R. Bester 4, T. Edwards 4, T. Boshoff 3, S. James 1, J. Bekker 1, T. Boshoff 1.

LEADERS TOPPLE!

Thursday Jan 26 1956

HENRY LONG, Wembley Lions' captain and holder of the South African match-race speedway championship, was beaten 2-0 in the first "leg" of his title match with Olle Nygren at the Pretoria Stadium last night. But Henry was a happy man as he left the track. His Lions' outfit had beaten Pretoria Eagles, the leaders, 44-39 in a National League match.

Lions recently became the first team to defeat the Eagles on the Wembley track. Now comes the leaders' first defeat on their home track—and this opens up the National League championship.

Nygren, riding Sormander's motor cycle, won the first heat of the match-race in 45 seconds—this, after a re-run. Long didn't make a good start in the second heat, allowing Nygren to take the lead. And the Eagles' Scandinavian star held on despite Long's repeated challenges to win by a length. Leading scorers in the league match were:

Pretoria: Nygren 10, Davies, Blokdyk 7, Mortimer 6, Wembley: Sormander 12, Henry Long 9, Christoffersen 7, Petersen 6.

Peterson and Mortimer set new one-lap records of 14.6 secs.

Redmond Clinches Test

With Last-Heat Win Thursday Feb 2 1956

PEARLESS riding by Trevor Redmond, the South African Open champion, brought him maximum 18 points—and South Africa a 54-53 win—in the third speedway Test before a capacity 8,000 crowd at Pretoria Stadium last night.

It was Redmond, forcing his way through to the front in the final heat, which enabled the Springboks to reduce the Scandinavian team's lead to 9 in the five-match series. The Scandinavians went ahead when they won 59-48 at Durban last Saturday night.

The Springboks came to the last heat needing a 4-2 win to clinch the match. Lasse Petersen had engine failure in the third lap and Redmond,

came after he had attended a meeting of the South African Speedway Riders' Association before he went out to ride in the South African match-race championship against Henry Long, the holder, at Pretoria Stadium last night.

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SPEEDWAY TOUR MEN TO DRIVE "STOCKS"

The six riders forming the Scandinavian speedway touring team—Olle Nygren, Dan Forsberg, Lasse Petersen, Basse Christoffersen, Rune Sormander and Ulf Ericson—will drive in the opening Stock Car meeting of the season at Wembley Stadium on Friday night.

We plan to hold a Scandinavian-Stock Africa meeting in their opening meeting," said Buddy Fyfe, Stock Car Association official last night. The majority of these speedway riders have driven Stock Cars in Sweden and special cars are being prepared for their match.

Forsberg is still recovering from a broken ankle, but hopes to be fit for the match. Meanwhile, the tourists, who have won the speedway Test series 3-1, are still being put in scores in National League matches. Nygren top-scored with 10 points when Pretoria Eagles, the National League leaders, drew 22-22 with Springs Stars at Olympia Park, Springs on Saturday night.

Eagles were two points down when they came to the final heat, but one of the biggest crowds of the season saw Nygren and Mortimer make first and third place. Redmond, the Stars' captain, was second to force a draw. Leading scorers: Forsberg, Nygren, Blokdyk 9, Mortimer 8, Springs, Redmond 8, Christoffersen 8.

The speedway Crazy Night, postponed Friday, goes on at Wembley Stadium, 10-11 night when four leading speedway riders—Nygren, Sormander, Henry Long and Alan Hunt—take part in a series of three four-lap heats.