

THE HENRY LONG COLLECTION

Part 16 – 1961/62

The final season under our spotlight marked the end of one era and the beginnings of another. The days of big crowds, big stars, big stadiums and many larger-than-life personalities were consigned to history. Buddy Fuller left the scene and the continuing contraction of the sport did not afford opportunities for riders to make a living out of speedway, and it reverted to an amateur pastime at country tracks. This no doubt partly prompted the retirements of Roy Bester and Henry Long, leaving Doug Davies the undisputed South African No. 1. Davies having enjoyed a successful 1961 at British club New Cross claimed the SA Championship title at Klerksdorp in December 1961. The staging of the country's top event at Bob Maddern's up-country track set the pattern for the next decade as it was to be 1973 before another championship was held at a city venue. Meanwhile political storm clouds gathered over South Africa resulting in the country leaving the Commonwealth and becoming a Republic. The immediate effect for speedway was to require work permits for any South African rider wishing to pursue his career in the UK. At least in 1962 and for a few years afterwards SA riders could continue to ride in the UK but ultimately there came a point when that was off-limits.

1961/'62 season's Roll of Honour

SA Championship @ Klerksdorp: - Doug Davies

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The foregoing understandably explains the timing of Henry Long's retirement from racing. After 17 years in the saddle, through a career that had seen him achieve more than any other Springbok rider, and with no more objectives left to attain, - an appearance in a Wembley, London World Championship being the zenith for any speedway rider - , he hung up his leathers to concentrate on his recently established car and garage business, to be joined in partnership by Roy Bester.

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Doug Davies retains title

report by John Bunton

THE South African speedway championship was held recently in Klerksdorp. This is the second championship held during 1961.

Bob Maddern who ran the championship has always been a guest supporter of speedway racing and his track and set-up have been one of the best in the country. He is probably the only one at the moment capable of trying to stage a championship.

Both Henry Long and Roy Bester have retired and this automatically takes a lot of the glamour out of the game. Howdy Cornell was leading Davies in one race when he burst a front tyre and third and in another event when in the lead he lost a front tyre and had to retire. Hero of the championship apart from Doug Davies was Graham Aldworth—a newcomer said to be even more promising than Howdy Cornell.

The championship was run on the same night in Klerksdorp as a stock car meeting which meant a poor crowd. Doug Davies was in a class by himself.

Wembley Stadium is being tarred for hotrod racing at the moment and there are rumours that speedway racing will be presented on the tar. Wembley is big and fast and a tarred surface *might* be good for stock cars but I cannot think that it will be too successful for the bikes. It could be exciting as speeds may well approach 70 miles per hour.

There is also no chance of speedway being revived at Springs where stock cars have taken over under the promotion of Boet Ferreira a well-known road racing motor-cyclist and car driver. Incidentally Ferreira lost a leg while officiating at a recent stock car meeting and last week a spectator was killed when a car went over the fence. This was bad luck indeed. This was the track built by Trevor Redmond on which the famous Springs Stars raced.

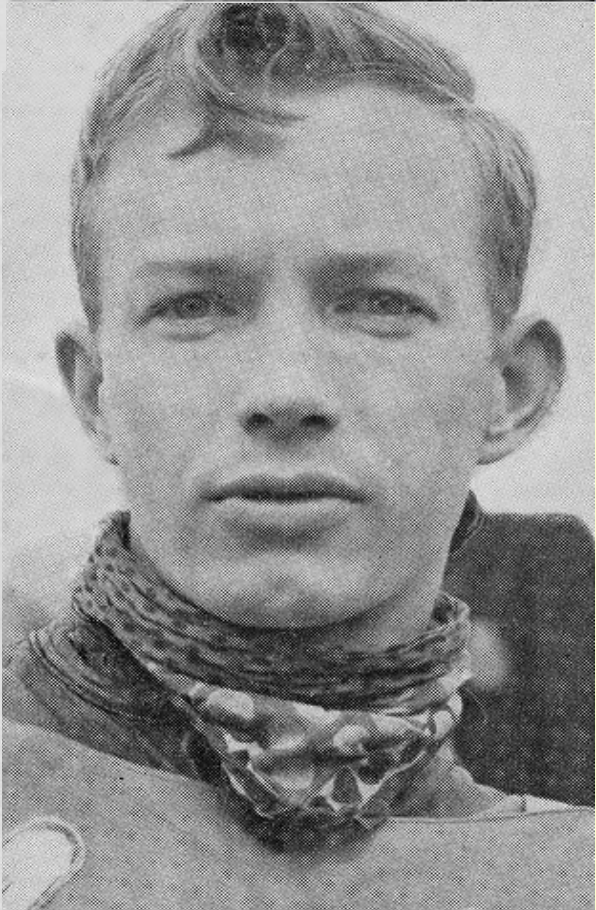
Durban was used by go-karts for a while but could probably be put back into order for speedway racing and Pretoria has become the major stock car track in the country with the promoting club being unwilling to upset the stock car fans by reverting to speedway racing when there is so little chance of reviving the sport on a national basis.

It is understood that riders will not be given clearance by the Control Board to ride in England next season and this could well mean that Doug Davies will be in a spot of bother should he decide to return to New Cross.

SPEEDWAY STAR & NEWS, January 6, 1962

NEIL MORTIMER, with Leicester last season, was a competitor in the South African Championship at Klerksdorp. A summary of the event, won by Doug Davies, appears on this page.

1962



SOUTH AFRICAN CHAMPIONSHIP

SCORERS: D. Davies 15, N. Mortimer 13, G. Aldworth 11, R. Drysdale 9, T. Viljoen 8, H. Cornell 8, D. Collins 6, T. Boshoff 6, N. Dormehl 5, C. Chapman 5, C. Lincoln 2, J. Pover 0.

Ht 1: Davies, Mortimer, Boshoff, Collins, 69.6. Ht 2: Aldworth, Cornell, Dormehl, Lincoln, 71.5. Ht 3: Drysdale, Chapman, Viljoen (n.f.), Pover (n.s.), 71.5. Ht 4: Mortimer, Dormehl, Lincoln, Boshoff, 75.2. Ht 6: Cornell, Collins, Viljoen, Drysdale, 70.6. Ht 6: Davies, Aldworth, Chapman, Pover, 70. Ht 7: Mortimer, Aldworth, Cornell, Boshoff, 73.4. Ht 8: Mortimer, Collins, Aldworth, Chapman, 72. Ht 9: Boshoff, Drysdale, Lincoln, Pover, 74.3. Ht 10: Davies, Cornell, Viljoen, Dormehl, 70.

Ht 11: Aldworth, Drysdale, Collins, Lincoln, 72.5. Ht 12: Davies, Mortimer, Cornell (n.f.), Dormehl (n.f.), 69.8. Ht 13: Viljoen, Boshoff, Chapman, Pover, 73.5. Ht 14: Davies, Drysdale, Chapman, Lincoln, 71.2. Ht 15: Viljoen, Dormehl, Collins, Pover, 74.4.

NOVICE RACE: Thurgood, Fourie, van der Walt, Boltman, 82.7. "B" CLASS: Phillips, Beytell, Prinsloo, Lincoln, 83.

The HENRY LONG Collection - concluded.