

Speedway League Racing in South Africa, Pt. 2: 1977 – 2003

In the decades that followed the first league speedway era in South Africa, - 1947 to '59 - , other small scale leagues were initiated, though not all ran to conclusion.

1977/'78, “Imperial Paint Products League Championship”:

A short lived league project was started in the early first half of the 1977/'78 season, to have involved Wembley, Pretoria (Mahem), Durban and Dunswart but the latter promotion pulled out. The Wembley programme of Dec.9th advertised an IPP Lge match, Lions v. Durban Hornets, for Jan.6th but by then the stadium had permanently closed for redevelopment and only 2 matches are believed to have been staged.

Dec. 9th 1977: Wembley 29: P.Prinsloo 10, N.Close 8, G.Long 5, B.Stephens 4, J.Bruins 2.

Pretoria 18: B.Harkins 11, B.Rourke 5, B.Strydom 1, G.Baynes 1, C.Davies 0.

Dec.14th 1977: Pretoria 26: B.Rourke 10, B.Harkins 8, B.Strydom 7, C.Davies 1, G.Baynes 0.

Wembley 22: P.Prinsloo 8, N.Close 6, J.Bruyns 3, B.Stephens 3, J.Stevens 2.

1982, “S.A. National League”

In preparation for a National League in 1982 Buddy Fuller re-constituted the SA. Speedway Control Board at the end of '81. The league was to include East Rand Stars (formerly Dunswart Devils), Durban Hornets, Pretoria Eagles and Tarlton Tomahawks, with a fifth team, Daleside Giants, meeting them in occasional challenge matches. The project went as far as to name teams' make-up, (see article, p.2), each to include one of the 4 visiting American riders, but for reasons unknown the competition never materialised.

1997 - '99, “National Speedway Association League”:

This league ran for at least 2 seasons and included visiting overseas riders and was run on a 4TT basis, each of 4 tracks staging a single home meeting. Match results are unknown at present, but the fixture dates were as follows:

1997/'98: Brakpan Feb.13th; Walkerville Feb.14th;
Klerksdorp Feb 21st (tbc); Newcastle Feb.22nd (tbc).

1998/'99: Walkerville Feb.6th; Newcastle Feb.13th;
Brakpan Feb.19th Klerksdorp Feb.27th.

2002, “South African Elite League International Series”:

The teams in this league were not town/track based but were sponsor-named, and they used the 4TT format.

Rd.1 @ Walkerville 2.2.'02:

Champion Spark Plugs 29, Southern Yamaha/Minolta 26,
Performance Plant Hire 21, LK Tuning 18.

Rd.2 @ Walkerville 9.2.'02:

LK Tuning 25, Performance Plant Hire 16,
Champion Spark Plugs 16, Southern Yamaha/Minolta 14.

Rd.3 @ Walkerville 16.2.'02:

LK Tuning 28, Champion Spark Plugs 28,
Southern Yamaha/Minolta 21, Performance Plant Hire 17.

Rd.4 @ Bloemfontein 23.2.'02:

LK Tuning 32, Champion Spark Plugs 25,
Performance Plant Hire 25, Southern Yamaha/Minolta 7.

The league was decided on overall points scored and hence the standings were as follows:

1 st :	LK Tuning	103	3 rd :	Performance Plant Hire	79
2 nd :	Champion Spark Plugs	98	4 th :	Southern Yamaha/Minolta	68

2003/'04, “South African League”:

Four teams agreed to participate in this league in 2003 but Wembley withdrew at the final moment. Though a Walkerville team rode they staged no home meeting.

Rd 1, Mar. 29 @ Brakpan: – Brakpan Rebels 32, Walkerville Wizards 33;

Rd 2, May 31 @ Rustenburg: – Rustenburg Red Devils 31, Walkerville Wizards 32;

Rd 3, July 12 @ Brakpan: – Brakpan Rebels 20, Rustenburg 21.

Result: 1st Walkerville 4pts, 2nd Rustenburg 2pts, 3rd Brakpan Opts.

A concluding play-off of the 'South African League Final' towards the end of 2003 between Walkerville and Rustenburg for the 'SA Club Champion's Trophy' was twice rained off. One further attempt was scheduled for 31st Jan 2004 as a curtain raiser to the new season, but when this meeting was again cancelled the competition was never completed.

If you can provide any further results or missing information on the above events, please contact Speedway-SA via the pro-forma on the Contacts page.

The following article relates to the failed 1982 league proposal, and was first published in 'Speedway Scene' , Ed'n No.7, Dec.1981, Jo'burg.

“SPEEDWAY GROWS”

“Two of the most important steps in South African speedway were taken at a meeting in Johannesburg on November 30 with the formation of the 'South African Speedway Control Board' and the revival of the National League. The request for the formation of the Control Board came from Dunswart promoter Buddy Fuller who felt that the sport had reached the stage when it was necessary for the promoters and organisers to liaise on dates and meetings. He pointed out that he had not known about the projected opening meeting at Tarlton on November 21st, - which was washed out by rain - , until he had read about it in the daily press.

The Control Board will be responsible for drawing up a calendar for meetings and for allocating riders to teams for the National League, which will get under way in 1982. It will comprise Buddy Fuller (Dunswart), Nico van der Berg (Pretoria) and Nick van Rensburg (Tarlton) as well as the South African Speedway Association executive. Chairman will be John Louw and Riders Representative will be Arthur Bruins.

Their first decision was the revival of the National League which had flourished in the country in the 1950's. The teams will comprise East Rand Stars (formerly Dunswart Devils), Durban Hornets, Pretoria Eagles and Tarlton Tomahawks. A fifth team Daleside Giants, will contest challenge matches against these teams.

Although there was still no track in Durban, Mr Fuller said that negotiations were still under way and looked very promising, and in view of this he felt that a Durban side should be included in the National League. It will be the second side from the golden past to be revived and both it and Pretoria Eagles were winners of the old National League.

Mr Fuller also announced that four American riders would be competing in South Africa early next year and they would be allocated to the four teams. Their places would be taken by local riders once they had returned home. The teams are as follows, in their riding order:-

Durban Hornets:

1 U.S.A. rider to be nominated,
2 Ernest Blignaut, 3 Noddy Naude
4 James Olivier, 5 A.N. Other,
6 Gary Marsh, 7 Peter Niemandt.

Pretoria Eagles:

1 U.S.A. rider to be nominated,
2 Marcus v.d. Berg, 3 Wayne Coughlan,
4 James Bruins, 5 Arthur Bruins,
6 James Gilson, 7 Kevin Tebbutt.

East Rand Stars:

1 U.S.A. rider to be nominated,
2 Ge Kemp, 3 Denzil Kent,
4 Angie Rippamonte, 5 Rob Lassen,
6 Ashley Meade, 7 Brian Davey.

Tarlton Tomahawks:

1 U.S.A. rider to be nominated,
2 Mike Cothill, 3 Gary Prommel,
4 Martin Cox, 5 Alan Simpson,
6 Mike Marsh, 7 Ronnie Louw.