

S.AFRICAN- & RHODESIAN-BORN RIDERS IN BRITISH SPEEDWAY

Professional speedway riders from all continents have always optimised their potential by travelling to the opposite hemisphere as domestic seasons ended. For riders from Commonwealth countries a season in the UK also served to raise a rider's standard by competing in the home country's league competitions, ultimately to partake in the World championship qualifying round and hopefully achieve the dream of riding at London's Wembley Stadium, perhaps one day to reach ever rider's ultimate goal of becoming World Champion! Over the years more than 40 African born racers have ridden in the UK: the attached table lists all known riders. (Riders born elsewhere, subsequently taking up SA citizenship are *not* included in this review.) Just two South Africans, Henry Long and Doug Davies, made it to a Wembley Final.

The post-war period of late '40s/early '50s was to be the busiest, when at least 20 speedway riders took part in one of Britain's 3 National League divisions, encouraged by seeing and meeting up with world-class Brits, New Zealanders and Scandinavians in the Southern summer, and who not only provided the necessary contacts in Europe for reciprocal Northern hemisphere stints but who, by racing in the Union and its own SA National League, raised the standard of its domestic riders.

But after the SCB-SRA dispute of the late '50s and the political isolation of the '60s matters changed dramatically, - speedway too was isolated, activity shrank, and the race standard with it, so that even after the Republic's international re-emergence, few of its decreasing pool of riders were of international standard, and in the present century only 2, Bevan Compton and Byron Bekker, have secured team contracts.

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Attached table, p.2.

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South African- & Rhodesian-born Riders in British Speedway



by TEAM & DIVISION (**Div.1** **Div.2** **Div.3**)

n.b: At brief times there was only one UK league, and a 3rd Div'n only in 1947-'59 and '93 to date.



i) post-WW2

NAME	#SEASONS	1946-'59	1960 & '70s	1980s & '90s	C.21 st
Byron Bekker	9	-	-	-	{ Ncsth. '04, Scunth. '05-'09, Edin. '09, Wey. '10, B.Vue2 '11, Dud. '12, (loW '13).
Roy Bester	2	Edin '53, '54, Leicester '54	-	-	-
Trevor Blokdyk	2	Poole '58, '59,	Ipswich '61, Leicester '62	-	-
Toby Boshoff	1	Plymouth '49, Rayleigh '49	-	-	-
Bert Clark*	Rh 1	Edin '54 (1 st Rhod'n in UK.)	-	-	-
Dave Collins	2	Unattached '51, '53	Leicester '62, Sunderland '64	-	-
Bevan Compton	1	-	-	-	Berwick '01, Sheffield '01
Howdy Cornell	1	-	Neath '62	-	-
Wayne Coughlan	1	-	-	Unattached '81	-
Eddie Cox	1	-	-	Unattached '88	-
Doug Davies	4	Birmingham '54-'56,	New Cross '61	-	-
Arthur Duncan	1	Birmingham '56	-	-	-
Mike Ferriera	Rh 8	-	Coatbg '74, Canterbury '79-'81,	(Cant. '80-'81) Swin. '80-'82, Wimb. '83,'84, '85	-
Buddy Fuller	3	Hastings '48, '49, Livp'l '50	-	-	-
George Glenn	2	-	Middlesbro '61, Newcastle '62	-	-
Pip Harris	Rh 1	-	Unatt'd, '76 (2nds @ Mid'l)	-	-
Keith Harvey**	12+	New Cross '46, '47	-	-	-
James Hayhow	Zam 2	-	-	Unatt'd '86, Edin. '87, RyeH. '87, Cant. '87	-
Denzil Kent	Rh 6	-	Unatt'd '79,	Cant. '80-'83, Swin. '81 '82, Eastb. '83 '84	-
Fred Lang	1	Wembley '54	-	-	-
Henry Long	5	Sheff '48, B.Vue '49-'52	-	-	-
Graham Long	1	-	Unatt'd, '77 (2nds@ Scun.)	-	-
Pat McKenzie	3	Rayleigh '55,	Rayleigh '60, '63	-	-
Vern McWilliams	1	Glgw WC, Wol'vtn, Poole, '54	-	-	-
Mac Magill	1	-	-	-	Unatt'd '10
Hec Mayhead	1	Birmingham '54	-	-	-
Neil Mortimer	2	Birmingham '56,	Leicester '61	-	-
Etienne Olivier	1	-	Berwick '73	-	-
John Osbourne	1	-	Unatt'd '63	-	-
Stan Paulsen	Rh 1	Leicester '56	-	-	-
Neil Pettit	2	-	-	-	Unatt'd, '09, '10
Peter Prinsloo	Rh 8	-	Ips '71, Wemb '71, Ext '76-'79,	Poole '80-'82.	-
Deon Prinsloo	Rh 4	-	-	Ext. '90, Wimb/Estb. '91, LgEat. '92, P'boro '94	-
Bob Quick	1	Poole '54	-	-	-
Dick Sayer	2	Unatt'd, '57,'58 (2nds@ Nrwhc.)	-	-	-
Tom Sayer	2	Unatt'd, '57,'58 (2nds@ Nrwhc.)	-	-	-
Bob Serrurier	1	Belle Vue '51	-	-	-
Doug Serrurier	2	Liverpool '49, '50	-	-	-
Harry Serrurier	1	Wolv'ton, Bristol '54	-	-	-
Paul Smuts-Steyn	Rh 1	-	-	Unatt'd, '83?	-
John Surman	1	-	Unatt'd, '66	-	-
David Steen	Rh 10	-	-	{ Readg '89-'91,'94,'96,'97, Edin '91, Stoke '92, Ext '93, Oxf'd '95, Glsgw '98	-
Syd van der Vyfer	1	Leicester '49	-	-	-
Johnny Walker	1	Wolv'ton '54	-	-	-
Fred Wills	2	Liverpool '49, '53; Stoke '53	-	-	-
39 <- Totals ->		20: ('40s, -7) + ('50s, -16)	12: ('60s, -8) + ('70s, -5)	10: ('80s, -8) + ('90s, -3)	4

ii) pre-WW2

Keith Harvey**	{ 1928, '29 ?; High Beech '30, Stmfrd Brdge '30,'31 '32, West Ham 1933, '34, Wimb. 1935, Cardiff '36, Nottm '36, Hall Green 1937 '38, Crystal Palace 1939, Norwich 1939, New Cross 1946-47.	Retired aged 50½ years, June 1947
Stan Collins	Warrington 1930	
Cecil de la Porte	Wembley 1935, '36, Cardiff 1936. Nottingham 1936. Hall Green 1937	
Alan Reeve	Crystal Palace 1930	
Will Michaletos***	Crystal Palace 1930	
Ernie Evans	Wimbledon 1931. Sheffield 1933, Bristol 1936. New Cross 1936, '37, '38, Sheffield 1939.	
Les 'Kernel' Barker	Coventry (Brandon) 1928, Exeter 1929	
Godfrey Rabie	West Ham 1939	

* Bert Clark born in Wales, emigrated to N.Rhodesia, started speedway there.

** Keith Harvey – See pre- & post- WW2.

***known in UK as Will Nicholas

n.b: In the 1990s, after the fall of communism and the opening up of **Eastern Europe**, a few riders spent a season or two in continental Europe :-

Karoly 'Karl' Kechky	St.Johan AST Lge, 1997; Krosno, PL (Polish. Div.2) 1997, '98; Lendava, SLV (Slovenian Lge.) 1999.
Bevan Compton	Czestochowa PL 1995; Leszno PL 1996. (t.b.c.); Felixdorf AST Lge, 1997.
Dannie Fourie	Styrian Panthers AST, Austrian Lge 1973.
Eugene Smith	Hungarian Championship, 2001.