

THE HENRY LONG COLLECTION

Part 4 – 1950/'51

The 1950/51 season was the longest on record, stretching from October 1950 to the following May. But a month before tapes-up there was still doubt over several issues; who would be the touring team; would the SA ace, Henry Long, settle his differences with the South African Speedway Riders' Association, and which teams would be participating in the Transvaal League.

Negotiations with the English Speedway Riders' Association for an English team to tour the Union ultimately broke down over finances but the Dutch accepted the same terms and a first visit by the men from the Land of the Windmills was put in hand. The two countries were involved in a series of five Tests whilst several challenge matches against composite teams were also staged. Although running the Springboks close in two matches, the Dutch lost all five internationals and were decisively beaten.

The Transvaal League remained unchanged in numbers from 1949/50 but name changes and the reconstruction of the track at Prince George Park, Boksburg meant that West Rand Dakotas became Boksburg Lions and the Eagles changed from East Rand to Germiston with both operating from Boksburg. Pretoria Tigers continued to share Wembley with the Johannesburg Pirates. From the first meeting on 13th October until the final meeting in early May 1951 scores were close in most league matches and only on one occasion did a team breach the 50 point barrier. It was as late as 26th April before the destiny of the championship was decided, - with matches in hand on the league leaders, Germiston Eagles, it was imperative that Pirates beat the Lions, but in something of an upset they failed to do so, going down 45-39 and thus handing the honours to the Eagles. The closeness of the competition is shown by the fact that only six points separated the winners from the bottom placed team. An innovation was the inclusion of Dutch riders in league teams from the turn of the New Year until their return to Europe in March. The dispute between SA.SRA and Henry Long continued after he returned to the country from his stint at Belle Vue and was not resolved until February, when he was signed by Pretoria Tigers. With having to return for a further season in the UK in 1951, Henry only rode in six league matches and also missed the National Championships at season's end.

Major individual championships continued, although the National Pairs Championship was not staged. In the absence of Henry Long, Fred Wills was the favourite to retain his National Title but had to admit second best to Bob Serrurier on the final night of the season. The National Handicap Championship was staged for a second year at Wembley with the victor being Bob Raw. Two other individual titles were competed for, the popular Wembley Open, and the Transvaal Championship, Fred Wills winning the former whilst Alec Blankfield collected his first ever title when he won the Transvaal. The 1949/50 Wembley Match Race Championship end-of-season holder, Fred Wills, repelled seven challengers and held the title for the entire season. His hardest defence was expected to be against Henry Long but despite suffering from influenza and riding Buddy Fuller's machine, he beat SA's top rider by 2 races to one.

As the season drew to a close negotiations were concluded for a South African team to tour Europe with an itinerary covering five countries and a proposed eight Test matches. Further news was of domestic expansion and plans for future generations of riders. Plans were already being formulated to build a track at Hoy Park, Durban, whilst a SA.SRA training facility was opened at Vlakplaats on land near where the Old Barn circuit had been located. A new track appeared on the East Rand just before the end of the season and was built for the Transvaal Show which opened at Springs on 24th May.

1950/'51 season's Roll of Honour.

Test series:

– S.Africa 5, Holland 0.

SA National Championship:

– Bob Serrurier @ Wembley

SA National Handicap Chmpshp (Yanx Trophy):

– Bob Raw @ Wembley

Transvaal Championship:

– Alec Blankfield @ Wembley

Wembley Open Championship:

– Fred Wills

Wembley Match Race Chmpshp (End-of-Season Holder):

– Fred Wills

Transvaal League Champions:

– Germiston Eagles

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OVERKEENNESS COSTS BUTCH THE SPEEDWAY

Saturday Jan. 20, 1951

TEST
THE DUTCH SPEEDWAY TEAM might have beaten South Africa in the second Test match at Wembley Stadium last night if they had not tried quite so hard as they did. South Africa won 60-47, a 10-point smaller margin than in the first match, but the difference would probably have been even less had some of the Dutchmen not been so keen.

In the first heat, Jan Bosman, their captain, was out in front of Fred Wills when he came off through trying to take the second bend too fast. Wills felt trying to avoid him and Bisschops rode over the fallen machines. Wills was cut on the foot, but carried on for three heats and scored full points. His best effort was in the fourth when he snatched the major points from Timus Metzelaar.

The loss of Wills almost cost the Dutch back of the Holland team. Bisschops was obviously shaken by his spill and Metzelaar had to miss two rides as a result of a foot injury.

At one stage South Africa led by 17 points, Harry du Toit, Wills and Buddy Fuller being able to counter the team tactics of their opponents. Timus Metzelaar struck his previous form and in the 14th heat was only 0.1 of a second outside the record.

BRIEF APPEARANCE

But the brightest spell for the Hollanders was Henk Steman's brief appearances. He had three rides and won all three. This will make a big difference to the visitors when he gets used to the track.

In the last heat there was a spectacular crash. Dammers fell when in the lead and Joop Nolten tumbled over him and came to a stop about 30 yards farther on. Fortunately neither rider was injured. Jonker was allowed to take Nolten's place and with the extra ride became top points

Results

Heat 1: F. Wills (S.A.) 1, J. Bosman (H.) 2, J. Nolten (H.) 3, 82.1sec. Heat 2: B. Fuller (S.A.) 1, T. Metzelaar (H.) 2, H. Dammers (H.) 3, 80.1sec. Heat 3: H. du Toit (S.A.) 1, J. Blankfield (S.A.) 2, 81.3sec. Heat 4: F. Wills (S.A.) 1, T. Metzelaar (H.) 2, B. Serrurier (S.A.) 3, 80.9sec. Heat 5: G. Jonker (H.) 1, B. Fuller (S.A.) 2, W. van Hemerik (H.) 3, 80.1sec. Heat 6: H. du Toit (S.A.) 1, J. Bosman (H.) 2, H. Steman (H.) 3, 81.9sec. Heat 7: F. Wills (S.A.) 1, B. Serrurier (S.A.) 2, W. van Hemerik (H.) 3, 80.3sec. Heat 8: T. Boshoff (S.A.) 1, B. Fuller (S.A.) 2, J. Bosman (H.) 3, 81.9sec. Heat 9: H. du Toit (S.A.) 1, T. Metzelaar (H.) 2, H. Dammers (H.) 3, 81sec. Heat 10: H. Steman (H.) 1, B. Serrurier (S.A.) 2, T. Boshoff (S.A.) 3, 82.6sec. Heat 11: B. Serrurier (S.A.) 1, B. Fuller (S.A.) 2, H. du Toit (S.A.) 3, 82.6sec. Heat 12: G. Jonker (H.) 1, J. Blankfield (S.A.) 2, H. du Toit (S.A.) 3, 80.9sec. Heat 13: H. Steman (H.) 1, T. Boshoff (S.A.) 2, H. Dammers (H.) 3, 81.9sec. Heat 14: G. Jonker (H.) 1, B. Fuller (S.A.) 2, W. van Hemerik (H.) 3, 79.4sec. Heat 15: J. Blankfield (S.A.) 1, H. du Toit (S.A.) 2, J. Bosman (H.) 3, 82.6sec. Heat 16: G. Jonker (H.) 1, W. van Hemerik (H.) 2, B. Serrurier (S.A.) 3, 80.4sec. Heat 17: B. Fuller (S.A.) 1, A. Gould (S.A.) 2, J. Bosman (H.) 3, 82.6sec. Heat 18: G. Jonker (H.) 1, H. Dammers (H.) 2, J. Blankfield (S.A.) 3, 80.1sec. Point scores: South Africa: B. Fuller 14, H. du Toit 12, F. Wills 9, J. Blankfield 8, B. Serrurier 6, T. Boshoff 5, H. Serrurier 4, A. Gould 2, total 69. Holland: G. Jonker 15, J. Bosman 10, H. Steman 6, W. van Hemerik 5, J. Nolten 1, T. Bisschops 0, total 47.

LONG SHOWS HIS CLASS IN RETURN TO SPEEDWAY

ONLY ONCE IN SIX RIDES did Henry Long have to battle to cross the line first at Wembley Stadium last night. Making his first appearance of the season he spreadeagle all his opponents in the Transvaal speedway meeting and finished with full points for Pretoria Tigers, who beat Germiston Eagles 43-38.

His first ride was timed at 72.5sec, only 4 outside the record and he followed with the three next best times of the night. In the final of the scratch race series he was given a hard race by Timus Metzelaar, the only man to get within 100 yards of him at the finish.

Falls were more frequent than usual, no less than seven riders coming to grief. The worst fall was when Bob Serrurier tried to get inside of Bob Raw and over-slid. Both riders took no further part in the meeting.

RETAINED TROPHY

Fred Wills won the break for the first bend in his match races against Ge Jonker, his Dutch challenger for the "Golden Helmet" and once again kept the trophy in two straight runs.

The disappointment of the evening was the showing of Henk Steman, the recent Dutch arrival for their Test team. He fell in the sixth heat and was saved from what might have been a serious injury by Maurice Fenton, who laid his machine on the cinders instead of riding over Steman.

RESULTS

Heat winners in the league match were: T. Boshoff (P.) 85.9sec, H. Long (P.) 70.8sec, M. Fenton (P.) 87.5sec, W. van Hemerik (P.) 83.1sec, H. Long (P.) 81.4sec, B. Raw (P.) 84.8sec, G. Jonker (P.) 83.1sec, H. Long (P.) 81.2sec, H. Serrurier (P.) 84.8sec, J. Bosman (P.) 84.8sec, W. Long (P.) 80.1sec, J. Serrurier (P.) 84.8sec, G. Jonker (P.) 83.4sec, T. Boshoff (P.) 82.9sec. Point scores: Pretoria Tigers: H. Long 15, J. Bosman 8, T. Boshoff 8, M. Fenton 5, A. Gould 4, B. Raw 3, L. Rees 3, total 43. Germiston Eagles: W. van Hemerik 8, G. Jonker 8, H. Serrurier 5, B. Serrurier 4, O. Wilms 4, J. Serrurier 4, H. Steman 3, F. Lang 2, total 38. Scratch race series: Heat 1: A. Gould 1, H. Serrurier 2, 86.4sec. Heat 2: H. Steman 1, J. Nolten 2, M. Fenton 3, 85.8sec. Heat 3: T. Metzelaar 1, H. Dammers 2, J. Serrurier 3, 85.8sec. Heat 4: H. Long 1, J. Bosman 2, W. van Hemerik 3, 82.7sec. Final: H. Long 1, T. Metzelaar 2, 9. Gould 3, 82.2sec. Total 38.

S.A. Sportsman Killed

HENDRIK GRIMBECK, aged 33, a member of the Pretoria Tigers' Speedway team in the Transvaal league, was killed yesterday afternoon while working in his yard on his machine with an electric drill.

The drill apparently short-circuited.

He gave a shout and his wife, rushing out of their home, found him dead.

Grimbeck was vice-chairman of the Pretoria

Motorcycle Racing Club and rode in the Port Elizabeth "200" on New Year's Day.

He leaves two children besides his wife—a son aged six and a daughter nearly two.

RAIN WASHES OUT SPEEDWAY TEST, BUT LONG GETS RECORD

TORRENTIAL rains which started during the interval, caused the third speedway Test at Wembley last night to be abandoned, when South Africa were leading 39-26. But it couldn't prevent Henry Long from setting a new four-lap record. **Saturday Feb. 10, 1951.**

The Long "streak" came in his first outing—the second heat—when he burst from the gate and won by over a quarter of a lap from the Holland crack, Steman, in 70.8 seconds faster than the old record held jointly by Doug Serrurier and Buddy Fuller.

In his second outing Long was only one-tenth second outside his new record. He scored maximum points in his four rides, the last win being on a flooded track, and on this showing he will be a difficult man to beat.

Although the Springboks were without Buddy Fuller (ankle), Joe Blankfield substituted as heat leader—the Dutch riders were forced into minor places in ten of the 11 heats, but their only success, in which they got a 3-1 win, was the result of superb team riding.

Bosman and Steman straggled the track right from the gate, and Joe Blankfield was not given an opening throughout the race.

The decision to abandon the match, which attracted a record crowd to the Wembley circuit, came when all four riders in heat 12 fell on the sodden track.

Heat winners: Boshoff (S.A.) 81.8; Long (S.A.) 70.8; J. Blankfield (S.A.) 82.8; J. Blankfield (S.A.) 82.4; Wills (S.A.) 80.7; Long (S.A.) 79.3; Bosman (H.) 83.5; Wills (S.A.) 81.3.

Points scores: South Africa: Long 15, Wills 9, Blankfield 8, Boshoff 5, Wolf 2, total 47. Holland: Steman 6, Bosman 5, Jonker 5, Bisschops 4, Bosman 4, Van Hemerik 2, total 26.

Henry Long was Prince George's Park, Boksburg, to-night for his first outing in the new track. He will ride for Pretoria Tigers against Johannesburg Pirates in a League



Henry Long, the brilliant South African speedway star, who broke the Wembley record during the third Test against Holland, which was abandoned when South Africa were in a

LONG STILL UNBEATEN IN SPEEDWAY

Tuesday Feb. 20, 1951
Henry Long's speedway successes almost came to an end in the final event at Wembley Stadium last night, but he went round Fred Wills in the third lap to score a clever win, his 22nd successive first placing since his return to South African tracks.

Wills and Long qualified for the final of the scratch race series and, when Long went into a slide at the first bend, Wills took the lead. For two laps he kept Long behind him, but as he hugged the white line in the third lap his intentions were obvious and Long opened his throttle and managed to beat Wills to the back straight. From then on Long was the master. Wills, however, did enough to suggest that he still has a chance of retaining his "Golden Helmet" when he accepts Long's match race challenge on Friday. The time, 70.1sec., was only 0.4 outside the record.

In the Transvaal league match between Boksburg Lions and Pretoria Tigers, Long equalled his own record in the fifth heat as well as getting the better of Wills. At the end of this heat Pretoria had a lead of two points, which they increased to 13 with three heats to go. Boksburg scored 13 points in the last three heats, but went down 39-44.

Long scored a maximum and Wills dropped his only point when defeated by Long.

RESULTS

Heat winners in the league match were: Wills (B.) 79.5sec, H. Long (P.) 81.4sec, H. Dammers (B.) 82.3sec, T. Boshoff (P.) 81.1sec, H. Long (P.) 78.7sec, B. Raw (P.) 82.9sec, T. Fenton (P.) 82.1sec, H. Long (P.) 78.9sec, F. Wills (B.) 82.9sec, T. Boshoff (P.) 82.9sec, H. Dammers (B.) 81.4sec. Individual point scores: Pretoria Tigers: H. Long 12, T. Boshoff 9, M. Fenton 6, A. Gould 5, J. Bosman 5, total 44. Boksburg Lions: F. Wills 11, T. Bisschops 7, H. Dammers 6, D. Wolf 4, H. du Toit 4, total 38. Results of the scratch race series were: Heat 1: H. Dammers 1, H. Steman 2, F. van Zyl 3, 83.1sec. Heat 2: F. Wills 1, W. van Hemerik 2, A. Gould 3, 80.4sec. Heat 3: T. Boshoff 1, B. Serrurier 2, 78.8sec. Heat 4: G. Jonker 3, B. Serrurier 2, B. Raw 1, 81.8sec. Heat 5: H. Long 1, F. Wills 2, G. Jonker 3, 79.1sec.

THRILLING FINISH IN SPEEDWAY TEST

A RECORD CROWD OF ABOUT 9,000 rose in their seats during the last five thrilling heats of the third speedway Test at Wembley Stadium last night when South Africa won the match 54-53 and their first rubber.

Hopes of a Dutch win rose and fell as the teams struggled for the odd point on which the result hung, but they were dashed in the final heat when their captain, Jan Bosman, fell in the second lap and South Africa won 4-2.

Henry Long, who scored a maximum number of points for South Africa, dashed from the track to visit his wife, who had just presented him with a son.

Holland needed to share the points for the last heat, in which Long was riding to win the match.

In an effort to keep Bob Serrurier out of third place Bosman fell and finished the most desolate man of the evening.

Fred Wills Gets Out of Sick-bed to Retain Match-race Title

FRED WILLS, holder of the Wembley match-race championship, for almost 12 months, got up from a sick-bed—he had been down with influenza for three days—to retain his title in the "match of the season" against Henry Long at Wembley last night. Wills, riding Buddy Fuller's machine, won by two rides to one, but Long broke the record.

Few of the 9,000 record crowd knew that Wills was almost forced to "call off" the match. He said afterwards: "If it hadn't been for the fact that the match was previously postponed and the crowd were being admitted at half-price for this reason, I should have asked for a postponement."

It seemed as though the title would change hands when Long, starting for it outside in the first heat streaked from the gate and was soon in a clear lead. The champion couldn't recover and Long clocked 39.2 sec, to set up a new three-lap record.

It was a different story in the second heat. Wills gated as fast as his rival, swept into the lead at the first bend and resisted every attempt by Long to get through. He won in 34.1 sec.

The third heat "decider" was a carbon-copy of Wills' previous win. He got into the lead at the first bend and throughout the race appeared to know the exact position of his rival trailing hot on his rear wheel.

Wills' racing tactics were superb. He won on his merits and after setting the black and white flag in 39.3 sec, a huge crowd streamed through the riders, lifted him from his machine, and carried him shoulder-high to receive the Golden Helmet.

It was the fifth time he has successfully defended this championship and it was his most thrilling victory. Two spills in which Buddy Fuller

(lost one) and Metzelaar (lost two) were unseated, probably cost Johannesburg Pirates their league match with Germiston Eagles.

These two stars of the Pirates' team won all their other heats, but it was Eagles, the league leaders, who won the match 46-37.

Heat winners: H. Serrurier (E.) 82.3; Metzelaar (P.) 80.9; Jonker (E.) 81.6; B. Serrurier (E.) 82.2; Fuller (P.) 83.3; Metzelaar (P.) 83.3; B. Serrurier (E.) 80.5; Metzelaar (P.) 81.1; Fuller (P.) 80.5; B. Serrurier (E.) 80.9; Steman (E.) 82.8; Fuller (P.) 80.6; A. Blankfield (P.) 81.9; H. Serrurier (E.) 83.1.

Point scores: Germiston Eagles: B. Serrurier 11, H. Serrurier 9, Steman 9, Jonker 1, Van Hemerik 4, Wilms 4, J. Serrurier 2, total 46. Johannesburg Pirates: Fuller 9, Metzelaar 8, A. Blankfield 8, Dammers 5, Nolten 3, Hollenbach 1, Goodman 1, Viljoen 1, total 37.

Long—and Team-riding—Beat Holland

Saturday Feb. 10, 1951
HENRY LONG and his team of riders, who scored a useful seven points, It was a different story last night. He failed to score, and Henk Dammers, who, though chosen as reserve, had five outings and scored six points.

Wills and Du Toit also showed their ability as heat partners and between them totalled 20 points.

Henk Steman, with three heats, was Holland's outstanding individual rider and, although Metzelaar scored 11 points, he lacked his fire of the last Test.

Consequently, the match was devoid of close finishes. Perhaps this was because Henry Long was never headed from the gate.

In the third Test it was Wim van Hemerik, riding as reserve for Serrurier's machine, broke down in the second heat—his first ride—and failed to start in the fifth.

Bob Raw substituted for Thy Bisschops in the Dutch team, but only scored one point.

Speedway Grand Slam for S.A.

Saturday March 31, 1951
SOUTH AFRICA completed the speedway grand slam against Holland last night, when they won the fifth and final Test 65-42 at Wembley Stadium.

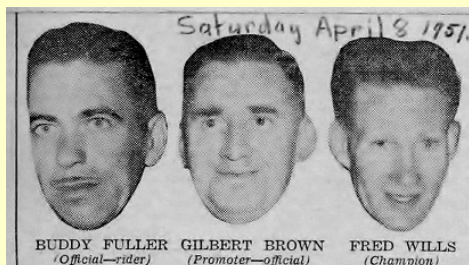
The highlight of the night was Henry Long's brilliant riding. He scored maximum points (18) for the Springboks, and in all his rides broke 80 seconds. The only other rider to break this time was Joe Blankfield, who returned 73.8 seconds in the ninth heat, after Long had equalled the Wembley four-lap record time of 78.7 seconds in the previous heat.

Joe Blankfield was unfortunately not to share maximum points with Long. He was well placed in the final heat, but fell and Harry du Toit filled first place.

For Holland Timus Metzelaar was the best performer with 13 points, but received worthy support only from Ge Jonker (11 pts.) and Henk Steman (9 pts.).

Des Wolf rode in place of Bob Serrurier after the fifth heat. Serrurier's machine broke down in the second heat—his first ride—and failed to start in the fifth.

Bob Raw substituted for Thy Bisschops in the Dutch team, but only scored one point.



BUDDY FULLER GILBERT BROWN FRED WILLS
(Official-rider) (Promoter-official) (Champion)

IT'S the 21st birthday of speedway in South Africa. And after a long uphill struggle—tracks opened, tracks closed, there were years with nobody to organise riders and meetings—the sport of the flying cinders has now grown from a raw-boned youngster into a strapping healthy man, able to take a place among other major sports.

Wanderers (1930-32) ... Malvern Stadium (1936-37) ... The Old Barn on the Heidelberg Road (1939) ... and again a rebuilt track at The Old Barn (1946) ... These were the milestones on the road which led to speedway making its home at Wembley Stadium (Johannesburg) in 1947. Since then it has progressed to such an extent that its life-line is no longer in danger.

But the rapid advancement, both in and out of the track since 1946 has seen little short of meteoric. Over 10 South African riders have appeared on the programmes during the last five years, and seven—Fuller, Wills, Henry Long, Bob Serrurier, Doug Serrurier, Bob Gould and Syd van der Vyver—have been winners to ride for English League teams.

The cinders have been churned up and smoothed out on three tracks this season—Wembley, Prince George Park, Boksburg, and Bloemfontein, and enthusiasm for the sport, based on estimated attendance figures for this season, is higher than ever.

They Say . . .

SO, with this rosy picture in view, I invited three of the sport's leading names to answer the question: "What does the future hold?"

"We're definitely past the growing-pains stage," reflects man-about-speedway Buddy Fuller, who is now chairman of the South African Speedway Association. "Look for new tracks at Durban, Pretoria, North and Bulawayo and a training track on land near The Old Barn."

And seasoned Fred Wills, the South African and Wembley motorcycle champion, who takes little of the track, preferring action in the saddle, considers the standard of riding among the top-headers has never been higher.

Both Fuller and Wills agree that several young riders—Des Wolf, Fred

ERIC LITCHFIELD . . .

. . . reviews South Africa's sport of the flying cinders now celebrating its 21st birthday. He finds it is "sprouting." The men who matter in the game talk of new tracks being built at Durban, Pretoria North and Bulawayo—the first step towards a National Speedway League. It all adds up to . . .

SPEEDWAY IS OVER THE STAGE OF ITS GROWING-PAINS

Van Zyl, Roy Bester, Maurice Fenton and George Wainot—have it in them to become leading figures in a few years' time. The new tracks for Durban, Pretoria North and Bulawayo are not mere dreams. Last week the three members who form a board of directors at Durban, where permission has been given to build a speedway track at Roy Park. This is the most important move made outside Johannesburg. Why? Because the coastal town has always supported car and motorcycle racing, and there is obviously a big following for any sport involving oil and fumes.

Says Gilbert Brown: "Durban officials are very keen to work with the S.A.S.A. and the track should be ready by August for the opening meeting."

310-yard Circuit

FULLER, who pegged out the new track, measuring 310 yards—its smaller circuit than Wembley, but smaller circuits produce better racing. Fuller says: "It is a keen for Natal riders to take their place alongside the Transvaal cracker."

"Natal riders may take a little time to learn the art of the cinders sport, but when a coastal team can hold its own in outside company, then a National Speedway League will be round the corner," said Fuller. "But it is not a shortage of talent, but it has got to be trained. This is

where chairman-manager Gilbert Brown's enterprise comes in. A start will be made this week on a new track on land 15 miles along the Heidelberg Road," he told me.

Plans include a 350-yard circuit, clubhouse, swimming pool and six tennis courts built in attractive surroundings.

Popular belief is that our speedway stars are professional sportsmen. Well, I don't suppose they would pass muster for, say, the Olympic Games committee because of the heavy expenses which are paid to them, but it's down in black and white that the sport of speedway is amateur.

There is no skillings for points system here—that would infringe amateur rule—but riders are given generous expenses for various items of equipment and maintenance.

They are entitled to it. Look at the list of current expenses: Leathers (£30), machine (£200), top-notchers and two machines, new engine (£80) and a leading rider needs a new engine a season, special dope and oil (£1 a gallon), rear tyres (£5), and a rear tyre lasts only five meetings. Add in the transport or machines to the tracks and nobody will begrudge the riders' expenses.

The days of full-time speedway in the Union are still far ahead. But the opening of new tracks and an increase in the number of riders and teams will be a step nearer that goal.

Pirates must win to keep speedway league chance

Johannesburg Pirates, with Buddy Fuller back in the saddle, appear to be all set for a win in their Transvaal speedway league match against Boksburg Lions at Wembley Stadium to-morrow evening. If they lose, their chances of finishing at the top of the table will vanish, if they win, they must still beat Pretoria Tigers and Germiston Eagles to gain the title.

Racing at Wembley maintained its interest last week even without the attraction of the Holland team and Henry Long. To-morrow's match should be a thriller, for in addition to the league chances of Pirates being at stake, all riders, including some of the novices, will be keen to get match practice before the coming South African championship.

FULLER'S CHANCES

Fuller meets Fred Wills, Harry du Toit and Fred van Zyl (twice) in the league match and his chances of taking the national title from Wills will be judged by his success in these heats.

Doug Serrurier will be joined by Fuller, Wills and Bob Raw in attempts on the one lap record held by his three opponents, but the highlight of the evening should be the final of the scratch race series. Favourites to win their heats are Du Toit or Serrurier, Wills, Fuller and Joe Blankfield.

Wills Down—Then Fuller: Bester Wins

BUDDY FULLER and his brother-in-law Fred Wills were both unseated in the first heat at Wembley last night when Boksburg Lions beat Johannesburg Pirates 45-39 in a Transvaal League speedway match. Wills came down when he was in the lead during the first lap and Fuller hit his opponent's machine. Both riders remounted and filled the places behind Roy Bester (Boksburg Lions). This was Wills's only defeat.

Fuller also figured in the most exciting race of the match. It was in the fifth heat when he opposed Harry du Toit. The lead changed hands four times before Du Toit was first past the black and white flag.

DROPPED ONE POINT

Du Toit dropped only one point to Joe Blankfield in heat eight.

Fred van Zyl is now fulfilling his earlier promise. He took the ninth heat in 82.2—only one-tenth of a second outside the fastest times of the match put up by Wills and Fred van Zyl. Du Toit won and three seconds—it was a good showing.

Roy Bester (7 points) also showed improved form and helped towards his team's win.

Heat winners: Bester (L) 85.8; Du Toit (L) 82.2; A. Blankfield (P) 82.6; Wills (L) 86.3; Du Toit (L) 83.1; J. Blankfield (P) 82.9; Wills (L) 82.5; J. Blankfield (P) 83.1; Van Zyl (L) 82.2; Wills (L) 82.1; Du Toit (L) 83.3; Fuller (P) 82.1; A. Blankfield (P) 83.0; Hollenbach (P) 85.5.

Points scores: LIONS: Wills 11, Du Toit 11, Van Zyl 9, Bester 7, Wolf 5, Nelson 1, Smith 1; total: 45. PIRATES: J. Blankfield 10, A. Blankfield 10, Fuller 8, Hollenbach 4, McWilliam 3, Nicholls 2, Goodrum 2; total: 39.

The one lap start record of 19.4 held by Wills, Fuller and Bob Raw still stands. In attempts on this record last night, Doug Serrurier, Wills and Fuller were all clocked at 19.5 secs. Bob Raw clocked 19.9 secs.

Mills SPORTLIGHT Mills
April 21, 1951

DOUG SERRURIER
PRESIDENT HOLDER OF THE
YANX SPEEDWAY SILVER TROPHY
DEPENDS IT NEXT FRIDAY NIGHT, THE 27th, AT WEMBLEY

BUDDY FULLER
FORMER NATIONAL CHAMP
WILL RIDE

FRED WILLS

THRILLS GALORE!

NATIONAL CHAMPION IN TOP FORM

AND THE DEBUTS OF THE CINDER TRACK: BOSHOFF AND BLANKFIELD!

Sunday April 22, 1951 Speedway Stars

FOUR speedway stars came over the horizon as speedway began at Wembley Stadium 21 years ago. They were "Buddy" Fuller, Henry Long, Fred Wills and Doug Serrurier, and you can put them in any order of merit you fancy.

Just to show you how hard it is to break into the sport, I add that the same four riders are still South Africa's brightest stars. The fact is worrying officials: After all, nobody lasts forever, and some time some season, new crowd-pullers will be needed. And there's no more than 22 regular riders in the whole country.

A track "school" was opened at the start of the present season. Nearly 120 riders turned up; only about four have begun to look like developing into worthwhile material. "Speedway isn't so easy as it looks," said "Buddy" Fuller yesterday. "Any boy hoping to make the grade must work hard."

That's why Wembley officials are opening a new riding school at Vlakplaats on the Heidelberg road. "Anybody is open to try his luck," concluded Fuller. "If he looks like shaping as a rider, he will be taught the art of broad-sliding. The rest should come to him later on the cinder track—if he's keen enough and good enough."

The Vlakplaats circuit, dug out of a 72-acre stretch of the veld, will be hard and possibly rough. Apart from being oiled and rolled, it is being left alone.

It all sounds pretty tough to me. But if you think you can get in there and sit a speedway thunder-bore, you're welcome to try.

The first recruiting meeting takes place to-morrow night at Wembley Stadium.

A Tough Course

Bob Serrurier is the brand new South African speedway champion. He totalled a maximum 15 points from five rides to take the title off Fred Wills (8 points) at Wembley last night, and he thoroughly deserved this success.

The vital heat came when Serrurier met Harry du Toit, both unbeaten after three rides, in heat 14. But Du Toit and Raw fell in the last lap, leaving Bob Serrurier an easy winner.

Fred Wills, who was beaten by Serrurier in his first outing, had his engine seize in his second heat. Although he rode a borrowed machine for the rest of the championship, there was never any hope of it offering a serious challenge to retain the title he has held for the last two years.

Buddy Fuller, beaten in his first two outings by Raw and Bob Serrurier, finished with three firsts for 14 points and runner-up.

Leading scores: B. Serrurier 45, Wills 14, Du Toit 11, Fenton 10, Raw 9, Wolf 8, A. Blankfield 8, Wills 8, D. Serrurier 8, Boshoff 8.

Raw Wins Last Heat—and Yanx Trophy

Bob Raw, chosen as a non-travelling reserve for the seven-man Springbok speedway touring team, won the Yanx trophy 20-heat event at Wembley last night. But it wasn't until he had collected three points from the last heat and Fred Wills had been forced into third place in the same race that Raw could claim the trophy.

Coming up for the last heat Raw (starting from 10 yards behind the starting gate) was on the 10-point mark while Wills (30 yards behind the starting gate) had 11 points.

It had to be Raw first and Wills no better than third if Raw was to get the trophy. And that's what happened. Boshoff, hugged the white line to keep Wills out of second place.

Doug Serrurier, the holder, finished with nine points, but it was a bad night for Buddy Fuller who was unseated three times. Still Fuller and Wills clocked the faster times (82.6) of the night.

Heat winners: Wolf 82.7; Wills 83.2, D. Serrurier 84.1, Raw 84.9, Wills 83.3, Fenton 84.9, Boshoff 84.9, Raw 85.5, Wolf 84.6, Wills 84.2, D. Serrurier 85.4, Boshoff 85.1, Wills 82.6, Fuller 82.6, B. Serrurier 83.2, Joe Blankfield 82.9, Gould 84.7, Raw 82.9.

Leading points scores: Raw 13, Wills 12, Wolf 12, Boshoff 11, D. Serrurier 9, Gould 8, H. Serrurier 7, Fenton 7.

Wills Retains 5th Title

FRED WILLS, 32-year-old South African speedway champion, successfully defended his Wembley match race title for the seventh consecutive time on the Wembley circuit last night. He beat his brother-in-law, Buddy Fuller, in two rides.

Wills took this premier match event in South African speedway of Fuller 12 months ago. Since then, as has held off the challenges of Raw, Doug Serrurier, Jonker and Metzelaar (the two Dutchmen), Long and Joe Blankfield. And now he has again beaten the previous holder.

It looked all over a Fuller win in the first heat, when the challenger "gated" faster and held the lead until the last bend of the three-lap heat. But Fuller drifted wide, allowing Wills to pass him on the inside and in trying to correct his overside, Fuller "hit the cinders," Wills' winning time was 86.6 seconds.

Fuller was again first out of the gate in the second heat, but his lead lasted only until the second bend. Here Wills shot through on the white line and held his lead to win in 61.4 seconds.

Johannesburg Pirates, helped by a maximum from Buddy Fuller and Alec Blankfield's 11 points, had a comfortable 20-32 Transvaal League win over Pretoria Tigers.

There was an unusual incident when Syd van der Vyver (Pirates) and Toby Boshoff (Tigers) dead-heated for second place in heat seven.

Heat winners: Fuller (P) 80.5, Raw (T) 81.2, A. Blankfield (P) 82.6, Boshoff (T) 83.3, Fuller (P) 79.9, J. Blankfield (P) 82.5, A. Blankfield (P) 81.7, Raw (T) 83.1, Fuller (P) 80.7, J. Blankfield (P) 83.2, Van der Vyver (P) 83.4, Fuller (P) 80.8, A. Blankfield (P) 83.5, Fenton (T) 82.8.

Points scores: Johannesburg Pirates: Fuller 12, A. Blankfield 11, J. Blankfield 8, van der Vyver 64, Klotzwyk 5, Goodrum 3, McWilliam 3, Hollenbach 2, Total 501.

Tigers: Raw 9, Boshoff 81, Fenton 7, Gould 4, Reid 3, Nicholls 1, Root 1, Smith 1, Total 321.

BLANKFIELD'S FIRST TITLE

"A LSC BLANKFIELD thoroughly deserved to win the Transvaal Championship," said speedway ace, Fred Wills, after Saturday night's meeting before a big crowd at Boksburg.

It was a generous tribute by the runner-up and no more than was deserved. Alec Blankfield, who has struck his best form just before the Springbok team—he has been selected in this seven-man team—leaves for Europe, was his first championship.

He scored maximum points from five rides. But the "decider" was really heat 14 in which Blankfield met Wills, Bob and Doug Serrurier. All four riders had nine points from three rides as they went to the tapes.

Blankfield, who gated very fast throughout the meeting, was first away and kept a comfortable lead throughout the four laps.

Blankfield still had to beat Fuller in the last heat of the championship to win the title. Again he burst from the gate and held on to gain another three points—and a popular championship success.

Heat winners: Wills 83.5, B. Serrurier 84.1, A. Blankfield 84.5, D. Serrurier 85.4, D. Serrurier 84.1, Wills 84.9, A. Blankfield 84.5, Wills 85.1, heat 11 cancelled, D. Serrurier 86.2, B. Serrurier 85.3, A. Blankfield 83.7, Fuller 87.5, Raw 85.4, B. Serrurier 84.8, Wills 85.8, Raw 85.7, A. Blankfield 84.9.

Leading scores: Alec Blankfield 15, Wills 14, Bob Serrurier 13, Doug Serrurier 11, Raw 11, Du Toit 10, Fuller 9, Wolf 8.

Cinder Track at Show



The East Rand's newest cinder track, built for the Transvaal Show which opens at Springs on May 24, was tested out by two dirt-track riders, Alec Gould (left) and Buddy Fuller. They found the track to their liking. "We shall get a great kick and the crowd a great kick," said Fuller. Followers of dirt-track racing will see their favourites in action on the eve of the departure of the Springbok motorcycle team for competitions in Britain.

Bob Serrurier New Speedway Champion

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South African Speedway Supporters Club

1951

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F.Wills, B.Raw, B.Fuller, J.Blankfield, D.Serrurier, B.Serrurier, H.duToit, A.Blankfield.



L>R: Wim van Hemelrijk, Gerrit Jonker, Jan Bosman (on bike), Bert Willard, Thei Bisschopps, Henk Dammers; Knlg L>R: Joop Nolten, Tinus Metzelaar.



See '50/'51 slideshow for full set of the season's photographs, - action, portrait, teams.