

1982 "Maunakea 200"

By Steve Quinn

The team of Doss Tannehill (Motorcycle Committee chairman), Jack "JB" Beaumont and Brant Ackerman placed third in a field that included world-class competition at the 1982 "Maunakea 200" enduro motorcycle race on the Big Island this past Memorial Day weekend. Brant Ackerman earned additional honors by finishing fifth in his class, no small feat considering he rode most of his second day with a cracked collarbone. Other OCC riders were Mark Buck, Robbie Bright and Steve Quinn.

This year's annual two-day event started seven miles above Hilo on the Saddle Road. It was sponsored by the "Rock Island Riders" of the Big Island, and attracted such known riders as the Malcolm Smith Husqvarne racing team from Riverside, California.

The race began on the pavement, but immediately progressed to "off road" riding across lava flows, through dense



Left to right are Al Sarafin, Steve Quinn and Mark Buck at the start above Hilo on the saddle road.

tropical Hilo forests, over cane-field roads, slushy trails, miles of rough dirt road with very deep puddles, and finally endless miles of *a'a* lava. The riders who didn't break down covered 113 miles and ended up at the Pohakuloa Ranger Cabins for the night. Some of

the "puddles" referred to were more like small lakes, frequently spelling disaster for even the best riders who happened to pick the wrong line in attempting these amphibious crossings. Many wound up completely submerged and had to pump water out of their engines to get them started again.

At the end of a grueling first day, aching riders tossed fittfully in their bunks, dreaming about avoiding imaginary boulders and cliffs, trying to rest, but too exhausted to really sleep. The second day, covering 123 miles, started at the Ranger Cabins, then crossed Parker Ranch pastureland to Waimea town. From the Maunakea slopes just past Waimea, the course proceeded *mauka* up and around the backside of Maunakea to the 12,000-foot elevation. Much of the course passed through low clouds. These combined with drizzling rain reduced visibility in some instances to as little as 30 feet or so. Around the backside, bikes churned up loose lava and the moisture in the air caused steam to rise as if the lava were cooling from a recent flow. The second day included all sorts of volcanic terrain and spectacular sights before riders emerged from the isolated side of Maunakea.

Bikes were packed in vans and shipped by Young Brothers barge about one week before the race. Riders went over the day before the race and stayed in Kona for the remainder of the Memorial Day weekend before returning to Oahu. Joining the OCC group were

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Duncan Brown and his wife, Marilyn, from Phoenix. Duncan prepped with OCC the day before, rode well until he gashed his elbow midway through the first day, and joined us in the celebrations afterwards, along with other riding pals from Oahu.

Mark Buck was unanimously selected to receive the "Directional Iggy" award (nothing personal Jon) for mistaking Mauna Loa for Maunakea, and ending the first day with a flat tire and out of gas. Beaumont and Ackerman deserve credit for finding and rescuing Buck, who luckily found a phone at the Moana Loa Observatory and sent a distress call to his teammates across the Saddle at the cabins on Maunakea. Starting at about 4 p.m., after just completing the first day's ride, Beaumont and Ackerman borrowed a truck and drove to the observatory. High altitude prolonged this mercy mission because scarce oxygen in the air prevented the truck from going more than about 5 miles per hour as they neared the observatory.

One of the Club's more experienced racers, Robbie Bright, was doing great until he pushed too hard on the throttle and seized his engine on the paved

roads just a few miles from the finish on the first day.

"Stinky" Quinn, the same who "crashed on the way to the start" in the Opaulea Invitational, and also the recipient of the perpetual Yick-Lung "Most Likely To Suck-Seed" award for his performance in the Opaie Invite, surprised some by his entry in the Maunakea 200. Fellow rider Mike Muller commented just days before the scheduled departure for Hilo, but too late for Quinn to cancel, "You must be crazy! Either that, or you've greatly improved." Slightly shook, Quinn went anyway. After the first day's riding, he was so exhausted that he threatened not to ride day two. However, motivated by the long list of nonfinishers and greatly inspired by Buck's determination to fix his flat tire even if it meant borrowing a rim, Quinn got a second wind and completed the race.

Both Ackerman and Quinn came away lame from crashes on the second day; Ackerman with a cracked collarbone, and Quinn with a shoulder-muscle tear. Bright, the only other casualty, was injured slightly, but as a result of recreational activity, not

the race.

Tannehill, who never finished in his previous tries, and always experienced some difficulty getting going in the past, had some good news and some bad news this year. The bad news was that when Doss pulled up to the starting line his bike wouldn't start. But, in his customary cool-head fashion, Doss simply pulled his bike aside, gave it a swift kick, got back on, started it, and got under way slightly behind from the start. The good news was the he finished the race this year with a Third-Place Team finish. Amazing how a little maturing influence from Punahou guys mellow out those Kam School boys.

As chairman of the committee and de facto captain of the OCC teams, Doss and his lovely wife, Scrappy, assisted with hotel accommodations and helpful hints on bike preparation and how to prevent flats during the race. All of the OCC participants greatly appreciate the Club support in making this year's "Maunakea 200" a fun success. And a special note of thanks to Dougie Carr on the Big Island for taking care of the vans and getting them loaded and unloaded for us.