



There they go in the terrific massed start that features each year's Big Bear. Some of the riders are rolling already, a split second after the starting signal. Photo by Campbell.

AUB LeBARD, B. S. A., TAKES BIG BEAR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR

By
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and
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THE puff of smoke from the starting bomb was seen to hang in the air for a split second before the sound of it burst on the ears of the aggregation of riders and motorcycle enthusiasts who had assembled in the biting cold of the desert morning.

There was a moment's silence as the riders ran to their mounts, then pandemonium broke loose. Two hundred and thirty-two engines were kicked over, almost in unison, caught with an ear-splitting, spine-tingling roar that startled and thrilled the huge crowd as the riders literally hurdled over the first small rise on the way to Big Bear.

Within seconds, riders and machines were obscured by thick clouds of dust churned up by the thundering herd, and the sounds of the pack died away across the desert.

A peculiar quiet descended where Bedlam had reigned, as those who had witnessed the greatest thrill in motorcycling—the massed start of the Big Bear—gathered their wits and slowly regained some semblance of composure.

As the dust rose, it was quite evident that not all of the riders had negotiated those first three or four washboard hills; there were several machines tangled up, and a few who "didn't get her on the first kick," but with a little help the first casualties were off to follow the tracks and dust into the distance.

Several hours and 150 rugged miles later, a fine gentleman by the name of Aub LeBard came flying around a bend on a mountain road high up in the San Bernardino mountains to find a large group of people eagerly awaiting the arrival of the first rider. It was the third successive year that Aub was the first

finish—the winner. The man is incredible!

This year the Big Bear was started on the desert about twelve miles east of Victorville, Calif., and was so routed that only one major highway crossing was necessary.

The course selected was, according to



Aub LeBard looks pretty tired after his history-making victory. Note facial lacerations. Everyone had his share of spills. Aub's B.S.A. is the same he rode last year and he has high regard for this mount—nearly fifty runs without mishap. The man on Aub's right is his fine and proud

the experts, the toughest yet. The actual finish was just out of the town of Fawnskin, which is located on the shores of Big Bear Lake, at some 7000 feet elevation. The desert portion of the run was extremely rough, with lots of loose sand, rocks and hills. The mountain section ran over trails and logging roads. It was an arduous, man and machine killing event.

This 1951 race included one check, No. 4, that proved to be disastrous for the majority of the riders. They missed it. As a result, only thirteen of the thirty-eight who checked in at Fawnskin had "clean" check sheets, and several of the "13" had back tracked as much as eighteen miles to find the lost check.

Thus 232 started—38 checked in at the finish and only 13 had all the checks.

Aub LeBard's ability to pick his way across the desert and mountain, following the lime, is unbelievable. That he has won the last three years, defeating the nation's best, is a fine tribute to his skill and courage. But Aub trains diligently, and his mounts are in perfect shape, too—so it isn't just luck.

The weather was perfect for the run—cold and crisp. The desert run was dusty, but only scattered patches of snow and ice were encountered in the mountain.

At the start, the machines were lined up abreast in a sandy hollow. After a run of some fifty feet, a rolling rise approximately twenty feet high presented itself, then down into another hollow and up again. Most of the spectators at the start lined the course for a quarter of a mile on each side, taking advantage of these rises, so few saw the

actual start, but could hear the deafening take-off of the motors and the almost immediate appearance of the riders surmounting the first hill. It was truly an amazing sight—they seemed to pop right up out of the ground.

"Jonesy" of M.C.M. Muffer fame predicted that "when that starting bomb goes off and all those riders come over that hill together, there's going to be iron spread all over a square mile of this desert." He was just about right, too.

This kid, Vern Hancock, looks like a comer—only been riding six months, and finished 41st.

"Feets" Minert missed a check, but finished. He had two flats, in fact, came in on one.

Guy Louis, who has been a contestant in many of these races, knew he had missed a check, No. 4, and along with Julie Kroeger and, as he says "a whole parade," back tracked eighteen miles to get the mark. Guy finished 8th.

Del Kuhn was second man in at the finish, but missed No. 4. Del was pretty upset, after closing up on Aub LeBard in the final miles of the race. He had a flat 10 miles from the start, and had to change a wheel at the first emergency gas check. In spite of all the beefing over the No. 4 check, Del, with second spot slipping away from him, never put up an argument. A real sportsman.

Nick Nicholson was running in No. 3 spot, only three miles from the finish, and broke a chain.

The riders complained of one bad hill which was a mass of rocks. The boys really had trouble getting over, especially the big machines, and all were pretty well convinced that the hill should have been by-passed.

Another common complaint was of

"poor marking." Not enough lime spread and some places it led up dead end canyons; with the boys all milling and circling, it was almost impossible to pick up the course again.



Dalton Holladay rode his Matchless to second place. Photo by Campbell.

The highly controversial No. 4 check was situated back of a sizable lava hill. The course led over the hill and down into the check. Complaints of poor marking resulted in most of the riders bypassing the hill and picking up the lime on the next tangent. The boys followed tracks and dust, instead of lime.

Max Bubeck discovered at Lucerne that he had missed a check, and called it a day.

The Mustangs got a rousing cheer when they roared thru Lucerne. Walt Fulton ran out of gas about 15 miles from the finish—and he had all the checks, too. Tough luck for a good rider and a sturdy little machine.

Tex Luse, on an Indian TT was going like crazy until he put a big rock through his transmission.

Julius Kroeger, who finished in 5th spot, rode out from New York state for the 4th year to compete in the Big Bear. He says there will have to be two feet of snow next year, or else!

Ralph Prickett from Albuquerque, New Mexico is getting to be a regular competitor in the big events in Southern California, and winning a lot of friends and a great deal of respect for his riding ability.

Roy Burke, that popular B.S.A. dealer from Portland, Oregon, brought a formidable crew with him—eight riders in all—and talk was heard everywhere about the outstanding job of riding he did. He was among the first to come into the finish line, but he too lacked all the checks.

The one entry from Illinois was none other than that famous National TT Champion, Roger Soderstrom. He hit a rock which blew his front tire. This happened when he was over-riding to get back on course after losing the lime. Roger's reaction to the Big Bear was that it was a wonderful course, but he was disappointed that it was not conducted to give the majority of the riders a better chance of finishing.

The "Official Finishers" list shows that between fifteen and twenty dealers were among the starters. Another group that was well represented was the Class A Short Track boys. Two service men, who had obtained special week-end passes for the event, were also among the riders, as well as one bonafide doctor.

Father and son combination Bill (dad) and Dale (16 yrs.) Martin were unable to compete together this year, as Bill

Left—LeBard pauses briefly to get checker's stamp. Note camouflaged helmet. Julie Kroeger says, "That LeBard doesn't appear to be going, but just try to latch on behind the guy." Right—Del Kuhn's Matchless is serviced by Frank Coopers gang. Look at those people work. They pumped hundreds of gallons of gas and poured many cans of oil into the machines at strategic locations along the course. Photos by Phebus.



had a broken foot, sustained in the (preparatory) Little Bear Run. They will be remembered as the ones who were lost in the mountains overnight following last year's Big Bear. Dale finished in 166th spot in this, his 3rd Big Bear-Run.

Another father and son combination were the Zarembas, Bruce Sr. and Bruce Jr. (14 yrs.) who made a nice start, but ran into difficulty after the 1st check. Another younger member of the family, Donald Lee, had an entry in, but was unable to ride because of a broken arm.

Among the thirty-five starters who failed to reach the first check for various reasons, was Bob Daly, who rode a Rudge. Bob, in spite of the handicap of an artificial arm, has persevered in his motorcycle riding, even, as in this instance, participated in some Class C competition.

Frank "Slim" Kocher, one of the old timers around these parts, finished this year in 11th place, the first Harley to sign in with all checks. "Slim" has been riding the Big Bear Run for many years, having won that event in 1941. Much credit was given at that time to his notorious red beard. He and Don Alfred, who was this year's scout for the Three Point Club, were old riding buddies of Royal Carroll, Sr., who, until his death, carried most of the responsibility of conducting the Big Bear Run each year. Many tales are still told of the tricks these boys used to play on each other.

An entry from S/Sgt. Walt C. Moore, of the Hilltopper M/C was received from Japan. He sent word that he hopes to be home for next year's run.

Lammy Lamoreaux, popular and well known Short Track artist was first over the hill at the start—he was flying low on his screaming Triumph in true racing style. He checked into Fawnskin in sixth or seventh spot, only to find that he had missed the No. 2 check, eliminating him from the finishers. Another tough break.

No serious injuries were reported. One rider came into a check, complained of his hand hurting. The checker removed his glove, and found a piece of Spanish Bayonet (spine tipped leaf from a Yucca) had broken off in his hand: The rider took one look and passed out. While he was on cloud No. 8, the checkers took pliers and pulled it out, applied antiseptics and bandages. The rider revived, took a slap on the back and was off again to the races.

Aub LeBard and his wife pulled a neat trick. As the riders usually follow a known rider, Mrs. Aub knitted a navy blue stocking cap for his riding helmet.



Roy Burke, Portland B.S.A. dealer, headed a large contingent south for the Big Bear. Photo by Campbell.

Just before the start they pulled that over the helmet. It worked beautifully—even Ernie May couldn't find Aub.

The Victor McLaglen Corps, under Major Nick deRush did a beautiful job of handling traffic at the start, the Lucerne gas check, and the finish.

Chuck Wilson, owner of Fawnskin Lodge, opened a store and provided plenty of heat, a wash room and lots of hot coffee for the riders. The President of the Chamber of Commerce was out directing activities, assisted by the Fire Warden and others. First aid was ready, including a truck made into an ambulance.

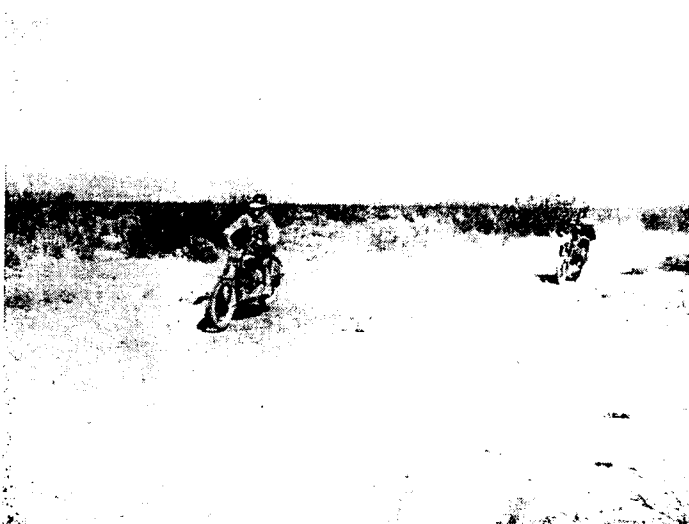
OFFICIAL RESULTS

- 1—Aub LeBard B.S.A.
- 2—Dalton Holladay Matchless
- 3—Willie Wilson B.S.A.
- 4—Ed Sumner B.S.A.
- 5—Julius Kroeger A.J.S.
- 6—Ernie Graff B.S.A.
- 7—Howard M. Guy A.J.S.
- 8—Guy R. Louis Matchless
- 9—Ray Phillips B.S.A.
- 10—Butsy Mueller Ariel
- 11—Frank Kocher Harley
- 12—Milt Gowman Norton
- 13—Stubby Free Triumph
- 14—Pat Doherty A.J.S.
- 15—Bill West Triumph
- 16—Don Cole Indian
- 17—Ralph Prickett B.S.A.
- 18—Walt Harper Velo.
- 19—Tommy Lark Triumph
- 20—Allen Cole Indian
- 21—A. Don Jones B.S.A.
- 22—Glen Lenz B.S.A.
- 23—Robert Thomas Triumph
- 24—Richard C. Fator Triumph
- 25—Bud Sage Triumph
- 26—Vern Loveland Indian
- 27—Francis Garbisch Velo.
- 28—Harold Emmick Triumph
- 29—Donald Lee Morgan Triumph
- 30—Andrew Martinez Triumph
- 31—Frank Landry Harley

In spite of closing the mountain checks at a given time, some of the boys were out in Rattlesnake Canyon when darkness fell. They built fires, both for warmth and to attract other riders. The canyon looked like Sunset Blvd. for a while. All the riders got out safely.

Keenan Wynn, a regular entry in the Big Bear for several years, has been MC at the last few Trophy Presentations. He usually bemoans the fact that he didn't win a trophy. This year he received a baby-blue, fur-lined pottie, presented to "The first 34 year old actor to make a mountain out of a molehill."

Detailed results, recapitulations and some interesting comparisons with former years will be found on page 22.



Lammy Lamoreaux pours it on his Triumph across a broad desert highway. Lammy finished right up there, but missed a check.



Del Kuhn, just after leaving the check at Baldwin Lake, high in the mountains and some twenty miles from the finish at Fawnskin.