

Lockhart blazes his way to Canadian title

By Guy Bertrand
Times Sports Editor

It began out of curiosity, became a passion and ended up with a Canadian championship.

For Warfield's Kerry Lockhart going fast on his motorcycle was always a thrill but when he decided to see how he matched up against other fast bikes he never dreamed where the ride would eventually take him.

That ride ended two weeks ago in Mission when he claimed the Canadian Motorcycle Drag Racing Association overall title in the Supergas Division at the season finale.

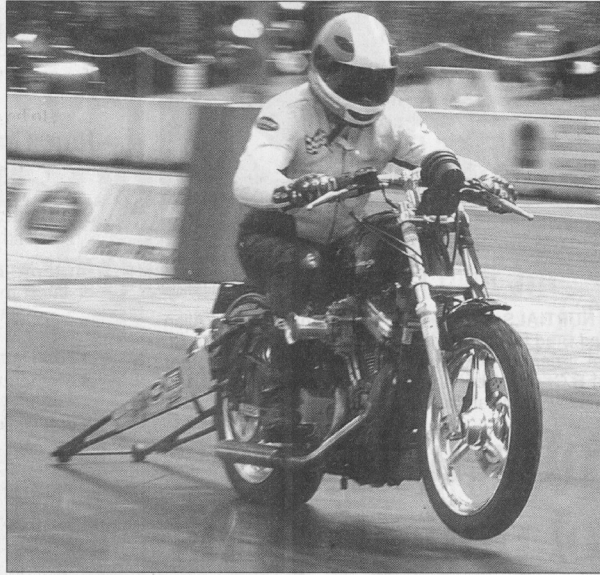
"It was a dream come true," said Lockhart. "I had not only won the CMDRA Supergas class but I did it on a street legal Harley Davidson."

His taste for racing began like many other motorcycle riders curious to see how fast they could get their bikes going. So he took his bike to Kelowna to test it out on a drag strip.

"I just thought my bike was fast. And the proving grounds for whether your street bike is fast is supposed to be the drag strip not the road. The track's a safe place.

"I found it was not so scary and a lot of fun. I got the bug."

He learned about the CMDRA



and attended several events in 2004 and held his own in street bike classes. However, last winter he wanted more so he dipped into his pocket book, did some research and purchased a bike out of North Carolina.

"I needed to find an even faster bike than the Harley I had already," said Lockhart.

He found a 2002 Harley Davidson Sportster that was owned by a 72-year-old American who wanted to get back into racing. The gentleman had the engine rebuilt by one of the top builders in the States but eventually found it too much for him. Luckily Lockhart was

looking for that kind of bike and a deal was made.

He entered the Canadian circuit in the Supergas Division open to any variety of Harley Davidson bike, the majority of which are built from the ground up and costing owners over \$40,000.

The circuit featured seven stops in Alberta and B.C. and about eight riders battling it out in an elimination ladder in the Supergas division.

Lockhart looked very much like the new kid on the block with his street bike slightly souped up for racing against monster machines.

"The dedicated drag bikes are very expensive and very focused. To take your street class bike and put it in a real dedicated drag bike class is like bringing a knife to a gunfight," he said. "Nobody does that. And the ones that do don't win."

"I was my own mechanic, I was my own pit guy so if something went wrong it got really hectic. Fortunately the bike was very well built and very well maintained and it held together for the whole year."

As a rookie in the class, he had no sponsors, no pit crew and was responsible for all the expenses.

"It was me, myself and I. I was trying to make the bike as fast as possible on a reasonable budget."

He realized after losing his first two races that he needed to beef up his bike a bit more.

"By the time the third race came around I used a street bike technique that nobody in this class was using. I applied nitrous oxide to



WARFIELD FLASH: Kerry Lockhart won the Canadian Motorcycle Drag Racing Association's Supergas championship earlier this month in Mission.

the bike and the bike became incredibly fast.

"That kit was good for about three-tenths of a second. Enough to put me in front of the pack."

His bike was now going from zero to 60 miles an hour in three seconds. He was reaching a speed of 140 miles an hour in a quarter of a mile.

"It's not about speed," he explained. "It's about the acceleration."

He won his next two races, placed third in the two after that to sit tied atop the standings with one race to go.

His performance raised eyebrows from competitors with overhauled bikes built specifically to tear down a drag strip.

"There was some tension because these guys have their \$30,000 or \$40,000 bikes and here I am showing up on my little Sportster and winning."

"This type of drag racing is actually, in my opinion, like tennis. It isn't always the person who plays the best who wins. Everybody plays well. The least errors wins. I like to think I did a pretty good job."

"The first 60-feet is the part the rider is responsible for then after that the motorcycle and the power

and the engine take over."

He traveled to each of the seven stops on the circuit, which went as far north as Fort St. John.

Yet after all those miles and days away from home he was deadlocked for top spot heading into the season finale in Mission on Sept. 18.

"As luck would have it I ended up meeting (his rival atop the standings) in the semifinals in Mission. There we were head-to-head and the winner of that race would be the champion for the year."

"It was a very tense moment. It lasted 10 seconds and it was over. I got down to the end and discovered I had won and it was quite a feeling."

"(Crossing the finish line) was an amazing release of tension, frustration that had built up during the year," recalled Lockhart. "It was a ton of travelling, a ton of expenses. The staff at the store (he owns Sound West in Trail) were wonderful to cover for me. And my wife Deanne was very understanding."

There was a cherry atop all that icing on his cake the next day when he was named the CMDRA's Rookie of the Year at the windup banquet featuring riders from across Canada and the U.S.

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CMDRA champion

"That was out of the blue," he admitted.

Now the bug has taken an even bigger bite out of Lockhart. Sponsors have taken notice and have been in contact and he's already thinking about next year.

"I didn't think winning the championship was going to be a realistic goal," he admitted. "So

there really wasn't going to be a next year."

"But as I was getting ready for the final race I suddenly realized it's not about winning or losing. It's about the journey. You realize throughout the year you love it because it's a sport you enjoy and the people you meet and the camaraderie."

So now is there going to be a next year?

"You have to come back and defend the title," said Lockhart smiling before pausing. "Okay you don't have to ... but you want to. It is too much fun."