

1966 – A snapshot review first published in '50 Years of Cycle Speedway' by The British Cycle Speedway Council in 1996.

1966

BCSF Rocked by Resignation of Top Officials

BCSF clubs were rocked by the shock resignation of two of the Federation's leading officials. Chairman Derek Bacon and executive member John Whittaker announced their decision after a disagreement with fellow officers over disciplinary proceedings against Beckenham rider Wally Dighton. In his resignation letter, Bacon wrote "It is my considered opinion that the decision to rescind our original ruling concerning the case of Dighton can only serve to weaken both the dignity and solidarity of the executive committee".

New Team in Mansfield

A new team has been formed in Mansfield. Although Blidworth Red Stars originally formed in 1963, they only really came into being in 1966. Their first track was built in a field but now they are seeking a new site. The club has had a great deal of help from Mr A E Oaken of the Blidworth Boys' Club. Their first match at Leicester on 8 May resulted in a convincing win by the home side who won 56-16. The scorers for Stars were P Young 7, J Hubbard 4, P Crowder 3, P Speed 1, J Holroyd 1, A Mathers 0.

Tottenham All Lit Up!

In spite of threatening thunder clouds, a fair sized crowd turned up on Thursday 12 May 1966 for the advent of the first floodlit match at Stonebridge Lock. Edmonton Monarchs, for many years the Kangaroos friends and rivals, provided the opposition. Malc Reading and Bernie Cable showed they were suffering no ill effects from their dash up from Southampton where they were working. They provided good support for Tottenham's top scorer Pete Hooper. The Monarchs, who had John Cobbin guesting, fought back well but couldn't prevent Tottenham winning by 39 points to 33.

Merger Demands Escalate

In the weeks that followed Bacon's resignation, the cycle speedway press was flooded with letters calling for a merger. Robin Martakies said joining forces "was the obvious thing to do. For too long both parties have been engaged in a cold war which is ridiculous. A controlling body containing the best of both worlds would be in an excellent position to bargain on behalf of the sport."

John Leith added his weight when he wrote "The war between NACSA and the BCSF can do nothing but harm cycle speedway. Yet neither side can consider getting round the table. They are only interested in ensuring their own images remain intact."

Cycle speedway journalist Barry Shapley called for a BCSF/NACSA merger. He wrote "Mr Bacon was the BCSF. His word, more than any others, held tremendous sway in policy and decision making. He would never, or so it appeared, have agreed to peace with NACSA at any price. I think now a merger is nearer than ever."

Legal Action Contemplated to Recover Trophy

Legal action is being contemplated by the Birmingham Cycle Speedway Control Board against Cradley Heath for the non-return of a cup which one of their riders won two years ago. Numerous letters have been sent to their club manager, Mr A Clarke, who has not replied or acknowledged any of them.

Southampton Show-Down

The long awaited clash between the giants of Southampton cycle speedway materialised on 16 and 23 August 1966 as the Saints, current British League leaders, and the Vikings, Home Counties League pace-setters, did battle for the Wootton Trophy, sponsored by ex-Bristol rider, Doug Wootton.

Saints' Winchester Road circuit was in immaculate condition, borne out by the fact that Rod Mills beat the track record in the opening heat. After an even start the Vikings went ahead in heat four and became the first team to win at Winchester Road this season, winning by 50.5 points to 44.5. Vikings' Rod Mills was the star of the show notching 13 points from his five starts. Dave Butcher top scored for Saints with nine points. In the return at Monksbrook, Colin Wheeler was in good form scoring 13 points but he couldn't prevent a Vikings' victory by 53 points to 43 and an overall victory by 103.5 to 87.5.

John Harry Suspended

John Harry, former Coventry test team captain and former manager of Brandon Bees cycle speedway club, was suspended for 12 months by the Coventry Cycle Speedway Association after he was found guilty of striking a match steward.

Gleave Wins Lancs Title

Following up his Southend Grand Prix win at Whitsun, Blackley's Graham Gleave added the Lancashire individual championship to his collection at Openshaw. Finishing second in his first race he went on to win all his others to total 14 points. Runner-up was home track favourite John Watchman (Openshaw) 13, with last year's winner Vinny Marsland third with 12.

Reiche's Hilversum Title

The Hilversham championship was held in Holland on 18 June. The track was very wet and slippery and several crashes occurred. Johan Koudijs did not take part, due to illness and the eventual winner was Donald Reiche with 15 points. Second was Klaas Hendriks with 13 points and third H Heerschop of Hollandse Welpen with 12 points.

SOUTH LONDON LOSE RECORD TO LEICESTER

Leicester Monarchs travelled to South London in a British League match and broke South London's unbeaten five year old record of home wins. It was a hard fought match between two very fine sides, with never more than a few points in it. Leicester finally edged home by 45 points to 51. The scores were South London Rangers 45 (Ted Cracknell 13, Arthur Ellis, Dave Ellis 9, Kelvin Wilson 5, Dave Hutton 3, Robin Voller 2, Ken Dare 2, Ray Foy 2) Leicester Monarchs 51 (John Knock 12, Wil Burns 11, Grant Warwick 10, Colin Warren 5, Bruce Ward 4, Steve Copley 4, Harry Glover 3, Bruce Heath 2).

1966

WALSH WINS AT WEDNESFIELD

Hours of heavy rain washed out several events at the annual Wednesfield Carnival, in the town's Ashmore Park, but the cycle speedway cup competition was ridden after a slight delay. The winner with 12 points was Ivor Walsh, the Midland Youth Champion from Kingstanding. Dave Underhill of Tipton was placed second after beating Doug Davis (Shelton) in a run-off, both riders having 11 points.

Defeat at Last for Sighthill Hammers

The big talking point in Edinburgh in June was the defeat of triple Edinburgh champions, Sighthill Hammers, in the city for the first time in four years. Granton Griffiths, their great rivals, were responsible for inflicting a 49-47 defeat at Sighthill. Nothing seemed to go right for the home team and they were soon four points down. Although Sighthill pulled back the leeway with a 5-1, Granton clinched the match with a 4-2 in the last heat to end Sighthill's long unbeaten run stretching back over 70 matches.

Galley Celebrate Norwich League Victory

The Norwich League this year resulted in a very close struggle between Galley Pirates and Eaton Tudors. Both teams lost silly points to the lower clubs through being understrength. Despite being beaten by Eaton, Galley went on to record their umpteenth successive league championship. In the last three years, Norwich Stars with Parkins, Hellesdon with Hurrell and Eaton with Harland have failed to knock the all-round strong Galley from their perch. Thorpe Saints and Galley Scorpions filled the minor positions.

Leicester are Triple Champions

By defeating Horspath 58-38 at Slater Street in their last British League match on Sunday, 16th October, Leicester made sure of the treble - British League champions, Gold Cup winners and Combination League champions. Southampton are once again runners-up. The match was run under very unpleasant conditions, a constant drizzle throughout and both teams and officials are to be commended for sticking it out to the end.

Devon League 1966

	P	W	D	L	For	Agst	Pts
Wipton Aces	12	11	0	1	715	440	22
Plymouth Devils	12	9	0	3	707.5	444.5	18
Dawlish Demons	12	8	0	4	637	512	16
Shaldon Kestrels	12	4	1	7	499	647	9
Exeter Tigers	12	4	0	8	552.5	619.5	8
Exmouth Vikings	12	3	1	8	523.5	636.5	7
Exeter Buccaneers	12	2	0	10	424.5	773.5	4

Ken McKinlay Shield

Sixteen year old Bernard Hunt, Thorpe Tigers, sensationally won the Ken McKinlay Trophy at the Norwich Heartsease track on October 23rd. He was in impressive form notching 14 points. Second was Barry Woodcock (Galley) with 13 points and third Chris Jones (Earlsdon) with 12 points. Successful national finalists Glen Jenkinson and Bill Savage of Warwick Blue Diamonds never really got to grips with the 100 yard track and finished well down the field. The holder was Harry Glover of Leicester Monarchs.

Fordham Takes Sheffield Title

Eddie Fordham (Stradbroke Arrows) won the Sheffield senior individual championship with 14 points. The only rider to finish in front of him was Tony Storr. Fordham also set a new track by winning his last race at the time of 37.6 seconds. Barry Moakes (Stradbroke Arrows) finished a surprise second with 12 points and Pete Wragg (Parson Cross Devils) finished third with 11 points. The first three in the senior are all junior riders.

DEVON REVIEW

Wipton Aces won the 1966 Devon League Championship for the sixth year running amid much controversy from their near neighbours, the Plymouth Devils. By all accounts Plymouth were desperately unlucky not to win. In their away match with Exeter Tigers they were told the fixture was cancelled and never turned-up but the League Committee decided the match should have taken place and promptly awarded the Tigers two match points.



*Sighthill Hammers created cycle speedway history in 1966 when they became the first Scottish side to win the national team championship. The Edinburgh side were involved in a titanic struggle with Cheshire's Offerton Devils, finally winning by 50 points to 46 at Eastleigh Park, Southampton. Pictured here are (back row left to right): - Jim Borge, Jack Pinkerton, Dougie Bald, John Tait, John Cockburn
Front row:- Gordon Whitehead, Don Moir and Tam Daly.*