



Stan Currington's career included stints with Maico, Yamaha and Can-Am (pictured).

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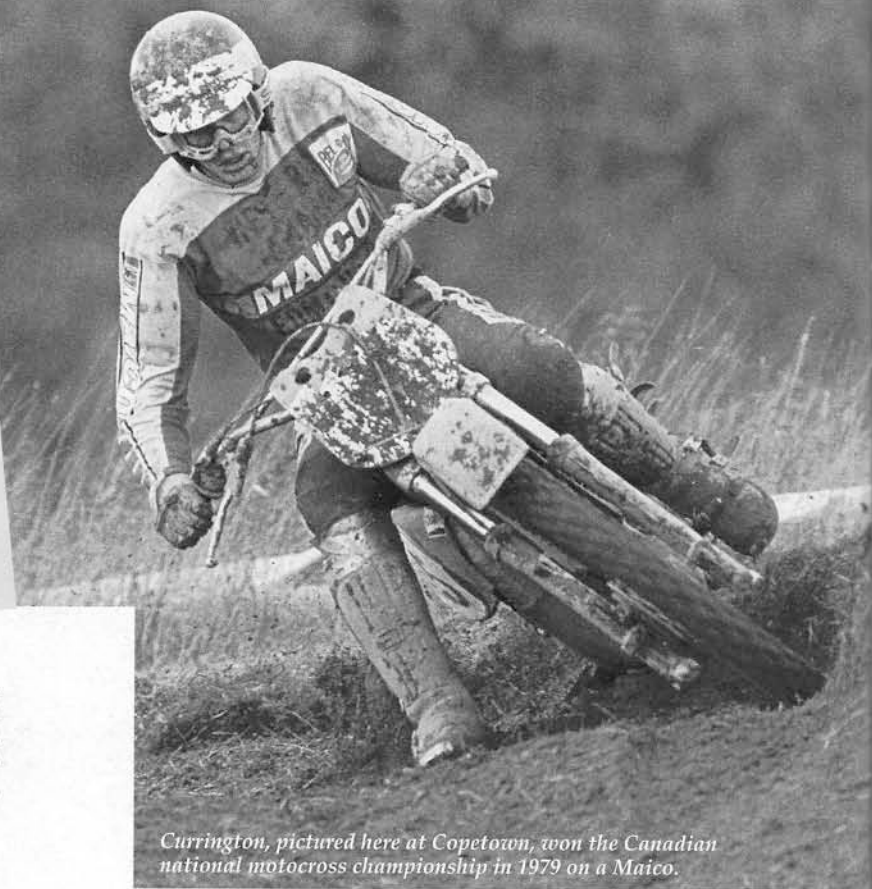
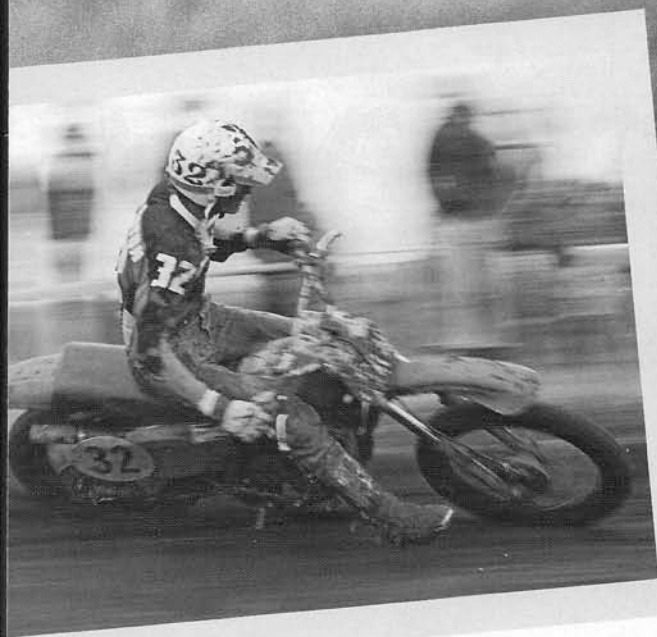
Canadian MX champion Stan Currington

BY LAWRENCE HACKING PHOTOS BY BILL PETRO



I first met 1979 Canadian Open Class Motocross Champion Stan Currington in April of 1980 at an international MX race in Thouars, France. Stan's performance made me proud to be a Canadian. He was the consummate privateer, driving to the races alone in a Ford Transit van with one bike. Stan did all the wrenching, chores, training and was competing in Grand Prix motocross races against the very best riders in the world during an era that is now considered the heyday of motocross.

In those days the factory teams had all the stars: Lackey, Noyce, Malherbe, De Coster, Pomeroy, and Vromans, all on works machinery. The privateers fought hard to compete against the big-budget teams, and Currington was one of those privateers. His best GP finish was fifth overall in a muddy German Grand Prix; the result is most likely the best finish for a Canadian in a World Championship motocross race held outside of North America.



Currington, pictured here at Copetown, won the Canadian national motocross championship in 1979 on a Maico.

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Stan is from humble beginnings. Born in the UK, he and his family moved to Edmonton when he was young. His father rode trials, and Stan grew up piecing minibikes together. He worked on the family honeybee hives for a summer, saved up for a 1974 CZ 250 and started his climb through the ranks of Senior and then Expert. In 1976, Currington headed for the Canadian nationals on a Scona Cycle-supported Can-Am, but two seasons on the orange bikes ended in disappointment. Late in 1978 he bought his own used Maico and promptly won the 1979 Canadian championship, riding against manufacturer-supported professionals such as Wally Levy, Tim Krogh, Kevin Ferguson and an up-and-coming Ross Pederson. He spent that season living out of his van and competing on the fast tracks in the US that made up the Trans-Am series. One Trans-Am stop was at Copetown, ON where he finished second in the 500 class, a result that caught the eye of many racing insiders.

If anything, Stan Currington is not afraid to try something outside the box. When asked why he took the leap to race in Europe, he replies, "I didn't like being in a rut, riding the same tracks against the same guys over and over. I always sought out new challenges."

For the 1979 early-season European races, Stan shipped out for the continental motocross circus on a UK-based, shop-supported Suzuki RM500. The shop owner of CGH Moto-cross sponsored him, gave him a part-time job and a place to work on his bike. Stan spent the season riding six Grands Prix and numerous lucrative international races in France, Belgium, Holland, Italy and Germany. In those days the prize money would barely cover the travel expenses, and privateers would often show up with

just enough to get to the start line and then move on to the next race.

The time in Europe was a great learning experience for Stan. "I learned a lot about life racing in Europe," he recalls. "It was tough, but fun. I met many of the famous riders of the era and got to ride some of the most famous tracks like the Citadel, in Namur, Belgium. It really was a thrilling time and I can remember it as clear as it was yesterday."

During the 1970s and '80s, motocross was changing rapidly. Bikes went from short to long suspension travel, and race team budgets were bountiful. Currington remembers seeing the first single-shock Suzuki and the first Uni-Trak rear suspension on Brad Lackey's factory Kawasaki.

At the end of the 1980 season Stan returned to Canada with support from Forest Lawn Cycle in Edmonton for the four-race national series, but he got a late start leaving on the four-day drive to Ulverton, Quebec with an untested bike. Tired from the drive, he crashed hard in the first moto and the day ended with a DNF. His title slipped away from him, and he completed the series in sixth. Still struggling to pay the bills, Currington scaled his racing aspirations back.

The following year Yamaha Motor Canada offered him his best deal ever: bikes, parts and Yamabucks contingency money. Stan spent the season in Ontario racing and conducting riding schools, all while living in his van parked behind Yamaha's corporate headquarters.

The 1982 season was his last attempt at the Canadian championship; Rick Sheren offered up an RM Motocross-supported Maico, on which Currington could only muster a

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In his prime, Currington was racing a full season in Canada and visiting some US-based Trans-Am events while also competing in Europe during the off-season.



seventh overall season finish. After the 1982 season Currington decided to settle down back in Edmonton, but he didn't stop riding, and still does to this day. Most recently he made the journey back to England for the World Veterans' Championship at Farleigh Castle, where Stan and the Canadian team ended up in sixth place in the 2014 and 2015 editions.

To this day I remember Stan Currington at Thouars in 1980 at the first European motocross race I witnessed. He battled hard with Jim Pomeroy, who was a factory Beta rider at the time. After the race Stan was feeling flush with cash—he had a top five result—and bought dinner. In a recent telephone conversation he told me he had a financial setback the next day. He went through a red light in a small French village and a local plowed into the rear wheel of his Ford van. All of his winnings went to pay for the damage. As usual, the life of a privateer is a tough one; it seems you take one step forward and two steps back. The prize money would have been put to good use in a new stereo for his van, but instead it paid for an old Citroën.

"I learned all the necessary and valuable life lessons from racing, especially from my time in Europe," Currington fondly recounts. "I met all my friends through motorcycling. Once a year we meet in Kamloops at the national and have a beer together. That makes it all worthwhile."

