

TASMANIAN MOTORSPORT HALL OF FAME

ROSS ALLISON (Inducted 2016)

Ross Allison was born in 1951 and at the age of 17 (in 1968) he started working on Honda motorcycles at Lloyd Campbell's as well as chainsaws and Johnson outboards.

It was during this time he attained his motorcycle learner's licence.

His first bike was 90cc Honda, which was ridden everywhere as if tomorrow had been cancelled so it was no surprise when 12 months later he bought a road going 325cc Honda, which he worked on and modified himself to go racing.

In his first racing season in 1970-71 he won the Tasmanian 350cc championship, the Dennis Wing Memorial Race, and the Tom Phillis Memorial Race establishing himself as a rider with tremendous potential, also developing many friendships at the Tasmanian Motorcycle Club rooms in Launceston. At the time Ross didn't have a car of his own, so he borrowed Keith Dodd's van to get to the track. The racing budget was non-existent and it took three weeks' wages to buy a rear tyre, so it was always a case of a "shoestring budget without the shoe".

There were many trips to the mainland to race at Hume Weir, Phillip Island, Sandown, Calder, Adelaide and Wanneroo, usually as a group in Barry Barnes' bus with a trailer full of bikes behind. After his Honda, Ross acquired a powerful 750cc Dunstall Metisse from Earl Webster, enjoying considerable success and in 1972 was recognised as Tasmania's leading circuit racing rider. In December 1973, Ross and Winston Badcock rode a stock standard 250cc Suzuki around Symmons Plains for 24 hours, smashing existing records for 250 cc, 350cc and unlimited bikes and also establishing records for one hour to 24 hours in the process, and covering almost 1000 laps at an average speed of 100 kph.

That same year, Ross moved from two wheels to three, taking over as the passenger in the Duncan Ramsey owned 650cc Yamaha powered outfit with Steve Sheldrick, which lasted only until Ross decided it was safer to be the rider.

Ross then took over the outfit with David Lambert coming on board as the passenger, and the two worked together to modify and prepare the bike for the 1974 season and despite limited funds and relying on fellow riders to billet them around the country, the team contested five of the six round rounds of the Australian Junior Sidecar championship.

It was an outstanding year with the pair winning round two at the daunting Mount Panorama circuit at Bathurst, which also doubled that year as the Australian Grand Prix for motor cycles and sidecars. They were up against the mighty Stan and Steve Bayliss teams, on their 640cc Honda powered outfits, plus another 26 outfits from all over Australia, so it was a huge result to win from 11th on the grid.

To cap it off they also contested the senior sidecar race finishing sixth outright and first junior team in a field of 40.

In addition to winning the Bathurst round, the team placed second in the opening round at Symmons Plains and were also second in Victoria ,Western Australia and South Australia, finishing the season second overall in the championship.

Ross retired from competitive riding in 1977, but maintained his interest in the sport as a highly regarded motorcycle mechanic, assisting riders such as Malcolm Campbell in endurance races.

Profile by Barry Oliver