

Flashback Times

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Texas Motocross Legend - Kirk Spencer #82 & #485

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Interview by Shand Garcia

New to Holeshoot Magazine and beginning with this issue, I am pleased to bring you an all new feature called "FLASHBACK TIMES". This will be a throwback feature to bring you a quick look into some "where are they now" former bad boys of Texas racing. FLASHBACK TIMES is sure to bring back some memories of these racers, or at least educate you on some former super-fast Lone Star standouts. Hope you enjoy, as these racers featured in this new column, sat at the top of the mountain you are trying to climb! And, without a doubt when selecting the very first FLASHBACK TIMES featured racer, I looked no further than one of the fastest Texans to ever ride.....Kirk Spencer "The Doughboy".

Well Kirk, you are the very first guy to be featured in this new column. Lets just get right to the point..... You were one of the fastest racers to ever come from Texas. Would you consider yourself in the Top 10-15 of all time? Maybe so, but I feel those types of questions should be answered by your peers.

Yeah, sorry to put you on the spot. I just hear a lot of good stuff about how fast you were. For the readers that don't know, what years did you race and when did you retire? I started in 1974 and retired in late 1985, or early 1986.

As you know we just released the book "Berm - The Texas Motocross Chronicles" and I got to tell you, Dennis Hawthorne told me that there should have been more "Kirk Spencer" in the book. A definite unintentional oversight on my part...hahaha. How does that make you feel that Dennis holds you in such high regards? I have a great deal of respect for Dennis, and I sincerely appreciate his comments. Dennis is about the last one from Texas, that someone my age would consider Old School. I'm very glad I had the chance to race with him back in the day when you were enemies on the track, but could sit down and have dinner with each other afterwards. I rode several years with Dennis and feel very privileged that I get to see and communicate with him presently.

When did you turn Pro? I moved into the Open Expert class locally when I was 14, in 1977. I remember being so excited about my first Expert race because I actually made a small amount of Dough that day. As far as my AMA Pro license, I wanted to get it quickly, so I decided to ride all three classes, 125, 250 and Open at the AMA Regional Qualifiers. The AMA Regional Qualifiers at that time consisted of 6 classes for the day. 3 Intermediate classes and 3 Pro classes with the pro class running 30 minutes plus 2 laps per moto. I remember after each



moto, my father would be sitting on the starting line with my next bike while the intermediate classes were on the track, meanwhile I was getting a drink and fresh goggles and heading to the starting line. I was able to get my AMA Pro license after 4 of these regional events. As far as when, I believe it was 1980. For those who don't know about the heat wave of 1980, it was rough. We had 69 days of 100 degree or higher temperatures in DFW that summer. What's amazing to me now is the fact that I can't ride 6 laps, much less 6 long motos in one day.

Give me 10 names that were your biggest threat each weekend. Monte Anderson, Kirk Dillon, Dennis Hawthorne, Ricky Kidd, Jon Kolbenvik, Bobby Pickard, Wyman Priddy, Mark Rakestraw, Darren Rhoten, Steve Muhlolland.

Quite an impressive bunch. I was told you were the guy to kind of push Wyman Priddy (the Father of Texas Motocross) out of the way....and later Hawthorne did that to you...Any truth to that? Timing wise, I would say yes, although I'm not sure I would call it pushing someone out of the way. Wyman had his day, and I was the new kid on the block. As we get older we lose some of the fight and aggressiveness we once had. MX is such a short lived, on the edge and fast paced sport it's hard to keep the pace up. Dennis came up through the pack and started dominating about the time I started losing focus and my heyday was over, which I feel was the case between Wyman and myself.

I think it's really symbolic that while at the track you can always be seen wearing a hat with pics of Wyman Priddy taped on the hat! I actually doctored that hat up for a Wyman Priddy Memorial race that the TVRC hosts each year. Everyone loved the hat. So I have continued to wear it, although I will be changing it up a bit from time to time. I also installed Wyman Priddy tank decals on my bike for that event. Wyman taught me quite a few lessons, and when I did learn something from him, it was usually the hard way.

Name a few of your favorite racing career highlights! Some of my career highlights have to be:

- 1979 GNC Final Houston Astrodome 250 Expert - 3rd Place
- 1980 TMA Series - 250 Expert -1st Place, Open Expert -1st Place.
- 1980 Locally - 250 Expert - Placed 1st overall in 21 of 34 events. Open Expert - Placed 1st in 20 of 40 overalls.
- 1981 Locally - 250 Expert - Placed 1st in 47 of 85 motos for 23 of 40 overalls. Open Expert - Placed 1st in 57 of 76 motos for 30 of 38 overalls.
- Placed 1st in 34 consecutive motos of 250 and Open Expert action in 1981.
- 1981 Trans USA - 8th Place in Open Class at Rio Bravo.
- 1982 CMC Golden State Series - Open Expert - 5th Place.
- 1983 GNC Final - 250 Expert - 2nd Place, Open Expert - 1st Place.
- July 2007 AHRMA Vintage National Mid Ohio -1st Place +40 Expert.

That's a ton of moto wins and overalls. What was your most hard-fought race, and with who? Definitely several of those through out the years. One I reflect on often was at Oak Hill with Wyman Priddy. I was 14 years old and had recently moved into the Open Expert class aboard a Carter's Yamaha YZ 400D. Wyman Priddy won the first moto and I was not able to challenge him real hard, but I did keep him pretty close. A couple of weeks prior, I had ran Wyman down at Rabbit Run, only to have him coax me into a corner too fast where he brake checked me. He rode off chuckling as I stalled my bike



while running into the side of him. My dad kept telling me, you can run with him, it's just a matter of doing it and proving that you can do it. In the second moto, I got the holeshoot and was running scared and nervous out front. Wyman was on me, around me, and into me quickly. I spent the entire moto protecting my lines which was hard for me as green and jerky as I was. It was a real bump and grind fest. I felt and saw his front tire so much, I began to think it was mine. I knew he had to take a jab at me on the final lap. I held firm until the very final turn. I knew he was coming and I ran in a little hot and just barely overshot the inside rut, and gave Wyman enough room (which for Wyman was about the width of his front tire) to stuff me and beat me to the checkered flag. I still wish that I had got on the binders a little harder and made that rut, but that moto was definitely a turning point for me and my confidence in my riding ability at the time, and helped me move forward.

You have re-surfaced recently in the TVRC (vintage) events. What brought you back out? Mike Hance. The man re-kindles lots of old flames and also keeps them burning. He would make someone a good wife, LOL. He has been riding the vintage events for several years being one of their original members. I have always cherished my old pictures and artifacts from the old days, so I have always been fond of the old days. Hance calls me up in 2004 and says "Doughboy, Rick Humphreys is having an EVO race, which is an old style vintage race with some Vet classes at Rio Bravo. Except this time, he is adding a Pro/Am class in which Kent Howerton, Jim and Ron Pomeroy, Gary Jones, Marty Smith, Mike Bell, Steve Wise, Bryan Myerscough, and various others should be there, and I would like you to ride my 1974 CZ400". I was reluctant to accept because I had not been to a mx race in about 20 years, but it sounded Sooo Coool, that I could not turn down the factory sponsorship of Team Cramp's Mike Hance. He said "all you have to do is show up and ride". I did, and had one heck of a great time, creating one of my fondest memories, and have been doing a little of the vintage stuff ever since. The TVRC crew really makes it a laid back atmosphere where everyone has fun and it does not get too serious. Their motto "Motocross For The Fun Of It" is definitely holding true.

Looking back, are you 100% satisfied with your career and where your name sits amongst Texas motocross? I don't think a real racer is ever completely satisfied. You always want more. I regret that I did not pursue the Nationals more aggressively. I am very happy with my accomplishments and thankful that I am still able to ride and reminisce with a lot of my dear old friends.

Thanks for the time Kirk, I am glad I got to know you.... and good luck at the TVRC races! It was my pleasure Shand. I would like to personally thank you for your continued enthusiasm of the MX scene. It's not often we run across people like yourself that possess the maturity and interest of the older days, especially at your young age. Thanks for everything you do for the sport, both new and old!

