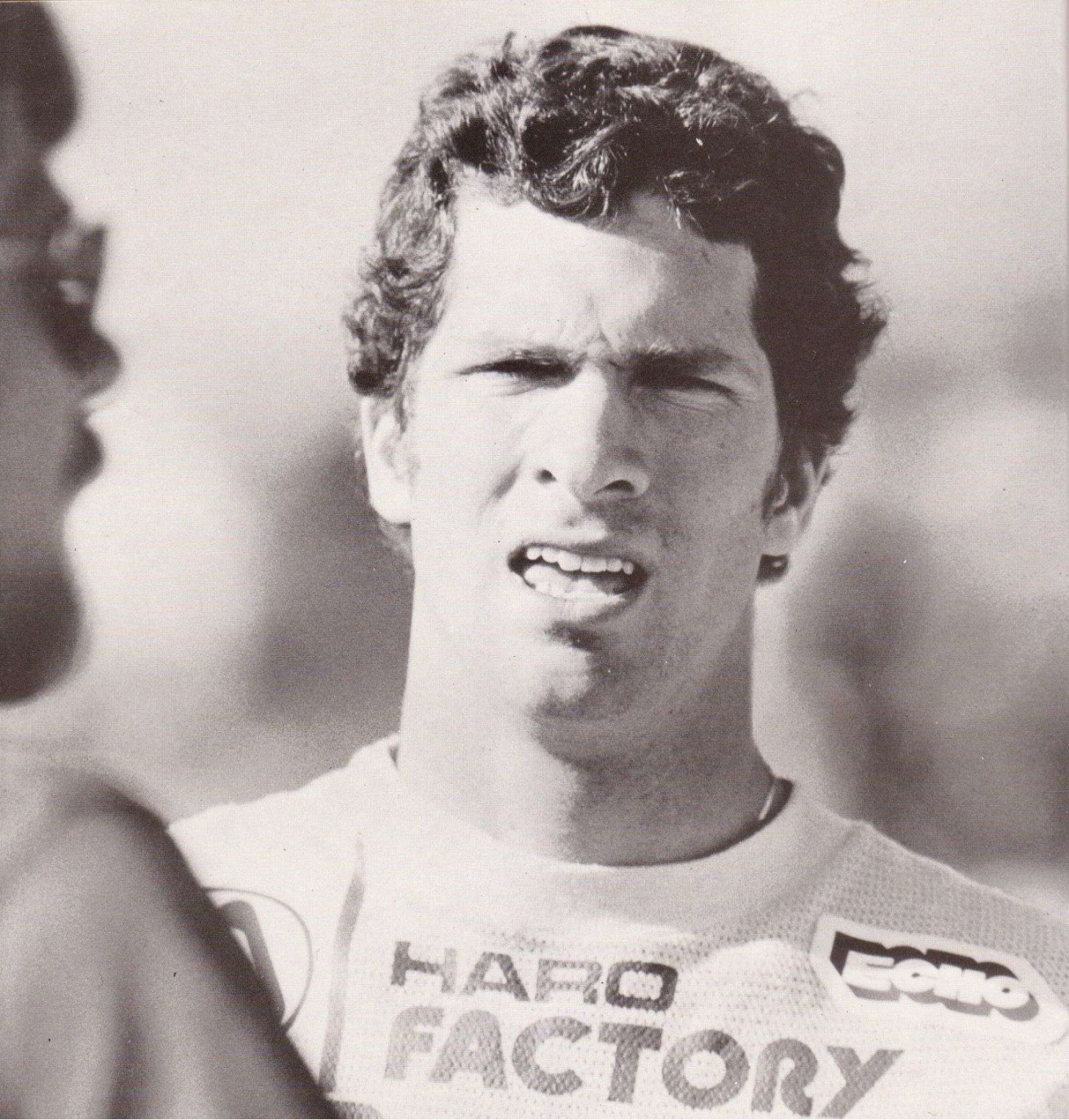


GREG HILL'S PROFESSIONAL BMX SKILLS



Oldschoolmags.com

Compiled by Simon 2012
With thanks Juan M.



FOREWARD

Greg Hill can vouch for every word written in this book. The information in these pages is the result of years of racing experience. While this book is not intended to be a substitute for experience, it will no doubt save you countless hours trying to sort everything out by yourself—the way Greg did it. Contained in these pages is a wealth of information on every aspect of BMX racing. All the key techniques and strategies that have worked for Greg are here. Anyone can benefit from this book, from the newest beginner to most experienced expert.

The information in this book was

intended to meet but one objective: to make the reader a better racer. But when I first read this book, I realized that Greg Hill was not only teaching BMX, but a philosophy based on simple values like dedication and hard work. When you think about it you realize these values are the secret to success in all fields. Wherever we end up is the result of the effort we put toward getting there. If a little effort takes you a little way, just think how far you can go if you give your best effort. In this world, hard work pays the greatest rewards. If you are looking for an easier way, you're out of luck, it doesn't exist.

—Bob Hadley

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BECOMING A WINNER

Doing the right things, the things that need to be done: that's what makes a winner in BMX. Things like going to bed early the night before a race, eating the right foods, and practicing. If you do all those things, you are going to feel like a winner and you are going to be a winner. Coming across the finish line first is just the physical side of being a winner; the more important side is the mental side. Sometimes it doesn't have anything to do with racing. You'll feel better about yourself because you're putting effort towards doing something that's worthwhile. In the long run you may even decide that you don't want to become a champion racer, but in the meantime you'll have learned how to try your hardest and always put out 100% to achieve your goals.

DESIRE TO SUCCEED

When I put so much emphasis on working out and practicing, you have to realize that they are nothing more than a means to an end. That is, working out isn't your goal, but to improve at racing is. That's why it is so important to remind yourself constantly that "this is so I can win races."

I believe that motivation is rooted in the desire to succeed. If you want to win, you'll work out and do all the necessary practicing. Maybe you'd like me to tell you how to make it to the top without all this work, but that way does not exist.

In the movie *Rocky Three* there was a very good example of what happens when you don't put your heart in your training. The film shows that if you really aren't completely committed to training then you are just wasting your time with half-hearted effort and you are better off not even doing it. In the movie, Rocky Balboa, played by Sylvester Stallone, went into training for his first fight against Clubber Lang, played by Mr. T, and all Rocky did was go through the motions of training for the crowd.

He wasn't doing any more than putting in his time. At the same time Clubber Lang was off by himself, working out, concentrating and getting fired up for the fight. What happened? (For those of you who didn't see the movie) Rocky got his face smashed in. Because he never had his mind on the fight, those weeks and months that Rocky trained were almost totally worthless.

GOALS

Setting goals for yourself is a very important ingredient of success, because attaining them helps to build confidence. Confidence is a strong belief in yourself and in your ability to do things. You'll never get anywhere unless you have this kind of self-assurance.

Your first goals should reflect a realistic evaluation of your capabilities. You don't want to set impossible goals. It wouldn't be a good idea, for instance, to have as your only goal to be the top pro six years down the line. Start with several





small goals, ones that are attainable now. If I were just starting out and never in my life had I ever gotten a holedshot, then my goal would be to get the holedshot as soon as possible. I wouldn't however, make my goal something that I didn't have to work for, like "getting around the track without crashing," because I'd have already done that. Always try to set your immediate goals just one step up from your current level. It's OK to have more than one goal at a time, but to get the most out of them you should say to yourself, "OK, after I get this one, then I'm going after the next one." In other words, put your short term goals in a logical sequence.

I may have several goals at one time. A yearly goal, an intermediate goal (which covers the next major event or championship), and, an immediate goal (which usually covers the upcoming race). Also, I may have specific goals in several different areas of interest at any one time.

A Goal is like a ladder. The top rung is the topic of your ultimate goal, like, "Win the main at a National." Each rung up the ladder represents something you have to do to reach the top. The first step might be to practice your starts for an extra hour

every day. The second thing might be to stop eating candy and other junk food. And so on—every logical step that seems necessary or helpful. The point is, if you do all the steps you'll eventually reach the top of the ladder and your goal. Say you did set "Win a national" as your goal, and when the National came around, you blew it. This is where it gets tough: the big let down. You set your goal high, you did everything you could think of that was right, but you "failed." Sure, you've got a right to be frustrated. But the key is to turn that frustration into *determination*, determination to keep struggling up that ladder. You may not win the next National either, or even the next one after that. Heck, you may not win one for two years! But when you finally do win one, it will mean that much more to you, because you stuck it out. You got where you wanted to go.

Once you've got that goal under your belt, you'll realize that with a little more work, with harder effort, you could've reached your goal much sooner. Once you realize how powerful your mind is, and learn how to make the *ambition* side of your brain over-power the *lazy* side, then you're on the road to success.

This book will not make you succeed as a top BMX racer. Only you can do that. You have to want badly to be a success. Bad enough to give up a lot of things and bad enough to put in the effort and work that it takes. If this sounds like a tough choice, it is. It isn't right for everyone. But I do believe that, deep down, everyone has it within them to succeed if he wants to. If you want to, then you'll gladly do all work that it takes. Believe me, it's worth it, every minute of it.



TRAINING AND FITNESS

WEIGHT TRAINING Health Spas & Clubs

Joining a health club might seem to be the logical way to begin weight training, but there are three reasons I do not recommend this approach: One, if the club is any good, you'll have to wait in line to use the machines; two, the club may not always be open when you want to work out; and, three, for what you pay to join (usually about \$200) you can buy enough weights of your own to get going.

Decent equipment (i.e. good but not the top of the line) can be bought new for a reasonable price. You can probably find a fairly good bench press, bar, and weights for around \$75.00. You may be able to find used equipment for even less.

The most popular weight training tool (aside from the weights) is a bench press, but if you are low on cash then I recommend getting a curling bar and fifty or sixty pounds of weight to start out with. Sometimes a curling bar is the only bar that I work out with. With this you can do several good exercises for BMX (see photos): curls, reverse curls, tricep extensions, upright rows, bent over rows, overhead press, overhead press behind the neck, shoulder shrugs, and the list goes on. Be sure to follow all the safety precautions when working out with weights.

I strongly recommend that you get professional advice from a weight-lifting coach at a school or at a local gymnasium. Be advised—don't get into weight training without getting qualified help. Many people have been injured because they didn't know correct lifting procedures and appropriate weight loads for their level of physical conditioning.

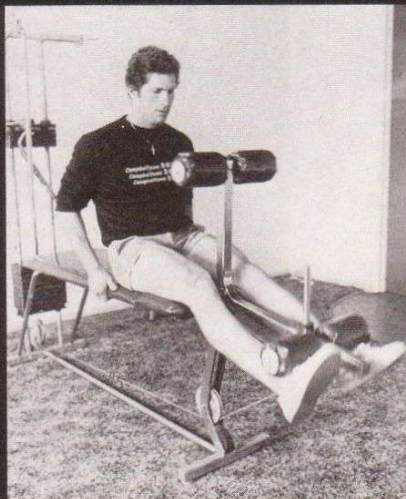
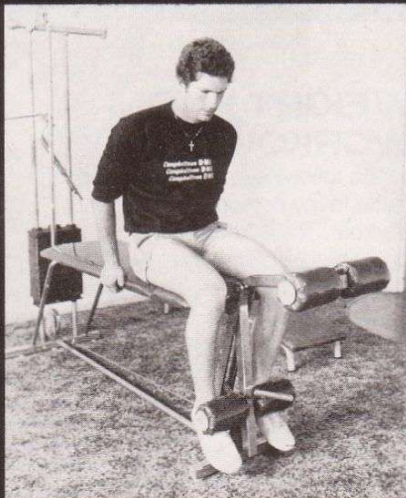
Always try to do your working out in one complete session rather than trying to do half now and half later. I feel that working out in split sessions will take you twice as long to achieve the same results.

WEIGHT ROOM WORKOUT

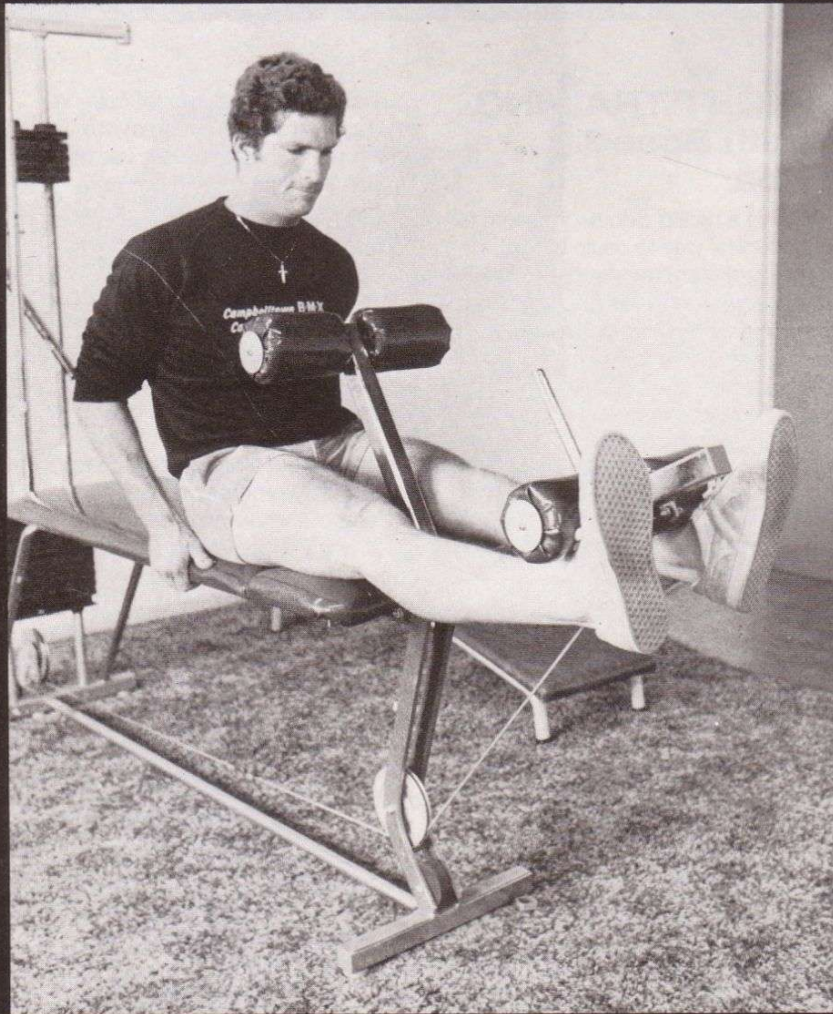
The following is a step-by-step guide to my personal weight room workout. The amount of weight I use isn't what I recommend for everyone to use. That you'll have to figure out for yourself.

Leg curls, 6-8 reps each set, 50#, 60#, 80#, 100#,
120#, 100#, 100#. Stretch between each set.

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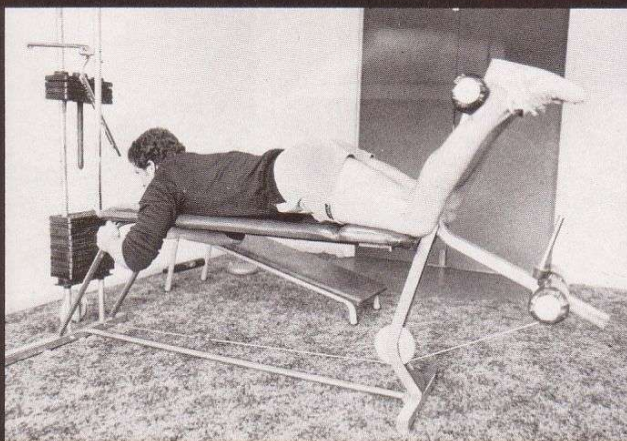
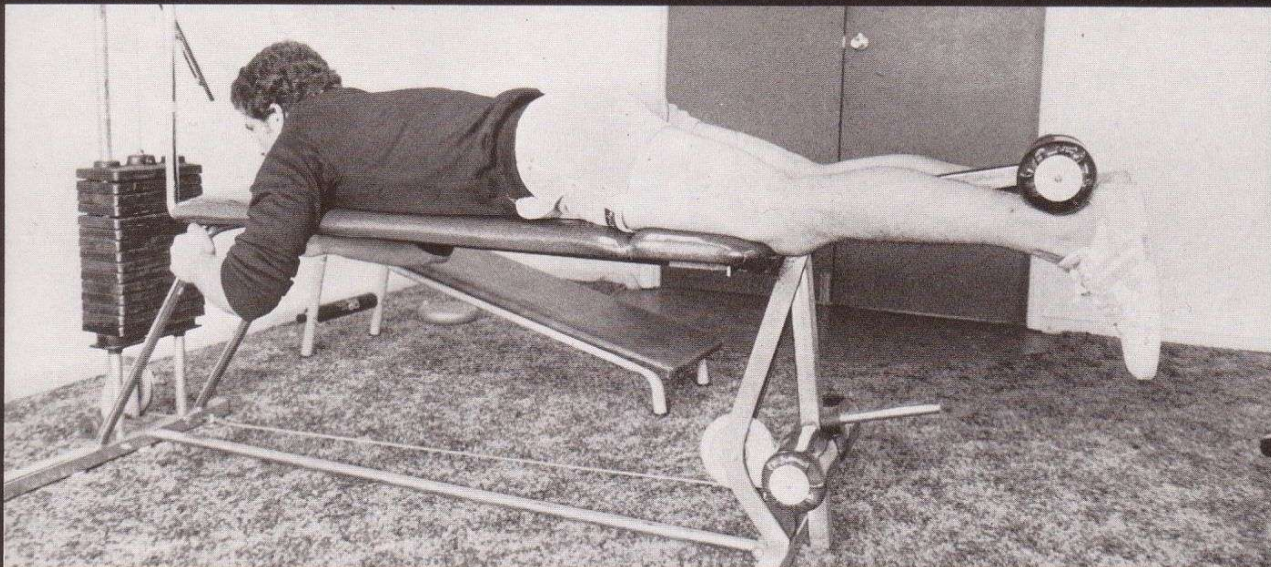
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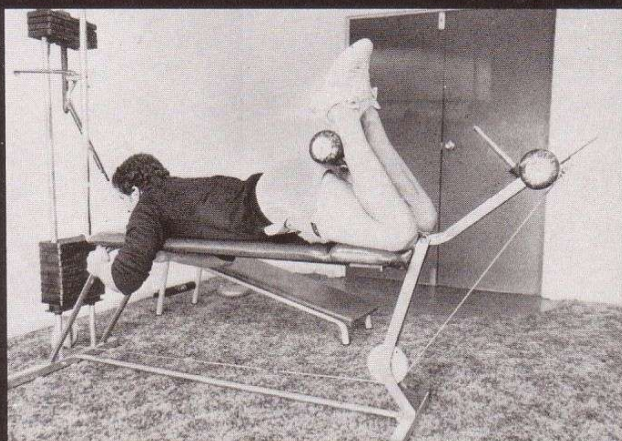
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Hamstring curls, 6-8 reps each set, 20#, 30#, 40#,
50#, 60#.

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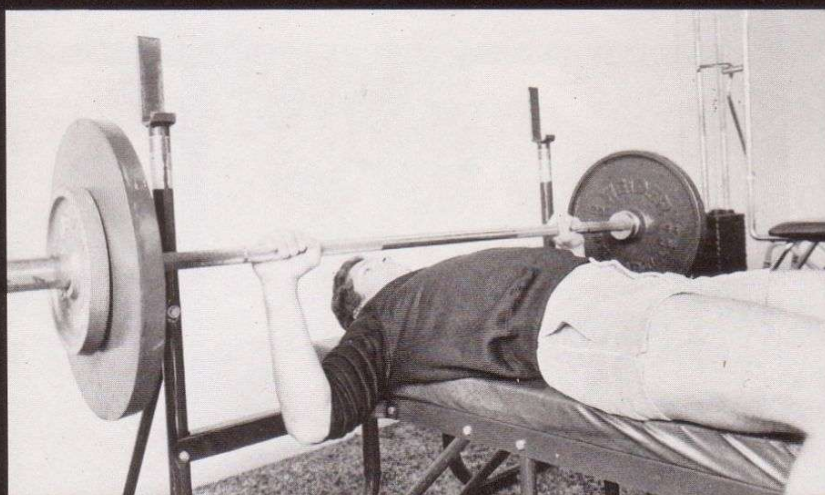
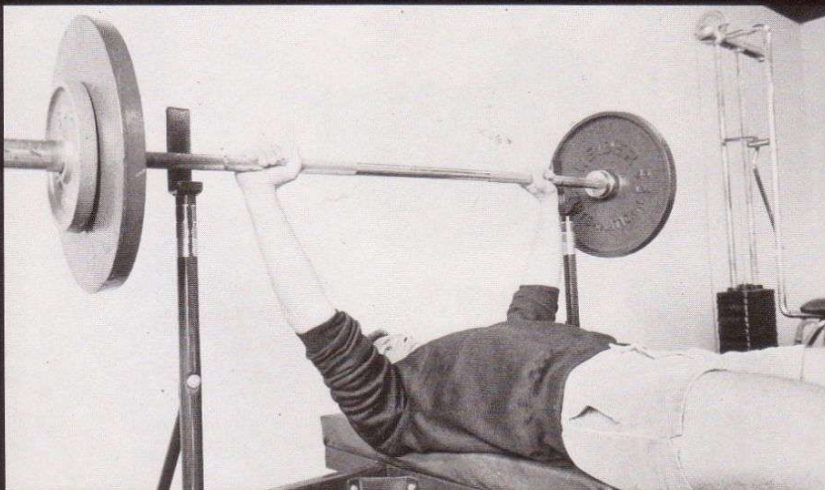
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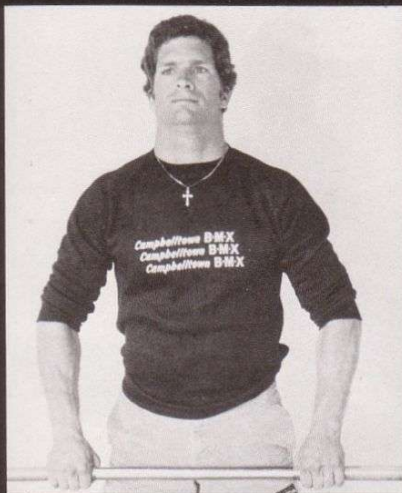
Bench press (don't do these by yourself, always have a friend "spot" you), 6 reps each set, 133#, 155#, 177#, 185#, 220#, 235#. If I wanted to, I could probably get up to 300 or 400 lbs. on the bench press, but the idea is to build muscle plus endurance. For this purpose I lift several sets of 6 reps with moderately heavy weights. If I wanted to build sheer muscle, I'd be powering sets of 4 reps with real heavy weights.



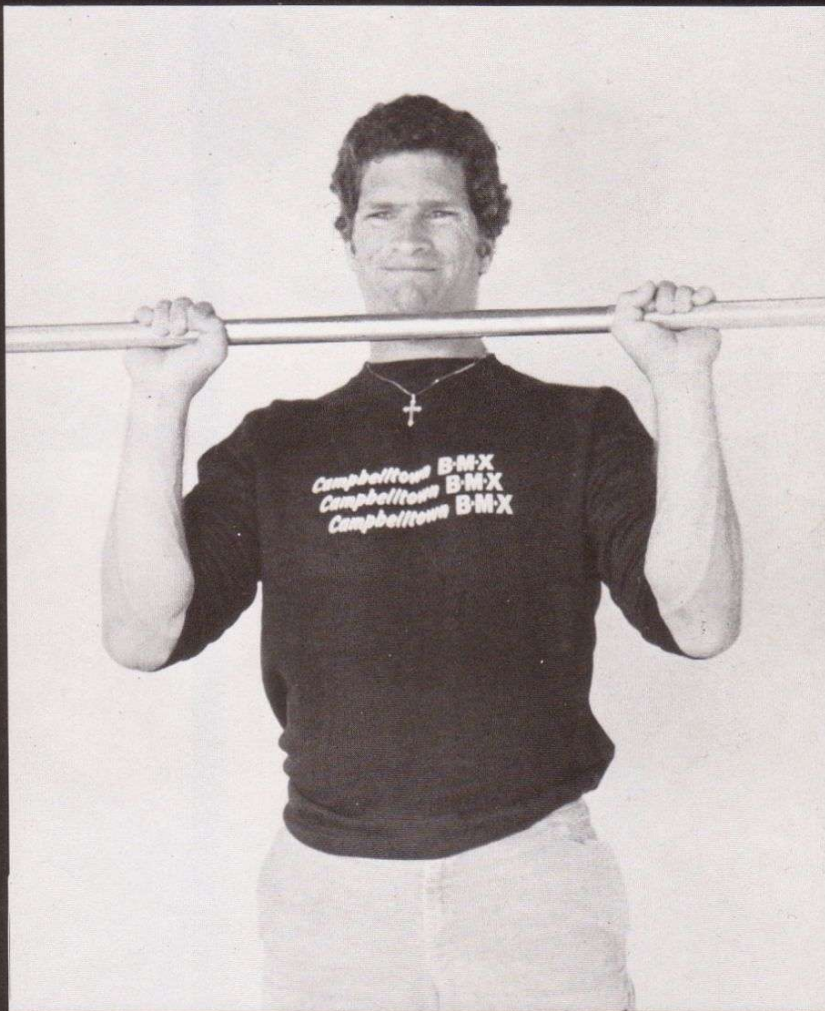
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Curls, 6-8 reps each set, 60#, 60#, 90#, 90#, 104#, 115#. Curls are my favorite exercise. I could do nothing but curls for a workout, but you have to be careful not to overdo any one exercise.

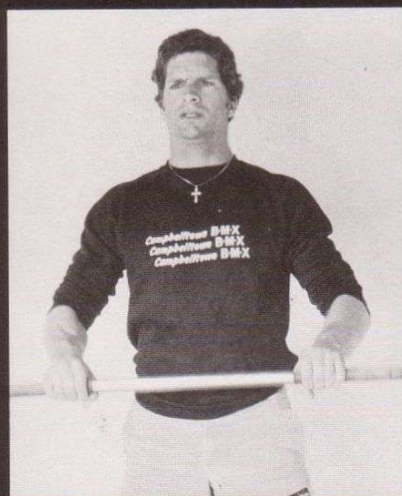
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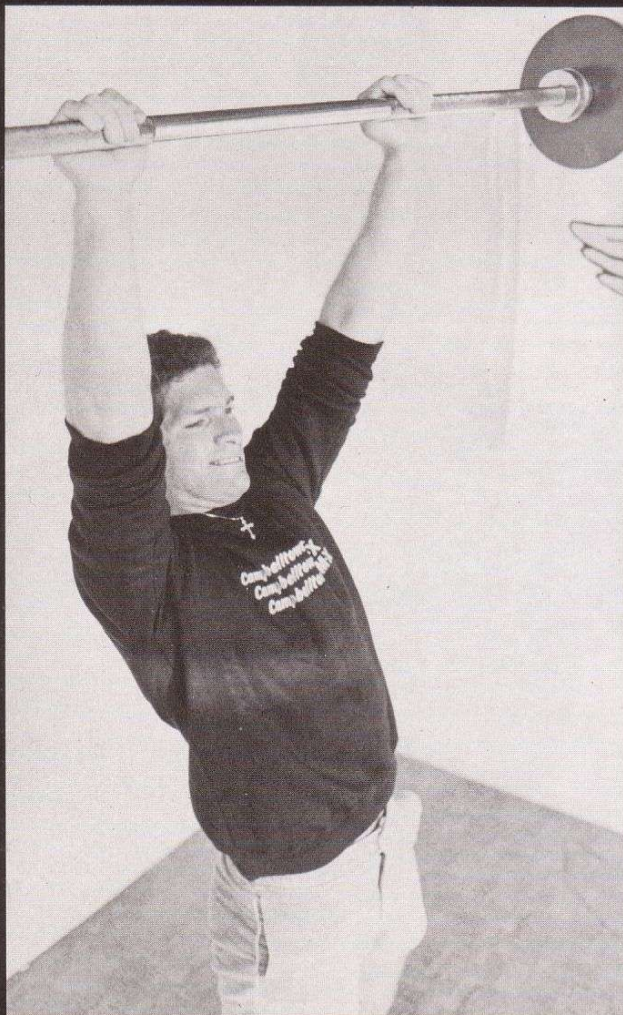


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Tricep extensions, 6-8 reps each set, 60#, 60#, 70#,
70#, 80#.

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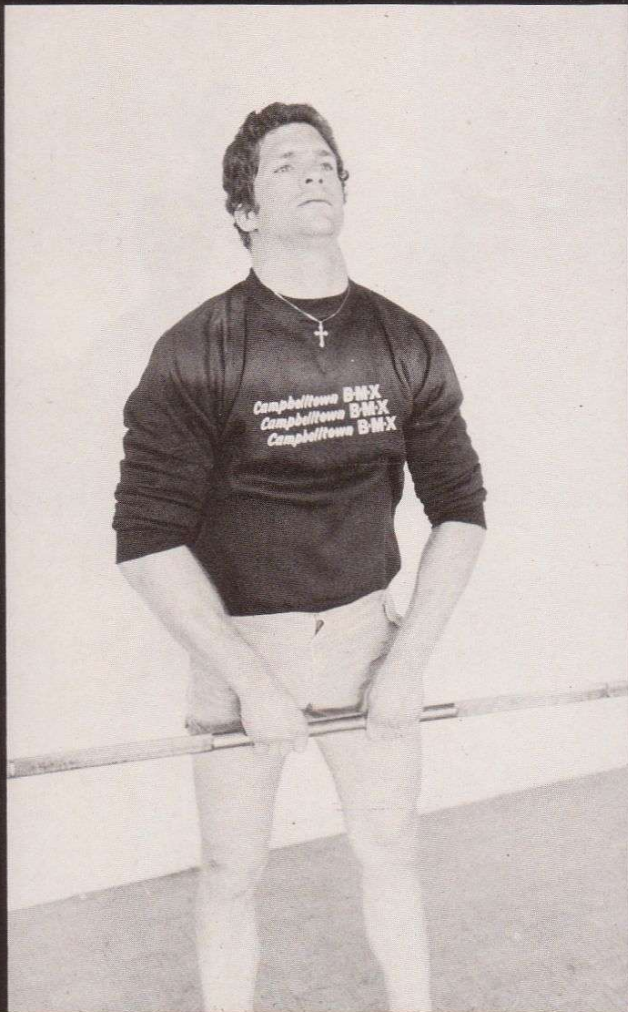


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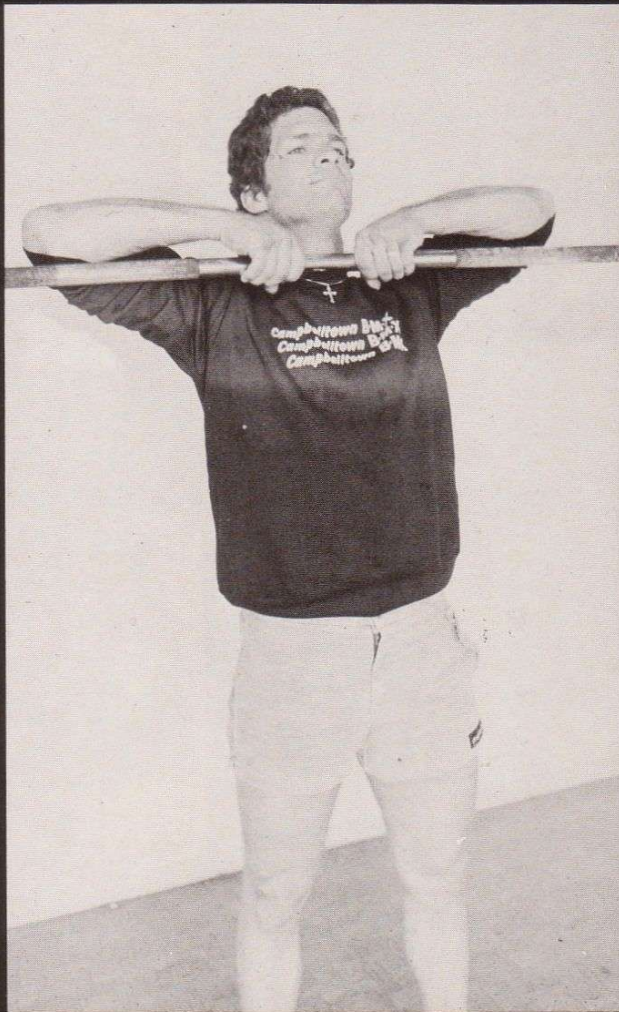


Upright rows, 6-8 reps each set, 60#, 60#, 70#,
70#, 80#.

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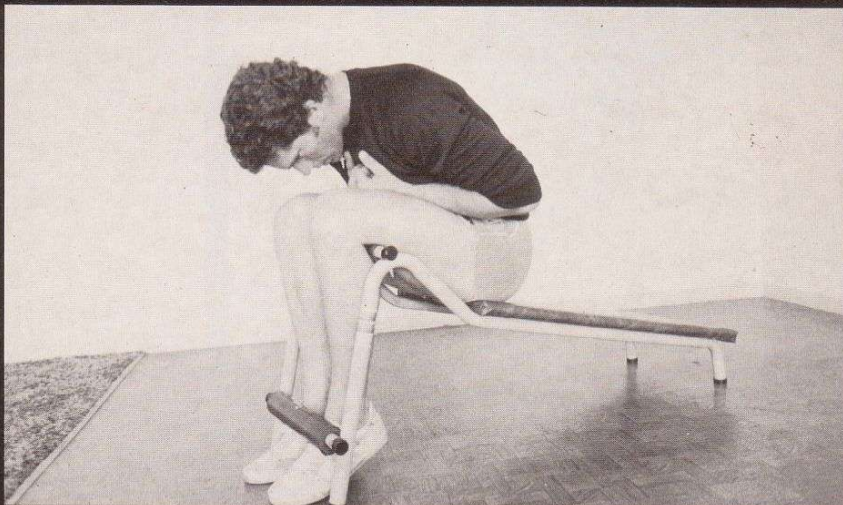
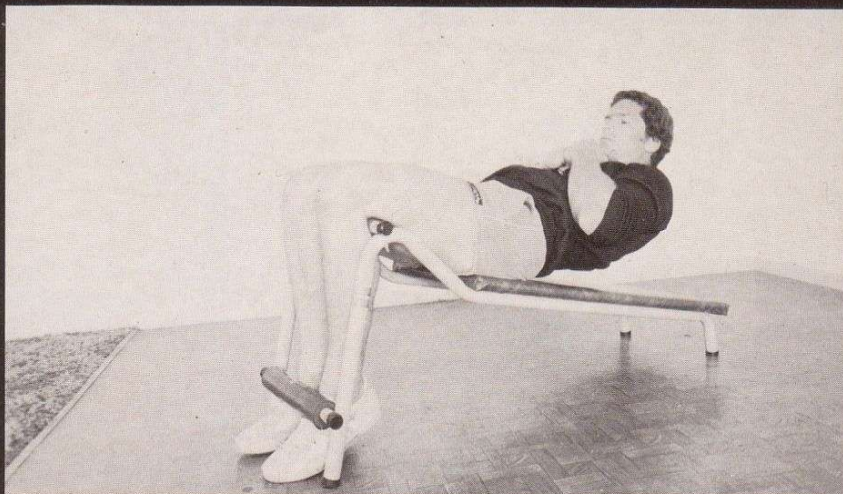


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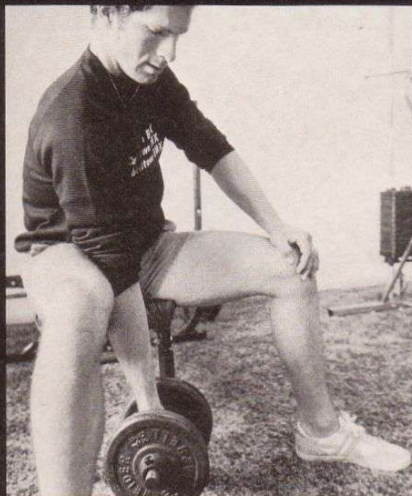
Sit-ups, at least three sets of twenty on an inclined bench.



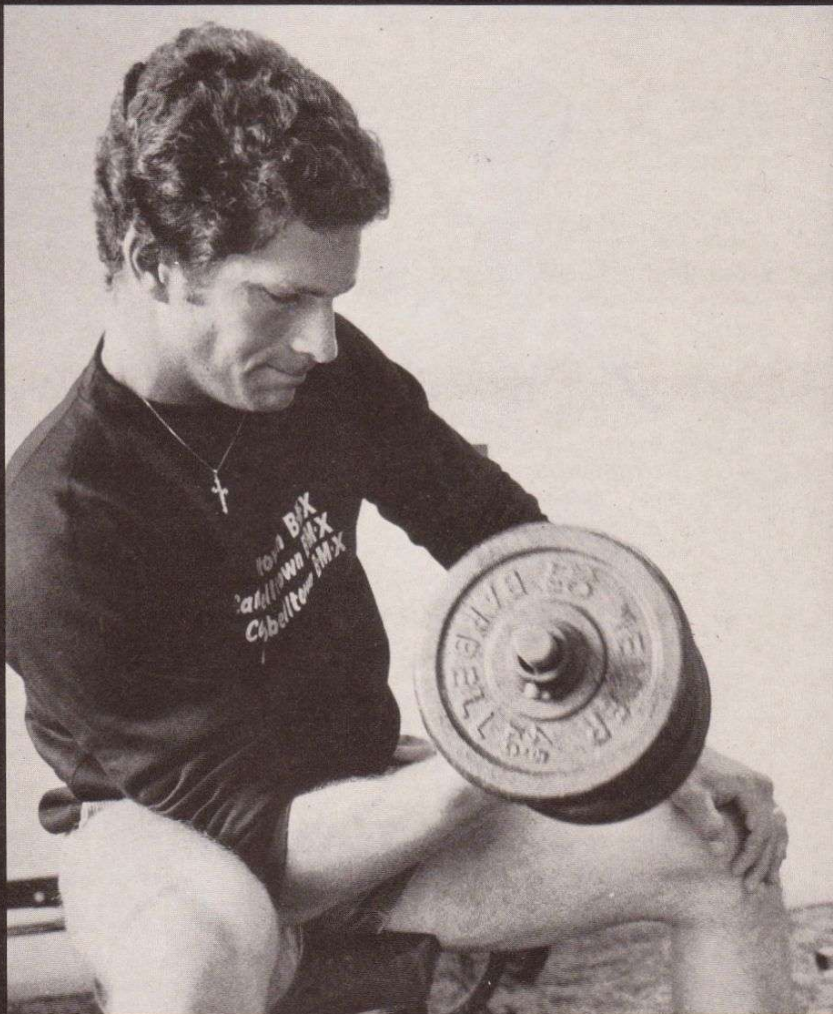
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Dumbbell Curls, 6-8 reps each set, 20#, 20#, 30#, 30#,
40#, 40#.

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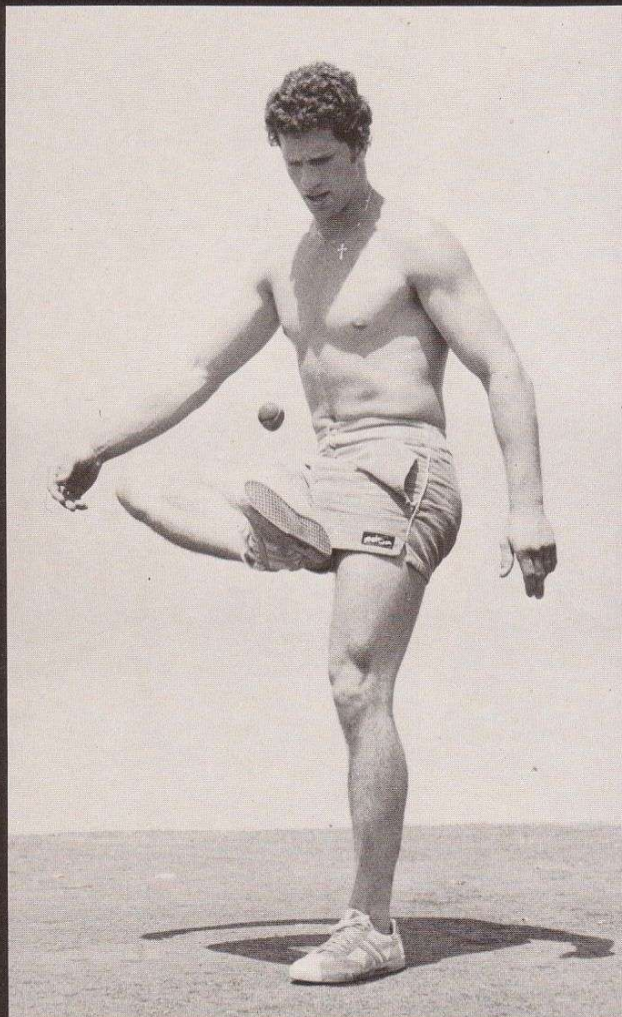
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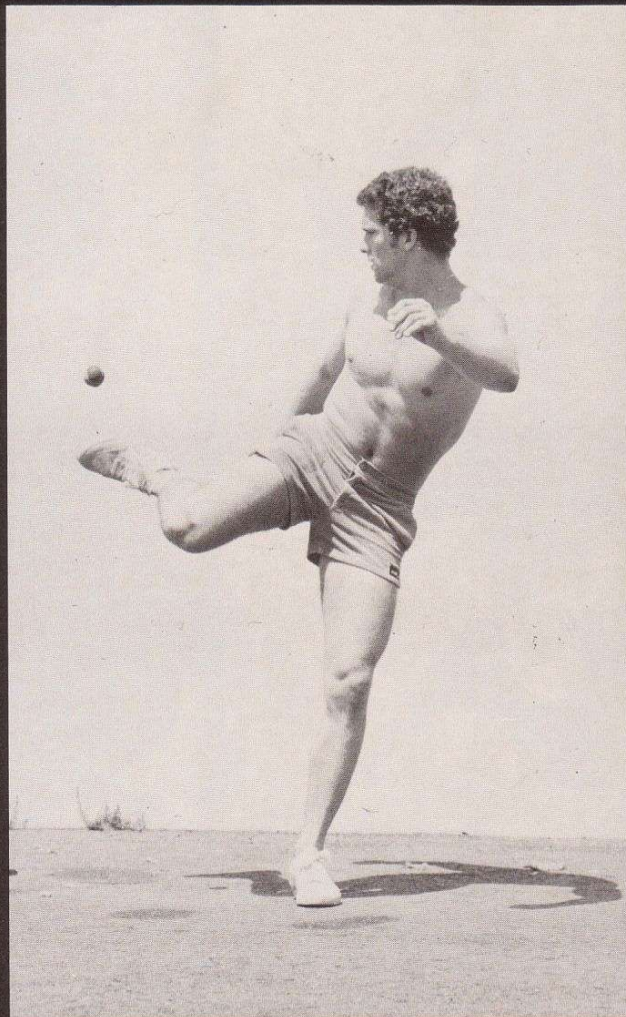
Hacky-sack, at least 45 minutes. No time limit, especially if you're with friends. (Can't find a Hacky-Sack at a local store? I get mine from Sun Enterprises, the owner of which is Chuck Sun, the

famous moto-cross racer. You can order a Hacky-Sack from Chuck by sending \$6.95, money orders only, to SUN ENTERPRISES, 11845 S.W. PACIFIC HWY., TIGARD, OR 97223.)

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NUTRITION

My approach to nutrition is simple: use common sense. If you're active and healthy you have to eat when you're hungry. I'm not against snacks between meals (unless you're a good deal overweight), but instead of snacking on a cola and a candy bar, get an orange juice, or milk, and a sack of almonds or similar nutritious food. Anything that's fresh food is fine for snacking. Stay away from the processed and the sugar (junk) foods. I don't really go much for those protein drinks and those so-called "muscle" diets. Fad diets and special concentrate mixes nearly always have something wrong with them, or, they don't give you anything that you can't already get by eating the correct diet.

The important thing is you have got to have three well balanced meals a day. Even the workout doctors say eat balanced meals. Eat something from

each of the four basic food groups at each meal. They are: the meat group, which includes pork, poultry, fish, eggs, and nuts; the vegetable and fruit group; the bread and cereal group; and, the milk and dairy group.

Just keep each of those groups in mind every time you eat. Even if you're having a hamburger at a fast food chain.

I don't worry too much about eating at fast food places. I won't eat every meal there, but, if I like the menu at a particular place, I don't go out of my way to avoid eating there. If I need to eat and a fast food restaurant is convenient, I stop and I have the usual burger and fries, but milk or juice instead of a cola. I don't worry much about the burger and fries, because I know I'll work them out of my system. When you're working out, you're burning up calories. You're using that food for energy and not storing it as fat in your system. The same is true of eating eggs everyday. For someone who's not active, eating more than three or four eggs a week may not be good for them. In some people the food just makes fat and the cholesterol eventually clogs up their arteries. But, someone who's as active as I am has

nothing to worry about. They are going to burn up those calories.

While good nutrition is important to a racer all the time, it's especially critical before a big competition. The biggest race of my professional career (so far) was the '82 Las Vegas World Championship. I got more geared up for that race than for any other. And what did I eat during the weeks before the race? Answer: *A lot of food.* For Vegas I ate three big, home-cooked meals a day.

When you are working out hard, you've got to eat, you have got to replace those calories. If you don't feed yourself enough, you'll get tired and burned out. Eat as much as you need to sustain your workouts. But remember, if you cut back on your workouts, cut back on your food intake as well. A good bathroom weight scale will tell you when you're eating too much.

TECHNIQUE

Balancing at the gate for a practice start. Every aspect of your body position is critical, from crank position to your grip on the handlebars.

STARTS

I'll put it bluntly: *You'll never win any races until you can get the holeshot.* You'll never make it into the ranks of the pros until you have a *great* holeshot. The start is 90% of any BMX race. It's also the hardest part of any race. Getting the holeshot takes the most strength, the most mental concentration, and the most nerve.

I would guess that in any one typical year of racing, less than ten out of the fifty or sixty big Pro main events are ever won by someone other than the guy who got the holeshot. And half of those ten are probably lost because the guy who got the holeshot made a stupid mistake in the first turn. In all, maybe five races out of sixty are ever won by a pass after the first turn. That's not too many. If you want to win one, it's going to have to be with skill, not luck.

THE MECHANICS OF STARTS

I can't emphasize enough the importance of getting the best possible start. Of the two starting techniques, the one-pedal and the

two pedal, the two pedal is used almost exclusively now. And I don't expect to see the one-pedal start regain any popularity for the same reason everyone switched away from it in the first place: it's inefficient. In fact, I don't foresee starts changing all that much in the future—about all you can do is practice more to refine your technique and improve your consistency.

But let's compare the two techniques just for the record. With one-pedal starts you are standing low to the bike with one foot on the ground. When the gate suddenly drops, you have to combine body motions in order to go forward as well as you simultaneously pull your lagging foot back into its position on the pedal. Right at that instant you run the great risk of misplacing your foot on the pedal. That is the worst thing about one-pedal starts: there are so many variables to worry about that it draws your attention from more important areas, like concentrating on the lights. The ultimate solution to preventing these problems is the two-pedal start. There is no wasted motion, no wasted energy. There is less worry of slipping the pedals,

because they're already in position. Two-pedal starts offer better out-of-the-gate stability—your balance is already established the instant you come flying out of the gate. There is a smoother and more powerful transition to the second pedal, and most important, improved consistency.

My two pedal start technique is the result of practicing starts for years and years. It originally evolved from a simple "balance and go" approach through endless hours of trial and error experimentation.

Several factors play important roles in the technique:

- throwing your hips for the snap
- crank position
- stance
- handlebar position and general bike sizing
- gearing
- timing and anticipation

THROWING YOUR HIPS—THE SNAP

I want to talk about this idea first because it's so important, and so much of what I have to say about it relates to the other topics. Once you have a basic understanding of this,



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In perfect anticipation of the gate dropping, start to throw your hips forward and pull up on the bars to insure maximum torque out of the gate.

the rest will simply fall into place.

Throwing your hips forward as you go into the start is the secret to successful two-pedal starts. A lot of people, however, make the mistake of thinking that because your body weight is moving forward that that's all there is to it. Hardly. It's only a small part of the "snap" concept. Where you get most of the snap is by loading your body muscles with tension—like cocking a spring-loaded trigger—just an instant before the gate goes down then bursting all that energy at once into the start. Still, you want to be extremely loose while you're waiting on the starting line for the stagers command. Loose, but ready to spring into action! You actually want to react like a spring or a rubberband: *Snap!* The only way to make this work is to know exactly when the gate is going to drop, which is all a matter of timing and anticipation. You want to time it so that your hips are thrust forward an instant before the starting gate begins to move. This will give you full efficiency and economy of motion. In doing this, you're accomplishing three things: slinging your hips forward helps you initiate motion, it gets you ready for a powerful snap,

and it lets you execute the snap itself smoothly. These are three phases of what should look like one continuous motion.

Check out the photos and you'll see that the actual amount that I throw my hips forward isn't all that much. And although everything moves very quickly, there isn't any jerkiness to the technique. Just a clean and instantaneous SNAP out of the starting gate. Once you get this technique figured out, it will not only get you going on the road to better starts, but it will also inspire you to go out and practice more. I feel that any rider who studies this technique and executes it properly will become a much greater rider and his (or her) percentage of wins will improve vastly.

CRANK POSITION

For almost every gate I race from, I always have my cranks one to three clicks up from dead flat (that is, exactly parallel with FLAT ground) regardless of the angle or inclination of the gate. As you can see in the photos, crank position and stance are important because one sets up the other. One real common mistake riders make, especially on low-angle gates, is positioning their crank too

low. This is usually compounded by the rider locking his knee. This may feel like a logical thing to do because it feels like you can drive a lot of power to the pedal if your knee is locked. What really happens though, is that you aren't making use of your leg muscles, the strongest muscles you have. Instead, if you keep your knee slightly bent, you will develop a more powerful first stroke of the pedal.

Keeping the crank clicked up one, two, or three clicks, insures that you will travel a sufficient distance on your first stroke while still developing a powerful amount of torque to shoot you out quickly.

STANCE

Basically, if you start with your bike square to the gate and the rear wheel directly behind the front wheel, you are in the typical stance for starts. I have found that by doing just a few minor modifications to this stance it will improve your ability to balance, snap, and develop torque.

I start first by moving my rear wheel about two inches out of line in relation to the front wheel. I start ordinarily with my right foot so therefore my wheel is shifted to the right. If I opt to

Although my bike has barely moved at all, I've got plenty of forward motion to thrust out of the gate. Notice how much power I'm putting into the right pedal.

start left foot, which I can do and will do if the track situation calls for it, naturally, I would shift the rear wheel to the other side. Now, with the wheel shifted out to the appropriate side, you'll notice that the bike is much easier to balance. I will use the seat on my bike to brace my leg against as a steady. With the bike angled out like this, you can do that without twisting your body over to one side. While this is simply a convenience, the real benefit of this stance comes from the way it places you over the cranks and lets you get a great grip on the handlebars. From this stance the power develops like you were pulling on a weight bar. You can snap up and pedal down with incredible force! Try it, you'll feel the difference from the very first start.

When you're in the stance, try this: if you're right handed, twist your right hand forward slightly and grip hard! When you snap, this little rotation in your hand will help to pull your body forward quicker as well as help you pull much more power out of your upper body.

The rest of these are simply details that, while possibly not quite as important as those already mentioned, I use to round out my

technique, to give me an edge over-and-above the basic technique. Each little twist is all part of a process of continually refining through hours and hours of practice.

HANDLEBAR POSITION

For starters, I place my hands out near the end of the grips for extra leverage. I don't mean that you should go out and get bars that are three feet wide. Just get the bars that are the maximum width you feel comfortable with. Check around for a bar that has a comfortable "sweep" bend. Bars that have an awkward shape will hurt your wrists no matter how wide, or narrow, they are.

Aside from where to grip the handlebars there are two other phases of bar positioning. Bar height and stem throw. For each rider they differ depending on the physical size of that person. Fortunately, adjustments in both these areas are easy to self-diagnose and correct.

To check your bar position you have to do some starts. As you snap off a start, you want your back to straighten out as you throw your hips forward. If you find that you can't get your back to straighten out, or your

hips don't seem to come as far forward as they should, then it's likely there's a problem with the positioning of the handlebars.

If there is something wrong with the bar position, you'll know right away, because, with this start, the bars will get in the way. You won't be able to throw your weight enough to get anything going. If your bars are too low or tilted too far back, it will cause a strain on your back when you try to snap. You won't be able to straighten your back properly or keep your arms and knees bent correctly.

If this is the case, then you should first try to adjust the stem. Often this does the trick. To test it, find a long, steady *uphill* climb and ride up slowly. With each stroke of the pedal snap like you would coming out of the gate. You'll be able to tell right away if you're getting the proper form or not. If your bike still isn't right, it may be that you need bigger handlebars or a longer frame or both. DO NOT try to compensate for a small frame by tilting the bars way forward. In addition to making your bike extremely hard to control (which is reason enough) it puts too much weight too far forward when you snap. This could lead to an endo over





The bike has only moved about ten inches, but with the gate finally out of the way, the bike will surge forward on the downstroke of the first pedal.

the gate if you mistime, and you also run the risk of cracking your knees on the lower part of the handlebar.

Of course your frame might also fit you too big. This is something I see once in a while with little kids just starting out. They are trying to compete on a full-size bike or their big brother's bike. This is all OK if you aren't all that serious about winning, but if you are reading this book, that is probably not the case. Younger riders also need their equipment to fit them perfectly. If the bike is too big or the bars are too wide or too tall, they won't be able to pull correctly to develop any power.

TIPS ON YOUR STARTING GATE

Unless you have a full track in your backyard already, you're going to have to make a practice gate.

When you build yourself a starting gate make it simple. Build it to hold at least two riders, unless you regularly practice with four or more friends, then build it wider. Always try to have enough people on hand to fill the positions on the gate plus one extra so you can take turns operating the gate. But don't invite over ten people

to share time on a two-man gate, because nobody will get enough starts in.

Don't worry too much about the slant of your practice gate. You might want to angle it so it will be similar to your local track gate, but it's not critical. Once you get this start method wired, you can take it on any gate and be successful. I personally keep my gate slanted down at only a slight angle, the back being about six inches higher than the front.

PRACTICING IT

Once you get this starting method down, practicing it is the most important thing—to bring up your level of consistency. The more you practice it the less you have to worry about your starts when you get up on the gate for a big main event. All the hours of practicing eventually condition your mind and body to react as if starting were all second nature to you, regardless of the pressures of the event.

I'm dead serious now. What I'm going to tell you is what I did to help me win the 1982 World Championship in Las Vegas. In the weeks before the race three friends and I would go to a track called The Park in Fullerton.

Each day we would go there to do a minimum of 150 starts. To help keep it interesting we would race to a line about five feet away from the starting gate. That's correct—each start would be a five-foot race to see who could snap out of the gate the best. We kept tabs on who won each round and made the loser be the judge for the next round. This really helped with my concentration, as well as improving my consistency. If you can do 150 starts and only blow, say, five of them, then on race day you should easily be able to do six in a row, or however many it takes to get you through the main event.

You might think that, because you don't live in California, you can't practice every day, because the weather is often bad where you live. Well, California has some inconvenient weather, too. It rained several days before the '82 Las Vegas World Championship race but we still practiced. Not in the rain, but under the protection of a carport at a local apartment building. We loaded the gate up in the back of a pick-up truck and took it down there while everyone was away at work. If you want to do something badly enough, you'll find the ways to do what you need to.

As the pedal moves to the end of its stroke, your body weight starts to shift back to the middle of the bike and into a position where you can spin the cranks.

Occasionally something does come up and there really is no way for me to practice my starts. What do I do then? I'll take some time that evening and just sit down and think about it—I'll go over each motion, step by step, and try to concentrate on it as if I were actually doing it. I do this often and sometimes I get so totally pumped about it, just sitting there, that I can't wait to get back on my bike and do it for real. Mental practice is a good thing to do once in a while even if you can practice your starts every day. I mean just sit and think and concentrate.

LIGHTS & STARTERS

Always scope out the lights or starting gate operator several motos before your race is being staged. Repeated observation reinforces your mental conditioning. The secret to getting off the gate is to concentrate and remain calm. Remember, in that important moto you want to do exactly like all those practice starts you did at home. This is not the time to think, "If I can just shave off one more second . . ." Think that and I guarantee that you will blow the start. You want your front wheel to follow *with* the gate. Sure, once in a while you'll get a start that you timed so good that you push the gate down and blast out like crazy, but don't ever go intentionally for those kinds of starts; just let them happen when they happen. I'll tell you, I did one of those starts in the Pro main at the 1983 ABA Winternationals at Chandler, Arizona, and it scared me to death. Fortunately, I didn't flip or get thrown sideways, and I won the race. But, believe me, I came within one nano second of flipping over the bars at that instant. As I said, once in a while you may hit one like that but to

attempt to achieve that kind of start every time is too risky for anyone. What will happen if you do try it? Your percentage of good starts will drop way, way, down. It is much better to seek the best overall results, rather than attempt a perfection that you can reach only once in a while. Besides, the more and more you practice the closer and closer you'll get to achieving a consistency on a higher level of performance.

The idea in racing is to beat the people racing against you. You don't have to beat the gate, just the riders next to you. You don't race the gate, you don't race the jumps, you don't race against the track, or against the clock in BMX. Absolute perfection is impossible. If you attempt to seek it you'll only put so much pressure on yourself that you'll eventually crumble. On starts, being within one or two points of perfection 98% of the time is better than being perfect only 40% of the time, or even 80% of the time.



NOW THAT YOU'VE GOT IT WIRED

After you've gotten a few holeshots of your own, you'll see how much easier it is to race when you're in the lead. You won't believe it. Being in the lead gives you an incredible feeling of power and control.

When you think about it, getting off to a good start and getting the lead is more than just a way to win races, it's a way to win in life. When you get off to an early lead, the rest of the race goes much easier and smoother. The same applies to everyday life. Do your homework right away and you don't have to worry about it the next day or to make excuses for not having it done.

I've noticed the people who always complain about this and that, always finish in the back of the pack and have an excuse why they didn't win. The guy who shows up for the race and thinks, "Gee, it would be nice to win today. I think I'll try," is no match for the guy who has been thinking all week long, "I'd better practice my starts more each day because I'm going to win next weekend."

CORNERING

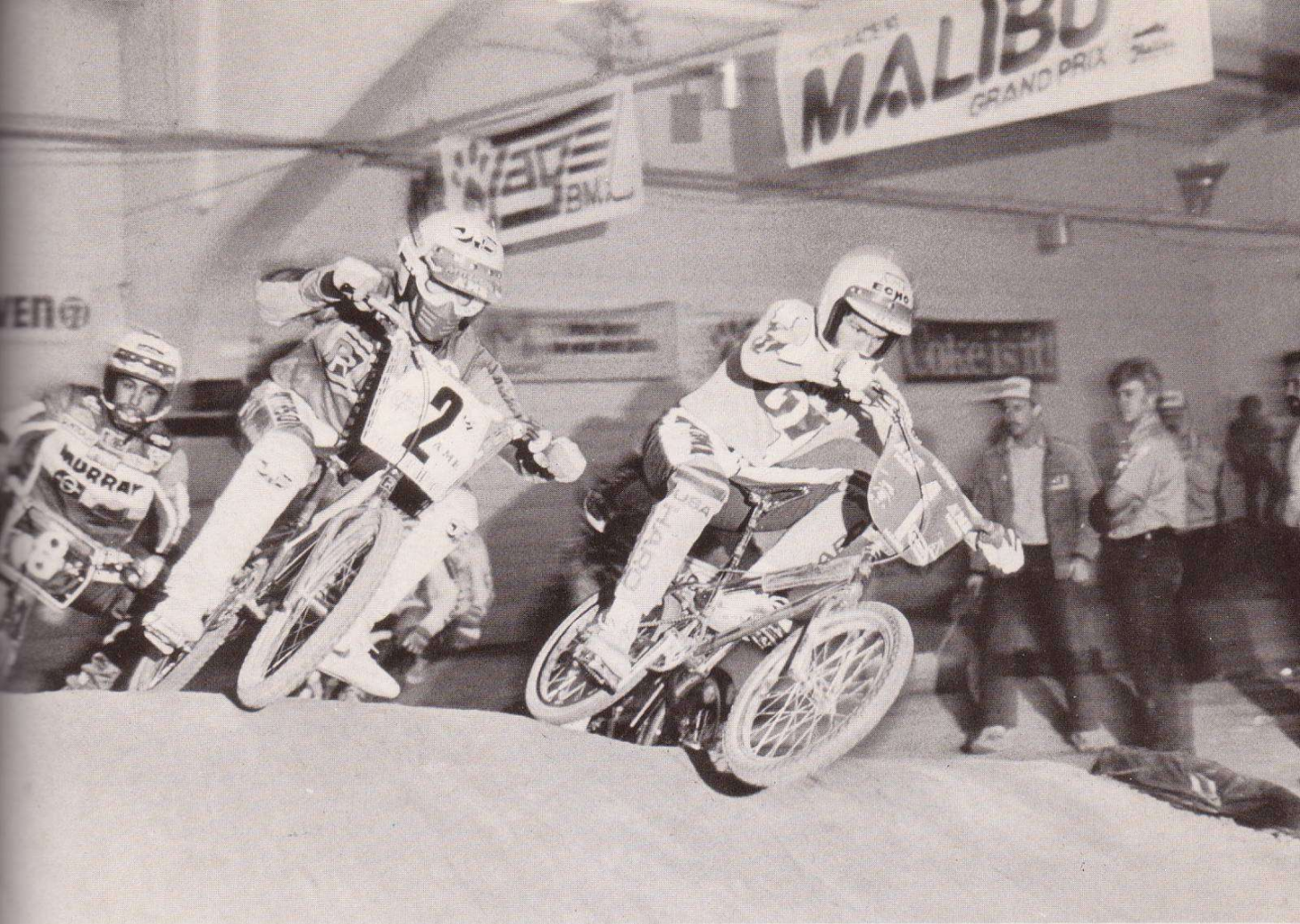
There are three basic parts to cornering. Leaning the bike over, carving the turn, and exiting the turn. This section will deal with the various ways to accomplish them. Let's begin with how to lean your bike and body depending on the type of corner and traction available.

For most turns the essential idea is to balance your weight evenly over the bike so you maintain equal traction at both wheels. The idea is, if you start to lose traction, the bike will drift evenly out from under you, rather than wash out the front or slide out the rear. My stance is low and ready. My outside leg is at the bottom of the cranking stroke and slightly bent at the knee. My inside leg is on the pedal, but almost no weight is on it. It's there ready to deliver the next power stroke or come off to brace me if I start to slide too much. Remember, though, don't put your inside foot out for no reason—that's a bad habit to get into. You don't want to waste time doing things that are unnecessary. This is an energy-burst sport, a sprint race. The race is over in an instant. If you want to drag your feet or do big

dusty slides a la motocross, then don't bother with BMX, get yourself something with a motor.

Turns slow you down, no matter what. The idea is to keep them from slowing you down any more than is essential. Common sense tells us that the best way to do this is not to hit your brakes. Unfortunately, a turn might be too tight to hit at full speed and, you might fly off the track and crash. We'll look at this type of turn later. Right now, let's look at turns that you don't have to slow down for.

If you selected your gear correctly (we'll talk about that in the section on strategy), you should be pulling your gear ratio going into every turn except the first. This means accelerating *all the way* up to the point where you should begin to lean into the turn. It's as simple as that. Crank as hard as you can until the instant you have to lean the bike over. Make your line through the corner, then upright the bike and crank as hard as you can to the next corner. In most of these instances, your body will be leaning at more or less the same angle as the bike when you go through the corner. Leaning with the bike is important to remember on fast corners, because you will be able to start cranking the



instant you start to come out of the lean. If you just lean the bike and keep your body upright, you can't pedal until you get your body realigned with the bike. Remember, turns slow you down, so you want to keep your momentum going and get back to pedaling as soon as you can.

Cornering on extremely sharp turns, like those you'll find on most

indoor tracks, often requires a somewhat different strategy. In this case you *want* to extend your foot out. You lean your bike over sharply, but keep your body relatively upright. This "tripod" position makes you a very difficult rider to pass or knock down. In indoor racing that's the name of the game—survival.

Yet another technique is required in

corners where traction might be bad due to sand or mud. Slippery or skiddish corners are best negotiated carefully. My technique is a combination of keeping the bike almost dead upright, and leaning my upper body into the turn. I do my best to keep both feet on the pedals—the sooner you can get back into the pedaling mode the better.

Not many things can beat a cross-up for pure excitement and fun, not to mention the crowd appeal.

JUMPING

There are several types of jumps that you might encounter on a BMX track: speed jumps, lip jumps, drop offs, step-up jumps, and European jumps (a jump that leads directly into or out of a turn). For each one the riding technique is slightly different; and for each one, the technique is as complicated as the ones for starts. Jumping technique is very, very, critical to the outcome of any race. To jump well you need all the basic skills: balance, timing, rhythm, coordination, and quickness. The application of these skills is essential to basic jumping techniques.

Speed jumping is a common term used to describe the various ways of staying low off a jump. There are ways to speed jump whoop-dee-dooos, medium-sized jumps, monster jumps, double jumps, step jumps, drop-off jumps, and table-top jumps.

DROP-OFFS

The method that you use on drop-offs depends entirely on the size and abruptness of the drop itself (see diagrams). You might be able to

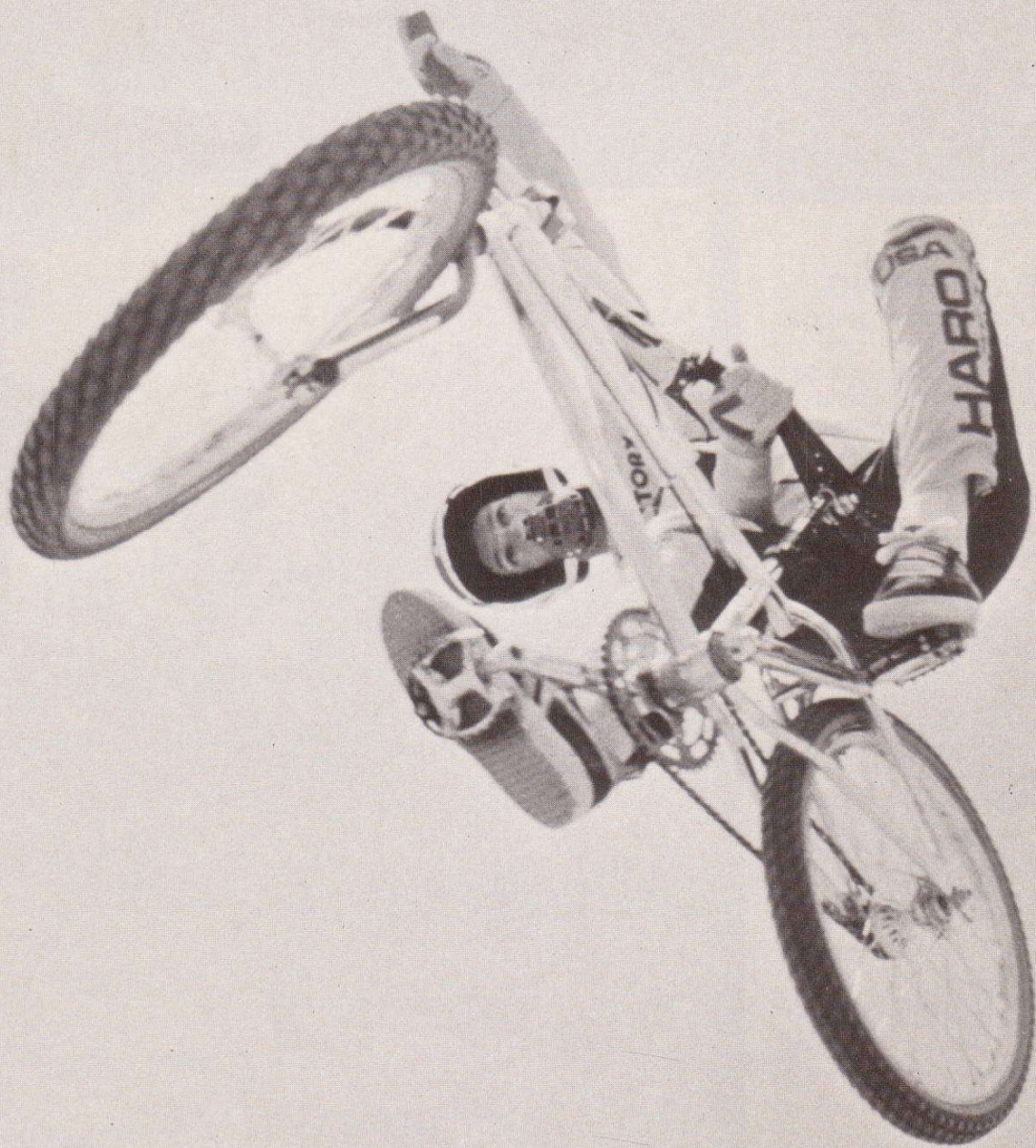
speed jump a sheer drop if it's not very big, say, maybe two feet high at the most. Any sheer drop higher than that and you had better just fly as low as possible. Inclined drops are much easier to take because you can usually speed jump them. An inclined drop can be taken one of two ways, by either pre-jumping or traditional speed jumping. Pre-jumping is better suited for long, steep drop-offs. This is where you actually bunny-hop over the leading edge and land farther *up* the face than you would have had you had just ridden over the edge at speed. This method is especially good if the edge of the drop has a kicker on it that you want to avoid.

GETTING AIR

But before you learn how to speed jump, my advice is to learn how to *jump in order to get air*. Learn how to jump far and high, and practice doing it regularly. I see too many riders who can ride basic tracks, but when they get to a track that has a real jump, a jump that forces you to get some air, they get all psyched out and can't cut it. Granted, most tracks around are too easy, and it's rare that you ever race on a track that has a jump too big to speed jump, but the wrong time

to learn how to take a big jump is when you have to race over it. Besides that, jumping is an all-around skill that every successful rider is expected to have. Imagine going on a photo shoot for a BMX magazine, and when they ask you to do a cross-up you can't do it. That'll be the last time they ever ask you to go out for photos.

Good jumping skills come from practice. You start out slow and build up. You think it takes guts to fly off a big jump? It's not guts, it's skill and confidence gained through practice and preparation. The best jumpers didn't start yesterday, they all have several years of experience. And they don't take stupid risks.



1

On doubles that are not spaced very far apart as these are, you want to get air, but only enough to precisely clear the lip of the second mound.

SPEED JUMPING

After you have mastered getting air, learning to speed jump will come much easier to you. Speed jumping is a precise technique. Rhythm and timing are the keys. I always time my pedaling so I pull into a power-wheelie just as I reach the jump. The front wheel never touches the face of the jump. The most common errors that I see riders make are they pull the front end up too soon or they coast before the jump and then pull the front wheel up by a big tug on the handlebars. To avoid these mistakes, work on your rhythm and timing, always trying to get out every last power stroke before the jump. (see photos).



Move your weight forward, like on a speed jump, but don't pull the wheel up. My speed at this point is about 20 MPH, which is fast enough that it would be very easy to over jump the second mound and lose time.

2



3

As the front wheel approaches the lip, I aim it very carefully for a touchdown just beyond the peak of the second jump.



I've used my legs to absorb about 50% of the launching effect of the jump.

4



5

If everything is calculated out perfectly, the landing is very smooth, almost like you're gliding back down to earth.



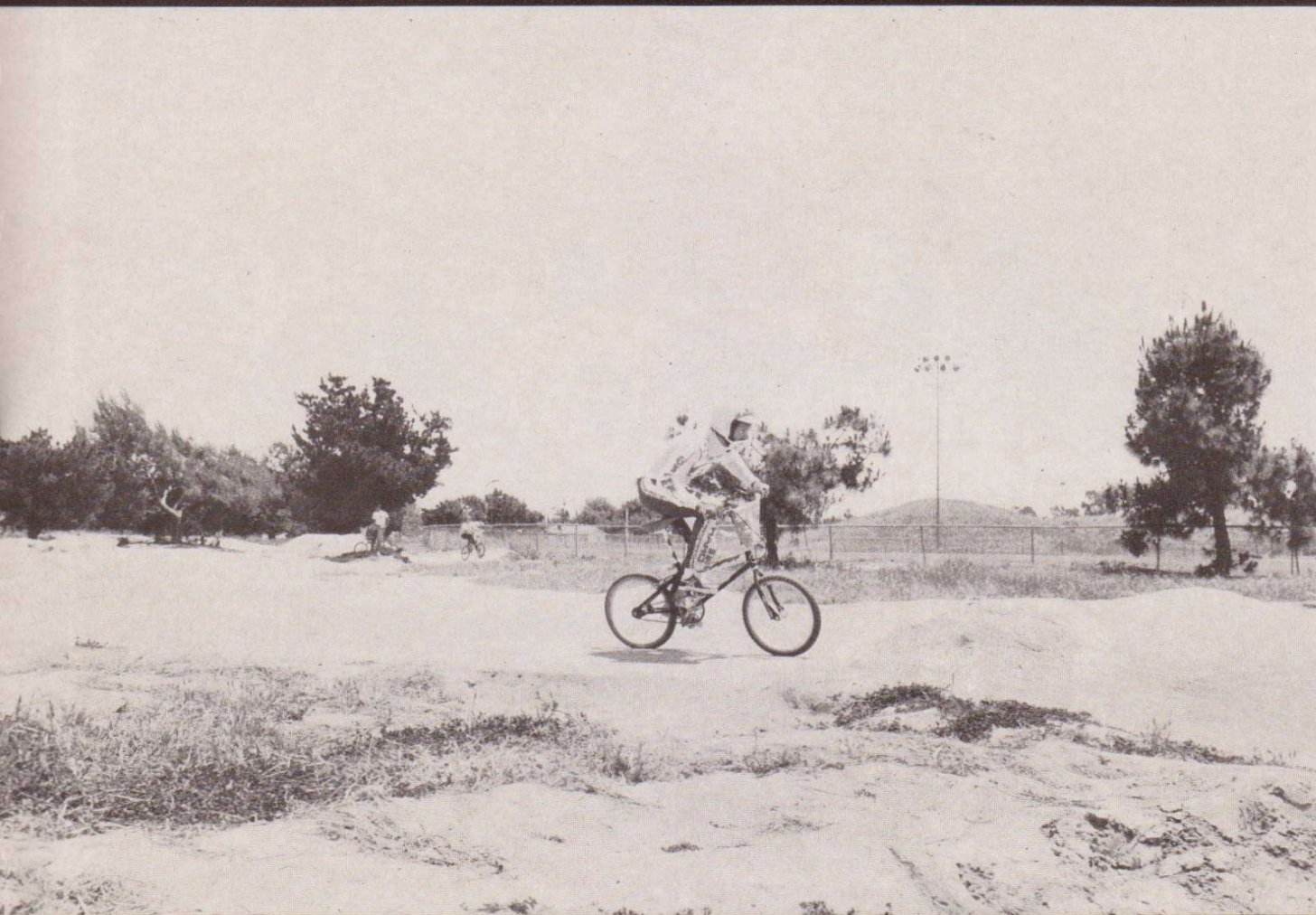
The instant both wheels are solidly on the ground, extend your legs to "push" the bike into the backside of the second jump. This will help you pick up some speed.

6



1

Triples are usually spread out farther than doubles and that means that you have to make an effort to get enough air to clear them. With this particular set, the speed is about 20 MPH, which is only barely enough to clear. On the approach, crouch low, ready to spring.



The instant you hit the face of the first one, spring your body up, like you are bunny hopping right at the top of the jump.

2



3

At mid-flight, keep your body steady, and your eyes aimed at the lip of the third jump that you need to clear.



On long jumps, you have a tendency to drop fast. You can get a few extra feet on your jump by pulling the bike up into a crouched position while you're in mid-air.

4



5

Again, it's important to land right on the down side of the last jump to maximize your landing force into forward push.



The force of landing from a long jump can throw you around sometimes. You can minimize this by keeping your bike straight (no cross-ups) and absorbing the impact with your legs and body as best you can.

6



1

The most common mistake riders make is trying to take doubles or triples, that they know they can't jump, too fast.



They hit the first one, getting a little bit of air ...

2



3

... Start to land before they've cleared the second jump ...



... Then land with a crunch that almost throws them over the bars. If you don't feel that you can safely clear a set of doubles or triples, slow down and take them smooth, and safe.

4







MONSTER JUMPS

If a jump is so big that, no matter what, you are going to get air, approach it just like you would any other jump and use your speed jumping technique to stay as low to the ground as possible. Don't waste your time pedaling in the air, it could mess up your balance.

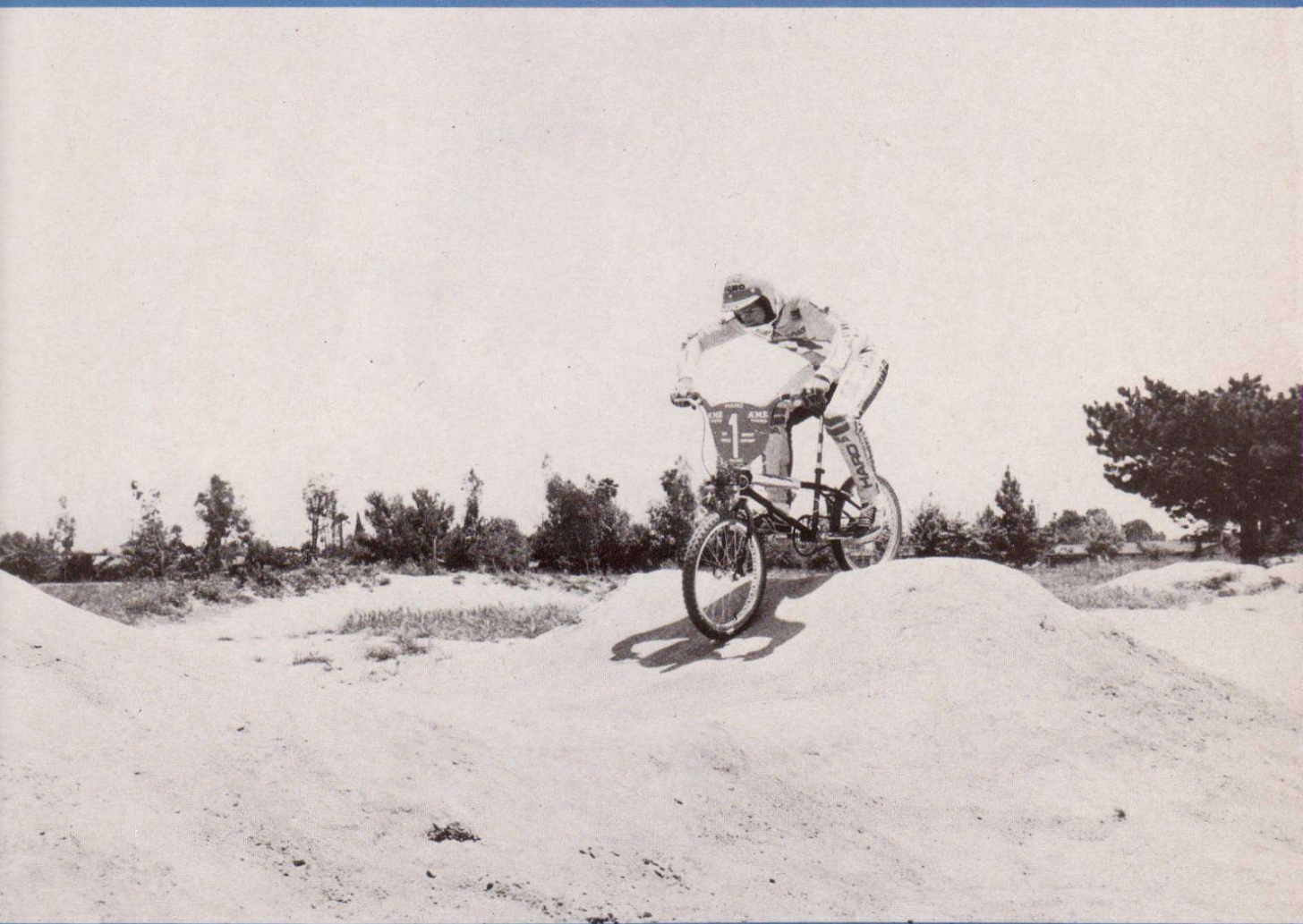




1

Once in a while you have to take doubles that you can't clear on one jump. If that is the case, don't do anything fancy, just ride over them as smooth as possible.









5







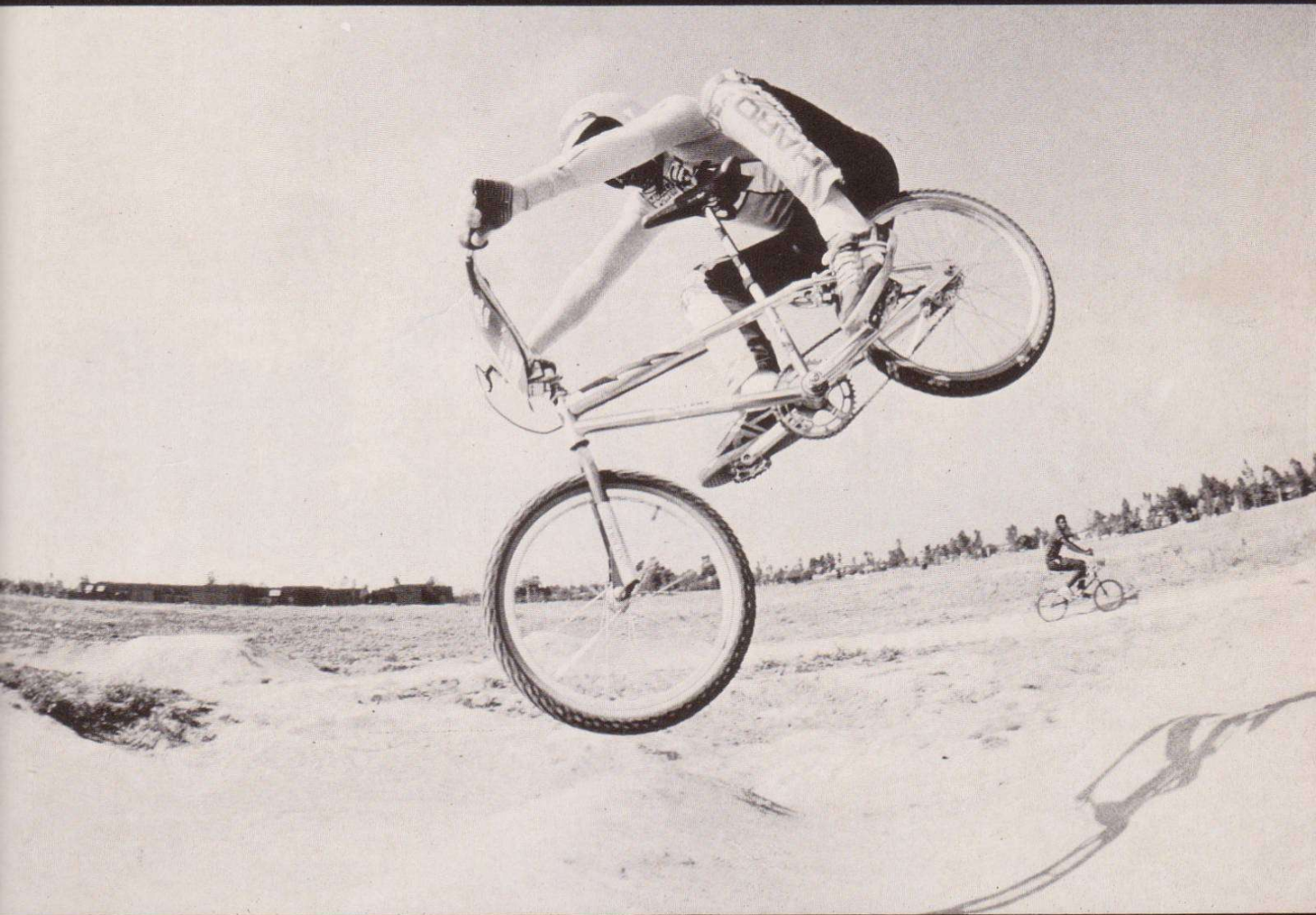


*Good style comes from
lots of practice.*



0

Good jumping skills are an essential to the basics of BMX racing. An accurate landing like this on the back side of a whoop-dee-do can help you pick up speed. Needless to say, if you never learn how to handle a situation like this your all-around racing progress will suffer.



1

Speed jumping takes practice and timing. Your approach should be straight on, with your body loose and ready to absorb the jump. Notice how neither my elbows nor my knees are locked.

POWER JUMPING

(See photos) Power jumping is my way of taking any jump or whoop that I can *pedal completely over*. Anyone can learn this technique by starting with small, smoothly contoured obstacles. As your balance, timing, and confidence improves you should try bigger and bigger jumps.



Pull the front wheel up just as if you were going to lift it over the crest of the jump. Keep your weight slightly forward so at the right instant you can push the wheel back to the ground like a shock absorber spring on rebound.

2



3

With the front wheel down, move your weight slightly to the rear to absorb the "kick" of the jump.



Notice how my legs have "rebound" into the same position as before the jump. Speed jumping is just trying to absorb the jump as fully as possible.

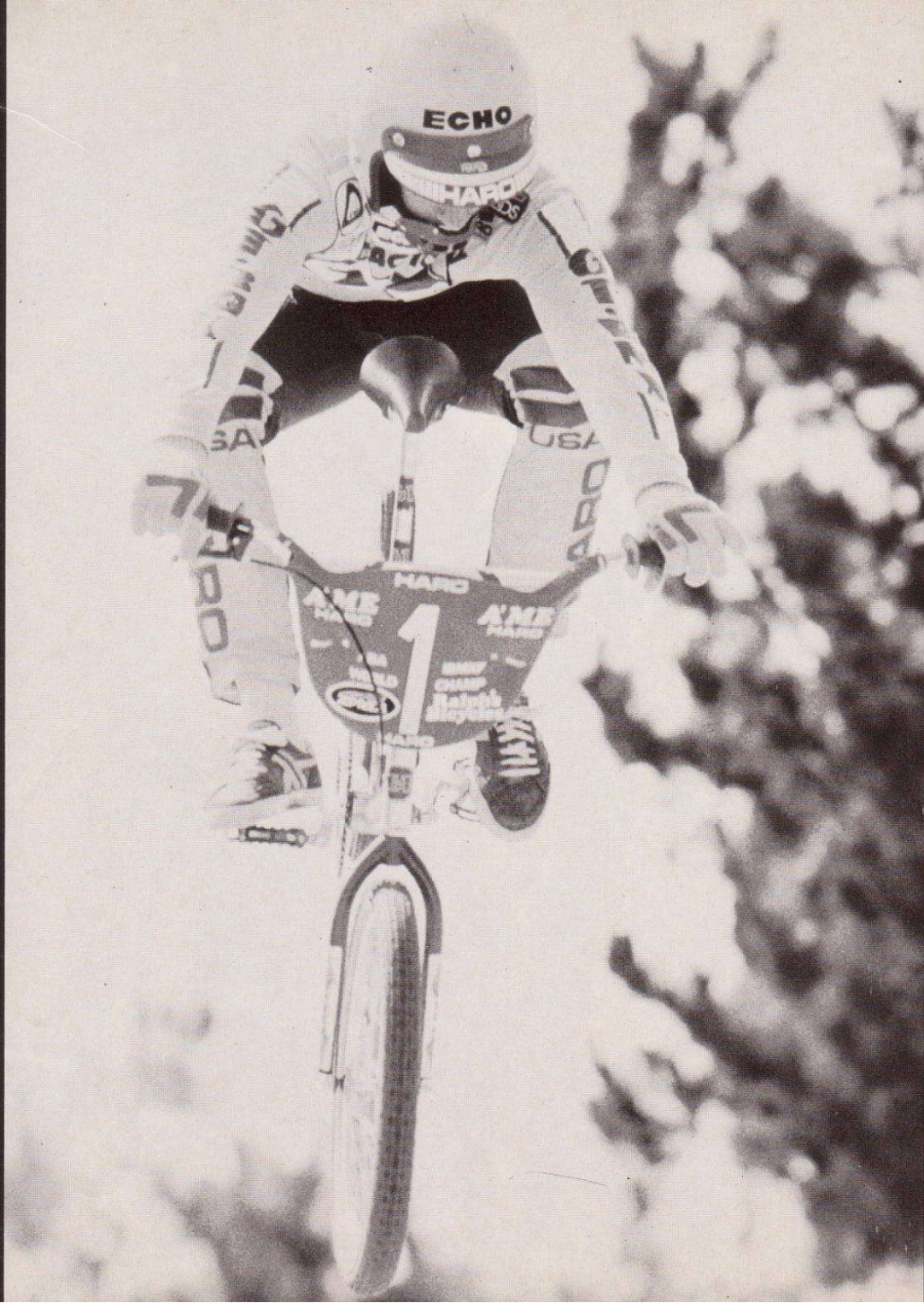
4



Body compression is very important to keeping your wheels on the ground and driving forward. Each instant you have your wheels on the ground that your competitors don't means gaining an advantage.









Timing your power strokes is the most important part of powerjumping. You don't want your crank or pedal to hit in the crest of the jump; when you hit that point, you should be right between a down stroke.

STRATEGY

TRACKS AND STRATEGY

The track you are racing on will sometimes dictate minor adjustments in your stance. Generally, the closer the start is to the first turn the more this comes into play, especially if you get an outside lane.

What I do in this situation is point my bike slightly to the inside of the first turn. It may feel a bit weird to set your front wheel at a slight angle against the gate, and that's all it should be, a slight angle, but don't worry about it.

The last time I did this was at Chandler at the same winternationals that I mentioned before. I got a fourth in the first moto (they were only taking three to the main). In moto two I drew the outside position. I knew that I had to do something if I was going to have a chance to still qualify by the third moto (we were racing on the total points system). I set my bike on the gate in my regular stance, but with a slight angle toward the first turn and proceeded to get my best holeshoot of the weekend. By getting out of the

gate extra quick and having my angle of attack already established, I was able to dictate whatever line I wanted to the rest of the pack, immediately forcing them to adjust their strategy to fit mine. By contrast, if I had simply gone out dead straight, I would've had to make a "cut" to get to the inside. This would have required that I make several complex decisions about where to cut and whether the quick move would startle someone into center-punching me. Plus I'd have had to worry about traction at the instant I made the move. As you can see, doing it that way is much too complicated. It is much more efficient to have your basic line established at the gate, so when that gate drops you can concentrate on putting out. Of course, had I blown the start or only come out even with the guy next to me, I would've had to readjust my strategy according to how things developed going down to the first turn.

TIPS

I recommend that everyone learn to do my start method both right and left handed. Mainly, I learned the technique both ways just to make

myself a more versatile rider. I feel that the more control you have over your bike in every conceivable situation the better off you are, it's good just in case you need to rely on it some day, say, due to an injury or something. Besides that, it becomes a new challenge for you if you like a change from practicing starts the regular way. The thing is, you're still working on timing and snap as well as refining your overall feel for the gate.

GEARING

I have one basic rule that I generally follow when selecting a gear ratio for a particular race track. I generally adjust my gearing so I spin out, plus a couple of cranks, just before I have to shut off for the turn. If you plan on racing at only one track in the immediate future, then I suggest that you do all your practice starts with the gear that you use for that track.

People always ask me, "Isn't it better to practice with real heavy wheels and a super-hard gear so you can build yourself up?" No, to me, it is not better, in fact it's totally ridiculous



because it completely ruins your sense of timing for your race bike. When I practice, I want to simulate the feel of an actual race. I recommend that you stick with the bike and the gear that you will be racing on. It is all part of conditioning yourself, preparing yourself, for that ultimate moment when the starting gate drops.

I personally always practice with a 43/16. If I travel to an unfamiliar track and find that I need to run a 41/16, then that's what I'll run; but on Monday when I go back home and practice starts again, I'll put my 43/16 back on. I use the 43 because it's the hardest gear I'll ever normally race on (so that's why I practice with it). It also happens to be the gear that I race on the most. I've found it to be quite easy to show up at a track and drop down one or two teeth if I have to. It takes me only about five minutes to get used to a lower gear.

But I have found that it takes me three days to get used to a harder gear. Well, at least it seems like three days. The fact is, if I know that an important downhill race is coming up, I definitely will install the proper gear

(if, in fact, it will be higher than a 43/16) for the whole week before the event.

If you're going to visit a track that you've never been to before, call the promoter or the track operator and find out what the track is like. More often than not they can tell you what gearing other riders use at their track. If they can't tell you, ask them for the name and number of somebody who can. If you ask the right questions, you should be able to guess pretty close to what you will need. Once you have an idea of what gear to use, then practice on that gear. If you have any doubts, go up one to be on the safe side. Then if it's necessary, you can always go to a lower gear. The way I feel about it, going to an easier gear on race day is much better than going to a harder gear.

STRATEGY IN TURNS

FIRST TURNS

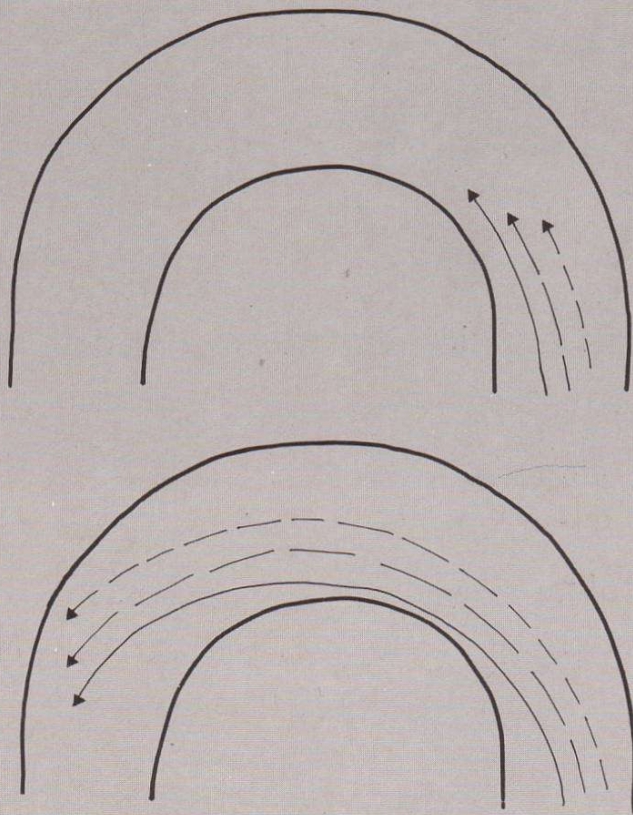
Assuming that you know your starts and you can get the holeshot the first turn is nothing to worry about. It's not even there as far as I'm concerned. When you get the

holeshot, you want to take the common sense line: in low and out high. But, unfortunately, nobody but nobody gets the holeshot every time.

There is no rule about first turns. Every track is different and every race on every track is different. Each person in front of you is a variable that you must contend with. Unless you are in *last place*, the first turn is the hardest place to set somebody up for a pass. At the same time, it is a paradox that the first turn is also the one place where you will get passed most often. Murphy's Law is implanted in every first turn: "If anything can go wrong, it will."

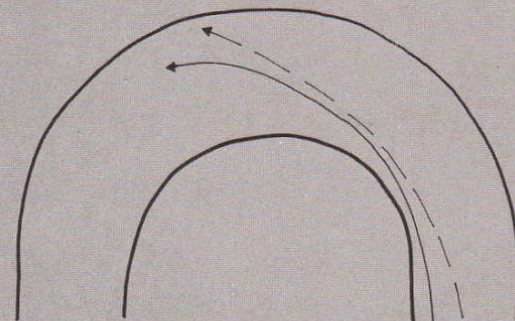
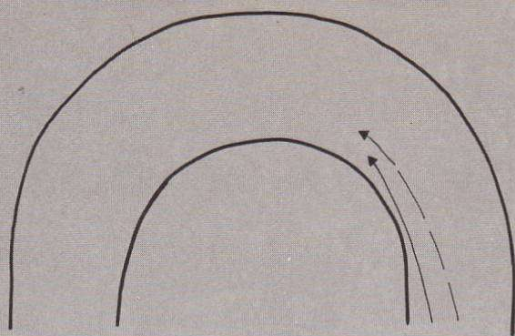
FLAT, OR SLIGHTLY BANKED FIRST TURNS

In working with these types of first turns, moving to the outside to set someone up for a pass will almost always leave you open to getting cut off by the guy right behind you. Unless you have eyes in the back of

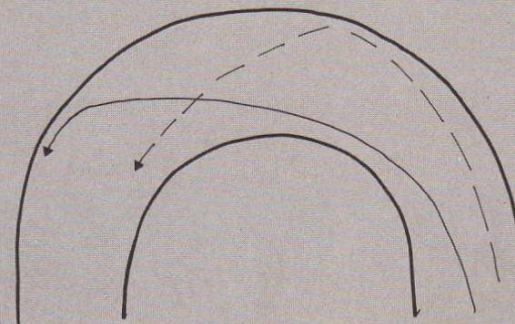
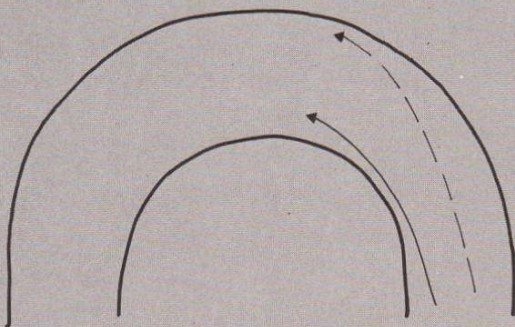


Flat or slightly banked first turn. This is an ideal first turn situation. You (solid line) have the inside and a slight lead going into the turn (top). You want to hold an inside line because that's the quickest way around the turn. Go just fast enough to keep from sliding out. Don't worry about the guys on the outside of you. Because the turn doesn't have a berm, riding the outside offers no advantage. Coming out of the turn you want to drift towards the outside line for two reasons. One, it forces anyone next to you to crowd to the outside and, two, carving a line to the outside "rights" your bike quicker and you can start pedalling sooner.

This is a block-pass. This is the most common way used to pass in BMX. It takes a little bit of aggressiveness and nerve, but if done properly, it's the cleanest way to pass there is. If the guy in front of you leaves you enough room on the inside, dive for it! All you have to do is squeeze yourself in next to him before he can make his cut for the turn. Once you own the inside, you can cut any time you want, but the later the better, because it forces your opponent to slow down even further.



This is a slingshot maneuver. You almost always need some banking, or better yet, a good berm, to work this kind of pass. In this one you're the dotted line on the outside. The guy in front of you takes the classic line, "in low and out high." You, on the other hand, take the extreme outside going into the turn. Just when you anticipate him to cross up to the berm, you cut hard and crank your way down off the berm. You need to accelerate hard in order to pull ahead!



your head to see that the pack is far enough back, it's best not to risk the move. This is one of the biggest mistakes riders make. In desperation to pass the guy in front of them, they make wild moves and get passed themselves. Your best bet, in most cases, is to hug the inside, aiming just slightly more inside than the guy in front of you. This way, if he makes a mistake and/or crashes, you are in the best position to get around him. Following with your front wheel overlapping the rear wheel in front of you is fine as long as you are to the inside and can hold your line. If you are to the outside and your wheels are overlapped, you are at the mercy of the guy in front of you. He could move slightly into your wheel and it would be all over. If you have to be on the outside, leave plenty of margin for the unexpected.

Being side-by-side is a totally different story. But there are different strategies that you might apply (remember, no rules) depending on your exact position: whether you are side-by-side and in the lead, or side-

by-side and in the pack; or whether you are on the inside or on the outside; or whether you hold a slight lead or are at a disadvantage.

SIDE-BY-SIDE AND OUTSIDE

If you are in this position, don't back off if you are in the lead, even if it's only by a few inches. If the rider inside of you is going to drift, then lean hard into the turn to brace yourself for when he makes contact.

At Long Beach one time, I had the lead by about two inches going into the first turn. I was on the outside and to the very inside of me was Stuart Thomsen. Had I not leaned harder to the inside, almost over on him, in fact, he would've easily passed me. Instead, I was able to hold the lead and win that race. Don't be afraid of a little bit of elbow-to-elbow contact.

If you have any type of lead, even an inch, leaning in on a guy makes him think before he tries to do anything. Once you have the advantage on someone, it becomes his risk to try to pass. He would have to be coming in at a much faster speed to be able to counter your leaning in on him. And even then, he

would risk causing a pile-up. The way I look at it, when I'm on the inside, I take the fastest line. If someone is occupying part of that line, it's his job to hold on to that line. When I'm stuck on the outside, I think the same way. I don't expect the guy on the inside to give me any space, so I force him to let me have it by leaning in on him.

On tight tracks with a tall berm first turn, it might not be such a good idea to try to bang elbows with somebody when you are on the outside, even if you have a slight lead. With the help of the berm, it becomes real easy for the inside guy to square off against you. If this looks to be the case, swing wide at the last instant before hitting the berm and let the inside guy pull into the lead. Then, the instant you can cut down the berm without hitting his back tire with your front tire, square off the berm and shoot for the inside.

You want to be sure to wait until the last instant before making your move. If the other guy sees what you're doing, all he has to do is slow down and not give you the open track to cut across.

Sometimes the pack will be too bunched up to attempt a move like that. The only thing you can do is glance over your shoulder to see if it is. Timing is critical. Look before you decide to cut. This way you should be able to tell in time if the inside guy is going to slow down to block you. Remember, a quick glance is all it takes. Don't swing around to see who's behind you, only look to see if the inside is clear.

If there is no room to cut clear to the inside, then try to cut directly behind the leader so he can't take you out.

What happened to me at the 1982 IBMXF World Championship event at Dayton, Ohio, is a good example of how this maneuver can work:

The first turn was a tight hairpin with a big berm. I was in third place off the start of the Pro Open main. Going into the first turn, I could see two riders in front of me, Tommy Brackens and Stuart Thomsen. They both went for the deep inside and I could see that their speed was going to carry them high on the berm. It was just that kind of berm. Sensing this, I cut to the outside and squared off to

get underneath those two riders (see diagram). It worked out perfectly. As they swooped around the top of the berm, they clanged together and gave me just enough time to swoop below them and into the lead.

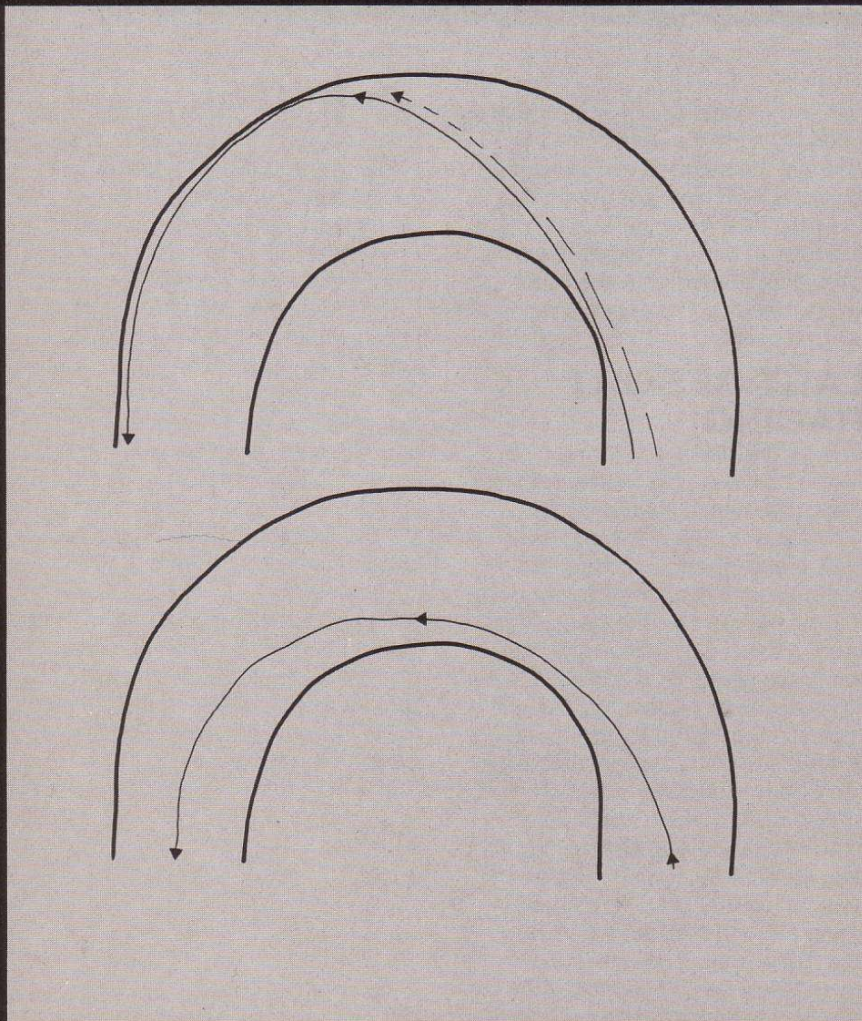
I didn't look back on that one. There wasn't time to see if the track was clear or time to think about the move. It was all instinctive. You just have to be conditioned to respond to those instants. That all comes from the experience that I talked about earlier. Of course, there was an element of good luck on my side on that move: I didn't get T-boned when I cut across the track. I have no doubt that if I had waited a split-second longer I would've been T-boned.

On tracks that have two open lines through the first turn, and you are stuck on the outside one, power as hard as you can to stay even. This way it's your race when you come out of the turn. You really don't have to worry about anyone else trying to get by because, if the other rider holds his line and you hold yours, the track is blocked to everyone behind. If there are two lines and you slow down to cut behind, then you leave the whole outside line open for a backmarker to come blasting around.

INSIDE MOVES

Inside moves are simple, go for the fastest line that protects your position. If someone is to the outside of you, you can expect to see the tactics that were described earlier. If someone leans on you, don't force it. Most of the time you can give them room and still come out on top. Don't ride up high on the berm *just* to shut the door on the guy next to you. If riding high is your line, then take it, but don't go out of your way to take somebody out. Playing games will get you nowhere. Get in and out of that berm as fast as you can, and that's all.

If you're on the inside, dicing side-by-side, but in the pack, the same rules apply as if you were going for the lead. You are racing the guy next to you; but keep an eye on the leaders.



On a banked or bermed turn, the solid line represents the "classic" line used to hold off someone directly next to you. You control the inside going in, then drift high on the exit to take advantage of the berm for a power drive.

On flat, or non-bermed turns, a middle to inside line is used depending on the length of the straight away following the turn. If it's a long straight, you want a slightly higher exit line for a faster exit speed. If it's a short one, keep it to the middle for quickness.

PUTTING YOUR FOOT DOWN

I believe that it's best to keep both feet on the pedals whenever possible, but in *some* turns it is a good strategic move to extend a foot. For instance, if you drift wider in a turn than you want, extending that inside foot can serve to block somebody from passing. In flat turns, getting that foot out braces you in case you slip traction.

In first turn situations, putting your foot out depends on one factor: pedaling. If it's a big wide sweeper that you can pedal almost all the way around, then you are better off pedaling than you are dragging your foot. If it's a turn that requires a heavy lean angle and hard carving, then put your foot down and protect your position.

Don't misunderstand, putting your foot down will not prevent anyone from crashing into you. What it does is deter people from trying to sneak under you. If they want to plow into you and cause a pile-up, there's not much you can do to prevent it.

If you run into a track with a wide-open first turn, it's real common to find that the second turn is where a bottleneck of riders occurs. If that is the case treat it like you would a tight first turn. In fact, first turn strategy should be applied whenever you encounter close competition going around corners.

LAST RESORT RACING

Blow the start?

You can make big moves from last place if you are alert and a little lucky.

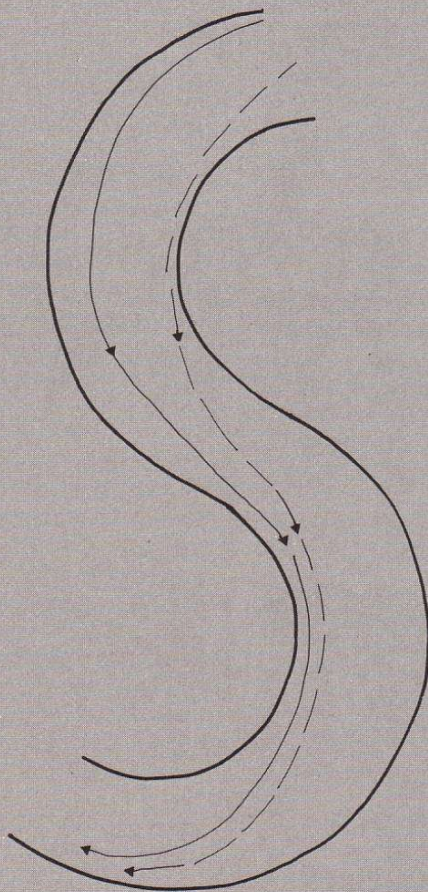
In '82 at an NBL race in Florida, I blew the start and was dead last going into the first turn. *Everybody* in front of me went for the inside of the berm. When I saw that, I knew that there was going to be a pile-up. Normally if you're dead last out of the gate you want to go in high and come out low, just to try and get underneath somebody. But in this case I cranked all the way around the high outside. The outside line is almost always the very fastest way around most berms. You can usually keep your speed going through them and exit cranking at a higher rpm. If no one is immediately behind you this is the best way to take a bermed corner.

When we race in close company, however, you want to use the criss-crossing lines around most corners because they are designed to block the strategy of other riders. Get it? Anyway, at that race in Florida, I passed everyone but two guys by riding the outside. And because I knew that no one was behind me when I was chasing the guy in front of me, I was able to take the last turn real wide and keep my momentum up. The extra speed allowed me to sling-shot past into second place.

It all boils down to being aware of the circumstances in your race and knowing how to use them to your advantage.

Sometimes it can be an advantage to try to stay wide in a corner. Consider a track that has a switch-back or S-turn. Being on the outside of the first one will put you on the inside of the second one.

The ABA track in Chandler,



With switchbacks or S-turns you have to be very careful of what tactics you use. A block-pass, in particular, can backfire on you real easily. Notice how the solid line has the "outside disadvantage" going into the initial turn of the switchbacks. That disadvantage is quickly turned into an advantage going into the next turn. The solid line is in the best position to block-pass and come out on top.

Arizona, is a perfect example. The first turn, a tight and flat left-hander, is followed by a short straight which dumps into a high-banked, right-handed berm. Coming out of the first turn side-by-side gives the advantage for the next turn to the rider on the outside.

Fortunately for me, this is exactly what happened at the '83 ABA Winter National there. I came out of the first turn high and with a slight lead. Because I had the outside, I was coming out of the turn faster than they were, in perfect position to grab the hot line for the second turn.

SOMETIMES . . .

There are times that all you can do is settle for whatever position you are in. There have been races that I tried every move I knew and I still couldn't move up one position. It might be the track was too narrow, or the guy in front of me just didn't make any mistakes. Whatever the reason, there are just going to be times when it's impossible to pass. This is why you should get the start. If you're on any track where it's impossible to pass, if you have the lead every time, there's nothing to worry about.

TAG

You can learn a lot about anticipation and countering moves by playing a game that I play. It's called tag. It is just like regular tag; one guy is "it" and he has to touch somebody in order to get rid of being "it." Of course, we play tag on bicycles instead of on foot.

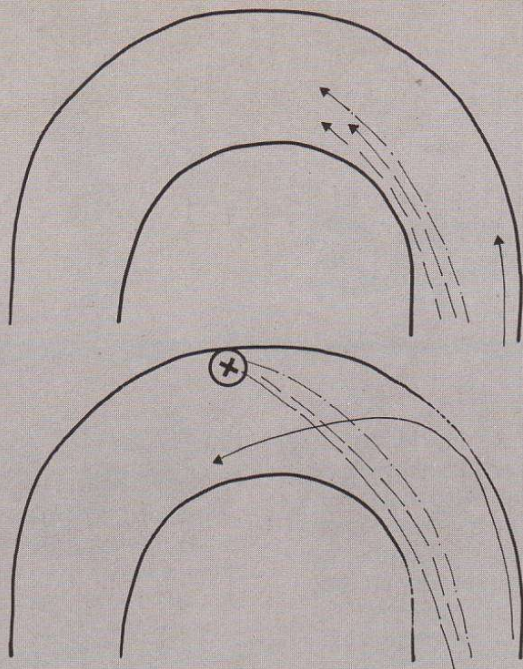
By playing tag you will discover all kinds of new skills and tactical maneuvers. Virtually every move you will practice during a game of tag will help you for racing. Things like; how

to anticipate moves, how to cut quickly in order to avoid someone, how to lean on someone (if you're "it"), and how to use your elbows.

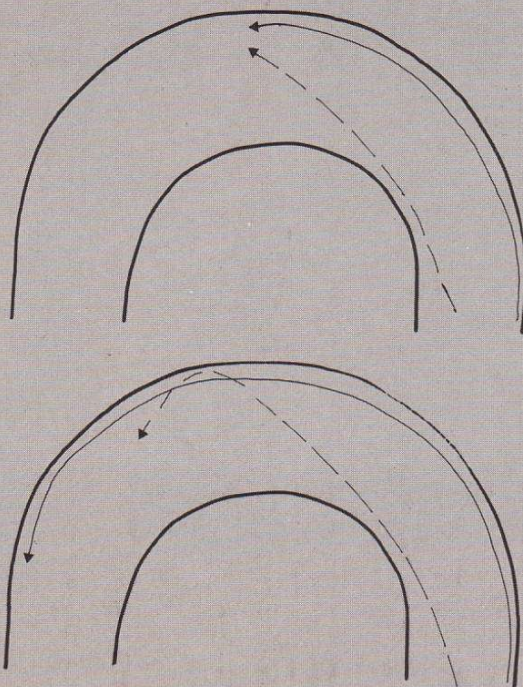
When I play tag, I try to get at least five guys to go along. We find a field or a parking lot somewhere and set up the boundaries about the size of two or three basketball courts. We make it bigger if there are more guys. If any one goes out-of-bounds he's "it." This game calls for skill and timing, and it improves stamina.

You don't just go plowing into somebody in order to tag them "it." You use your head, try to manipulate them into a corner or against a boundary so all you have to do is brush against them for a tag. Bumping wheels, elbows, or any other part of the bike or body, constitutes a tag.

All in all, tag is an excellent form of training. It keeps you on your bike and develops skill and physical conditioning.



If you get a bad start and anticipate a pile-up in the first turn, hold back just enough to get a clear shot at a slingshot pass if the wreck does occur.



On really high, steep, and fast berms the hot line is the "rail" around the very outside. In this case, the broken line has gone for the inside line, but sweeping around the outside at twice the speed is the solid line. About the only way the guy on the broken line can pass is by bashing into the guy on the rail.

LOOSE ENDS

BURN OUT

There have been times that I've been so burned out that I've felt like quitting BMX. But when I look back now at those times, it makes me glad that I didn't quit, because I can see what I've accomplished since. That is why I think that it's important for everyone to recognize and understand exactly what burnout is. When I was burned out on racing, and I mean I was really burned out on racing, I got over it by relaxing and forgetting about BMX. I started doing things like going to batting cages, bowling, and working on my truck in order to just have a good time and do something different for a change. In time, my desire to start racing came

back as well as the urge to start winning. Now, I never let myself get burned out. I make sure that I spend a certain amount of time every so often just thinking about other things. If you have a hobby that is totally unrelated to BMX then do that regularly. Anything that will divert your mind from BMX will do.

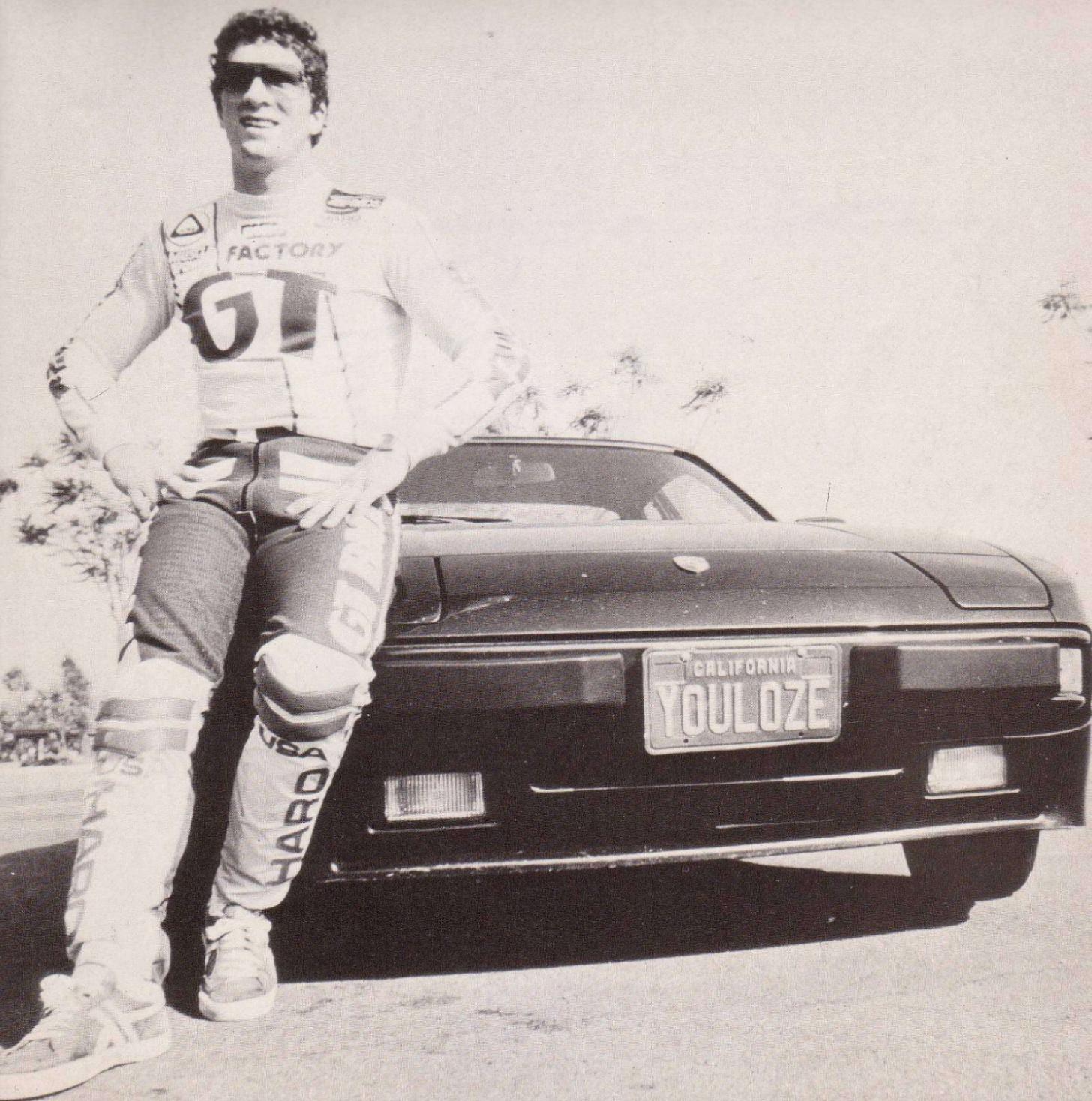
Burnout comes from going too long and too hard on one thing. There are things that I do to avert burnout that also helps to keep my level of motivation and desire to win high. For instance, if you normally race four times a month, skip one race each month. You can go and watch, but don't race. By doing this, you'll always feel like you're not getting enough racing, that way it keeps your level of desire high. If you never quite get your fill of racing, you'll always come back hungry for more. Don't wait until you get burned out to take the weekend off, that could be too late.

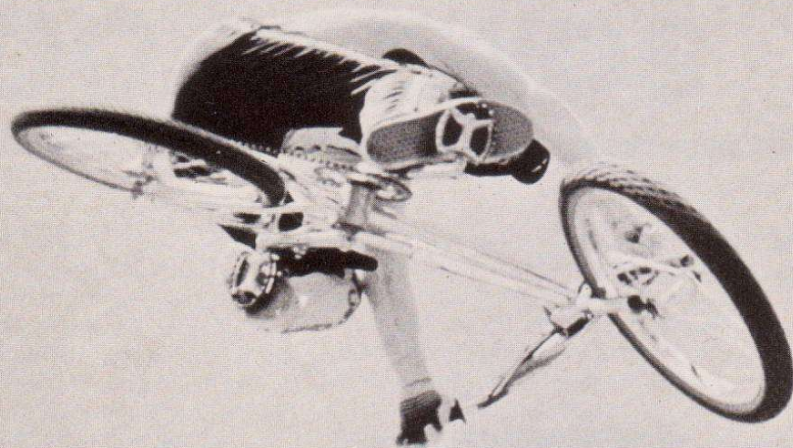
If you ever do experience burnout, remember it's only a temporary condition. Take a short vacation or find a new interest. I'll wager you'll come back to BMX a better racer than you were before. I did.

INSTINCT & EXPERIENCE

Instinct is an interesting part of racing. It is a gut feeling for no obvious reason—you take a chance or make a move because "something" tells you to. Often it's the best thing you could have done.

You may be at the stage where you don't take any chances at all. In that case you have to try hard to recognize missed opportunities such as an easy pass. Once you begin to recognize those missed chances, you will slowly start to take them. You might make some moves that cause you to bail, but you will also eventually find the holes.



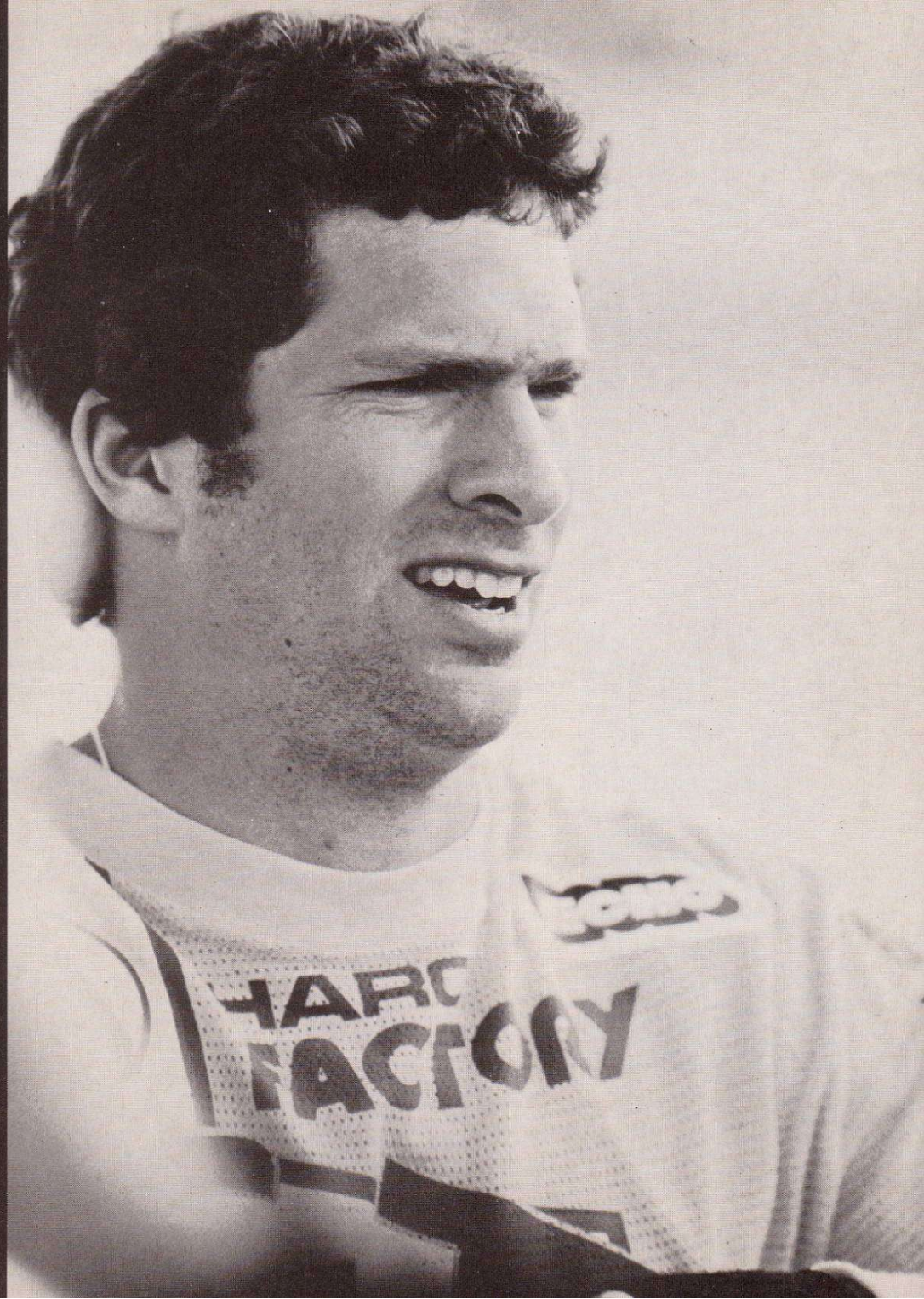




BMX is a great sport. It can be very rewarding at any level of competition, beginner, novice, expert, and pro. What level you attain is up to you. Each step up the ladder takes a certain amount of work and dedication. Even for those who are naturally gifted with exceptional talent for BMX racing, the climb demands effort. They may make it look easy on the track, but, I guarantee you, they can account for many hours of practice away from the track, too.

You might think that you don't have as much natural talent or ability as the next guy, but that can be overcome by a stronger desire to exceed your present limits. More races are won on the strengths of desire and determination than raw ability.

In any case, I believe you can make your climb to the top much simpler and quicker if you follow the training and practice procedures that I've outlined in my book. Try to keep to a regular schedule and keep it and yourself as organized as possible. Like your mind and body, keep your bike prepared and in good working order, too. The sooner you begin the sooner you will reach the top of the ladder and become a winner. You can do it!



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