

# THE RESPECTABLE HUSTLER

By Hilary Clay Hicks

Photos by Hicks

Riders: Scott Mitchell & Wayne Erickson

About a year ago, Ralph Mundia of Ralph's Bicycles fame introduced his Hustler BMX frames. What a difference a year makes! Let's take 'em out to the track and beat 'em up to find out what the new Hustler is like.

## HUSTLER

When your reporter arrived at the Ralph's/Hustler headquarters, the subjects of our test were all ready and waiting.

Scott Mitchell and his friend Wayne Erickson were there with Scott's dad John. Ralph Mundia had the bicycles all set to go.

Inspecting them closely, in particular the one to be ridden by Scott, we found that Ralph had built up another of those incredible racing machines for which he is famous. The bike was particularly well set up for Scott, who is tall and strong.

Scott liked the GT bars because they are familiar to him. The Hutch 180mm cranks (very much like Red-line) are his style. The Shimano DX pedals fit his feet comfortably (to be pushed by the Vans he wears).

We found that Ralph had recommended an Elina racing saddle for Scott, Pro Neck gooseneck, Hutch bottom bracket, Araya rims, Bulls-



eye hubs, Competition 3 tires, Tange headset and Shimano DX handle on DiaCompe brakes. The seat was one of those slick looking Cook Bros. Laid Back, with Addicks SP clamp. The chain was an ultra-light and strong D.I.D. of 4130 chromemoly.

And, of course, the Hustler frame. It was already apparently different from last year's pro model. The bottom bracket had been lowered to the standard height, with the crank centerline twelve inches from the ground. The length is about the same

*His bars are GT's, something Scott is familiar with, and a Shimano DX brake handle, A'ME grips, and a Pro Neck.*

*The new Hustler frame has a lower crank and revised geometry to suit the big rider better. The welds are A-OK, and the 4130 chromemoly tubing hits the Hustler high mark. The frame is tall and long.*

Mitchell gets air, seeking the impact test.

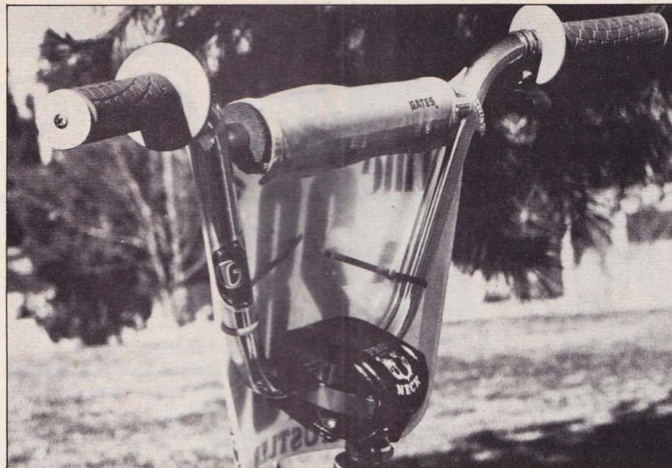




# RESPECTABLE HUSTLER



Erickson hops a bump in search of durability.



Sponsor Aero supplies both plates and pants. Headset is a Tange.

working on this model for over a year, ever since the Hustler Pro frame was first introduced. He has a great deal of pride in the workmanship, from the quality of the welds to the pre-polished chromed tubing of light, tough chromemoly 4130. He tested it with some of the best riders around, including Jeff Bottema (who can really beat up a bicycle), and

**"After a year of testing, Hustler has made some changes. The bottom bracket was lowered to standard height and the geometry was radically revised."**

finally concluded that it was good enough for the market. He lowered the bottom bracket simply because that's the way more riders wanted it.

**S**cott Mitchell #28, age fifteen, hails from Glendale, Arizona, right next door to Phoenix, and right in the ABA's back yard, near Chandler. Determination has made him the 28th ranked rider in the ABA's District #1 in just a year of riding.

His fast rise attracted the interest of Hustler BMX and Ralph's Bi-

cycles, which are now his co-sponsors. Along with them, he has the support of Premier, Aero, Vans, A'ME and Bottema Forks. His bicycles are built up especially for him by the Hustler/Ralph combine, and maintained by his dad, John.

He made his mark by lots of regular racing. So far, he has only placed in one important race, the ABA Summer National at Amarillo, Texas, where he was fourth. But his strong suit is points-gathering. He races five or six times a week, running back and forth between the Chandler track, Road Runner in Phoenix, and the Supercross track at Peoria, Arizona. He is indeed a hustler! And a hustler!

**"The new Hustler frame is taller and longer than a GT and shorter than a Hutch. It's a tighter steering unit made for the bigger rider."**

One thing for sure is that he will go to college. He has an A-minus average at Cactus High School, where he is in the tenth grade. He plans to be an architect. His family is proud of his academic excellence, and will support him in whatever he wants as long as he's a good student.

He races the 15 Expert class, and is beginning on cruisers. He has no plans to go pro, feeling he is too big for that, but you never know what is going to happen in a fast-moving career like Scott's.



When you look at the total bicycle, you see a collection of components intended to help the bigger rider go fast, all married to the new, intensively researched and tested Hustler frame.

Hustler will be introducing the new Semi-pro model later this year. Incidentally, Hustler also distributes Bottema forks and specialty items like headset adapters and sew-up tires. "The future is in specialty items," says Ralph. Hustler recently opened a huge warehouse in Bell Gardens near the Ralph's Bicycles store in Downey, getting ready for the rush in sales.

When we got out to the track, we found that the LaMirada facility was muddy and in poor shape. While we were there, Bill Fay and company

The saddle is by Elina, with an Addicks SP clamp holding a Cook Bros. laid-back seat post.



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**“The test was ridden on bikes built-up around the Hustler frame, using components recommended by Ralph for the not so little BMX racer.”**

arrived and were working the place over with bulldozers. Normally a fine place to ride, it was a mess while we were there; I'll bet it was just fine for the race Sunday.

Scott and Wayne worked hard for our camera, but it seemed like there was no place to get air that wouldn't land you in a mire. There was no place to slide, and no dust to roost.

The place was just full of local kids who were certain that they were better riders than the Team Hustler riders. They rode on their bars and jumped like fools and deliberately and accidentally got in front of the camera all the time we were there.

One thing they didn't understand was that Scott and Wayne are not trick riders. They're serious racers. Scott went to BMX from desert motorcycle riding, so his style is not based on bicycle antics, but rather on motocross skill. He has a straightforward manner, simply choosing lines that will give him the fastest way there. It was hard for those little California city squids to understand.

This combination of circumstances was lending itself to a rather dull experience until I asked Scott and Wayne to just loosen up and fall down for the camera. At first, I think Scott was a little upset. He didn't want these local kids to see him falling down and think that it was from lack of skill or whatever.

I managed to convince him that most radical pictures are actually the moment before the fall, so for awhile he let down his defenses and thought destruction. Wayne got right into it and was even doing endos and power slides into the wet sand right away.

This also served the dual purpose of demonstrating how tough these Hustler bikes really are. They held up just great. When a couple of big dudes take 'em to the thrasher, they don't flinch or even dent.

In all, we had a real good time and learned how to hustle with the Hustler. In fact, if you need a good bike, you better hustle up the bread and write or call Hustler. Ask for Ralph.

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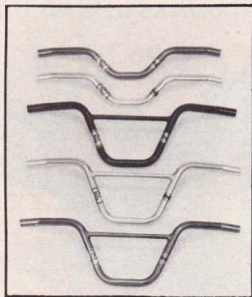
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