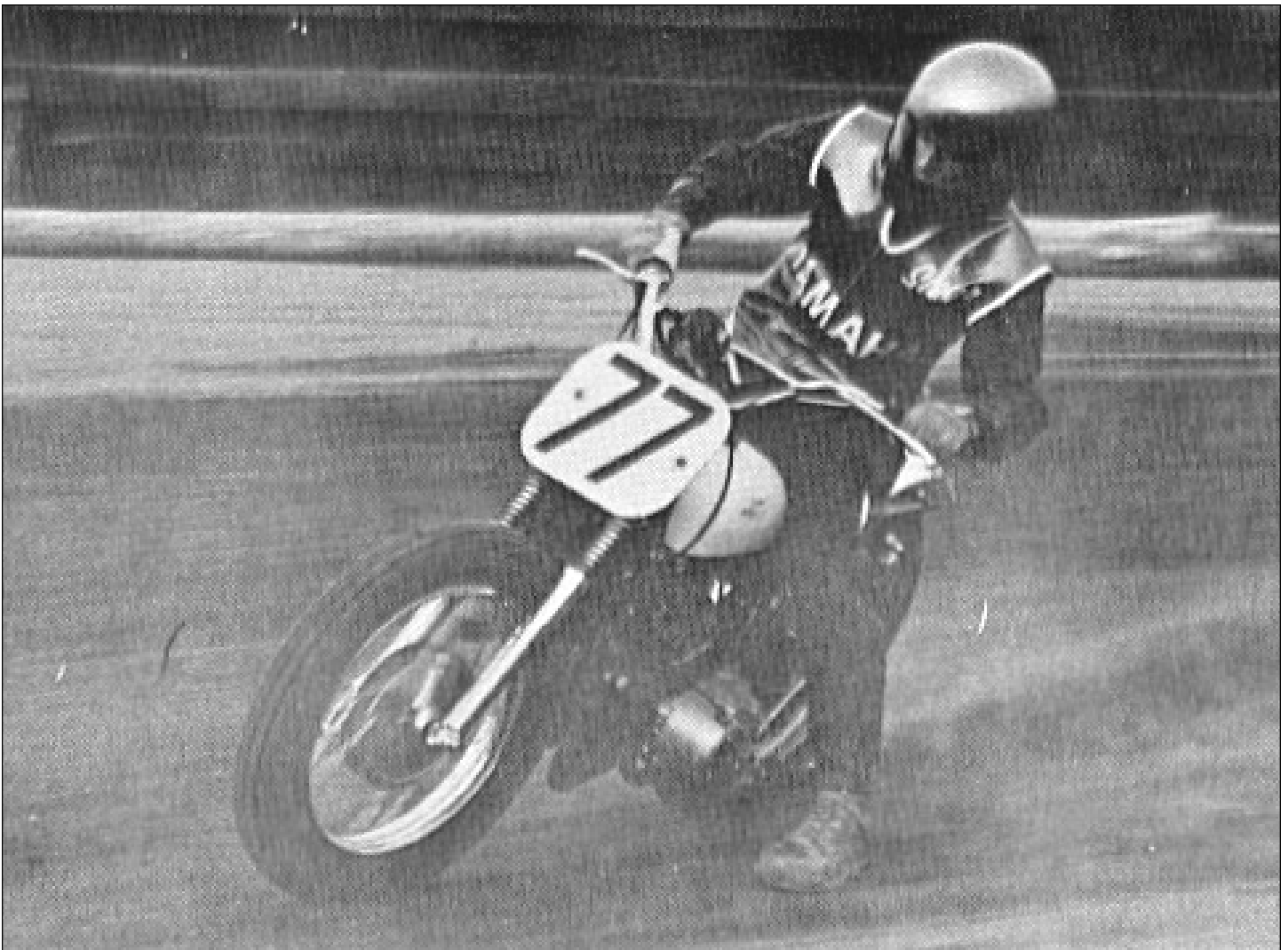




Steve at speed on the Yamaha



At Vancouver's Callister Park 1969 (*Rusty Harrison photo*)

STEVE BAKER

Pioneer - Motorcycling

By Michael Moore

Steve Baker's first bike, a Yamaha 80 was a gift from his Dad, either that or his young son would ever be hanging on every time he went for a ride. After learning the ropes and spending hours on a local dirt practice field he entered his first 100 cc race at Hannigan and won the race. Piqued by the results Steve continued riding a 250cc Yamaha, racing indoors, outdoors and flat track with the highlight being a TT win at Ascot. In 1970, he went to work for Trev Deeley in Vancouver who supplied him with a 250 Yamaha allowing him to continue his dirt-racing career. Borrowing a road bike from a friend Bob (Bo) Work gave Steve the opportunity to race at Westwood. His

first amateur year proved very busy with him riding the 250 in the States and 125s, 250s, and 350s in Canada highlighted by a second place at Mosport.

At Daytona in 1971, Steve finished in the top 10 in the 250 and 350 and by the end of the year he finished second in both classes for the Canadian Championship.

Turning pro in 1972, Steve ran numerous Canadian tracks and in an attempt to gain knowledge of extreme speed headed to Daytona, Atlanta, Texas and Charlotte earning a second at Talladega. To further advance his career in 1973 Steve raced in the US and Canada earning the 250 and 350

Canadian National championships. The next year Steve ended up on the notorious evil handling TZ700 eventually breaking his leg at Talladega. The next year a recovered Steve raced the same but much improved bike taking a second at Daytona and winning his first AMA (expert) at Loudon in both the 250 and 750 classes.

For 1976, Steve joined the World Championship F750 class winning at Brands Hatch, Oulton and Imola.

1977 dawned with Steve as a Yamaha factory rider and after a long year finished second in the 500 class to his old teammate Barry Sheene but on his red and white 750 Steve became a very deserving WORLD CHAMPION, the first American to accomplish that feat on two wheels. To make that year even more special he had finally won Daytona.

Returning to Europe in 1978, Steve finished seventh in the World Championship using private Yamaha. Later that year Steve in a separate deal ran a 750 Yamaha in North America but after breaking his arm and leg at Mosport decided it was time to take a breather professionally so for 1979 Steve only raced the Transatlantic match races on sponsored bikes.

In 1980 his lifetime love of bikes had him open a very successful dealership in his hometown of Bellingham. Now 2010 Steve on sponsored bikes finds himself returning to racing in the Classic festivals in Europe.

"Yamaha is in my blood," says the world champion and one suspects that the same can be said of British Columbia and his beloved Westwood for this quiet bespectacled Greater Vancouver Motorsport pioneer.



Steve Baker