

Wed. thru Sat.
Nov. 17-20
24-27

241 1/2 Walnut St.
For Reservations
& Information,
292-7454

HIGH-POINT RACEWAYS
(I-79 at Mt. Morris, Pa. exit)
MOTORCYCLE MOTOCROSS RACING
(Rain or Shine)
Sun., Nov. 14
GOOD FOOD AND REFRESHMENTS
racing also Sun., Nov. 21 & 28
Race 1:00 — Minibikes 10:00 a.m. Adm. \$3 Adults




MOTORCYCLE RIDER kicks up mud as he climbs hill at High Point Raceways in the rain.

Motorcycle raceway proves tough challenge

by Laurence Bennett

It's hard to imagine a two-wheel vehicle — or its driver — taking that much punishment.

Roaring like berserk chainsaws, the motorcycles plow their way around the tough, hilly, dirt-and-sawdust track.

On a rainy Sunday afternoon, that can mean you swallow a lot of mud as you ply the course. Drivers can get so muddy the scorers can't tell who's in first.

The area's newest racing arena is High Point Raceways, a motorcycle course near Mount Morris, Pa., operated by Dave and Rita Coombs. They used to run the motorcycle racing program at Appalachia Lake Park.

"We're trying to develop a course that will meet Grand Prix standards," said Coombs.

The mile-and-a-half course is carved out of a hilltop near Taylortown, Pa.

It's getting attention from a number of motorcycle racing drivers, such as Adolf Weil, a veteran from Germany and third in the Grand Prix standings last year.

Another is Graham Noyc, a blond Southampton lad who placed fourth in the GP standings.

Noyc and Weil toured the High Point course recently with Coombs and Sylvian Goebers, current Belgian national champion motorcycle racer.

The experts walked the course and made suggestions to improve the course safety and competitiveness, and to make it compatible with world motorcycle racing standards.

"I'd really love to get a Grand Prix race here in 1978," Coombs enthused.

Weil spoke little English, but offered comments that were translated by his mechanic, Karl

Heinz, or by Goebers. Weil and Noyc agreed the High Point track is a good one.

"A lot of European tracks are sand," said Noyc. "Some are rockier. This is a good course."

Coombs said his track will have cross-country races this winter, then open in May with championship series races in the 250 cc class.

"We've had about 2,000 spectators and 350 riders every weekend since we opened in October," Coombs said.

The day the experts stopped in, on their way to a Trans-AMA (American Motorcycle Assn.) race in St. Louis, a few spectators braved the chilly winds to see them up close.

"Watching these races is sort of a hobby with us," said Jack Williams, Duquesne, Pa.

"The kids are excited about it, as we are," said Williams. His wife, Betty, was rounding up their three young ones — John, Amy, and Alice.



DAVE COOMBS

"We had to get autographs for the kids," offered Betty.

High Point offers cash prizes in the expert rider category, according to Rita Coombs.

"There actually are 14 classes you can ride in," she explained. "We give trophies to winners in all the rest of the categories."

They'll have about 28 races on a good weekend, each one lasting from 10 to 20 minutes, she said.

She doesn't ride, but she loves the excitement.

She loves it enough to commute from their home in Morgantown to the track several times a week for races, or in preparation for the races.

Lynette Ryan, scorer and registration clerk, was enthusiastic, too.

"No, I don't ride motorcycles," she mused. "But I love to watch 'em."

The Coombs' hope a lot of other people do, too.



RITA COOMBS