



Team Owner Bob MacLean...



By Michael Gougis

Looking at professional-level racing today, it's easy to understand why a non-factory podium is an event celebrated by fans and racing journalists. Aside from freak weather-impacted races, it is rare that any of the factory teams are beaten by their lesser-funded colleagues to a top-three finish, and even rarer when a satellite team rider beats all of the factory team men and machines.

In the past decade, there has been exactly one dry-weather victory by a satellite team rider in MotoGP, in 2016 by Cal Crutchlow at Phillip Island, and that one came only after Marc Marquez, having already clinched the title, crashed while leading. (And given that Crutchlow is contracted directly to HRC as a development rider, calling his LCR Honda RC213V a satellite bike might be stretching the definition of "satellite...")

In that light, the accomplishments of American racer and team owner Bob MacLean are simply otherworldly. MacLean and Peter Clifford, who formed World Championship Motorsports, established the team as a solid satellite effort in the 500cc World Championship series in the 1990s and got the call when one of the factory Yamaha teams collapsed. Taking over that team's machines and riders, WCM podiumed in its first season, won in its second season, won again the following season, and then in 2000 took six podiums, three wins, and at one

Garry McCoy (24) won the 500cc Grand Prix at Valencia in 2000, riding a YZR500 for Bob MacLean's WCM Red Bull Yamaha team. Here, McCoy leads Kenny Lee Roberts (a.k.a. Junior) (2) and Valentino Rossi (46) with Max Biaggi (in red) trailing. McCoy also won in Portugal and South Africa that year. Photo by Yves Jamotte/DPPI Media. (Below, Right) McCoy (8) on the team's Yamaha YZR500 in 2001.

point led the 500cc World Championship points. To date, the five victories for WCM are the greatest number of wins for any non-factory team in the modern 500cc/MotoGP era. It is astounding.

"Here's a guy who had a pretty good team in the AMA," says MacLean, 81, now retired and living in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. "All of a sudden, in my wildest dreams, I would never, ever have thought that I would be standing on a podium celebrating a 500cc Grand Prix victory! When I think back on that, all of those days, that was among the top thrills of my life. We had more frigg'in' podiums and victories. We had a terrific run. I look back at that with a lot of satisfaction. It was a great experience."

MacLean's name might not sound familiar to fans new to the sport, but another MacLean might. Son Ian MacLean has produced some of the best-reviewed films about motorcycle road racing, including *Faster*, *The Doctor*, *The Tornado* and *The Kentucky Kid*, *Fastest* and *Hitting The Apex*. MacLean's son lives close to him, and the two visit on a regular basis.

Bob MacLean's racing story began with him behind the handlebars. Back in the day, a Grand Prix race start was something far more accessible than it is today, and MacLean took



a Norton to 11th in the 1967 Canadian Grand Prix at Mosport Park.

But team management interested MacLean after he was done riding, for a very simple reason. "Some years later, I decided, I'd like to try to make a business of this. I got involved with Richard Schlachter. I wanted to get Mike Baldwin, but Mike got hurt that year and Richard was around and we talked. I sponsored Richard and he won a couple of the AMA Formula One Championships back in 1979 and 1980." MacLean ran a Yamaha TZ750 for Schlachter in the