

AMA Formula One series, and kept one of Schlachter's TZ750 race-bikes for years.

That led to MacLean's introduction to GP racing on the Continent, with Schlachter in 1981 on a Yamaha TZ250. "We decided, 'OK, let's go to Europe.' We did the 250s, and the one year we did it he finished 10th in the World Championship, which is fantastic," MacLean says. "We just came over with a TZ250, and Kevin Cameron did some tuning, and that sort of got my toe in the water with GPs."

MacLean ran more high-profile riders in the U.S. in the mid-1980s, including Wayne Rainey and Grand Prix Champion Kork Ballington. "He (Ballington) came to the States when he was a four-time Champion in GPs. It was amazing. He rode a Honda RS500 and an RS250 for us. But that came to an end—the money was going out faster than it was coming in, which is typical of motorcycle racing, I guess."

Only temporarily deterred, MacLean jumped back in, and into the deep end of the pool, in 1992. Yamaha had made 500cc V-4 two-stroke GP engines available, and Serge Rosset's ROC firm started building GP-spec chassis. MacLean partnered with Clifford to form WCM, which ran as Team Valvoline/WCM in 1992 with riders Peter Goddard and Andrew Stroud. The next year, Niall Mackenzie snatched third in the British 500cc Grand Prix at Donington Park, the

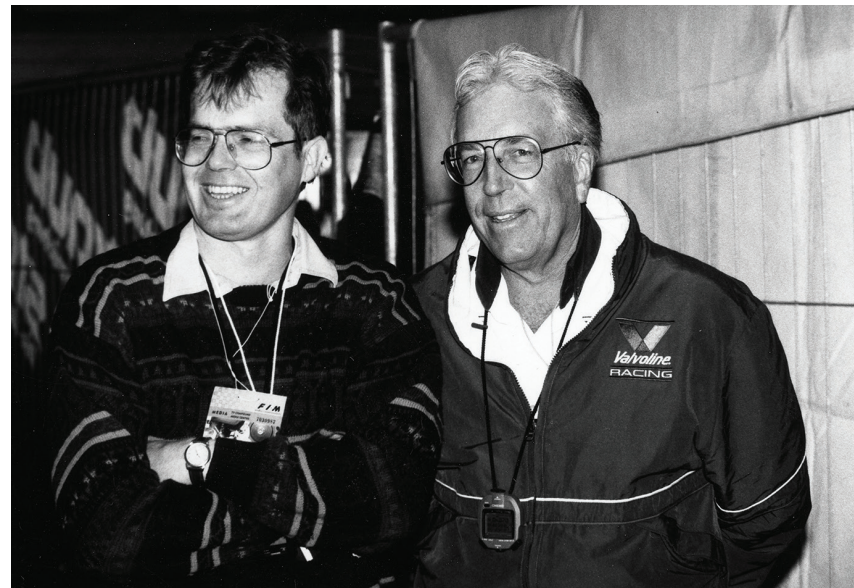
team's first podium.

The team plugged away until opportunity came knocking in 1997. "This energy drink company called Power Horse had signed Troy Corser and Luca Cadalora to run the Grand Prix races. As the season approached it became known that Power Horse didn't have the money to do it," MacLean says. "So between Peter Clifford and I, we thought, this might be an opportunity for us to step in and save Yamaha's bacon. They'd already built the bikes. So we did a deal with Yamaha, which was great. We had a great deal where they provided all the equipment for us.

"We went from there to the Red Bull sponsorship—we brought the idea to Red Bull and Dietrich Mateschitz (owner of Red Bull) because the Power Horse equipment was going to go back to Power Horse. So he said, 'I'll be the best sponsor you ever had.' And he was. Fantastic man, and a fantastic businessman."

Clifford recalls the opportunity in vivid detail. "Mr. Iio (Toshimitsu Iio, then Director of Racing for Yamaha) spoke to me at the first Grand Prix of the season in Malaysia," Clifford remembers. "He said, 'Peter-san, you and Bob-san have always been asking us for factory bikes. There are four sitting in the (Power Horse) garage there. Would you like them?'"

"I called Bob. We met up the following week in Japan at Yamaha headquarters in Hamamatsu and



(Above) Bob MacLean (right) and Peter Clifford (left) in 1997; they started World Championship Motorsports (WCM) before the 1992 season. (Left) McCoy, MacLean, and Mick Doohan on the grid with crew men in 2000.

made the agreement. The bikes ran the following weekend at the Japanese GP in Suzuka and were shipped direct to Jerez for the GP running in Power Horse colors.

"Bob and I went from Jerez to Salzburg and met Mateschitz and agreed for the rest of the 1997 season. I went from there to Italy where the team was based and started sorting things out. We raced as Red Bull Yamaha from the next GP in Mugello where Luca Cadalora took second behind Mick Doohan. At the end of the year we completely restructured the team and moved our base to Strasswalchen in Austria, close to Red Bull."

Contract talks with the riders had gotten tricky at first, and Corser was the first to leave. "We had to negotiate with Luca and Troy, and Troy was making rather aggressive demands on us in terms of what he wanted, including money," MacLean says. "He wanted Yamaha to provide all this stuff. And Yamaha said, 'Even Kenny (Roberts) doesn't ask for all that stuff!' So we let Troy go, over much grimacing, and kept Luca. And Kirk McCarthy was our number two guy, he later passed in a bike accident in Australia, great young guy—that was our first Red Bull team. We had a few podiums with them."

The next season saw the winning start. Simon Crafar won the British Grand Prix with the team in 1998, and Regis Laconi won at Valencia in 1999. Then came Garry McCoy, who won the opening round of the 2000 season in South Africa and backed it up with wins in Portugal and Valencia, Spain.

"Those were the golden years for us, in terms of performance. After two rounds, we were leading

the World Championship! And that was much to the (dismay) of Marlboro and Yamaha. Everyone says, when you're leading, you get all the good stuff. Yeah, sure we do. We didn't get the good stuff. We got some things. We didn't get what the main players were getting. But that's OK. That was the reality.

"For the manufacturer to give you the good stuff, you need several things. First of all, you need the rider. What makes an attractive rider to a manufacturer? Obviously, it's performance. But another thing is, what country is he from? If it's a U.S. rider and the U.S. market is big for a Yamaha or whatever, the markets in those big countries can help support Yamaha's money. It's not just Yamaha money, it's Yamaha Europe or Yamaha Germany that weighs in on those decisions."

"The other thing is that you're going to go to somebody and say, 'We have this team. We're not the factory team, with a capital 'F.' We're a satellite team. But we want the \$8 million it's going to cost to get you into sixth or seventh place.' Forget it! It's a ridiculous thing. That's what you're up against."

McCoy earned those three wins plus three more podiums to wrap up the 2000 season, and Max Biaggi was the only Yamaha rider who finished the season with more points than McCoy. It was making the Yamaha factory just a bit nuts. WCM was modifying engine locations in the chassis, experimenting with 16.5-inch rims and Michelin tires, and was making it work.

"We suddenly were going fast and beating factory people; we had improved the results by changing the size of the wheel. We went to a 16.5-inch wheel. And if you