

SEVENTEEN IS A STATE OF MIND

# BROC GLOVER

*Talking to the new 125 champ; with special guest appearance  
by the Commander*

by Len Weed

Photography by Jim Gianatsis, Jack Wright, Joel Jamieson and Scott Heidbrink

Tuesday. Somewhere, U.S.A.  
“Come in, Commander. Calling the Commander.” But the Commander can’t hear us. He’s on a hero run — with no CB. Gas stops, food stops, otherwise it’s pedal to the metal from Midland, Michigan, to Houston, Texas.

Tuesday. Valhalla High School. El Cajon, California. “For tomorrow, class, prepare a 4000-word essay on the importance of good citizenship in an inflationary world community.” The slim, blond student in the back is restless, still weary from a bumpy plane ride the day before.

Wednesday. West Punkin Center, Texas. “Hello, No-Tel Motel. Can you hold that room for me, the single? I’ll be there just as soon as I get my rig running again. Say, can you call a tow truck for me?”

Friday. San Diego Airport, where the 17-year-old essay writer is ready for another flight. His high school didn’t win a football game last year, although a classmate won a Silver Medal at the Montreal Olympics. But he won the AMA 125 National Motocross Championship.

The truck driver is Commander Jim Felt, factory tuner. He wrenched for Al Baker on the National circuit in 1974. It was “Bake and Shake” who tagged him the Commander. Jim would tune out the world while tossing around a tuning problem. Al came up with, “Come in, Commander, calling the Commander” to reestablish contact.

In 1974 Broc Glover was 14 and grounded from riding after taking up the sport a year before. He had started on a Kaw 100, raced about a half-dozen times and then found himself without moto funds when his parents split up.

In 1975 Jim Felt won the AMA



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*I’ve never really been  
into doing cross-ups.*  
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Golden Wrench award for tuning for 500 National Champion Jimmy Weinert. Fifteen-year-old Broc Glover was riding again, sponsored by Jack Lutz on a 125 Elsie. Jack Lutz didn’t own a shop, he just owned a Honda. He supported Broc for close to a year. Then Broc’s dad bought him an Elsinore. DG Performance offered him a ride in August of ’75. Broc was supposed to



ride the Yamaha Bob Hannah had been riding before leaving to join Suzuki. Instead, he rode his Elsinore first time out and finished behind Marty Smith and Tommy Croft. DG decided to leave him on a Honda.

1976. Jim Felt kicked back for a year, passed on the National circuit and worked for his buddy at Al Baker R&D. Meanwhile, Broc continued his winning ways on the DG Honda. "We built our own bike with a different frame and suspension and DG products. They have some pretty good stuff; they don't explode like some other

Trans-AMA series. Broc, just 15 at the beginning of the year, had no qualifying points and wasn't allowed to race the series. Yamaha worked out a local race program and signed him with an option for the '77 campaign.

And so, 1977, and Broc and Jim teamed up. The partnership got off to a gigantic thud in Florida. Broc lost his shot at winning the 125 series honors when he was disqualified for rolling under the rubber band at one start. But even before the first race Jim was already back home. He and Broc were doing some acceleration testing at

practice. "Jim had a bike length on me. He was definitely winning on the ported bike. There was this big cliff and he kind of went off it. It was about a seven-foot drop. He used his enduro instincts and landed fine, except there was this mound of dirt. It high-centered the frame and he went over the bars."

But what's a broken back to a man of true grit? Tuners are tough. The Commander was back in action before the Hangtown opener.

Broc says simply of the controversial last race of the 125 Championship tussle, "I won." The team held no discussion of team racing tactics. "That was built up out of proportion. I knew when I won the first moto that I was out of Bob's reach unless I broke or something. I also knew that if Bob beat me I would lose it. How stupid that would have been. We would have stayed in exactly the same order and Danny would have won it. We never really talked about it. Bob got the holeshot and he was gone. He was riding like I've never seen him ride before. He had a ten-second lead after the first lap. He had lost another championship and he wanted to make a showing and he rode really good."

Broc, who had won the first moto by 15 seconds, was back around fifth trying to get around Reid and Richter. It took him three laps. "I couldn't catch Bob and we were starting to get into lapped riders. I didn't want it to barrel down to Bob having to let me by. I wanted to beat him. With ten minutes left I just went as fast as I could go, and with three laps to go I was about five seconds back. Somewhere in there they told him to let me by.

"Suzuki put LaPorte on the best bike they had. Yamaha put the extra team riders in there. I knew it wasn't going to help me, I didn't really want them to do that."

Jim asks, "Did you hear about LaPorte and Grossi? Billy Grossi stopped at the finish line and let Danny by at the races in Illinois and Missouri. See, nobody ever heard about that. That's all team riding. That's just part of racing."

Broc adds, "If I wasn't capable of winning the Championship anyway I wouldn't have been up there. When we tied on points, why did I win and not Danny? They didn't write anything about Danny being so far behind us. I knew what I had



modifieds. They even sold Broc Glover replicas. We had a Profab frame, Marzocchi forks and laid-down gas Girlings. My dad was the mechanic the whole year and that bike never broke once in a National. DG was a really good sponsor. I think if you're not factory-sponsored, they're next best. The only difference between a factory and DG is you don't get a works bike and you don't get a salary."

Yamaha approached Broc in September of 1976. They wanted him to ride the 250 Support in the

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to do and I got there.

"I really wasn't planning on winning the Championship this year. I expected a second or third. I didn't think I had the experience." But Broc had something else, the willingness to work when the unexpected suddenly became a comprehensible reality.

The National series opened in April at Hangtown. Defending Champion Hannah fell way behind on points, teammate Glover had his own problems and Danny LaPorte leaped into a lead he was to hold until the final minutes of the season, four months later. For Yamaha, Hangtown meant teething problems with new bikes and having to play catch-up all year to hang onto their 125 Championship.

"When the works bikes got over here they weren't set up for me, they were set up for Bob. He had gone to Japan, but I didn't go. When they tested them over there they were water-cooled and then they sent them over here and they weren't. We got them two weeks before Hangtown. They were OK. That kind of bummed me out a little bit. The first time I got a chance to ride a works bike, and it wasn't much better than the production bike.

"They had left a water pump bearing in the cases and it promptly fell out when it heated up in the first moto at Hangtown. We don't understand why it didn't fall out during the two weeks of testing. It stuck between the case and shift mechanism and the bike wouldn't shift up at all. I went down to first and there was nothing I could do, and I had a flat tire too. For the second moto we put a new motor in. We didn't know what the problem was then. It happened again, but I knew it wouldn't upshift so I left it in fourth for about half the race.

"As the series progressed, I was riding where I expected, seconds and thirds, and then I started training twice as hard when I saw I had a chance. I was out riding every day. Toward the end of the year Bob bolted a pair of stock forks on his bike, whereas I rode one more week with the works forks, and then I came home and tested the 250 works front ends. We had been told they were not good at all, that they were putting production front ends on the bikes at the 250

Nationals. But after we tested and set them up, that was the best front end I had ever used. Bob was using the production 125 front end then.

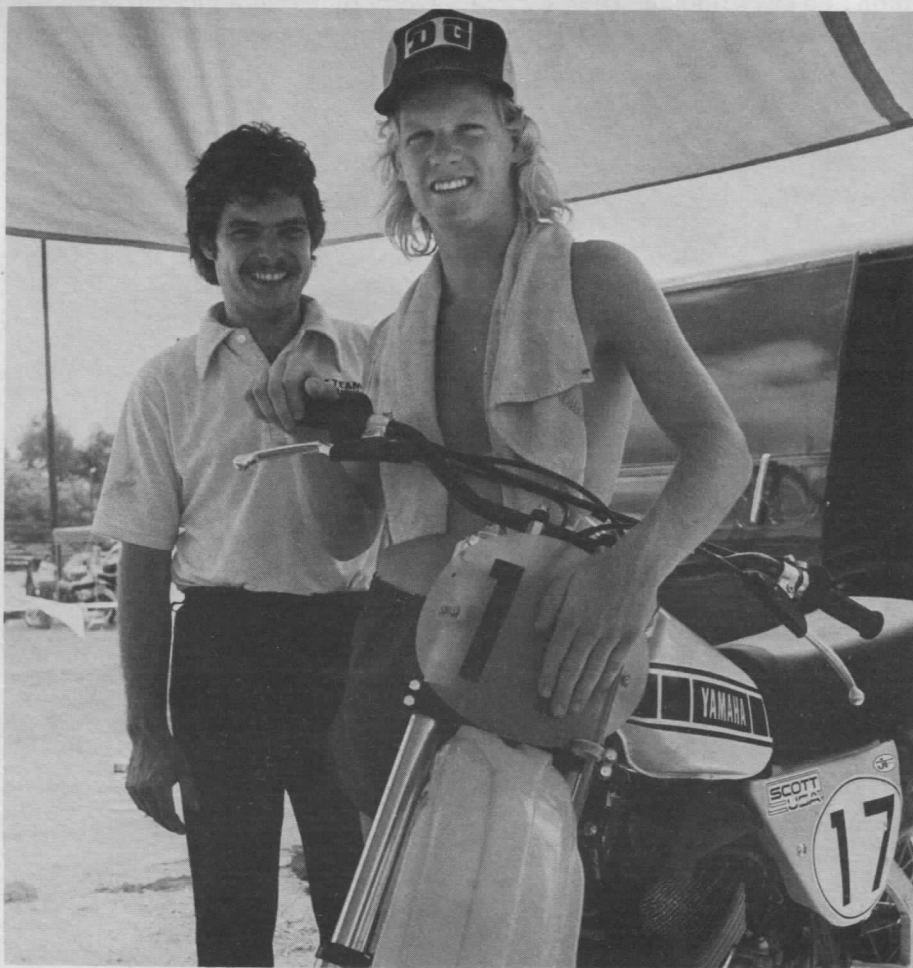
"Before the last race we went wide-open every day for four straight weeks. Jim worked on the bike every day and just made it perfect. We got a third bike and we tested everything like three days solid. I bet we went through 20 sets of forks and shocks and we tested carburetors, too.

"On the practice YZ we tighten up the spring on the shock ten millimeters from stock setting and go two stiffer on the damping. We

use a Profab aluminum swingarm, the forks get 15-weight Yamaha oil and 13 pounds of air. We just tried the Baker fork kit and it's working out fine. I use a 53 rear sprocket instead of the 51."

Jim adds, "The standard pipe is the best. It makes the most horsepower on the dyno. Change that silencer even a little bit and it just takes a dive. A lot of pipes you buy turn more revs, but they don't make more power."

Broc again. "If you can ride the bike to its suspension then you're gonna win. It's not all horsepower. If you have all horsepower and no



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**Are you guys looking  
for a test rider?**  
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suspension there's no way you're going to do anything.

"We didn't go to the aluminum swingarm because we had a problem with flex or breakage. It's a couple of pounds lighter and an inch longer and it does cause a little commotion. It looks sharp and it's very rigid.

"For a while we were messing with a 23-inch wheel. It worked fine on the works bike. In sand it was really nice. I used it up until the last race. Yokohama is making the tires and D.I.D is making the

rims. DG is selling them. You need a bike that has a lot of rear end suspension to make it work.

"Goodyear has a 16-inch rear wheel out now. Pierre's using one. The Goodyear 16 is a lot lower than the Trelleborg 17. I think it needs to be taller or it's going to fall in the holes. It looks like an Indy tire, really soft compound.

"To tell the truth, everyone is going to say: ha,ha,ha,ha, but the insides of the works bike and the YZ are pretty close. Standard gearbox. The head was standard. The cylinder has a chrome liner, but we didn't do any grinding. The

The 250s have more changes than the 125 by far. The 250 will be out first, too. Then the 125 and then the open. The problem now is you can't get a production 250. I tried to get one as a practice bike and there are none. We had to buy a 125 from a dealer who had one left to get ready for the last National.

"I still have the interview with Danny where he said he was going to be Champion. Proving him wrong became my goal. You're out training your brains out and it doesn't show, but if you have a goal . . . My goal was being Champion. Every time that a nice car went by,

I'd go: Wow, I could have one. I practice on the clock so I know how hard I'm pushing. I have the list right on my wall and I write down my running times.

"Factory riders are easily beatable. That's what I went out to do. I went out and shot for them last year. That's how I got a factory ride. What these people who want to make the 125 class a Support class are trying to do is bring the class down to the privateers' level instead of building the privateer up to the factory riders' level. That's not right. Watch a National. There're five or six riders and then there's a pack of people who aren't doing anything. They read about training and they know they should train, but they really don't train. If you're coming in 11th or 12th, that's when you train harder. If you could ride up to 95 percent of your limit for 45 minutes twice, there's no way you'd be out of the top ten. And then you can make enough money to get around the circuit.

"I personally think conditioning is extremely important. At the 125 Nationals there're a couple of guys nobody can beat for the first 20 minutes. Just flat smoking, but at the end of 45 minutes they're in 12th or 13th. They've burnt themselves out because they haven't trained. They're thinking of making their bikes even faster so they can get 25-second leads, and they still finish back or their bikes break.

"I was in such a daze getting ready for the last National. I'd come in and I couldn't remember what I had practiced. I was concentrating on conditioning, not speed. I really couldn't remember riding for over an hour because in my head I was thinking: Hey, I gotta beat LaPorte and Hannah. I ride with a watch on in practice. There's no way when you practice two 45-minute motos that you're going as hard as you do in a race. You're always pushing a little harder in a race. So I like to go out and ride about an hour and 15 minutes. I fill it up and usually ride just one time until I run out of gas."

At the time we talked to Broc, the AMA had not yet announced its plans for 1978 National motocross. They were discussing combining classes into one Championship series, or even dropping the 125 class to Support status. Broc



monoshock is handmade and a lot more complicated. It isn't that much better. Bob is using a stock unit in his works bike. They had to modify the frame. We went to a 36mm carb toward the end, but only on some tracks. A 34 was better on sandy tracks because it had a little more pull on the low end. The pipe is just like a '78 production pipe.

"The '78 YZ is a bit closer to the works bike. It's worth waiting for. I have six friends who want a 250 and I told them definitely to wait.

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***And then Jimmy stood up and said: Hey, what if nobody starts?***

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responded to the possibility that he might be a champion with no hill to stand on top of next year. "That's weird. The AMA is taking over the world. They're better than the FIM, for sure. The FIM has all three classes, but the AMA wants to make one class for TV and stuff.

"I didn't go to the 125 GP. The AMA denied me an entry. I was too late for one, but only because I was told I had to be 18. (Editor's Note: FIM rules allow a 16-year-old to ride a championship GP in his home country.) I got this dialogue at the beginning of the year. Later on Yamaha talked to Mike DiPrete (AMA National Motocross chief). I was told he told Yamaha: You're a little late — entries have been closed, but send an entry in. No problem. You'll for sure get accepted.

"We got a letter nine days before the race that said that nobody canceled out and there was no way I could ride it. The next day Grossi and Jennings got told they weren't going to go back. We called and asked DiPrete about an entry and he said: No way. We accepted seven entries too many and now we only have three cancellations.

"I talked to guys who raced and there were only like 20 there racing. They're supposed to have 30 on the line. So I said: Can I just go back and be there and try to sign up right there? I did it at the Nationals at the beginning of last year. They rejected all my entries. I just went to the races and signed up. They said I didn't have a good enough grading as a Novice. That figures, I never had a grading as a Novice. I'd be first in line to sign up in case somebody canceled. Then I got in the top ten and they didn't hassle me from then on.

"I thought I had a really good chance to win the 125 GP. I could've been in the top two or three for sure. I wanted to go and stand in line and get an entry that way. But how can you tell that to a vice-president of Yamaha? Something that's going to cost him thousands of dollars. How is he supposed to OK something like that for us to stand in line? So I went home and pouted for a day."

What about the AMA method for selecting teams for the Motocross and Trophee des Nations races? "I think that's the worst thing the AMA's ever done. The people who

have experience, like Lackey and Pomeroy, are sure going to do better. I'm not taking anything away from the other guys, either. Under their system Lackey and Pomeroy weren't even eligible. What they should do is call the factories beforehand."

Broc's future plans center on racing, but he's keeping his options open. "I don't know if I'm going to head on to college — I'll see how I do next year racing. I'd kind of like to get into law if I go, but if you make enough money racing and invest it right, you usually don't have to work too much after that. I

can't believe what some of those relief pitchers and Catfish Hunter are getting for playing baseball. I was a decent pitcher, but I dropped baseball and football when I started racing."

Broc won the High School championship at the Anaheim Stadium race in 1975, then rode the Super Bowl in '76, the year the attendance exceeded 70,000. Before the race he got a letter saying the pay would be cut. He recognizes that the young American riders are probably not mature enough to make a riders' organization stick. "The only time I ever saw anything



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like that happen, and it was just the best, was when Jimmy Weinert stood up at the Super Bowl. They weren't going to let anybody back off the starting gate and he said: Hey, what if nobody started? And everybody said: Yeah, right on. That'd be great, but there would always be some guy who'd take off. I just wish the riders could get together to make the sport better.

"I'd like to ride for Yamaha next year. They treat the riders right, there's not too much bull going on.

*Continued on page 79*

**BROC GLOVER**

Continued from page 27

They never talk about spending too much money. I really like the way everything's working right now, the mechanic I have and everything. Graham Noyce is 20 and he's considered unbelievably young over there. That's why I'd like to go over next year after I turn 18 and try some GPs."


Jim Felt's plans were a bit more immediate. He was getting married the following day and planning an extended Trans-AMA honeymoon. Just he and his bride — and Broc and his 250s. But at least the Commander will have a new truck. "I got the original Yamaha truck this year and I completely redid the whole thing. (Broc adds: By far the nicest truck — except for the motor — than any other). Finally it blew up. It had to be buried."

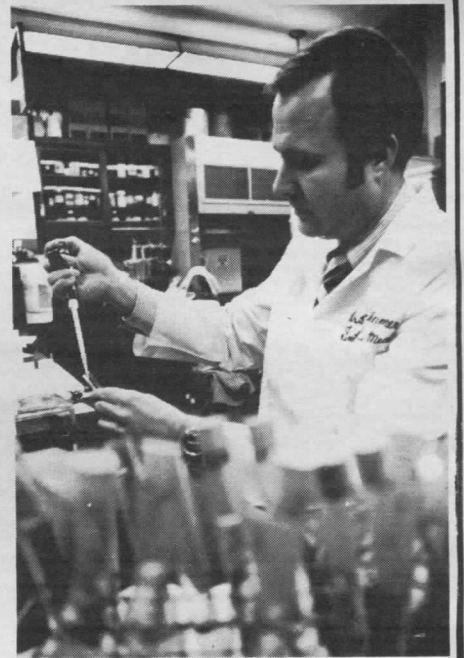
Hopefully, Jim will have an understanding bride. Broc says, "It takes longer for Jim to build a bike than anyone, and when it comes to races it's twice as nice as anyone's. I've seen him work till midnight and get up at seven and I'm still sleeping or watching cartoons. There's only one cartoon I watch. The Pink Panther. Jim's partial to Road Runner but I relax with the Pink Panther. Road Runner gets me hyped out."

Jim has his own method for working on the bike during the week. "I work right out of the motel. Most of the other teams have a shop or place to go. I get much more work done by staying at the motel to work. I really enjoy working on the 125s. The 250s and 500s are kind of a piece of cake, but it's kind of a miracle if you can make any 125 finish a 45-minute race as hard as those guys ride them."

And so, sports fans, the U.S. has another 17-year-old 125 National Champion from the San Diego area. Broc has been bringing himself along slowly, concentrating on one class. His 250 Support venture in the Trans-AMA will be his first National racing in that class. And he just had his first ride ever on a YZ400 in a local race. The title chase might have been a squeaker, but the winner seems to have a firm grasp on both the throttle and everything else that goes with it.

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