

# Young motorcycle racer learns to wheel and deal on professional circuit



"Goin' round the corner doing 91..." Jon Cornwell may not be the King of bikes yet but, he is rapidly working his way there. The young Halton Hills resident says he expects to be the number one young racer in the country next year.

By CAYLEY GRESSWELL

While most children were playing cops and robbers, hide'n seek or trying to cope with the strains of being in grade one, at the ripe old age of six, Jonathan Cornwell was already beginning his career of riding motorcycles.

Cornwell is now 18 and a grade 13 student at GDHS. After being in the racing scene for almost 12 years, he has proven himself to be one of the best and most respected young racers in Canada. Finishing 5th in Canada is certainly something to be proud of, but he has bigger hopes, saying, "I hope to do a lot better this year riding mainly in the States".

It was while the family was living in Scarborough that Cornwell's father introduced him to riding. It was not a full sized bike at first, but a mini bike. Mr. Cornwell had a bike shop, so all the equipment and encouragement was there right from the begin-

ning. He entered his first race when he was eight years old, in an open age limit race, riding a 100 cc bike. He did extremely well, taking third place, competing against 25 and 26-year-olds.

### TEMPORARY STOP

Just when he was starting to do well in racing, the Canadian Motorcycle Ass. introduced a rule that said that all racers had to be at least 14 years old. This only stopped him temporarily. With help from his parents, he entered the Schoolboy Motorcross races. He finished second in the national championships, and first in Ontario for four years in a row.

Jon started racing dirt track bikes when he turned 14, and at 15 he moved up to the senior class with a 350 cc Kawasaki, sponsored by Kelly's. At 16 he was classifi-

ed as an expert in short track and was well on his way in the racing scene.

After this season, Jon is rated expert Motorcross on half mile dirt track, short dirt track, and studded ice.



Jon Cornwell

He is rated a senior in Enduro racing, junior in road racing, and the only type of racing he's not rated in is spiked ice.

Now he is in about 200 races a year, mostly on weekends. He has raced as far away as British Columbia and Florida.

### PROFESSIONAL SPORT

Racing is a professional sport, and his total winnings for the season are about \$3000, (usually \$150 for first place). But, all of it goes back into racing one way or another. Repairs, gas, and travel expenses take most of the money, and a rider is lucky to break even.

Now teamed up with another rider, from Toronto, the young rider has gotten a new sponsor, Cummings Truck and Trailer Ltd. They are looking forward to racing more in the United States, as the competition is better and

there's more prize money.

The dirt track racing is over for the season, and Cornwell finished fifth in the Canadian Nationals, short track (point totals). "This was my first effort, I'd only just gotten the bike and it was a real rough job. I hope to be number one next year," he said. In Enduro racing he was third winning two of three races he entered. Enduros are very demanding as they are organized similar to a car rally, where you are riding through forests and trails, keeping at a certain speed, for an average of five or more hours.

### ICE RACING

Cornwell is looking forward to the ice racing season in which last year he finished second, and this year he's "looking to be on top". Ice racing will start in January,

and until that time, Cornwell will get his bikes in shape, and work for himself on other people's bikes in his garage at the back of his house, halfway between Georgetown and Acton.

He gets a lot of support from his mother, Betsy Cornwell, who is the head librarian at Georgetown Library and who has helped to sponsor him while he has been racing. The son says that it's his mother who "keeps me going". His mother usually goes to his races, takes pictures, and gives him lots of support.

Cornwell also rarely travels without his dog, Randy. Randy is the perfect companion, as well as being an excellent guard dog. Randy doesn't offer to help, doesn't talk too much, and doesn't give opinions on his racing. The only drawback of travelling with Randy is that he can't drive the van - yet.

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