

**Australian Wayne Gardner after a crash**  
*Praise be, I survived another one.*

There, he planned his strategy. Because Spencer's Honda was about 6 mph faster on top, Lawson figured on waiting patiently, in the hope that Spencer would push hard enough to use up his Honda's tires. "Fred-die usually selects a softer compound tire than me, and he wears them out," Lawson said before the race. "So if I catch him, it will be then."

On lap five, it looked as if Lawson's prophecy would come true. Spencer had just apexed the Correntaio, a 50-mph downhill righthander, when his rear tire broke loose. Fast Freddie kicked out his foot, correcting for the slide, and as a plume of blue smoke billowed from his rear tire, he countersteered the clip-on bars and kept himself upright. From that point on, though, the Honda appeared skittish through the turns, and Lawson narrowed the gap to about five seconds. But whatever he made up through Mugello's twisty back section, Spencer was able to pull back on the long front straight, where his NSR500 could stretch its legs, using its additional 6 mph to good advantage.

Finally, Spencer won, with Lawson second. Sarron was way back in fifth, behind the Honda vee-threes of Australian Wayne Gardner and Randy Mamola. And so the Second American Dynasty was started by the man who formed the first one nearly three years ago. But exactly who will reign in the new kingdom is still undecided. Spencer and Lawson traded wins at the following two races, with Spencer taking Austria, and Lawson putting his Yamaha in front at Yugoslavia. At the half-way point of the season, Spencer enjoyed a slim seven-point lead. One thing's for certain: The crown will go

## Where It All Began

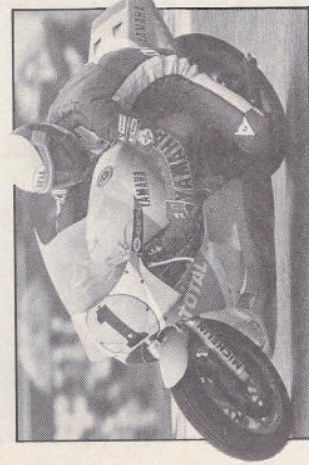
• Although the First American Dynasty started in late 1982, the American invasion of Europe actually began five years earlier. It was then that two Americans, Pat Hennen and Steve Baker, started the trend that continues to this day.

Hennen, riding an RG500 for Heron-Suzuki, got the ball rolling in 1977 when he won the 500 class at the British Grand Prix. The following year he won the Spanish GP, followed by Kenny Roberts' string of three victories in a row—the Austrian, French and Italian rounds—on the way to his first world title.

But Roberts' initial world championship in '78 wasn't the first international roadrace title held by an American. Steve Baker, riding a works Yamaha TZ750, won the Formula 750 class the previous year. Unfortunately for Baker, Yamaha didn't renew his contract for 1978. Instead, Yamaha sent Roberts to Europe, where he promptly won three consecutive world championships. —Dain Gingenelli



**1977 F750 World Champion, Steve Baker**  
*Roberts was America's next king.*



**Lawson had tire problems at Germany**  
*Just slinging in the rain.*

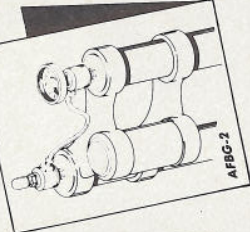
to Spencer or Lawson. Not only are they the fastest riders on the circuit, but they have the fastest bikes, too. At this point in the new dynasty, it appears that the only way the Americans can lose a Grand Prix is if it rains on raceday. And even then it will be tough to beat them. Because Lawson and Spencer learned a valuable lesson in tire selection on May 19. That lesson will cut short Sarron's advantage in the wet, and virtually guarantee that one of the two Americans will win the world championship. The Second Dynasty will be intact—at least for one more season.



**Freddie Spencer and Eddie Lawson finished first and second in Italy**  
*Order was restored to the World Championship, and a new dynasty began.*

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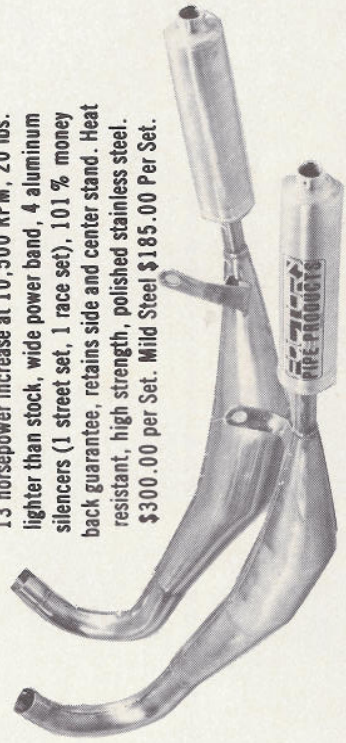
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