

Why Do They Ignore the Young? By David Hensby



Peter Craven

A puzzling question was posed recently during a conversation between some speedway fans, “Why do riders ignore the young?”

The relationship between the rider and fan is the most important aspect of speedway racing. As speedway fans, we all have our loves and our pet hates, whom we cherish to see beaten by our home team or favorite rider. But why is it that riders do not take the time to interact with the young fans, who we are firmly reliant upon to keep the sport from sinking into extinction?

Many speedway riders seem to forget where they once stood and watched their own heroes. Where they stood patiently to get a quick look, handshake or a treasured autograph. The feelings inside of seeing their team or hero walking across the track or around the pits and wanting to speak to them but were too afraid that this icon would not speak back.

Many fond memories of speedway racing are not from the actual races, but from the characters of the sport

I was told a story about Peter Craven in 1960. One of his biggest fans at that time was a young lad who had the opportunity to grab Peter’s autograph one night, but not only did he do this, he actually sat for half an hour and spoke with this young man about speedway and he own personal experiences. To this day, this guy remembers this as if it was an hour ago! A simple but, effective way of having an influence on a young child.

Today unfortunately, we see riders who do not take the time to interact with their fans, they walk pass autograph hunting kids or leave the event directly the moment their bike is loaded. This is not speedway!

We see many forums having subjects about “where the sport is going”, “why clubs are having a hard time getting fans” or “Teams closing”. Maybe if the riders took that extra time to interact and nurture the future of the sport, this maybe, wouldn't be a problem?

Yes, we do have excuses for this, with the invention of the internet and E-Bay, the once known pure autograph hunter, is maybe seeking a way to make a few quid by selling the autograph, or riders have to leave to ride overseas etc.... Accepted, yes. BUT this effects only maybe 1 or 2% of riders, so there is no excuse for anyone involved with speedway to ignore the fact that they can make it better, by spending a few minutes after the event interacting with their fans!

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