



# Sports

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TTITION



Team Obsolete  
Dave Roper competes on a 1967 Benelli.

## Return to 'simpler time' doesn't mean intensity is lacking on the track

By Rae Tyson  
USA TODAY

Californian Don Emde was a professional motorcycle racer until 1973. He still likes to compete occasionally but prefers the machinery of his youth — not the expensive, overpowered bikes of today.

"It was a simpler time, an era of motorcycling that was so much fun," says Emde, 43, editor and publisher of *Motorcycle Collector* magazine.

His attraction to older bikes is precisely why vintage racing has become so popular.

"Nostalgia is what's driving the growth," says Jeff Smith, director of the 3,000-member American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association.

Perhaps the king of vintage motorcycle racing is Brooklyn, N.Y., lawyer Rob Iannucci, founder of Team Obsolete, a full-blown racing team with several dozen vintage bikes, most exotic European models from the 1950s and '60s.

Included in the Iannucci racing fleet: Matchless, AJS, MV Agusta, BSA, Norton, Harley Davidson and Benelli.

Rules are strict: In most cases, bikes can't be newer than 1972 or be modified with newer equipment.

"If you are a real equipment junkie . . . the machines built in the '50s, '60s and '70s are the ultimate," says Iannucci, 48.

One of the most rare is a 250cc 1964 Honda with 24

### Remaining races

The American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association sanctions road racing, motocross, trials, flat track and other events. The remaining road races:

July 30: Gateway International Raceway, St. Louis  
Aug. 6: Heartland Raceway, Topeka, Kan.  
Sept. 17: Steamboat Springs, Colo.  
Oct. 15-16: Grand Prix Circuit, Talladega, Ala.  
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valves, seven speeds, six cylinders and gobs of horsepower. Honda built just six.

While the average age of vintage racers is 43, Todd Henning of Provincetown, Mass., dismisses the notion the competition is less than intense.

"The racing is pretty serious," says Henning, 43. "Maybe too serious."

Adds Emde: "They certainly do race very aggressively."

At Daytona Beach, Fla., this year, more than 40,000 spectators attended vintage races.

"They didn't come out just to see a bunch of gray-haired guys ride around," Henning says. "They came to see some real competition."

While much of the focus is on road racing, the association also sanctions vintage off-road events such as motocross, trials and flat track.

Says Smith: "They are all trying to relive their youth."