

# TRIPLE TIME

## ONE-MAKE RACING

Triumph has opened up a real can of worms. Not only has the Hinckley-based firm grabbed a prime slot at the British GP, but it has also broken the ACU's ruling which bans national one-make race series. The Shell Triumph Speed Triple Challenge is also being followed by an eight-round national championship next year. The last one-make championship, the CBR600 Cup, was back in 1988. Before that, Yamaha had run the successful Pro-Am series on LC350s and Honda the VF500 series.

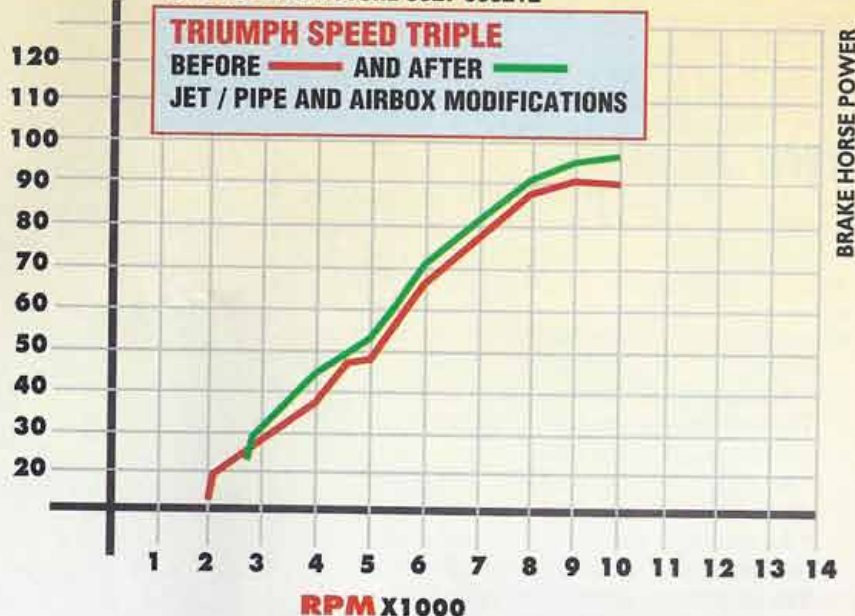
Some manufacturers and importers objected to the huge publicity generated by Honda CBR Cup. The industry's body, the MCIA, came to a gentlemen's agreement not to have single-make racing and the ACU, which controls racing, followed suit, rejecting any applications for them.

"This is a real hot potato," the ACU's Bill Smith of the road race committee comments. "We decided that because Triumph is British, it should be allowed to race at Donington. Next year's series will also go ahead. As Triumph couldn't compete against the Japanese bikes in Supercup, for example, this will give them good exposure. I like one-make series, and what better way to start them off again?"

The ACU now has applications from Honda, Yamaha, Suzuki, Kawasaki, Harley-Davidson and Moto Guzzi for national one-make series. Honda has applied for a FireBlade championship to run in 1995, following a similar successful championship in America. "If Triumph can have a one-make series with unproven machinery, Honda should certainly be able to put on a FireBlade series," retaliates Honda spokesman, Graham Sanderson. "After all, the CBR900 is the benchmark for all sportsbikes."

Kawasaki applied for a Zephyr 750 series last year, but was turned down after political in-fighting. Despite real enthusiasm for the Zephyr series, the MCIA recommended that no one manufacturer should be favoured and the ACU again followed suit. "One-make racing is good for biking generally and good for the sport," Kawasaki's Simon Belton, comments. "It generates dealer involvement and the competition is always very close and exciting. Triumph, however, has an advantage over the rest of us - it's British!"

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tried to make everything as cheaply as possible and that meant making the minimal amount of changes."

When Ron took a Speed Triple round the track, the clutch cover dragged on the ground so that was the first alteration, for safety reasons. Then a race shock was fitted, improving ground clearance by raising the ride height. The standard unit overheated during testing, while the Pro-Flex gas-charged race version performed well. Also, with no compression damping, adjustments were limited on the original unit.

Ron spent hours re-shimming the race shock so that it would suit both light and heavy riders. Next to come under scrutiny were the forks. They bottomed out under heavy braking, so stiffer 0.9-rate springs and heavier, 20W fork oil were used.

With the improved handling, the brake pads had to be updated. Ferodo developed a pad that both stops the bike well and can withstand the rigours of the track. A steering damper has also been allowed, as a safety precaution. "If it saves you when you get into a slide and a wobble, then it's paid for itself!" Ron declares.

His bike was tested with Michelin Hi-Sport tyres that the race guru has found very much to his liking, providing both good grip and feel. "Keeping the rules simple means that dealers who have never been racing before can now become involved," he explains. "It gives everyone a fair opportunity and the series also remains reasonably cheap."

"You only have to look at the Donington Park practice lap times to see how close the racing will be!"