

The fluorescent pink shorts and bright yellow jerseys of the Schmoos' Team are becoming a familiar sight up near the front of British mountain bike racing. And now they've come right to the top, worn by 1989 British Champion Tim Davies.

When Tim Gould was beaten into second place in the Championship he gracefully said he felt it was a good thing for the sport that Tim Davies had won. He was right in all sorts of ways. Not just because a race scene totally dominated by one rider, even one as popular as he is, must lose some of its edge, but also because the Schmoos' Team is easier for ordinary riders to identify with.

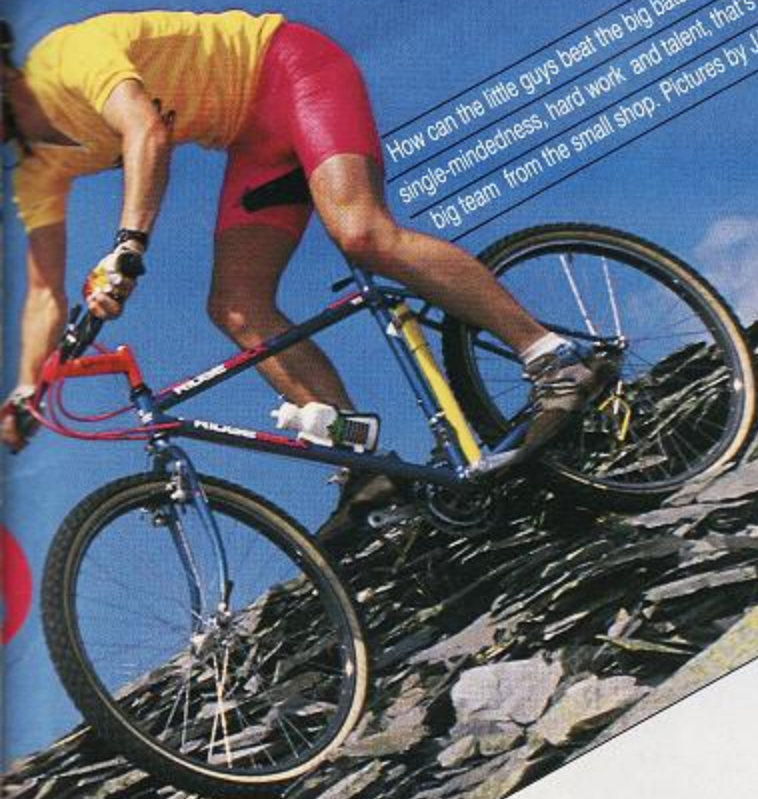
Not that the superb athleticism of Tim Davies and the rest are within the reach of most of us, nor the drive and determination. But the equipment is the team set-up is. Their pay packets most certainly are.

None of the Schmoos' Team is professional. They fit their training in between jobs and their usual occupations. They ride a variety of production bikes which most of us could imagine owning - Ridgeback 605, Specialized Rockhopper Comp, Clockwork Orange. No £1500 hand built race bikes here. And no huge support team or juicy budget from a major manufacturer. They are sponsored by Schmoos' Cycles, a small bike shop with a big reputation on the outskirts of Swansea.

# THE SCHMOOS' EFFECT



How can the little guys beat the big battalions? With dedication, single-mindedness, hard work and talent, that's how. MBUK meets the big team from the small shop. Pictures by JAMES BAREHAM.





THE SCHMOO EFFECT



## THE EDGE

What gives them the winning edge, apart from their individual talent and commitment, is Schmoor (once, in the dim past, known as Maurice Levenson). His ambition, character and good humour have provided a talented group of athletes with the sort of base they need to compete with the professionals and heavily supported semi-pros on the circuit. It is no mean feat to run, transport and support an MTB team in the season. To do it successfully and run the sort of MTB shop that MBUK Technical Editor John Stevenson can recommend unhesitatingly to readers in the area, is a gigantic task.

## THE BEDROCK

Tim Gould was right in another way too. It is good for the sport that a small dealer sponsored team should produce the British Champion, because it is on small enthusiastic dealers that British mountain bike racing leans so heavily. You just don't find the giants of the MTB industry organising events (an horrendous task). They enter teams to go for the glory, yes. Sometimes they contribute a prize or two. But the real business is all down to the smaller dealer. If you read Zoom avidly you'll know who they are - people like Schmoor.

## THE TEAM

None of this takes away from the talent and drive of the riders. A successful team needs back-up and organisation certainly, but on the day it's all down to the men and women with their feet on the pedals. So far the Schmoor's Team is all male. Tim Davies: Age 22. Tim is British MTB Champion and a member of the British cyclo-cross team. He is Welsh cyclo-cross Champ and a member of the country's Commonwealth Games Team. Of all his rides this year perhaps the most memorable was one he didn't win - when he stormed from the back to come second to Tim Gould in the Man 'n' Horse. Bike: **Clackwork Orange** with a flatter longer stem to straighten out his back into racing position. Ambition: To be number 1!

Graham Rogerson: Age 18, Graham is pictured here but left the team at the end of the season. An excellent road racer and time trialist Graham started the season strongly, a constant thorn in the side of MBUK race correspondent Paul Hinton, but faded towards the end. Best ride was the **Barretos Challenge** which he won; Bike: **Ridgeback 605** modified with Orange stem. Ambition: To beat the Peugeots.

Marty Hughes: Age 27. A Process Plant Technician by profession, Marty's hobbies are building bikes, riding bikes and eating. In that order. A cycling all rounder he's a first cat road rider, ex-Welsh cyclo-cross Champ and current Track League squad rider, and leader of the 89 Maindy Squad. Bike: **Saracen Special Edition**. Ambition: to pull wheelies like Tim Davies.

Dave Richards: Age 29. House husband and part-time soldier Dave is a high class Welsh squad cyclo-cross rider. Bike: **Ridgeback 605** with **Flexstem**. Ambition: To win every event for the next ten years.

Justin Philips: Age 17. A new recruit in the **Expert Class** and not shown in our pictures, Club cyclist, road racer and time trialist, Justin had his first full season of mountain bike racing last year and survived. Schmoor expects to add two more riders to the team for the coming race season.

## THE RIDE

The day we met up with the team, they had travelled up to Tim Davies' neck of the woods, Cross Keys, just north of Builth Wells, high in the Brecon Beacons. With the aid of Tim's father's detailed knowledge of the area, they had come up with a 10 mile training run which would test them against the diverse local conditions. The ride started from the town of Rhayader, out across the moorland, down through the forest to the Pen-y-garreg reservoir and back around to the town, up hill all the way. Photographer James Barcham followed the run on the back of Mr Davies senior's motorbike, here's his report:

Wales is breathtaking: great rolling valleys with small streams cascading down their sides. What a testing ground for a racing team: manoeuvring across rocky outcrops; daring descents down mounds of shale; long gruelling uphill climbs, legs aching and lungs gasping; crossing streams and bogs, constantly pushing yourself to go faster.

"Down to the river by way of a forest, we found more treacherous descents. The river was low, the dry weather had turned it into a shallow stream, revealing strange eroded rocks that formed a small gorge, looking like a planet set from Star Trek. Again, more difficult riding, then climbing stream itself, tyres slipping, then climbing up across the rock and onto the path. "All the while, the lads rode as a team, pacing themselves, no-one going on too far ahead, pushing each other to ride harder. All of them were in their element, good weather, great terrain and nothing to do except ride. "The ride back across the valleys was a long slow uphill climb, during which the team went uncharacteristically quiet, intense concentration was needed to keep up, especially as the pace was being dictated by a motorbike. "By the time Rhayader came into view I was exhausted, heaven knows how they must have felt!" That's the other ingredient that makes a successful team. Sheer hard work.

