



**Bailey (1) leads World Champion David Thorpe (42) and Johnson in the final moto; Bailey won with Johnson second and Thorpe third.**

"Sometimes I wonder how they go so fast," Bailey said in reference to the Europeans. "They just don't have the style we do, but some of them still get around quick."

After a morning practice session and opening ceremonies on Sunday, the first moto was staged to start at 2:30 p.m. A two-row start was used for each moto and each team had one rider on the front row and one on the back. Moto one was a 125/250cc combination, and America opted to put O'Mara up front with Johnson directly behind.

After the first turn the finishing order was set. Johnson took the holeshot with O'Mara a close second. "I didn't hear him (Johnson) coming at first, but then I saw his wheel and knew it was time to move over," O'Mara said about the start.

Former 125cc World Champion Eric Geboers gated well for the Belgian team, but slid out in an uphill turn on lap one and lost position. Italy's Michele Rinaldi brought the crowd to crescendo with his ride to third. He displaced France's Christian Vimond for the slot on lap three and then maintained his pace to the finish, 26 seconds behind O'Mara. Vimond, on a 250cc Honda, faded back and fell off the pace on lap seven.

Holland's Jon Van den Berk rode consistently to lock up fourth. Finishing fifth and sixth were Great Britain's Jeremy Whatley and Sweden's Peter Hansson. The pair dived for most of the moto and worked past Finland's Pekka Vehkonen on lap 12. Vehkonen carded a seventh.

Per FIM rules, riders in each moto were scored separately according to their displacement class. The higher the finish the lower the point score, so after one moto it was Team USA with two points. Johnson scored the 250cc win and O'Mara topped the 125s.

"I was trying to haul butt even faster than I was but I was sliding all over," Johnson said after his win. "I started staying more conservative over the tops of those blind uphill, because there are shadows on the faces of the jumps and you can't see how much shale is sticking out. I'm just glad I was able to get the job done."

"The track is getting slippery in spots," O'Mara said after keeping Johnson in sight for the entire race. "You just can't come in hard and grab some front brake like in practice. I really had to maneuver to hook up on a 125. I ride them all the time, though, and it's not like I've been off one for a long time. Riding a 125 keeps your style sharp and tangy."

A one hour intermission didn't give O'Mara much time to rest and it was soon time to stage for moto two. Tuner Chris Haines dropped a new set of clutch plates into O'Mara's 125 while Johnson and O'Mara talked strategy with Bailey. The hilly course, which started the weekend covered with fresh sod, was now rough and rocky.

Bailey gridded his big bore Honda on the gate with O'Mara behind him in row two. After turn one it was Bailey all the way. The newly-crowned 500cc National Champion roosted away from the pack and didn't look back. O'Mara got off 11th and had his work cut out. It was now that his extensive training came into play; O'Mara rode clean lines and kept the power on lap after lap, picking off riders one by one.

Denmark's Ole Svendsen and France's Yves Gervaise dropped their 500s in a tangle at the start. Italian hopeful Massimo Contini also crashed on lap one, putting him out of contention.

By lap four O'Mara had moved up to seventh. Belgium's Georges Jobe had been holding the pace behind Bailey for the first two laps, but then dropped to fourth when Holland's Jan Van Doorn and England's Thorpe moved by. Two laps later Thorpe passed Van Doorn for second.

O'Mara picked up one place each lap, working by many of the world's top 500cc riders. O'Mara was closing on Jobe when the Belgian tumbled over a small uphill jump. On laps 8-10, O'Mara stalked Thorpe, then finally motored by for second. During the last four laps of the race O'Mara went on cruise control, holding a pace which brought him within sight of Bailey at the finish. The crowd roared in approval as the Americans took the final circuit, and O'Mara reciprocated by hollering back through many of the corners.

Former 250 and 500cc World Champion Hakan Carlqvist scored top points for Sweden by passing Van Doorn for fourth on lap nine. Another former champion Heinz Kinigadner scored for Austria by piloting his big KTM to sixth. The Italian's top man was Corrado Maddii in seventh. Jobe regrouped and challenged Maddii in every turn on the last lap, but Maddii held off the attempts, relegating Jobe to eighth.

With one moto remaining in the Motocross des Nations, America had won overall honors. Bailey and O'Mara picked up one point each via their class wins, and with a total of four Team USA was unbeatable. America had posted a perfect score.



**Bailey chases Portugal's Correja De Melo; this was the sixth win in a row for the United States in Motocross des Nations competition.**



**The star of the competition was Johnny O'Mara; the 125cc rider finished second twice to his teammates who were on larger bikes.**

"I gave everything I had, I'm totally drained," O'Mara said. "It's not important to me who I beat, I did it for the team. I could go fast everywhere on the course except on the uphills. I wasn't giving up much horsepower either. My 125 was running as fast as some of the 250s. We've got this thing wrapped up with four top finishes; now I want Ricky and David to go for the clean sweep."

Bailey returned to the Honda transporter after the moto and had a short therapy session with Dr. Metzger, the physician who helped Bailey attain this year's 500c title.

O'Mara asked for a clean sweep and that's what Bailey and Johnson gave him in the final 250/500cc moto. Thorpe took the holeshot followed by Bailey, who gridded on the gate. Johnson was third followed by Van Doorn, San Marino's Giovanni Gavatorta, Finland's Kurt Ljungqvist, Australia's Craig Dack, Denmark's Soeren Mortensen and England's Whatley. Bailey slipped by Thorpe on lap two and Johnson quickly closed the gap to challenge Thorpe for second. Three laps later Johnson got around and set out after Bailey, who had opened up a big lead.

Behind the top three Van Doorn and Dack were dicing for fourth with Ljungqvist and Whatley contesting sixth. In the late stages of the race, Van Doorn faded to ninth. It was Rinaldi who posted the hardest ride in the moto. Spurred on by his Italian fans, he came from an 18th place start and fought every step of the way for a sixth place finish.

Bailey slowed through the final turns to wait for Johnson so they could finish side-by-side in a team effort. Bailey looked over his shoulder

for Johnson through the final turn, but Johnson was too close for comfort and Bailey knocked him over. Johnson remounted quickly and the pair crossed the finish line, hands raised together in a gesture of victory. Thorpe held third followed by Dack, Whatley and then Rinaldi.

The final tally had Great Britain taking second with 10 points followed by Italy with 13. A very close fourth was Finland, who amassed 14 points.

It was the most perfect of days for Team USA. A victory party was thrown by the promoter following the event, and the celebration went on late into the night.

"This has been a great race on a great track and the Italian fans were some of the finest I've ever raced for," Bailey said at the celebration. "In America, we work very hard in order to perform well in racing. This is a really big pay-off for all that effort. This day in Italy is one I'll remember forever."

## Results

FINAL TEAM STANDINGS: 1. USA (4); 2. Great Britain (10); 3. Italy (13); 4. Finland (14); 5. Holland (19); 6. Sweden (20); 7. Australia (23); 8. France (34); 9. France (34); 10. Czechoslovakia (35); 11. San Marino (37).

FIRST MOTO: 1. Rick Johnson (USA-250 Hon); 2. Johnny O'Mara (USA-125 Hon); 3. Michele Rinaldi (ITA-250 Suz); 4. John Van den Berk (HOL-250 Yam); 5. Jeremy Whatley (GB-250 Cag); 6. Peter Hansson (SWE-250 Hus); 7. Pekka Vehkonen (FIN-250 Cag); 8. Arno Dreschel (GER-250 Hon); 9. Craig Dack (AUS-250 Hon); 10. Zdenek Spacek (CZE-250 Kaw).

SECOND MOTO: 1. David Bailey (USA-500 Hon); 2. O'Mara; 3. David Thorpe (GB-500 Hon); 4. Hakan Carlqvist (SWE-500 Yam); 5. Jan Van Doorn (HOL-500 Hon); 6. Heinz Kinigadner (AUSTRIA-500 KTM); 7. Corrado Maddii (ITA-500 Kaw); 8. Georges Jobe (BEL-500 Kaw); 9. Kurt Ljungqvist (FIN-500 Yam); 10. Giovanni Cavatorta (SM-500 Hon).

THIRD MOTO: 1. Bailey; 2. Johnson; 3. Thorpe; 4. Dack; 5. Whatley; 6. Rinaldi; 7. Ljungqvist; 8. Soeren Mortensen (DEN-250 Yam); 9. Van Doorn; 10. Cavatorta.