

# TOP RIDING & RACING TIPS



## Team Duncan Racing tells all

**S**o you want to be a better rider? You had better keep your eyes open and listen up. One of the advantages of working for an ATV publication is all the contacts (racers, manufacturers, dealers, distributors, etc.) we make among the quad elite. This gives us an unbiased view of the happenings within the sport, but best of all we get to shoot the breeze with some of the top people in the industry. This allows us to pass the pearls of wisdom from the best racers in the country to the reading public.

Two top racers we run into all the time are Duncan Racing's Doug Eichner and Mark Ehrhardt. They are both Mickey Thompson champions and they have both put together very successful racing careers nationally and internationally. We inquired how they achieved their past success and what problems they ran up against in the '94 season.

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**3&4:** What advice would you guys give an up-and-coming racer?

◀ When you are play riding, ease off on the throttle and ride defensively. Remember, there are no flagmen or danger warnings out in the boonies. Always use a spotter.

**Doug:** Bike prep is very important. You don't want to worry about it on the track. Always remember to make sure the cables are lubed and the chain and sprocket are in good shape. Sometimes guys forget the simplest task. Tire pressure is also something to be aware of. If it is too low the tires will roll over and if it is too high then they will not hook up as well.

**Mark:** Yeah, bike prep is definitely important. Make sure the air filter is clean, the bolts are tight and everything is in good working order. Lube all the moving parts and just check everything prior to the race. You are there to win, not wrench.

**3&4:** What are you guys looking for when you walk the track before a race?

**Doug:** I try to pick out the best lines, and I also watch other racers during practice to see which lines are fast.

**Mark:** Searching out good lines will make you faster. Check out all the jumps for lips or kickers that will pop you in the air and slow you down. Find the smoothest sections and pick out the shortest distance between turns.

**3&4:** What kind of riding gear should a racer look for?

**Doug:** Make sure you try out and break in boots before racing in them.

**Mark Ehrhardt (left) and Doug Eichner both ride for Duncan Racing and have had very successful careers. However, the '94 series has been a little rough. The two Mickey Thompson champs have been plagued with bad luck, but they are on the rebound and are already looking toward next season.**

Boots are generally stiff when you first get them and they might cause you to miss a shift or make some other stupid mistake. Get top-quality protective gear that is comfortable.

**Mark:** Yes, no new boots. I am a big advocate of safety gear. Wear all of it all of the time, especially a chest protector.

**3&4:** How do you get good starts?

**Doug:** When you are at the gate watch the starter to see how he operates the gate. Does he always wait five seconds after the board goes sideways or does he wait nine seconds? There is usually a three- to ten-second delay, so watch for his pattern.

**Mark:** Watch the other heats and races for the guys who are taking the holeshot. Note their location on the line. You want to pick a spot that provides traction as well as the shortest distance to the first turn.

**3&4:** What are your strategies for get-

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*ting around the track quickly?*

**Doug:** Drive harder into corners so you carry more speed, and use more front brake rather than the rear to slow yourself. Try to round off corners instead of squaring them off. You will maintain more momentum throughout the turn and be that much faster exiting. I have found squaring off turns shaves off too much speed.

**Mark:** Remember this: The smoother you ride, the less mistakes you make and the faster you will go! I've seen guys riding really fast, but many times they are riding over their heads and end up crashing. Smooth speed will come with practice.

**3&4:** *How do you guys integrate training into your lifestyles?*

**Doug:** Train 100% all the time and work out in your spare time. Always be

aware of nutrition and spend as much time on your quad as possible. Never eat junk food before a race. Take time out to practice, and ride at least four hours a week.

**Mark:** Luckily, I enjoy exercise and being healthy. Like Doug said, always give it your all, but remember not to overtrain. Rest and sleep are just as important as training. It is important to ride as much as possible, but if you do not feel comfortable or things are just not clicking that day, stop before you make a mistake and hurt yourself.

**3&4:** *What kind of mind-set does a successful racer need?*

**Doug:** Beginning racers need to build their confidence.

**3&4:** *When should a 250 "A"-class racer move up to the Pro ranks?*

**Doug:** After you consistently place in

*Drive hard into corners and round them off so you maintain momentum through the turn. Ride smooth, stay in control and you will actually go faster.*

the top five in class "A" races. A racer has to know how to set a pace when leading a Pro race. You can't go too fast or you will burn out, and if you go too slow people will blow by.

**Mark:** I think a racer should make the move when he is consistently winning in his class. They should be smooth and easy wins, too.

**3&4:** *What should a serious racer keep in mind when he is out play riding?*

**Doug:** Ride defensively. Don't be as aggressive as you are on the track. Expect the worst to happen and always be aware of the terrain and other riders.

**Mark:** When you play ride change

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◀ If you can, walk the track and watch the lines other racers use. Pick out the smoothest ones and check for obstacles that might slow you down. Sometimes winning a race comes down to who has the fastest line rather than the most talent.

known, and make it a good name.

**Mark:** Race as much as possible. This will make you a better racer and it will make you more visible to people in the industry. I use everything at my disposal to get attention, like having my girlfriend Renee work as a model for the magazines. Business is business, but being personable and friendly goes a long way, too. Always have a good attitude when you win and especially when you lose. Build a rapport over time with a sponsor. Don't expect him to be your best friend overnight, and always act professionally. Don't come across as just another punk kid. Work with the magazines if you can. Doug and I work as test riders and that goes a long way toward getting sponsors. At the same time don't make a pest of yourself.

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Success in racing was not just handed to Doug and Mark on a silver platter. Hard work and a good attitude are the keys to winning. They both emphasize "fun" as being a major ingredient in having a prosperous racing career, so get out there and have some! □

your mind-set and mellow out.

**3&4:** How do you obtain and keep sponsors?

**Doug:** Keep a record of how you are doing and call and let them know—and when you get the chance, always pro-

mote them. Don't burn bridges with old sponsors because the new sponsor might expect you to do the same thing to him. You might have to go back to an old sponsor. Always be professional and courteous. Make your name

## DUNCAN RACING & THE '94 SEASON

### BAD LUCK NEVER STRIKES TWICE—OR DOES IT?

● Bad luck is a fickle and indiscriminate companion and can strike at the strangest of times. It does not matter who or where you are, just be aware that it is out there getting ready to choose its next victim.

Nowhere is this more evident than at the Duncan Racing pits. Defending MTGP champ Doug Eichner and two-time MTGP champ Mark Ehrhardt both have had more than their share. At the beginning of the year everything was set for what looked like a great battle

between teammates, but it was not to be. We asked to the two champions about their '94 woes.

**3&4:** In a nutshell, what happened to you guys this year?

**Doug:** The quad was running great and it looked like it would be a good year. But right before Seattle I came up short on a double at my practice track and I hurt my shoulder. It was not dislocated, but the muscles were torn. I can't really complain; it was just bad luck.

**Mark:** I was ready for the season, but things started going badly in Anaheim and steadily got worse. Seattle was good, but then I went to the Nationals and separated my shoulder. The season was pretty much over

at that point.

**3&4:** What are your plans for next year? Will you both be with Duncan again?

**Doug:** Sure! Everything works great. I am not letting the season get me down and I will come back fighting. I do plan to make it to more Nationals next year, though.

**Mark:** I will just ride like I always do. I will do all the stadium events and Nationals. We are also working on some new quads for the coming year, and I am now sponsored by La Victoria Salsa. Right now I plan on going to the Pont de Vaux endurance race, and then I am going to Australia to race. I am not down about the past season and, if anything, it makes me work harder. ●

