

## **BAINBRIDGE, Ronald (Junior)**

**Born:** April 19, 1924, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

**Died:** November 5, 2000.

Although he hailed from Melbourne, 'Junior' was spotted riding in Brisbane by former Australian international Charlie Spinks in 1946, and came to Britain the following year to join Glasgow.

Despite being somewhat overshadowed in his time on the Scottish scene by riders such as Tommy Miller and Jack Young, 'Junior' was a mainstay of the 'Tigers' team until the end of the 1953 season when the club sold him to Ipswich to help clear the debts incurred during the year. During that time he consistently recorded averages of over eight points per match and proved to be a hugely popular figure on the White City terraces. His best season in the red and white came in 1951 when he achieved an average of 8.95 and by the time the track closed he had scored 37 maximums for the club despite a fractured knee cap sustained in 1952 which threatened to end his career.

When the 'Tigers' ran into financial difficulties and were compelled to put Junior and Tommy Miller up for sale, he moved to Ipswich for a £500 fee but a change of track failed to lessen his scoring power and he filled a heat leader role in his first three years at Foxhall Heath, with his scores actually surpassing the figures he had achieved at Glasgow. The amalgamation of the leagues in 1957 saw him ride in the top flight for the first time since his arrival in the U.K. more than a decade earlier, but despite occasional flashes of form, he struggled to maintain his average and returned to Australia at the end of the year. He continued to ride in his home country and represented Australia in a test match against England as late as January 1960.



Year	Club	Division	M	R	P	BP	TP	CMA	FM	PM
1947	Glasgow	NL2	26	99	117	15	132	5.33	-	-
1948	Glasgow	NL2	33	136	166	14	180	5.29	1	1
1949	Glasgow	NL2	44	177	345	18	363	8.20	7	3
1950	Glasgow	NL2	22	84	173	11	184	8.76	6	3
1951	Glasgow	NL2	28	114	248	7	255	8.95	5	1
1952	Glasgow	NL2	34	145	293	18	311	8.58	2	1
1953	Glasgow	NL2	36	150	275	24	299	7.97	4	3
1954	Ipswich	NL2	23	97	218	7	225	9.28	4	2
1955	Ipswich	NL2	36	186	372	19	391	8.41	5	1
1956	Ipswich †	NL2	28	141	286	20	306	8.68	1	3
1957	Ipswich	NL	16	65	67	10	77	4.74	-	-

**International Honours:** Australian international – 9 caps, 29 points.

## GURTNER, Keith

**Born:** September 21, 1921, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia.

Keith set out on a long career in Sydney after the war and later rode at Brisbane before embarking on a trip to England on the recommendation of pre-war star, Frank Arthur. He originally joined Exeter on his arrival in Britain but was on his way to Newcastle in exchange for Bonnie Waddell before making his 'Falcons' league debut.

After outings for Newcastle and Bradford in 1948, Keith formed an all Australian spearhead at Ashfield in 1949, being the 'Little Boy Blue' to Ken Le Breton's 'White Ghost' and Merv Harding's 'Red Devil' as the trio formed a colourful heat leader combination. He was to remain in Scotland for the majority of the rest of his British career and joined Division Two newcomers Motherwell after leaving Saracen Park. After a season and a half with the 'Eagles' he was on the move across Scotland again, this time to Edinburgh for a £600 fee after falling out with the management at Milton Street.

His time with the 'Monarchs' was short lived and Keith spent his last two seasons in Britain with West Ham, proving to be a useful lower order rider in the top division. Although he left Britain in 1954, Keith continued to ride in his native Australia for many years and was still making international appearances for his country as late as the 1967-68 season. His best performance in the sport came when he scored an 18 point maximum for his country against England in February 1952 at the Sydney Sports Ground.



Year	Club	Division	M	R	P	BP	TP	CMA	FM	PM
1948	Newcastle	NL2	11	35	37	5	42	4.80	-	-
1948	Bradford	NL1	3	9	8	0	8	3.56	-	-
1949	Ashfield	NL2	40	156	286	17	303	7.77	1	-
1950	Ashfield	NL2	34	140	201	21	222	6.34	-	1
1951	Motherwell	NL2	30	120	231	18	249	8.30	4	2
1952	Motherwell	NL2	31	122	202	15	217	7.11	1	-
1952	Edinburgh	NL2	15	58	77	10	87	6.00	-	-
1953	West Ham	NL1	18	60	51	11	62	4.13	-	-
1954	West Ham	NL1	30	84	79	14	93	4.43	-	-

**International Honours:** Australian international – 23 caps, 154 points.

## **READ, Leonard Albert (Len)**

**Born:** January 8, 1918, Norwich, Norfolk, England.\*

Len first saw speedway at Norwich as a child and fell in love with the sport, harbouring ambitions to become a rider when he was old enough. He served in World War II and was captured by the Japanese, being forced to work on the 'Railway of Death' for three and a half years before his release. Upon being demobilised Len travelled to London to buy a speedway bike from Wembley promoter Alec Jackson and, after second half rides at The Firs, finally achieved his ambition by breaking into the Norwich team in 1946.

A broken leg the following year set back his progress and, finding team chances hard to come by, decided to join Plymouth in Division Three where he became something of a cult figure amongst the Devon fans. Len spent five years at Pennycross, punctuated by a two year spell at Liverpool, and scored over 1000 points for the club. He requested a move from the 'Devils' during 1950 after finding the travelling from Norfolk something of a strain but persevered and had what was probably his best ever season with an 8.23 average in Division

Two. He is second only to Pete Lansdale in the all time list of Plymouth point scorers and formed a fine heat leader trio in his heyday with Lansdale and Peter Robinson. Len was so small and light he had to ride with a specially weighted machine and this contributed to him being one of the most spectacular riders of his day.



Year	Club	Division	M	R	P	BP	TP	CMA	FM	PM
1946	Norwich	NrL	9	20	16	4	20	4.00	-	-
1947	Norwich	NL2	3	7	5	0	5	2.86	-	-
1947	Plymouth	NL3	11	40	41	10	51	5.10	-	-
1948	Plymouth †	NL3	44	171	344	23	367	8.58	4	4
1949	Plymouth	NL3	50	201	440	19	459	9.13	8	3
1950	Plymouth	NL2	30	121	232	17	249	8.23	2	4
1951	Liverpool	NL2	32	127	222	23	245	7.72	1	2
1952	Liverpool	NL2	22	70	86	14	100	5.71	-	-
1953	Plymouth	SL	24	88	124	19	143	6.50	1	-