

When Stan Beat Briggo

By Robert J. Rogers



Stevens leads Briggs

Yes, it did happen! 'Stan the Man' beat Briggo out of the gate and even the master Kiwi could do nothing against our Stan when he was in one of his winning moods.

It was heat five on the 15th of July 1969. The meeting was West Ham versus Swindon and my programme recalls the famous event:

Heat 5

1st **STAN STEVENS** (W/H)

2nd Barry Briggs (Swi)

3rd Clive Hitch (Swi)

4th Bent Norregaard (W/H) engine failure

Time 73.4 sec, one of the fastest times of the night.

Thankfully the track photographer was on hand to capture the event on film (see picture above).

It must have been Stan's night, as in Heat 9 he took the scalp of Swindon's 2nd Heat Leader, Bob Kilby as well!

West Ham went on to win 40-38, with Stan getting a total of 7 points. Arnold Hanley of Sheffield was a guest for Ken McKinlay who was injured and scored 10.

This was Briggo`s only defeat of the evening. He went on to get 14 out of 15, plus won the Bhudda Golden Snowball Final in the 2nd half. The shock of losing did not do Barry any long term harm as three weeks later he won the British Final at West Ham with a maximum 15 points.

In the following week's programme it stated, "Stan the Man really shattered everybody with his win over Barry".

Stan went on to be West Ham's fourth highest scorer over the course of the season, however he did manage to get himself injured before our next home match!

Despite all the famous names at West Ham, I think Stan was `Mr West Ham`, as he seemed to know just the right moments to pull-off a victory, even if it did not win the match, it gave the Supporters something to have a good cheer about.

He did, for some reason, upset a certain manager at West Ham and was moved on, but was back within weeks of the manager resigning!

One of Stan's claims to fame is that he was West Ham's last ever captain! He was the captain of the West Ham Bombers, the short lived second division squad in 1972.

Another interesting notes in the following week's programme explained why Barry had been practising after the match.

It said "History was made last week when Barry Briggs practiced with a special bike to be used on the tiny American circuits later this year, although we are not allowed to give any details of the bike".

This was not the first time Briggo had tried out unmarked bikes at West Ham, confirming his belief that West Ham at the time was the finest raceway in the World, and who are we to argue with the great man!

A final note, I used to love our matches against Swindon as they featured another of my favourite riders, the Red Devil himself, Mike Broadbanks.

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