



The Legend – Ivan Mauger

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The entire Speedway World was left in mourning when arguably its greatest ever Motorcycle rider Ivan Gerald Mauger passed away on the 16th April 2018 aged 78.

Born in Christchurch Ivan first saw Speedway at the old Aranui Track when he was about 12 years old and it was after seeing local hero and soon to be 2 x World champion Ronnie Moore make a flashy return from the UK driving around in his Sports Car that Ivan decided Speedway was the Sport for him.

After saving every penny he could earn Ivan bought his first bike and started riding at Aranui developing into a promising second division rider who soon had his own aspirations of making the trip to England seeking fame and fortune.

Today's racers couldn't possibly comprehend the mammoth 6-week journey by boat when they can now fly in luxury but not only did the 17-year-old Mauger do this he also took his new 16-year-old Bride Raye with him in 1957.

Competition in England was World class and chances were slim although some success came his way in the lower leagues for Eastbourne.

Money was scarce, so Ivan took on extra jobs to feed the family which now included a Daughter.

At the end of that first season the decision was made to send Raye and the baby back home to NZ whilst Ivan was to continue to make a go of it in the UK.

Ivan was often quoted as saying it was whilst watching the Ship sail away with his family on board that it was a pivotal moment in forming the resolve of character that would drive him onto his later triumphs.

Ivan himself returned to NZ at the end of 1958 without finding the success he had been hoping for but then not too long after the decision was again made to uproot the family and this time head to Adelaide in Australia to ride for Legendary Promoter Kym Bonython at the sadly now defunct Rowley Park Speedway.

It was during this period the Mauger the World came to know started to emerge especially under the guidance of Australian great and Two-time World Champion [1951-2] Jack Young.

Whilst travelling hundreds of Miles to meetings Ivan would grill Jack for every piece of information that he could soak up and over a 3-year period improved his technique to



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where it was often the pupil beating the master and it wasn't too long before England came knocking once more.

So, the Mauger's now a family of five, two girls Debbie, Julie and son Kym were back off to the UK where Ivan was to ride for Promoter Mike Parker in Newcastle in 1963.

Ivan had returned, and the previous 5 years had only made the hunger for success grow stronger.

Ivan's career statistic's and World achievements are there for all to see on Wikipedia and he still jointly holds the record of most Individual World titles at 6 with Sweden's Tony Rikardsson however if you also include his 3 World Long track titles he is clearly on the top step above all others.

What Wiki doesn't tell you about is the man, the myth, the Legend of Ivan Mauger.

A rider who could seem closed off to the fans on race nights but only because Speedway was his job and Ivan was at work and already focused on the task ahead.

He pioneered Visualization techniques long before other Sports even knew or realized it's benefits, he was one of the first in Motorsport to understand Nutrition and the importance of physical fitness.

Ivan used to train at the Manchester United Football stadium when he was racing for the Belle Vue Aces and would often outlast the Pro Soccer players who were usually 10 or more years younger than he was.

Ivan treated Speedway as a night time job so therefore would make sure he got rest during the day where the Kids were not allowed to wake Daddy while he slept.

He was one of the first riders to start wearing coloured Leathers and was most certainly one of the first to seek and obtain major Sponsorship deals with National Corporations which in turn gave the Sport massive coverage and credibility.

Mauger was recognized for his success by being made an OBE in 1976 which was later upgraded in 1989 to Officer of the Order of the British Empire he also made history in NZ when he won the NZ Sportsman of the year award in 1977 [known now as The Halberg awards] and then won again in 1979 after he had won his historic 6th Individual World crown.

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To his Family Ivan was so much more than a famous Speedway rider.

He loved Family life and once the racing career was over Ivan made sure they all enjoyed the fruits of the hard-fought success they had strived for in the tough early years.

Later in life Ivan and Raye settled by the Broadwater on the Gold Coast in a large house with a jetty on the water to moor their Launch Aranui [named after the first track Ivan raced at].

Entertaining their many friends from around the Globe as well as seeing their extended family grow became the focus of the Mauger household.

It was always filled with laughter; Grandkids and the Boat didn't stay tied up for too long.

Speedway didn't just lose its biggest legend, it also lost one of its greatest friends and family man.

Ivan Gerald Mauger

15 X FIM World Speedway Champion

1968, 69, 70, 72, 77, 79 Individual Champion

1971, 72, 76 World Longtrack Champion

1969, 70 World Pairs Champion

1968, 71, 72, 79 World Team Cup Champion

Voted by the fans worldwide as the " Millennium Man of Speedway"

With thanks to the writer, Mike Wilson and the Mauger family for the images.