

# EASTER ROAD RACING

by Laurie Fox

SET to conclude a busy month at the McNamara Park road circuit, this weekend's annual Easter meeting should provide plenty of appropriate action with the 30 odd events to include the combined Easter Cup and Round One of the Master of Mac Park, South Australian title rounds and the always impressive BEARS for British, European and American machines.

Apart from the two Easter Cup races and possible consolation events, all classes will run over four legs with aggregate points to decide the overall place getters.

Of the two legs of the Easter Cup and round one of the Master of Mac Park, Saturday's race will run over six laps while Sunday's important second leg will be a 12 lap contest.

Sure to attract top attention from followers, the Prestigious Easter Cup and round one of the Master of Mac Park has an outstanding field of A and B Grade competitors headed by local star David Trotter who will be all out to add a fourth victory to his remarkable treble of Master wins in the last three years.

Winner in 2008 and 2009, Adelaide's Graham Snaith is another keen to succeed again together with Preston's Steve Tozer while young local Ryan Ritchie, South Australian 600cc Championship winner, will be one to watch, sure to go well after a short absence from racing and capable of a top effort.

While there could be several others likely to surprise, A grade competitors such as Adelaide's Ben North, Royce Rowe, Evan Byles, Howard Sabey and William Strugnell, local Darren Trotter and top BEARS exponent Marc Balestro are sure to be among the top contenders.

Apart from the events already mentioned, there is little doubt that for many onlookers the popular annual visit by the BEARS for a round of its British, European and American Race Series will be the contest to watch with the many non-Japanese models such as Ducati, Aprilia, BMW, KTM, MV Agusta and Triumph.

While there is only a field of seven for the combined Formula 2, 3 and 4 models, all Ducatis of various capacities but still capable of turning on some keen tussles, the much larger Formula 1 and 2 field will be eagerly watched with no less than 16 F1 1000cc and larger machines of the many makes mentioned on the track together with four F2 bikes, one each MVAgusta and Ducati plus two 675cc Triumphs.

Just who might come out on top is hard to predict but certainly the already mentioned Balestro will be a goer on his 1198cc Ducati together with others including Horsham's Brett Harris on a similar Ducati and the Adelaide Cafe Racer Club's trio of Paul van der Heiden and Chris Brown on their BMWs and Paul Edwards on a 1299 Ducati.

With a remarkable number of modern 1000cc entries, two separate groups for the Over 600cc category will be necessary, one where A and B Grade riders are to race concurrently and the second for C and D Grade competitors

In the top grade field lap record holder David Trotter looks a big A Grade chance on his 1000 Suzuki but can expect challenges from Tozer and Snaith on Hondas, Yamaha mounted North and Strugnell and Byles on Kawasakis.

While it is unlikely but not impossible for one of the better B Grade riders to head the entire field, there are plenty of chances in their own group including several BEARS competitors.

Picking place-getters in the Over 600cc C and D events is not easy but with some ten Mount Gambier club members in the field, including Club President Andrew Saunders, some good local placings are likely and would be most welcome.

In contrast there will be just one group for the 600cc category with all four grades to race concurrently.

Good Mount Gambier placings are highly likely with Darren Trotter against Adelaide's Royce Rowe in the A Grade while Ryan Ritchie looks a strong chance against Adelaide's Mark Schuppan and Sandro Malatesta.

Fresh from good efforts at the recent Hartwell meeting, locals Aaron Rigby and Moryn Sullivan are also likely to show out in the field of 17.

Two support classes will back up the main features, the combined C20 and C20 plus with five riders in each group and the Limited category where Mount Gambier club members, David Short and juniors Dallas Skeer and Scott Nicholson should go well on their 125cc Hondas against several up to 700cc machines where riders include Hartwell's David Wilson and Malatesta from Adelaide.

With far more nominations for the Easter Cup than can be started, one or two consolation races over 10 laps may be held late in Sunday's program.

As the actual final field for the prestigious feature will depend on qualifying times and results of earlier events, those likely to take part will only be known late in the day.

Track action will start from 9am on both days although Saturday's early runs will be for practice and qualifying.

As is usual with big two day meetings, practice sessions will also be available on Friday allowing competitors to ensure that their machines are correctly set up for the circuit, particularly with the additional widened section now in use.

In a disappointment to many considering the excellent entries, there will be no sidecars or juniors in the Easter program this year.