

WORDS DAVE BATCHELOR



By the time you've finished reading this he'll be doing 240mph



N. LARANJEIRA



D. SCARCE

## DAVID KNIGHT

ENDURO GOD KNIGHTER IS THE ORIGINAL SMOOTH-THINKING RACE MAN

### WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?

There are hundreds on the line [at Weston Beach Race] revving like mad, but you have to keep your head, be real focused on the lights, not be too eager and just drop the clutch. If you pin it straightaway on sand you're going nowhere fast.

### PSYCHE YOURSELF UP OR BE CALM?

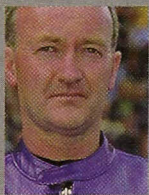
I try to stay relaxed. I keep thinking, so that if the start goes bad, I can concentrate on what happens next. If I do mess it up then I try not to worry about the couple of people in front of me – the race is more than just the first corner.

### BLIP IT OR FULL THROTTLE?

I try to keep it at a steady rpm, sort my weight distribution out and feel the way the bike launches. It's funny, I've been racing in the States and the Americans all just hold it on the limiter, especially on the 250s. Keep it smooth – sometimes you've got to go slow to go fast.

### EVER GOT IT WRONG?

Yep, big time at a local motocross race a few years ago. I was waiting for the start gate to drop. We were there so long the clutch on my TM boiled and it just took off on its own, up, up, and over the gate backwards and away she went. Not my finest hour.



## IAN KING

FOUR-TIMES DRAG BIKE CHAMP PULLS 4.5G AND HITS 240MPH IN SIX SECONDS

### WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?

You've got to react quickly, so I practise for two hours a day on a reaction timer that simulates the 'Christmas tree' launch lights. Mostly though, it's down to perfect bike prep – get the fuel mix wrong and good reactions won't matter.

### PSYCHE YOURSELF UP OR BE CALM?

Some riders like to be cocooned in their own focus, but I won't even put my leathers on until it's time to get on the bike – it tends to phase people if you're relaxed. Talk to them and they get even more tense. You're trying to put your pressure on other people.

### BLIP IT OR FULL THROTTLE?

I have an automatic slider clutch with various stages that holds the bike at a particular rpm, but when the lights go out I can just whack it open and let over 1000cc horsepower loose. We use car gearboxes; epicyclic units that can cope with the big power gear changes.

### EVER GOT IT WRONG?

Blinking cost me a European championship once. There's no pre-set time for the launch to go from yellow to green, so you're sitting there with your eyes wide open, in total focus, ignoring the sweat pouring off you.



# ETAWAYS



PB ARCHIVE



GOLD & GOOSE



## OLLY CRICK

PB CONTRIBUTOR  
USED TO BE THE KING  
OF THE COURIERS

### WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?

I always tried to avoid the dirty part of the 'track' where you can't hook up properly, and also tried to check the reflection of the perpendicular lights in windows and windscreens for a vital advantage. The pros go on the 'G' of green – you've got to be so careful if you launch on amber around town.

### PSYCHE YOURSELF UP OR BE CALM?

The ideal situation is to filter through the traffic to lights already on red and slot your front wheel about six inches in front of any other bikes'. Put down a marker, no acknowledgment, psyche them out. Then use your peripheral vision – is anyone creeping forwards, has their body language changed? Each traffic light match-up is a challenge that must be met and dealt with successfully.

### BLIP IT OR FULL THROTTLE?

I used to do it as cool as possible from tickover, but just have the clutch on the biting point. Lights change, increase the revs and let the clutch out. Then nail it, second, third maybe, to grab a few bike lengths. Then you've got to back off before getting into licence-losing territory. Job done.

### EVER GOT IT WRONG?

No. I was rarely beaten.



## CHRIS WALKER

HE SAW THE LIGHTS GO  
ON BUT WASN'T AT HOME  
AT LEGUNA SECA

### WHAT'S YOUR SECRET?

I don't know if it's much of a secret but I've got a motocross background, so when the start line consists of bikes spread 100ft wide and the first corner is only 40ft wide, it certainly focuses your mind.

### PSYCHE YOURSELF UP OR BE CALM?

A bit of both really. I like to have as much fun as I can, laughing and joking to take my mind off it all; you need distractions otherwise you can over-think the job. I do the warm-up lap, check my gloves and helmet, pat the tank and I'm ready.

### BLIP IT OR FULL THROTTLE?

I'm a blipper. You're told not to do it in motocross or road riding but if I don't blip I can't hear my motor above the pack. It's just my style. I don't use launch control – just a bit of clutch and back brake to stop the front wheel bouncing.

### EVER GOT IT WRONG?

Yeah, badly at Laguna Seca WSB. Normally, I watch the early races to see how long the start lights will hold you for. I saw the start of the AMA Superbike race and was pretty confident, but I didn't realise they used different lights to us. So when our turn came I was looking in the wrong place and must've missed it by about three seconds. I wasn't even in gear! I've never told anyone about that before...

## My Set-up

BY PIERRE SCOTT RLD

# #10

## Paul Hearn's 2002 ST4S

In the late 90s, Ducati's answer to the VFR was the lumbering two-valve ST2. But in 2002 the flagship Desmoquattro 996-powered ST4S arrived. Here's Paul Hearn's example.

'I'd always fancied a V-twin, and a Ducati. I spotted an 11,000 mile, 2002 ST4S at a local dealer. The ST4S's specification read like a special's – Brembo, Marchesini, Showa and Öhlins – mated to an **888-derived frame** housing the re-tuned 996 engine. The more conventional pipe layout of the ST4S meant that, on the road, it was often more powerful than the stock 996. I bought it.

'It had a few issues. New **Carbone Lorraine** brake pads and new fluid brought the **Goldline** calipers up to standard again. Low-down performance was sorted with a proper set up of the **RPM** sensor and a smaller, 14-tooth front sprocket, but it was still lumpy in town. The general 'Italian-ness' was smoothed out with a PCIII, K&N filter, hacked (er, modified) airbox, iridium plugs and some dyno time. It still produced a **healthy 113hp** at the wheel.

'A **PB set-up guide for the 996** (which shares the same components) gave a baseline for the suspension, backed off for suppleness on Irish roads.

'For convenience, a sidestand bypass switch went on and with **Motul MoCool** in the radiator and an aftermarket fan city traffic is no longer a ball-boiling experience. I fitted sports mirrors, a double bubble screen and adjustable levers, along with some R&G kit for its first trackday.

'**Diablo Stradas** are a good compromise for winter back roads as well as first gear hairpins. 'So, a supposedly fragile, expensive sports tourer has proved to be a reliable, cheap, capable and comfortable superbike. It gives as much confidence tipping into a **muck covered roundabout** in January as it does tackling Mondello's twin 90-degree bends, known locally as Tarzan 1 and 2.

'Home maintenance for all but specialist items is easy. She's north of 20,000 miles now and due for a **fork and shock rebuild** next winter. Performance-wise, she is plenty for me, and as the arse has fallen out of second-hand values, I reckon I'll run the 4S for a few years yet. **KL**

