

Trials Tales

Trials Tots

By Greg Cramond



Our little champ - note the expensive kit.

You see them at every trial. That is, a doting Dad chasing a tot on a minibike through every section. Some of the lucky ones are mounted on their own bikes for the run between sections and I have seen pushies used for the same purpose. Then there are the long-suffering ones, like me, who chase the tot by hoof for eleven and a half kilometres every meet.

Now these Dads it must be said are sacrificing a lot for their children, e.g. their winter warming layer of fat and possibly their sanity. What does the Dad get for all this trials nurturing? In most cases, three and a bit years later they get humiliated by their sub-adolescent, who is now a vastly superior rider than they ever were. But, before you get too smug (*within the humiliation*) about your future champion, there are more sacrifices to be made.

Well there's the pain in the wallet for a start. Those latest and greatest's don't come cheap. And we don't want our Tot to look silly so they will have a new helmet (*flashier perhaps than we would wear, but cool on the kid*). Then there's the boots, the gloves, the pants, all in the colours of the bike (*which, of course changes every year*).

Then there's the tantrums. The nurturing Dad is often seen at the side of the section gently persuading the teary-eyed Tot to get back on the horse and gee up that courage. Modern kids don't respect their

elders it must be said, because the gentle approach doesn't always succeed. Plan two then comes into effect: *If you just complete this section or two we can stop at McDonalds on the way home* (you apply the pleading voice effects).

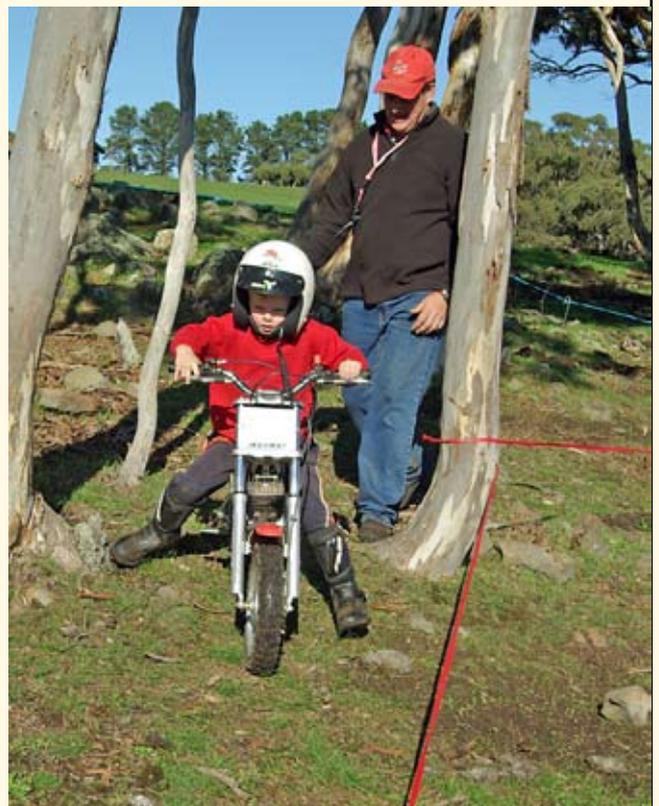
Of course some Dads are a bit too pushy. Apart from using plan two excessively, they use another technique to enforce their will to get the Tot motivated: They threaten to let the Tot's little brother/sister have a go even if that child is still in the pram. Speaking of which.....

Keeping in time with Dad, but swinging a camera and snapping happy at the little throttle-twister's efforts on the mini-dinger, is of course Mum. Now we all know that Mums sacrifice to a level most men can never achieve; *but we won't go there*. For the purposes of this story let's just keep to the theme. Mum also risks losing that winter warmth, but never her sanity; women have the ability to detach where bikes are concerned. Also Mums will never suffer the ignominy of being that guy "*who's quite a nice bloke, but his kids a much better rider*". Mum will only have the kudos associated with being "*the Mum of grand champion so and so*".

So why do you ask, do Dads do it? Why do we risk our sanity as the future grand champion throws yet another tantrum after the bike won't start? (*Did I mention that Dads are default bike starters.*) Why we risk our financial future on a sport that will never pay out big and surely our little grand champion won't be paying for a "high on the hog" retirement? Why do we not retire at all, but instead spend every waking hour running our champions across the country chasing trophies? Will we see our tot grow up to be eternally grateful?I think not.

Well I'll tell you why we take such risk. If we're going to get humiliated it may as well be by the fruit of our loins. 50 percent of that talent had to come from somewhere.

So there...



Here comes Dad now.