

BALLARD, Malcolm J.

Born: August 6, 1948, Catsfield, East Sussex, England.

Malcolm was an expert motor cyclist but had little previous speedway experience save for a few training school outings at Eastbourne in the winter of 1970-71 but he had made a fantastic impression at Arlington and, by the end of April 1971, he had forced his way into the 'Eagles' Second Division line-up. Pretty much everywhere he rode, Malcolm was sensational and scored paid ten at Workington in only his second appearance for Eastbourne before following this up with 13 points at Romford a week later. He soared to the top of the 'Eagles' averages in his debut season and earned rave reviews at the vast majority of the tracks at which he appeared. His performances helped the Sussex side to the Second Division championship and he ended the season with an average approaching nine points per match when months earlier not many outside the county had heard of his name.

Malcolm stayed at Arlington in 1972 and was understandably attracting the attention of the top flight clubs with Oxford winning the chase for his signature, partly due to the promotional connections between the two sides. He was hardly out of double figures all season for the 'Eagles' as he made further fantastic progress with an average a fraction short of the magical ten points per match figure. He held his own in Division One when called upon to ride for Oxford and it was a natural progression for him to move up full-time to ride for the 'Rebels' in 1973. He looked a sure fire bet for international honours as, at the age of just 25, he appeared to have a long career ahead of him, but he showed only flashes of the form he was capable in the top flight. He left Oxford at the end of the season for a fresh start at Poole but lasted only weeks at Wimborne Road before moving again, this time to Leicester. A confidence sapping run of poor form and machine trouble saw him quit the sport before the end of the 1974 season and his career, which had burst onto the speedway scene so spectacularly, fizzled out disappointingly. Few riders can have had such a short and contrasting career than Malcolm and it was a shame for the rider and the sport in general that his talent went unfulfilled.

| Year | Club | Division | M | R | P | BP | TP | CMA | FM | PM |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1971 | Eastbourne | BL2 | 28 | 113 | 235 | 12 | 247 | 8.74 | 1 | 2 |
| 1972 | Eastbourne | BL2 | 32 | 134 | 322 | 11 | 333 | 9.94 | 5 | 2 |
| 1972 | Oxford | BL1 | 13 | 56 | 65 | 21 | 86 | 6.14 | - | - |
| 1973 | Oxford | BL1 | 36 | 138 | 180 | 30 | 210 | 6.09 | 1 | - |
| 1974 | Poole | BL1 | 3 | 11 | 19 | 4 | 23 | 8.36 | - | - |
| 1974 | Leicester | BL1 | 6 | 22 | 16 | 7 | 23 | 4.18 | - | - |

Team Honours: British League Division Two Championship winner 1971.