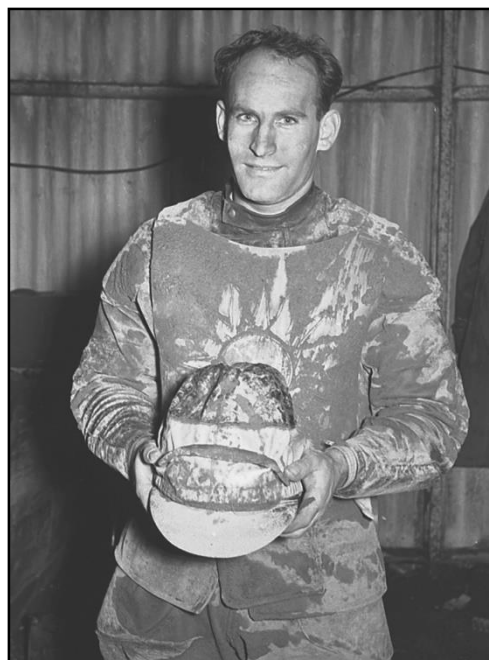


## **BENSON, Lionel Robert**

**Born:** February 8, 1925, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

Lionel was a side car driver in his native Australia before turning to speedway. He came to prominence in the winter of 1949-50, breaking Graham Warren's track record at the Bathurst track in New South Wales, leading to England captain Jack Parker recommending Lionel to Leicester. He was by no means an overnight sensation and it took him until the end of June to establish himself in the side but, by the end of the season, he had strung together a fine run of scores which saw him top the averages at Blackbird Road.

After just one season in Britain, Lionel saw his club elevated to Division Two and he took the higher standard of racing in his stride, again recording an average in excess of eight points per match and filling the second heat leader role behind Len Williams. He began to be mentioned more and more in the speedway press as a future test star and his debut international cap duly arrived in the second England v Australia tussle at Wembley in June 1952, scoring two points from the reserve berth. Domestically, Lionel had another superb season, helping the 'Hunters' to third place in the league and it was a major shock to the club when he decided not to return from Australia for the start of the next season.



| <b>Year</b> | <b>Club</b> | <b>Division</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>R</b> | <b>P</b> | <b>BP</b> | <b>TP</b> | <b>CMA</b> | <b>FM</b> | <b>PM</b> |
|-------------|-------------|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1950        | Leicester   | NL3             | 22       | 73       | 142      | 20        | 162       | 8.88       | 1         | 2         |
| 1951        | Leicester   | NL2             | 32       | 130      | 248      | 15        | 263       | 8.09       | 2         | 1         |
| 1952        | Leicester   | NL2             | 50       | 198      | 392      | 20        | 412       | 8.32       | 3         | -         |

**International Honours:** Australian international – 3 caps, 2 points.