

BROADBANK, Michael John (Mike)

Born: September 25, 1934, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, England.*

Despite the fact that Ivan Mauger rode in the Southern Area League early in his career, the finest true product of the league was Mike Broadbank who developed his riding talents at his local Rye House track. He had ridden at the circuit in his late teens before completing his National Service and returned to the track to take his place in the side for the 1955 season. Mike scored a full maximum on his league debut at Brafield and went on to have a fantastic first season in the sport, culminating in winning the Southern Area League Riders Championship.

These performances attracted the attention of the bigger clubs and Mike was to sign for the biggest of them all, joining the Wembley 'Lions' for a season of racing in the First Division of the National League. He was to spend just one season at the Empire Stadium as the club called a halt to league racing, and Mike was signed by Swindon after at least one club turned down the chance to take him on. Mike's transfer proved to be a master stroke for the 'Robins' as he developed into a world class rider, spending 16 fantastic seasons with the club to become one of the most popular riders ever to have pulled on the red and white of the Blunsdon team. With his red leathers and spectacular, unorthodox style, Mike was an instantly recognisable figure around the tracks for over 20 years



but his best days were undoubtedly spent with Swindon. He reached the first of his five World Finals in 1958 and the following year took over as the number one man at Swindon, establishing him as one of England's leading riders.

His average dipped slightly in the early 1960s as he struggled with ill health but, when the British League was formed in 1965, Mike took full advantage of the diluted competition to record a career best average of 10.53 points per match which put him fourth in the league averages behind Nigel Boocock, team mate Barry Briggs and Ken McKinlay and included a run of six successive full maximums. This was the peak of Mike's career as his average fell yearly until 1972 when he finally left the Abbey Stadium, having made 418 appearances for the club and scoring well over 3000 points.

Fast approaching the age of 40, Mike could have bowed out of the sport but decided to continue and joined Division Two newcomers Stoke to lead the side for the 1973 season. He put his experience to full use as he had a new lease of life at Loomer Road, topping the 'Potters' averages with a figure of over nine points per match and repeated this form in 1974 in a second season with the club. Mike returned to the top flight in 1975 for a season at Hackney before ending a glorious career in 1977 after spells at Crayford and Newport. In his five World Finals Mike never really did himself justice and his best performance was a ninth place finish in 1964, but he was essentially a team man rather than an individualist and will be remembered with legendary status, particularly by supporters of the Swindon 'Robins'. Mike rode throughout his career with the surname of Broadbanks, the extra 's' being added at the start of his riding days and never corrected.

Year	Club	Division	M	R	P	BP	TP	CMA	FM	PM
1955	Rye House	SAL	12	48	113	3	116	9.67	3	1
1956	Wembley	NL1	25	60	83	9	92	6.13	-	-
1957	Swindon	NL	20	96	100	25	125	5.21	-	1
1958	Swindon	NL	21	107	213	8	221	8.26	2	-
1959	Swindon	NL	18	94	211	9	220	9.36	2	-
1960	Swindon	NL	22	102	189	21	210	8.24	-	-
1961	Swindon	NL	18	73	133	10	143	7.84	1	1
1962	Swindon	NL	30	123	243	12	255	8.29	3	2

1963	Swindon	NL	27	111	222	21	243	8.76	1	2
1964	Swindon	NL	16	65	156	6	162	9.97	3	-
1965	Swindon	BL	36	150	384	11	395	10.53	9	6
1966	Swindon	BL	36	153	353	13	366	9.57	8	2
1967	Swindon	BL	38	152	285	40	325	8.55	4	4
1968	Swindon	BL1	40	180	353	30	383	8.51	-	4
1969	Swindon	BL1	24	92	125	16	141	6.13	-	-
1970	Swindon	BL1	2	7	9	1	10	5.71	-	-
1971	Swindon	BL1	37	131	131	32	163	4.98	-	-
1972	Swindon	BL1	33	118	122	22	144	4.88	-	-
1973	Stoke	BL2	33	145	323	12	335	9.24	5	5
1974	Stoke	BL2	38	161	355	22	377	9.37	3	6
1975	Hackney	BL	36	114	106	21	127	4.46	-	-
1976	Crayford	NL	36	143	224	38	262	7.33	2	3
1977	Newport	NL	30	122	167	32	199	6.52	-	1

Individual Honours: World Finalist 1958 (12th), 1961 (16th), 1962 (15th), 1964 (9th), 1966 (13th), Southern Area League Riders Champion 1955.

International Honours: England international – 28 caps, 167 points, Great Britain international – 8 caps, 30 points.

Team Honours: Southern Area League Championship winner 1955, National League Championship winner 1957, British League Championship winner 1967.