

Super Sam claims A45 crown

SAM BARKER beat off the ever-changing weather conditions to take victory in the 45 Road Club 10 last week.

Guest rider Barker picked up the gong with a time of 20.57, beating club rider Graham Dolby by a minute and seven seconds.

Light rain peppered the course and made it difficult for riders, but as the winds died down, the remaining field were able to put in respectable times.

There were personal bests for Ian Donald (25.22), Tim Caine (25.40) and Peter Greenhalgh (28.13).

Brian Carlin was the second club rider behind Dolby in a time of 23.20, with Andy Brooke finishing in 24.11.

The event was the first 10 of the year on the A45, with roadworks forcing a change of course up to now.

A5 RANGERS' Bryan Marshall and Rockingham Forest Wheelers' Tony Page lie second in the Northampton & District Cycling Association time-trial standings.

The pair currently sit on 374 points, 16 behind leader Neil

Cycling

Houldey of St Ives CC.

Trevor Parrish sits in equal fourth, a further 51 points behind second place after four events.

Page also holds third in the short distance standings with a total of 190 accumulated so far, just eight points behind leader Martin Jones.

The Wheelers' man has been in fine form of late, and leads the veterans table with a 400 point haul from four events.

Sara Frost is in second spot in

the Ladies table, with Babs Etoe not far behind in third.

NENE Valley's Greg Ashley lapped the field but just missed out on a win at the Milton Keynes Road race series held at Milton Keynes Bowl.

Ashley attacked early on in the race along with one other rider, but was eventually beaten in the sprint.

MATT PLEWS was the top man at Welland Valley CC's 10 mile time trial.

Plews came home in a time of 24.41, nearly a minute in front of nearest rival Phil Rayner who ended in 25.29.

Paul White picked up the final podium position in a time of 25.51.

ATOTAL of 26 riders took on the 18.4 mile course at Kettering CC in the Mark Bell Memorial time trial.

Sam Barker completed a good week with a win in 41.18, with Dominic Sweeney and Gregory Ashley completing the top three, finishing second and third respectively.



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Trampolining Special

Jaime's a Euro star as Britain bounce to bronze

OLYMPIC Trampolinist Jaime Moore starred as she helped Britain to a bronze medal at the European Championships in France.

The 26-year-old finished sixth individually in her best ever senior placing, and was the leader of a three woman team that bounced their way to third spot in the battle of the countries.

The Northants Academy star also managed an impressive fifth spot in the synchronised event with partner Claire Wright to round off a great week, and said afterwards: "I'm really pleased with my performance.

"My aim was to get in the final and I did that and I feel like my prelim round was great.

"I couldn't have asked for much more from my first two rounds.

"My routine in the final round wasn't quite as good as I know I can do, but it was still really good considering it's only my second international final."

Moore and her team-mates ended just 0.4 away from gold in the team finals, and the Northampton girl admitted that she was fighting back the nerves before one of the biggest routines of her career.

"It's probably the most nervous I've been," she said.

"Because obviously you're still doing your stuff, you're still doing it individually, but your scores all count towards the team and there's only three people that do the team final.

"Scores go back to zero, so really you've got to all produce it when it matters.

"We were 0.2 off silver and 0.4 off gold, so to find that out afterwards was a little

bit like 'if only I'd have pointed my toes a bit more we might have won'.

"But there's always ifs and buts, and as a relatively new team and quite a young team I think we did really well."

Club mate Yazmin Gumbs also had a cracking week at the event in Metz, and was just 0.1 away from becoming European Synchronised Champion with partner Danielle Pietruska.

Great Britain team officials slammed the decision to award the team from Belarus first place in an event that caused controversy, after an error on their final move appeared to go unpunished.

Gumbs finished in sixth place in the individual competition, while the junior team were just forced out of the medal positions in the team event, finishing in fourth.

Coach Tracy Whittaker, who travelled with the team as part of the coaching delegation, was delighted with the results for two of her star performers.

"When we looked at it last November, we pin-pointed the top eight as where they should aim at and they've done that," said Whittaker.

"The thing for both of them now is to get their difficulty up.

"It's their set scores that are currently getting them into the final but they aren't as competitive as they can be yet because of their difficulty."

Gumbs will be in action this weekend along with several other Northants Academy youngsters at the final grade one event of the season in South Shields.

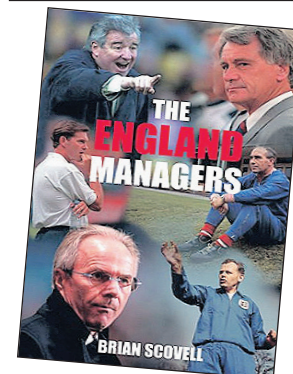
She is aiming to qualify for the ladies' national championships next month to cap off an impressive season.



■ IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE – Northants Academy trampolinist Jaime Moore

Attack on Sven ruins a top read

Book review



WHEN England managers' time at the helm expires, there is always an amnesty from the press.

You know how it goes. Coaches who were vilified for their plainly crazy selections and non-existent tactical nous are revealed as good old boys, loved by their players while the guns are silently trained on the next fool.

In *The England Managers: The Impossible Job*, former *Daily Mail* journalist Brian Scovell has not yet handed in his weapons and, despite Sven Goran Eriksson's imminent departure, the current incumbent is suitably massacred, his remains unrecognisable.

It is only one chapter in a book which devotes a section to each of the 10 England managers there have been up to this summer's World Cup. But it is a chapter which lets the side down, so to speak.

Up until then, the book is a worthy tome with strong opinions (notably concerning Don Revie, fool number three, whom Scovell variously labels 'a crook' and calls a cheat) and backed up by countless stories gleaned from years of sports hackery.

For example, Graham Taylor serenading assembled journalists after a particularly bad result helps capture the humour rather than the tragedy of his reign and there are many more.

Alas he should have stopped at nine.

As the reader reaches the 10th chapter he comes up against some suddenly abrasive opining: "There are two explanations why (Eriksson) got away with so much. First, money and second, lawyers."

Ouch. 'Got away with' makes the Swede sound like a conman who has somehow escaped justice. What of his excellent record before the pre-World Cup friendlies of 33 wins from 58?

It is a pity because the change in tone looks like it was brought on by an insistence that the book be relevant to the World Cup, and it spoils a good read. All the current bile from the recent media backlash is present.

Yet who knows what Germany 2006 might bring? How will this assessment of Sven look then?

The halcyon days of Walter Winterbottom – bereft of contemporary media intrusion – are treated kindly in their context despite his defeats that ended England's footballing dominance. Similarly Ramsey's imperfect sides of the 70s.

What might an obsessive media that brought about Sven's downfall have done to those great men?

Impossible job? It is now.

Nick Spoons