



A Timeline of Motorcycle Racing History on Pikes Peak

1916 - The history of motorcycle racing on Pikes Peak dates back to the very inception of the race in 1916. It was then that

Floyd Clymer became the first cyclist ever to top the Peak while the road was still under construction. Floyd went on to win two of the four cycle events scheduled that year, finished second to “Doc” Vanderhoof in the sidecar feature, and nearly edged Frank Kuntz in the Colorado State Championship race.

Clymer, originally, from Greeley, Colorado was a likeable but fierce competitor and received his greatest competition from Frank Kuntz, a Harley rider also from Greeley. Riding a special home built 8 valve racing Excelsior, Floyd claimed that although it wasn't as fast as the factory bikes, he preferred his because it handled better. Factory sponsorship was strong even in 1916 as not only Excelsior, but Indian, Harley-Davidson and Thor financed teams of riders exclusively for the Hill.

The bikes then would seem very crude and primitive compared to the fine machinery available today. Massive twin cylinder four strokes with rigid frames, three speed hand controlled gear boxes, and up to 80 pounds of pressure in the tires thundered up the Peak in those days! In the professional “free for all” there was no limit on engine size.

1917, 1918 and 1919 - No racing was held on Pikes Peak due to WWI

1920 – 1953 No Motorcycles on Pikes Peak

1954 - Cycle racing was discontinued in the twenties up until 1954 when the AMA (American Motorcycle Association) sanctioned the motorcycle events.

1955 - The races returned in 1955 and again the big four stroke twins prevailed.

1956 – 1970 No Motorcycles on Pikes Peak

1971 - In 1971 local motorcycle dealers were called together to consider the possibility of once again staging this classic race. It was decided that motorcycle racing would be very popular and that the races would be run on a trial basis. In 1971 there were three professional divisions: 125, 250 and Open. Bill Vickery and his Yamaha were victors in the 125 class, Bob Conway aced the field on a Rickman/Montesa in the 250 class, and Gary Myers led the Open class on a Husqvarna.

Under the direction of Bill Brokaw the success was overwhelming, and the cycles raced each succeeding year through 1976.

1972 - The 1972 classic welcomed Steve Scott (then a native of California) who surprised the "local boys" with his amazingly quick Bultaco. Victorious Gale Gieck and cousin Lonnie Houtchens battled to a finish that was decided by less than a wheel's length in the Open Pro division.

1973 - Rick Deane of Aspen, Colorado won his first Peak run in 1973 riding a 750 Triumph in the Open class. Rick was to repeat this task in '75 and again in '76, a close race that saw near tragedy at the summit. In a last ditch effort to pass Deane, David Korth collided with the support pole used to mark the finish line. Bob Conway, trailing in third place, narrowly avoided being hung by a wire stretched between the poles as alert spectators quickly hoisted and held the downed pole for Bob and the rest of the pack.

1976 – The 1976 running of the bikes on Pikes Peak was marred by a starting line accident involving several riders. A problem that race car drivers do not face is poor visibility due to the thick dust raised as the motorcycles start all together. At one time it was absolutely necessary to memorize the first 5 or 6 corners until enough dust had cleared to see the road. Of note is the motorcycle course record, set by Rick Deane, which stood until 1992. Rick's Triumph is on exhibit at the Penrose Heritage Museum. Steve Scott captured his 5th consecutive 250 PRO championship.

1977, 1978 and 1979 – No Motorcycles on Pikes Peak

1980 - Motorcycle racing was left out of the program until 1980 when it was reinstated under the direction of Gary Palmgren and Steve Scott. This lasted three years.

1982 - A tragic accident occurred in the thick dust when downed rider, Bill Gross, was fatally hit by another rider not far past the Start Line. Following this, bikes were once again dismissed from the Peak.

1983 – 1990 No Motorcycles on Pikes Peak

By 1990, a timing system was developed that would provide individual timing for motorcycle racing. Each class of motorcycles in the Division could now be broken into waves of five riders, vastly increasing the safety factor since it was no longer necessary to start all the bikes at once. Legendary IndyCar racer, Wally Dallenbach, and his Colorado 500 crew were enlisted by the Hill Climb board of directors to organize the return of motorcycles.

1991 - In 1991, entries trickled in at such a slow rate that Dallenbach could not meet expenses. He had to pull out with only two months remaining before the race. Hill Climb chief Nick Sanborn approached Bill Brokaw to put together a cadre of motorcycles. With the newfound safety of the timing device, Brokaw consented and enlisted long-time friend and racer Sonny Anderson as a partner. Despite having only two month's notice, they brought 58 riders to the start line. Brokaw and Anderson would spearhead the motorcycle program for the next 20 years, stepping aside when the course became fully paved in 2012.

1992 - Of note is rider Brian Anderson who shaved 19 seconds off Deane's record. Brian's Wood-Rotax is on display in the Penrose Heritage Museum. The popular Quad division was created in 1992.

1994 - Woodland Park's Clint Vahsholtz was the winningest rider prior to switching to the Super Stock Car Division. Clint's winning time in 1994 of 12:21.13 stood for 13 years.

1995 - Vintage racing, featuring classic British and Yamaha big twin machines, was inaugurated in 1995.

1996 - Sidecars appeared in 1996 with the antics of the stabilizing passenger making this addition popular with spectators along the race course.

1999 - Initially, riders were broken into amateur and professional classes. In 1999, this distinction ended with the dropping of all amateur classes.

2006 - Supermoto, a hybrid type of racing, was added in 2006 recognizing the growing popularity of dirt/asphalt combination tracks, which Pikes Peak was at the time.

2007 - A new 1200cc class was added in 2007 to recognize a growing number of large dual-sport type bikes. Davey Durelle shattered Clint Vahsholtz' long-standing record by nearly 41 seconds in 2007.

2008 - In 2008 there were four brands of machinery, BMW, Buell, Ducati, and KTM doing battle in this exciting addition.

2010 - An electric motorcycle was part of the action in 2010, but didn't finish.

2012 - Former Quad competitor, Jim Vidmar, stepped up to take the helm for the motorcycle program. The 90th running of the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb in the summer of 2012, marked the first time the race was run on an entirely paved course. Speeds increased, and records fell. For the first time, two riders broke the 10-minute barrier – both riding for Ducati. Carlin Dunne captured the crown again in 2012 with a time of 9:52.819, edging team mate Greg Tracy who also shattered the barrier at 9:58.262. Greg's brother, Gary Trachy, reigned in the 750 division. The record-setting Ducati piloted by Dunne is on display in the Penrose Heritage Museum.

2013 – Carlin Dunne, fastest rider on the Hill in 2013 chalked up a 10:00.694 in the Exhibition Powersport Division on the Lightning Electric Superbike - a huge win for electric bikes on Pikes Peak. The new record for an Electric Motorcycle (Modified) drew a lot of interest in this emerging technology.

2014 – Four records were set in 2014 and electric motorcycles returned. Jeff Clark set an Electric Motorcycle (Production) record aboard the 2013 Zero FX of 11:59.814. The three major division records each fell with Cal Collins on a Honda CRF450R capturing the Lightweight Record with 10:58.203; Eric Piscione on a Ducati Streetfighter posted a 10:46.159 for a record in the Middleweight Division, and Jeremy Toye turning in a sub-10 run in the Pikes Peak Open Division on a Kawasaki Ninja – 9:58.687. Sadly, Bobby Goodin, racing in the Middleweight Division, died in an on-course accident.

2015 – Tragedy struck again in 2015 when Carl Sorenson, a Colorado rider, died on the mountain racing in the Middleweight Division. Codie Vahsholtz stood atop the podium in 2015 as the winner and new record holder for the Lightweight Division, riding to victory on his 2006 KTM SMR with a time of 10:50.421. Codie now held two records – including the Pikes Peak Challenge 250cc record he set in 2013.

2016 – The 100th Anniversary of the Race of the Clouds brought motorcycle riders from 10 countries and crowned Bruno Langlois of Corsica motorcycle King of the Mountain in the Heavyweight Division. Cyril Combes, a rookie, set a new Quad record. Another addition was the initiation of the Race Smart Program, a veteran team who coached and mentored riders on what made racing on Pikes Peak unique and how to best prepare for that challenge.

2017 – Rookie Chris Fillmore blasted the overall motorcycle course record to set a new mark of 9:49.625 riding for KTM.

2018 – Carlin Dunne and Ducati, captured King of the Mountain honors and Chris Fillmore, aboard KTM set a new Middleweight Division record. Rookie of the Year honors went to Lucy Glöckner in the Heavyweight Division. The Race Smart Program was expanded to include drivers as well as riders.

2019 – Australian rider, Rennie Scaysbrook, stood atop the podium as the fastest rider in 2019; however, the celebration was marred by the death of Carlin Dunne, who died in a crash as he approached the finish line on race day. Lucy Glöckner, the only woman to enter the program this year, was the second fastest overall riding a BMW S1000R. She is fastest woman ever to compete on Pikes Peak, and is the first woman to break the 10-minute mark. Once again, Chris Fillmore returned to set yet another record, and he did, this time in the Lightweight Division.