

TWASM

THE WORLD SPONSORSHIP MONITOR

Produced by


Sports Marketing Surveys
QUALITY RESEARCH FOR MANAGEMENT ACTION

A MONTHLY REPORT ON SPONSORSHIP ACTIVITY IN SPORTS, THE ARTS & BROADCASTING AS REPORTED IN THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS & MEDIA

A Hundred Years of Racing

TWASM looks at the Isle of Man TT

Plus
Sponsorship Quick Facts
Sponsorship Guide
Breakdown
SLAM

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Editor

William Fenton

Publisher

Communicate Sport

Subscriptions

Catherine Hawkins

t: +44 (0) 20 7607 5111

e: info@theworldsponsorshipmonitor.com

Website

www.theworldsponsorshipmonitor.com

Produced by

Sports Marketing Surveys Ltd

The Courtyard

Wisley

GU23 6QL

t: +44 (0) 1932 350 600

E: info@sportsmarketingsurveys.com

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Welcome to TWASM

Dear Subscriber,

After the special 2006 Annual Review welcome to the first regular issue of The World Sponsorship Monitor e-magazine in 2007.

We look forward to another great year in sponsorship, as more and more brands look towards sports, arts, charities and many other properties to communicate and enhance their brands and businesses.

As an opening interview, we have taken the time to speak with Simon Crellin of the Isle of Man TT, and Stuart McBride of the agency Signature Sponsorship, which has assisted the motorcycle property in attracting

new sponsors. All this and much more in the Quick Facts, Sponsorship Guide and Breakdown sections.

As always, we welcome your feedback and comments, and strive to improve The World Sponsorship Monitor to suit your requirements.

We hope you enjoy the read.

Best wishes,



Stephen Proctor
Managing Director

One Hundred Years of Racing

The Isle of Man TT



Sponsorship of events by governments has never been stronger as regions all around the world compete to bring in tourists. Places such as Singapore have large tourist boards which are heavily involved in promoting events that they feel will bring tourist revenue. Like many areas in sponsorship, it is far from a new phenomenon, and this month we look at one of the oldest examples of the genre. The Tourist Trophy – or TT – which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year, has always been backed by the Isle of Man government as a means of bringing visitors to this small island just 50 kilometres long, which is also a powerful offshore financial centre. The TT is one of the few motorcycle races run on public roads, which gives it its unique character – and its special risk to competitors.

The island is a unique self-governing kingdom, a Crown dependency which belongs to neither the UK nor the European Union. It has its own parliament (called Tynwald), laws, traditions, culture, cuisine and postage stamps. There is even a Manx language and currency (although English is the spoken tongue and English and UK currencies are accepted everywhere).

2007 sees the event rebranded and re-energised, and professional PR and sponsorship support has been used as a key part of this effort by the Isle of Man government. We spoke to sports PR consultant Simon Crellin, himself a Manxman, and Stuart McBride at Signature Sponsorship about how this is being done.

Simon Crellin Interview

What is the role of the Isle of Man government?

The Isle of Man government is the promoter of the event, looking after everything including insurance, accommodation and promotion, while the federation, the ACU, sanctions and co-runs the racing with the Manx Motorcycle Club. The Department of Tourism and Leisure is behind

“THE TT HAS DEEP HISTORICAL ROOTS, ACTUALLY ROOTED IN THE BIRTH OF THE MOTOR CAR.”

everything, and for very good reason, as motorsport accounts for 40 per cent of the island’s visitors. The TT is a free event, as viewing is possible anywhere around the huge 37-mile circuit. The island needs people to come in volume and to spend money.

What’s the background to the TT?

The TT has deep historical roots, actually rooted in the birth of the motor car. British racing cars needed

a venue after having beaten the French in the 1901 Gordon Bennet Trophy. It had been decided that the winning nation would host the following year’s event and it seemed that Great Britain would be unable to fulfil its obligation because the racing of automobiles on public roads was prohibited by an Act of Parliament. The 1903 race was therefore held in Ireland, and a complex legal way was found of having the race in the Isle of Man for 1904. At the time more motorcycles were sold than cars, so the Act was extended to include motorcycle racing, and as the island offered a really tough technical challenge a success story began in 1907 that is now celebrating its 100th year.

Why has the TT been repackaged?

Its safe to say that in the mid-1990s the event was losing some of its shine from the glory days of the late 1950s and early 1960s when riders such as John Surtees, Mike Hailwood, Giacomo Agostini, Phil Read and Jim Redman competed in entertaining battles with machine and each other. That era was also notable for the first appearance of



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the Japanese bike company, Honda.

The Isle of Man TT motorcycle meeting has undergone an extensive overhaul by the Isle of Man government, which will see a number of significant improvements made to the running of the legendary event.

The review will see the introduction of new long-term commercial agreements, improved rider and team entry standards, further investment in safety and a new brand identity for the centenary races in 2007. This highlights the race's Manx heritage with the use of the Three Legs of Man and prominent use of red and yellow – the Manx national flag's colours.

The Three Legs of Man is the island's symbol of Independence. While there is much local argument about which way the legs run (officially it is clockwise), the symbol's meaning is undisputed: *Quocunque Jeceris Stabit* – 'Whichever way you throw me I stand'.

The Isle of Man-based TV company Greenlight Television expects to use the centenary to increase on the 43 individual countries which took



coverage last year. We want to get out of the motor sport ghetto and compete in the same area as Champions League, the World Cup and the bigger sports.

What is so special about the TT and why does the government support it?

The races are fast, risky and unique, and the Isle of Man is an important financial centre. The TT contributes to a positive national identity where riders compete for the challenge, and accept the inherent risks as being their own choice. This is a reaction to the nanny state, and certainly these days the event just could not be created. As we say, 'if it didn't happen, it wouldn't be put on'.

We are selling an experience, a festival to encourage what we call 'lifestyle' visitors. All the major bike manufacturers take over whole towns to run theme events, there are endless tourist attractions and this year we have The Who and The Stranglers playing live. The riders are unbelievably accessible and, of course, you can watch right by the side of the road as the bikes scream past along normal streets at stunning speeds.

What about the risk? How does this affect the media and sponsors?

We are quite open about this; motorsport is a dangerous activity and over the years there have been fatal accidents. However, we are dealing with it head on and safety continues to be of paramount importance on the circuit. We spent a £40,000 investment in the latest Recticel safeguard barriers and pole protectors in 2006, and the Isle of Man government has committed to spending a further £100,000 on safety products. A large part of the event budget is spent on safety.

We also have a strategy of developing and supporting up-and-coming riders and increasing qualification criteria. Race standards



have improved dramatically with a 108 mph average lap now considered the minimum qualifying standard for solo riders and 94 mph for sidecars. The bikes are better and we are not seeing a huge gulf of experience between riders sharing the same circuit. Of course, we also have the fact that more than 450 marshals are required to man the circuit to meet minimum safety levels. All this is working, and last year we had one fatality, which is one too many, but significantly lower than some years in the past.

On the PR side, it is a question of making sure that the journalists get the right information about an accident and don't rely on second-hand opinion. Last year we brought over a Press Association delegation to look for themselves and we have found we are getting more balanced coverage now.

Stuart McBride Interview

What is the involvement of Signature Sponsorship?

Sponsorship agency Signature Sponsorship (IoM) Ltd has been appointed to manage sponsorship, commercial and licensing contracts for the TT races. Signature has developed a range of fully integrated sponsorship packages, which include high-profile track signage, radio broadcast sponsorship and hospitality. All revenue generated from sponsorship packages is being directed back to fund future races. Years ago if you wanted boards on the circuit you had to ask permission in one place, then for hospitality you had to go to another, and so on. The



Isle of Man government appointed Signature to put it all together as they know we had experience with Shell and Formula One amongst other things. We audited all the TT's assets and did a valuation and so far have brought in Bennets Insurance, Aria helmets and a major telecom partner, and Suzuki as sponsor and licensees.

What kind of companies are sponsors and how do you handle the risk factor?

Motorcyclists these days are wealthy males in general (65 per cent ABCs) and we will have 60,000 of them on the island with a global TV audience of 1 billion. The Isle of Man is home to a lot of financial companies and

the freedom and control of risk fits well with that industry. The safety issue has been confronted responsibly but everyone understands that there will always be danger in such a special event.

What else did Signature do?

We see licensing as part of promotion, and Suzuki Great Britain will produce an exclusive, limited edition range of GSX-R motorcycles to celebrate 100 years of the TT races. Arai helmets also made a special TT helmet but merchandising isn't just bike related. The Isle of Man Post Office has also produced a unique range of stamps, Isle of Man Treasury coins and merchandise to mark the TT Centenary. There is a PlayStation TT game so realistic that some riders based in the USA, for example, have used it to learn this ultra-long course.

We're looking forward to this summer and we believe that our efforts for this centenary year will pay off over successive editions well into the TT's second century.