

Finding a Winning Sled

September 1969:

My grandfather, my father, and myself, (a boy of 9 years) sit at my parent's kitchen table filling out a dealer application. After seeing an ad in Popular Mechanics Magazine looking for dealers for the new Yamaha Snowmobile line, my dad talked my grandfather into selling them.

November 1969:

The first shipment of 5 new Yamaha Snowmobiles arrived at my grandfather's dealership. Two SL338's, one SL396, one SS338, and one SS396.

January 1971:

Sunday evening of Eagle River weekend my grandfather received a call from Yamaha International Corporation of California informing him that Mike and Wayne Trapp finished 1st and 2nd in the World Championship race at Eagle River.

January 1972:

Once again my grandfather received a call from Yamaha in California stating Mike Trapp repeated as champion in Eagle River.

FAST FORWARD

July 2007:

After being a life long Yamaha snowmobile fanatic, mechanic, collector, and racer, the stars began to align after a conversation I had with a friend of mine about a find of his. He said he would really like to talk to Yamaha Snowmobile Race Director from the early 1970's Mike Bowers. I told him I knew someone who had known him years ago. After a few phone calls I was talking with Mike Bowers. During our conversation he told me of a gentleman who had a SR292 racer that he had built for the 1972 grass drag season. He also told me that the sled won at Buffalo, Minnesota and it had magnesium and titanium components. Next he told me he had also built for the same gentleman a trail sled with "Circle M" fuel injectors and the sleds were for sale. He also said that the owner knew what they were worth and told me his name and phone number. I immediately called him about the sleds and when I could come and take a look at them. He told me that he also had two "wide tracks" and that I could look at them on the following Friday. The sleds were only about 3 hours away from me. On Friday morning I pulled into his yard with my trailer. Before I could even introduce myself, he said "why did you bring that trailer along? I'm not going to sell them today. I'm only open to offers on them." Boy, I sure thought this was starting off badly. We unhooked the trailer and traveled a couple of miles to a pole building of his in the middle of the woods. The grass was all grown up in front of the doors and it looked like no one had been there in quite a while. We went in and I saw the two sleds sitting in the middle of the floor under covers. First we uncovered the 292 and I was very impressed on how well it looked. Next we uncovered the "trail sled" and I immediately saw that the engine was a 1971 SR433. I took note of the serial number which was



SR433-00228. The chassis was a 1972 GP433 with 76 miles on it. A few other things I noticed about this sled is that it had factory race pipes that exited out the left side of the hood, aluminum skis, and of course the "circle m" setup. We chatted about the sleds for a while and then he said he had a "wide track" under a bunch of storm windows, screens, 4x8 sheets of siding, and some worm boxes. I couldn't believe what I was seeing as we got it uncovered; a 1972 SR643 that was new. The engine, exhaust, and skis were gone, but it was a new sled with the plastic covering still on the seat. Also, there was a brand-new extra 1972 factory race seat sitting with it. All I could think was "wow". We then locked up and went outside and talked about a lot of general things for about an hour. Then we drove back to his house and when we arrived I gave him my business card with my offer wrote on the back. He then told me he had another





"wide track" out back in the woods. When he first told me where it was I didn't see it. Then he said "right under the boat". I went around to the other side of it and went down on my knees. I couldn't believe what I saw! It was a 1972 SR643 with C-23 on the hood and tunnel. I knew it was Lynn Trapp's. I told him that he had a lot of history here. As we walked back towards his garage he asked me if he could take me to lunch. I told him "yes, just as long as I can buy!".

At lunch he told me many childhood stories he had and some of his interests; a lot of which were the same as mine. When we left the restaurant, he shook my hand and told me that he really enjoyed the day. He also said that he would consider my offer.

As soon as I returned to my shop I e-mailed Loren Anderson at the Snowmobile Racing Hall of Fame. I told him that I was trying to purchase some Yamaha stuff and was wondering how close it was to Mike Trapp's 1971 Championship sled. I also asked for the serial number of that sled. I thought the serial numbers might be the same. Saturday morning I received a reply from Loren. He said the serial number is: SR433-00228. Some of you can imagine how excited I was! I told my wife that the serial numbers matched and asked her what we should do next. I was actually shaking as I talked with her. She said "Well, I guess you'll have to do whatever you can to get them."

Next I called the owner and when he answered I told him that it was Leon calling about the sleds. He jokingly said that he just talked with me yesterday. I told him that I had talked it over with my wife and I would like to change my offer. I told

him he had a lot of history there and how proud my family would be to own it.

We went on vacation for a couple days. When we returned there was a message on my answering machine saying I should call him about the sleds. I guess the rest is history. Jason Remiker went with me to help retrieve and enjoy this very big find.

We spent most of the day talking with the former owner who is 80 years young and just a very nice gentleman.

All the time this deal was going on, I just kept thinking that something was going to go wrong as I knew how big this deal was; but it all turned out great!

The SR643 of Lynn Trapp's was his oval sled from the winter of 1971-1972. It has factory big fin cylinders, and a magnesium chain case and recoil/ignition cover. This sled also has the custom support for the end of the crank shaft like the one that helped Mike Trapp win his second world championship. The stock paratrail type suspension was taken out and replaced with bogies and the hood scoops are of a custom design. This sled is on the back cover

of Yamaha's 1973 snowmobile brochure. The SR292 was Wayne Trapp's grass drag sled for 1972. He won at Buffalo, Minnesota in Mod-1 and Mod-2. This sled also has a magnesium chain case and is extremely light.

The 1971 SR433 engine with serial number SR433-00228 has 6 bolt heads instead of four bolt heads. The cylinders are a very coarse sand cast without casting numbers and have chrome bore. The production SR cylinders had cast iron bores. Also, the exhaust ports are coated with something very smooth. After talking with Mike Bowers about the unique features of this engine, he told me that this is the stuff that the factory team used in 1971.

Then there's the new SR643 that's just missing the skis, engine, and exhaust. I would like to thank first off my wife Penne, my daughter Amanda, and my mother Carol for supporting me in this vintage snowmobile habit of mine. Also, all the great new people I met because of this, all of my old friends for letting me share the excitement of this find with them, and my Grandfather, Elmer Koch, for starting me on this great adventure in 1969.

Racing a sled that was last raced in the summer of 1972 by the Wayne Trapp of the factory Yamaha Team is pretty cool too. And another thing is I have won 10 first place trophies and 2 seconds with the machine just as it was raced in 1972 at places like Rhinelander, Hay Days, and Eagle River.

Submitted by Leon Koch

