

In 1980 when Honda rolled up with the CB1100R specifically to win the Australian Castrol 6 Hour, the organisers took umbrage at this race special and tried to find ways to block its entry. They picked on the fact that the Honda had no provision for a pillion, and tried to use that excuse. Honda replied that they had allowed similar single seat Ducatis in the race, and the rules did not specify you could not. Thus, immediately after the 1980 race, the organisers changed the rules to prevent single seat bikes entering. So for 1981 for the first time in its history, the 6 hour did not include all available production bikes, and in effect became a "Suzuki cup" for that year. In hindsight, a move which began the slide towards irrelevance of the great race.

Again incensed, Honda set about fixing the problem in later 1981! Easy, just add pillion pegs, and design a clever dual seat with a removable cover which allowed the bike to retain the original appearance! Of course, they did not stop there. The original RB model with the half fairing proved to have handling issues caused by that, so Honda set about designing a purpose built full race style fairing for the RC model. A number of other modifications were also undertaken based on race experience with

the first model. Much strengthened wheels, the front an 18 rather than 19 inch, were added, and the suspension also significantly overhauled. Several changes were made to enhance engine reliability, notable the cam chain and tensioner. Front discs were also now ventilated. The original red on white paint scheme was retained but the seat and fairing now added Honda royal blue as well. Just as gorgeous, and more effective, was the verdict. Another timeless classic. Some 1500 RCs were built in all.



Honda returned to the Castrol 6 Hour in 1982, with the organisers unable to find any excuse to refuse their entry, and this time cleaned up the first 4 places, with 1980 winner Wayne Gardner again winning, partnered by another local Wayne, Clarke (*right*). 1980 Suzuki runner up John Pace rode another



John Pace, 5, leads Alan Blanco, 7 in the race for second (left) at Amaroo, Sydney, Australia



CB1100RC to a fine and very close second, only 4 seconds in it after 6 gruelling hours.

Wayne had had rather a decent amount of practice on the 1100RC! Honda entered Wayne, multiple TT winner Joey Dunlop (bottom right), and Rocket Ron Haslam (below right) in the 1982 British Street Bike series, won by a mile in 1981 by Ron on the 1100RB.

Again the Honda dominated the series, this time with Wayne Gardner emerging as the champion).



Wayne Gardner leading Ron Haslam and Joey Dunlop (left) in a typical CB1100RC scrap!

Wayne promptly jumped on a plane to Australia to then win the Australian 6 hour for the second time on the Honda. In the process the 1100R (B and C models) became the only bike ever to win every Castrol 6 Hour in which it was allowed to compete!

Rocket Ron Haslam on the limit (below left) and 26 time TT winner Joey Dunlop (below right)

