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FLOGGING

KTM'S 250

THUMPER

TWINS:

HONDA

XR250/500

PIPE FIX:

HUSKY 250

PE175



DIRT BIKE

JULY 1980

VOLUME 10, NO. 7



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ON THE COVER: — Enduro expert Gary Woodling splits through the woods on the Suzuki PE400T, leaving the rest of his minute behind. Photo by Brian George.



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THE MINIS MEET

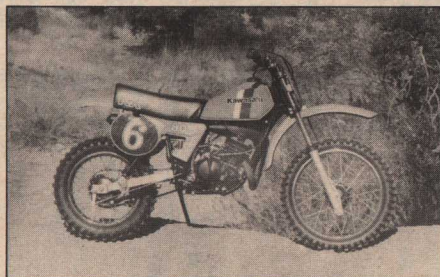
80 SHOOTOUT!

Honda/Kawasaki/Suzuki/Yamaha Head-On

By the Dirt Bike Staff



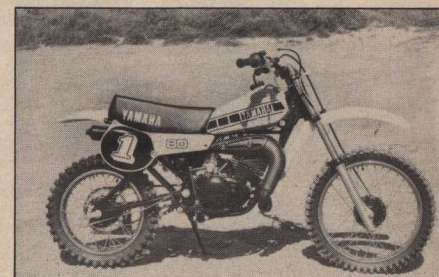
HONDA CR80



KAWASAKI KX80 A-2



SUZUKI RM80T



YAMAHA YZ80G

No one can say that there's a bad bike in the batch we have here. No matter which one you picked, you'd find that the machine was very fast, lots of fun to ride and relatively hassle-free to own and maintain.

However, there are differences. Very important differences. And, it's these differences that let us come up with a winner in this shootout. Actually, we didn't declare a winner; the chart did.

If you'll let your eye wander over to the big chart somewhere in this feature (hopefully), you'll see a large number of categories. In each of these categories, we assigned points, based on what our test riders told us over a period of about three months. Yes, we had the bikes that long. During that period, they were raced, play-ridden and thrashed around in general. All of the engines

proved remarkably strong, and no major breakages were encountered. However, we did have some minor problems, and we'll get to them later on.

One important thing: We assigned a full 10 points to the top bike in each category. This doesn't mean that the particular feature was perfect. In the case of noise, for example, we reluctantly gave the winner a 10.0, as we felt that all of the minis were way too loud.

If the points spread was close, it meant that the traits of the bikes were also close. However, a big spread in points means a big difference in the quality of that particular feature. A good example would be the section on Parts Availability, where the Kawasaki is worlds apart from the winning Yamaha.

Hope you get the idea. Now, rather than do a conventional shootout, let's make the chart do all the work. What we'll do is explain each category and why we assigned points as we did. The totals speak for themselves.

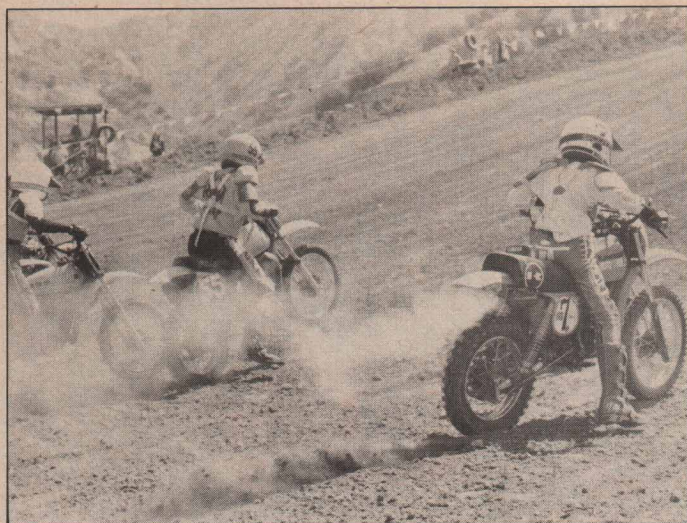
Fastest Acceleration: Drag Race on Level Ground.

This is basically a race to the first turn. Here, we gave the Honda 10.0, simply because it was first in the drag race more often than any other bike. The Suzuki was hot on its tail, though, and a sloppy shift on the part of a Honda rider would surely give the Suzuki all the edge it needed. Actually, none of the bikes could be considered slow. The difference between first and last place was often no more than five or six feet... tops. In many of our drag races, the Kawasaki would bolt into the lead

right out of the gate, then fade slightly as the other machines started to breathe. Part of this is due to the five-speed gearbox in the Kawa and the good low-end torque.

Best All-Around Power: Flexibility of Powerband

No question about it, the Kawasaki had more beans down low and at mid-range than the other bikes tested. In fact, the KX is probably the only one of the bunch that could be used as a trail/play bike. While other riders were frantically stirring the gearbox and fanning the clutch on the track, the KX rider would usually just twist the throttle and snap cleanly out of the corner. Very good all-around power. The YZ received a very low score here because it had absolutely no low end whatsoever. To get going, the rider had to



scream the engine and slip the clutch. Any sort of a hill at lower speeds demanded the use of low gear *and* possible clutch-slipping. The Suzuki had a decent mid-range and a touch of low-end power, while the Honda was much like the Yamaha... nothing at the bottom and a blast of power when it came on about half-way through the rpm range.

Forks: Quality of Operation

Even though we gave the Honda the best score, it didn't have the most travel. Most is not always best. The KX had seven inches of fork travel, the RM 6.7, 6.4 on the YZ and just a fraction over six inches on the Honda. While the forks on the KX were very soft, Novice riders would like them just fine. More aggressive riders bottomed out the KX constantly.

Shocks: Quality of Operation

The Yamaha got the nod here, and, as with the forks, the Honda had the least shock travel. In order of travel, the RM had the most with 7.1 inches, the KX was next with 6.9, the YZ was in third with 6.8 and the Honda was last with 6.3. The Honda shocks appear to be carbon copies (on a smaller scale) of the Showa reservoir units on the larger CR bikes. One special note: The mono rear end was able to take the heaviest impacts in stride, but wasn't as supple over the small bumps as the Honda.

Turning

No question here. The very low-slung and quick-turning Honda was a virtual shark in the corners. Even taller riders liked the way the CR could be flung around without a hint of washout. The CR is the King of the Corners in the 80 class. We felt that the YZ had a touch of front-end washout and down-rated it slightly for that. Our RM

HONDA CR80 Specifications

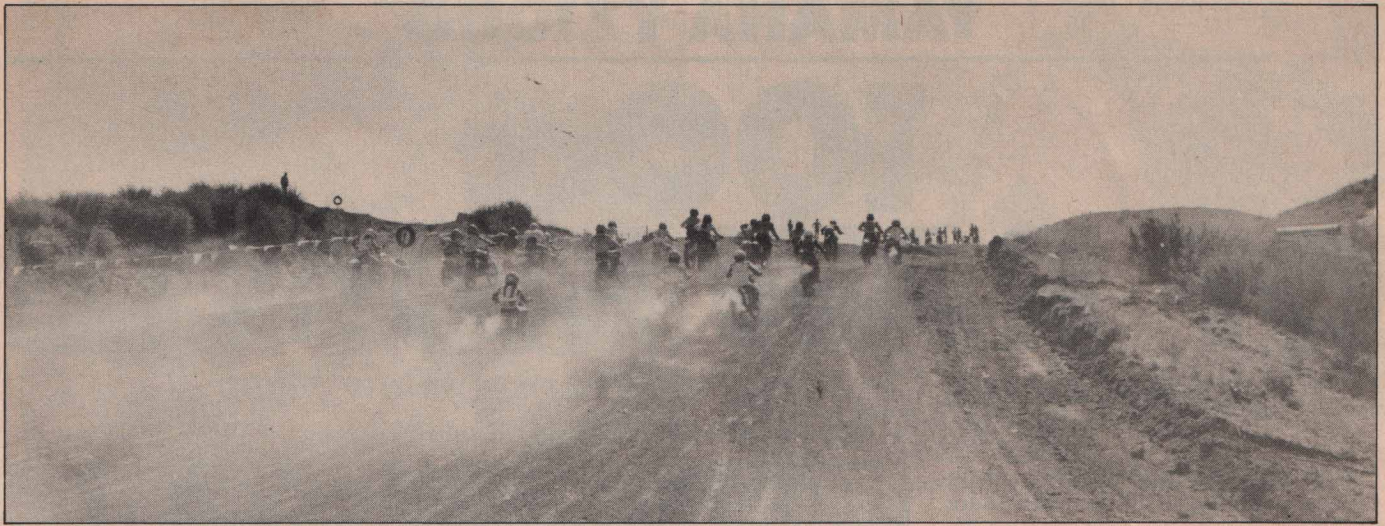
NAME AND MODEL	Honda CR80
ENGINE TYPE	Two-stroke, reed valve
BORE AND STROKE	49.5mm x 41.4mm
DISPLACEMENT	79.7cc
CARBURETION	26mm Keihin
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	148
JET NEEDLE	36E
PILOT JET	50
SLIDE NUMBER	2.5
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.)	Hondaline
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	1.2 gallons
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Steel alloy
GAS/OIL RATIO	20:1
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
AIR FILTRATION	Foam element/air box
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-disc
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed constant mesh
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.5
2	1.77
3	1.4
4	1.13
5	.96
6	.81
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	14/47
IGNITION	Magneto CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	Champion N2, NGK B9ES

SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	N/A
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Expansion chamber, high-pipe
FRAME, TYPE	Chrome moly steel, single downtube, split cradle
WHEELBASE	47 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.7 inches
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK	28.7 inches
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	29 degrees
TRAIL	3.3 inches
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	145 pounds
RIM MATERIAL	Steel alloy
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	2.75x17 knobby
REAR	3.60x14 knobby
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Air/spring leading axle forks, 6.7 inches
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Swingarm/aluminum reservoir shocks, 6.3 inches
INTENDED USE, MFR.	Minicycle competition
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
PRICE, APPROX.	\$698
PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$14.48
RINGS ONLY	\$4.00
CYLINDER	\$53.90
SHIFT LEVER	\$5.70
BRAKE PEDAL	\$8.20
FRONT SPROCKET	\$3.80
DISTRIBUTOR:	
American Honda	
100 W. Alondra Blvd.	
Gardena, California	

SUZUKI RM80T Specifications

NAME AND MODEL	Suzuki RM80T
ENGINE TYPE	Single-cylinder, two-stroke, reed valve
BORE AND STROKE	49mm x 44mm
DISPLACEMENT	83cc
CARBURETION	26mm Mikuni
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	155
NEEDLE JET	P-4
JET NEEDLE	SDP-39-3
PILOT JET	35
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.)	Suzuki CCI
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	1.4 gallons
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
GAS/OIL RATIO	20:1
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
AIR FILTRATION	Foam filter/air box
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-disc
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed, constant mesh
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.57
2	1.88
3	1.50
4	1.25
5	1.08
6	.96
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	14/50
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK B8ES, ND W24ES

SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	N/A
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Expansion chamber, high-pipe
FRAME, TYPE	Chrome moly steel, single downtube, split cradle
WHEELBASE	47.2 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	9.8 inches
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK	29.5 inches
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	28 degrees
TRAIL	3.46 inches
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	154 pounds
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	2.75x17 knobby
REAR	4.10x14 knobby
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Telescopic leading axle fork, 7.1 inches
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Swingarm, gas/spring shocks, 7.1 inches
INTENDED USE, MFR.	Minicycle competition
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
PRICE, APPROX.	\$699
PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$38.18
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CYLINDER	\$56
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was neutral and would do just what the rider made the bike do... and no more. The KX was surprisingly nimble for being the tallest machine.

**Stability at High Speeds
Over Rough Ground**

The reason we top-rated the Yamaha here, was probably due to the very rigid rear end. When the other machines had a tendency to bottom and kick to the side, the YZ would merely soak up the

jolt and continue on its way. Our test KX was down-rated here, because of the soft springing, front and rear, which would allow the bike to pitch and shudder when violently nailing bumps at speed.

**Ability of Bike to Handle
Deep Sand or Mud**

Here, the KX was a runaway winner, with no one else even close. The extreme lack of low-end power in the YZ

made the bike difficult for even very good riders to handle under sandy or muddy conditions, especially at slower speeds. Because of the great low-end and mid-range power of the KX, it was able to chug through stuff that had the other minis reaching for a lower gear. Good, solid, torquey engine.

Shifting Quality: East of Shifting
None of the bikes could be consid-
[Continued on page 63]

MINI-SHOOTOUT

	HONDA	KAWASAKI	SUZUKI	YAMAHA
Fastest acceleration: Drag race on level ground ...	10.0	9.0	9.8	9.7
Best all-around power:				
Flexibility of powerband	9.0	10.0	9.5	8.5
Forks: Quality of operation	10.0	8.8	9.5	9.5
Shocks: Quality of operation	9.7	8.8	9.5	10.0
Turning	10.0	9.5	9.8	9.2
Stability at high speeds over rough ground	9.7	8.8	9.7	10.0
Ability of bike to handle deep sand or mud	9.0	10.0	9.7	8.5
Shifting quality: Ease of shifting	10.0	9.4	9.9	9.8
Starting ease	9.0	10.0	9.8	9.0
Maintenance: Includes filter, carb accessibility and general care	9.5	8.5	9.2	10.0
Attention to detail	9.4	9.6	10.0	9.9
Durability	9.8	10.0	9.9	9.8
Ease of riding: Includes fatigue factor and skill level needed to properly ride bike	9.0	10.0	9.6	9.0
Braking	10.0	9.5	9.9	9.6
Effectiveness, stone stock, Novice class	8.0	10.0	8.5	7.5
Effectiveness, stone stock, Intermediate	9.8	8.8	10.0	9.4
Effectiveness, stone stock, Expert	10.0	8.5	9.9	9.7
Noise level	9.9	9.8	9.6	10.0
Price, suggested retail	10.0	9.7	9.9	10.0
Extra features: (Rims, trick goodies, etc.)	9.5	9.4	10.0	10.0
Parts prices	7.9	8.3	8.3	10.0
Parts availability	9.0	7.0	9.4	10.0
Hop-up parts availability	7.5	7.5	9.8	10.0
Tires	9.4	8.8	10.0	9.5
Weight, dry	9.9	9.8	9.0	10.0
TOTAL POINTS	235.0	229.5	240.2	238.6



[Continued from page 43]

ered a poor shifter, but the Honda was the slickest of the lot. We downgraded the Kawasaki slightly because it got a bit notchy as time accumulated on it.

Starting Ease

The long, curved kickstarter on the KX, combined with the heavy flywheels, allowed it to light off easily, with no fuss or loading up. Both the YZ and the Honda usually took a number of kicks to get going and puked and blubbered badly until totally warmed up. The RM was not too fussy, but nowhere as simple as the KX.

Maintenance: Includes Filter, Carb Accessibility and General Care

We gave the YZ the top rating here, because it's no problem getting to anything on the bike for the normal pre-race service that should be performed. Getting to the air filter required that

YAMAHA YZ80G Specifications

NAME AND MODEL	Yamaha YZ80G
ENGINE TYPE	Two-stroke, reed valve
BORE AND STROKE	49mm x 42mm
DISPLACEMENT	79cc
CARBURETION	26mm Mikuni
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	210
NEEDLE JET	.0
JET NEEDLE	4J13
PILOT JET	.35
SLIDE NUMBER	1.5
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.)	Yamalube
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	1.2 gallons
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
GAS/OIL RATIO	36:1
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
AIR FILTRATION	Foam element/air box
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-disc
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed, constant mesh
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.40
2	1.83
3	1.47
4	1.21
5	1.04
6	.92
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	14/51
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK B8ES
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Expansion chamber, high-pipe
FRAME, TYPE	Chrome moly, double downtube, double cradle
WHEELBASE	46.7 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	8.9 inches
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	28 degrees
TRAIL	.90mm
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	145 pounds
RIM MATERIAL	Steel alloy
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	2.75x17 knobby
REAR	3.60x14 knobby
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Leading axle telescopic fork, 7.2 inches
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Monoshock, 6.8 inches
INTENDED USE, MFR.	Minicycle competition
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
PRICE, APPROX.	\$698
PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:	
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the rider remove the left side panel. Compare that to the Kawasaki, which required that the rider take off the saddle and fumble around with a bunch of nuts and bolts to boot. The saddle on the RM also had to be removed to get to the filter, while the Honda was accessible through a side panel, like the YZ.

Attention to Detail

We gave the RM the nod here, because it did more small things better. Kawasaki and Honda had poor chains and guides, where the RM thought this area out better. Also, it was the only bike of the four with aluminum rims, a definite plus.

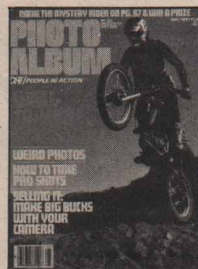
Durability

None of the bikes had any major mechanical difficulties, but the Yamaha levers bent and snapped way too

KAWASAKI KX80 A-2

Specifications

NAME AND MODEL	Kawasaki KX80 A-2
ENGINE TYPE	Two-stroke, reed-valve
BORE AND STROKE	48mm x 45.8mm
DISPLACEMENT	82cc
CARBURETION	29mm Mikuni
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	120
NEEDLE JET	0-8
JET NEEDLE	5DH-62-2
PILOT JET	40
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.)	Kawasaki racing two-stroke
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	1.3 gallons
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Steel alloy
GAS/OIL RATIO	20:1
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
AIR FILTRATION	Foam element/air box
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-disc
TRANSMISSION	Five-speed constant mesh
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.57
2	1.88
3	1.45
4	1.17
5	1.0
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	14/48
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK B8ES
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	N/A
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Expansion chamber, high-pipe
FRAME, TYPE	Chrome moly steel, single downtube, split cradle
WHEELBASE	46.85 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	10.43 inches
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK	30.31 inches
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	26 degrees
TRAIL	3.2 inches
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	146 pounds
RIM MATERIAL	Steel alloy
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	2.75x17 knobby
REAR	4.10x14 knobby
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Telescopic leading axle fork, 7.9 inches
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Swingarm, oil/spring shocks, 6.9 inches
INTENDED USE, MFR.	Minicycle competition
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
PRICE, APPROX.	\$729
PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$18.44
RINGS ONLY	\$6.64
CYLINDER (Electrofusion)	\$47.75
SHIFT LEVER	\$5.84
BRAKE PEDAL	\$10.50
FRONT SPROCKET	\$8.62
DISTRIBUTOR:	
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easily for our tastes. And when you tried to straighten them out, it was a guaranteed el-breako. The top end of the Honda sounded the loosest of the four bikes at the end of the test, even though it was ridden about the same number of hours. Spokes on the YZ were a constant problem, and motor mount bolts on the Honda were always coming loose. We ran through three plugs on the Honda; one on the YZ. Our front number plate cracked on the Kawasaki, just from vibration, and the rear fender on the RM broke in a simple lowside.

Ease of Riding: Includes Fatigue Factor and Skill Level Needed to Properly Ride Bike

This relates directly to the next three categories. No doubt about it, the YZ and the CR were the hardest to ride, demanding that the rider always be in the correct gear for the situation, or face the possibility of bogging badly and losing time. The KX rider just had to concentrate on where to go and find the smoothest and best line. We don't think there are that many mini riders around who can properly use the kind of power that is put out by the Honda and the Yamaha. We placed the RM

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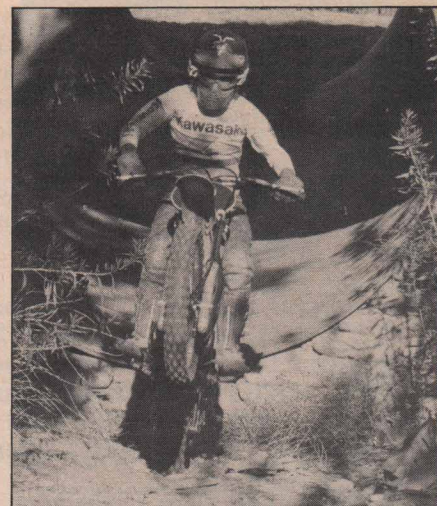
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above the CR and the YZ, even though it had a big rush of power. It's just that the RM would pull cleaner and earlier than the Honda and the Yamaha.

Effectiveness, Stone Stock, Novice Class

There's only one bike for a Beginner or a Novice rider to consider, and that's the Kawasaki. It has the right kind of power and is easy to ride. The engine can be breathed on some if the rider advances to the Intermediate level. We feel that most Novices will just waste their time on a YZ or a Honda until they get at least a full year of racing under their Gold Belts.

Effectiveness, Stone Stock, Intermediate Class

We feel that a sharp Intermediate-level rider can take advantage of the rocket-like delivery of power that comes with the RM. While not as fast in a drag race on level ground as the CR, the RM will bolt out of turns harder and earlier, providing the rider is in the right gear, with his body weight in the right place. The lack of low-end power on the YZ relegates it to third place in this class. We feel that Intermediates are not sharp enough to keep the YZ operating in the most effective part of its power for the duration of a moto.

Effectiveness, Stone Stock, Expert Class

The name of the game here is power. The more, the better. The Honda received the full 10 points. Because the KX only has a five-speed gearbox and not as much top-end power as the rest, we gave it a fourth here. Very close to the Honda is the RM. Very close, indeed.

Noise Level

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one of the major manufacturers should hang their heads in shame here, because of the fact that many of these minis are used as play bikes, away from a closed track. Even on the track, all four of the bikes hurt eardrums and put out a horribly irritating bark. The Yamaha is not the quietest... it's just the least loud. By contrast, a 450 Maico is positively quiet compared to the four 80s tested here.

Price, Suggested Retail

You may be able to buy one or all of these bikes at a reduced rate; if so, you can disregard this category, or adjust it accordingly in your mind. The fact of the matter remains that the KX costs about 30 bucks more than the rest. Thirty bucks is, after all, 30 bucks.

Extra Features: (Rims, Trick Goodies, etc.)

We gave the Yamaha and the RM the same score here. Aluminum rims are on the RM and a plastic tank is stock on the YZ. Also, both have a multitude of nifty brackets, guides and goodies. The YZ has contoured levers and the RM has a neat lifting strap behind the saddle.

Parts Prices

We got our parts prices by calling a half-dozen shops around the country and not telling them who we were. Across the board, the YZ parts were lower than the rest. Some of the Honda parts were very expensive for an 80. We also found that some dealers just don't follow the suggested retail price for parts when it comes to racing minis. Especially when they're in short supply.

Parts Availability

On that same series of calls, we also asked if basic parts were in stock and on hand. Yamaha and Suzuki dealers seemed to have the situation well under control, while some Kawasaki and Honda dealers seemed to have a "could

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care less" attitude. It would be a good idea to check out your local dealer when choosing your mini and make sure he's into dirt, and not just a street-oriented shop. Some Honda shops are heavily into touring and have a floor full of 750s and Gold Wings, with one dusty mini stuck away in the corner. Use your head.

Hop-Up Parts Availability

If you're like most riders, you plan to keep your bike for a while. This means that as you and your ability grow, you'll probably want more power and more travel. Who doesn't? Yamaha



rules here, because they've been around the longest and a lot of shops work on the bike and sponsor riders. A great deal of knowledge exists on how to make the YZs work better. Suzuki is very close behind. Honda and Kawasaki are both late entries, and not as much savvy and goodies are available, as of yet. This should change within the year, however.

Tires

Suzuki is on top here, with a decent 4.00x14 IRC on the rear. Probably the worst tire of the lot came on the Kawasaki, a 4.10x14 Nitto. We were plagued with flats on the Kaw and felt that the traction was also poor. Honda and Yamaha both come with narrower rear tires than the Suzuki, too.

Weight, Dry

Weight must be considered a factor. The more you have, the more you have to horse around. Our test YZ was less than a pound lighter than the Honda, and the Suzuki was the heaviest of the group.

Total Points

This is it. The bottom line. Where you get a rating of the bikes. A look at the numbers shows that the Suzuki comes out on top, followed closely by the Yamaha. Not far behind are, in order, the Honda and the Kawasaki. Like we said at the start, there's not really a poor machine in the group, but there are differences. We feel that the chart and the numbers tell the story. And, if you're honest, you can effectively use that chart to figure out which bike is right for your skill level. □

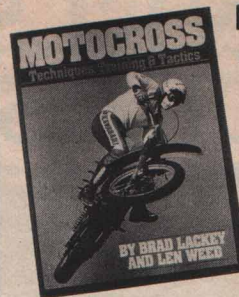
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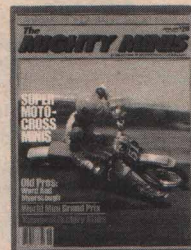
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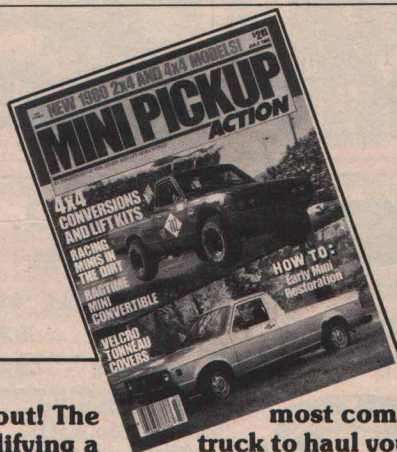
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