

**SUPER-HOT 200cc TERROR TESTS:
RADICAL XR200 & ALL-NEW KDX200!**



'86 KDX200



'86 XR200

DIRT BIKE

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MARCH 1986

**'86 HONDA CR250:
IS IT REALLY A WORKS BIKE
IN DISGUISE?**

**SPECIAL ATK TEST:
WE RIDE THE
4-STROKE OF
THE FUTURE!**

**'86 RACING
CALENDAR:
WHO, WHAT,
WHEN &
WHERE!**

JOHNNY
O'MARA,
TEAM
HONDA



**PROJECT
CRX250, PART 2:
WHY DIDN'T HONDA
THINK OF THIS?**

**'86 TY350: YAMAHA
TAKES YOU WHERE ONLY
MOUNTAIN GOATS HAVE GONE!**

**BARSTOW TO VEGAS:
1200 RIDERS BEG FOR MERCY IN
THE ULTIMATE LEGAL DESERT RACE!**

**'86 TRI-Z250: YAMAHA PACKS MORE
HI-PERFORMANCE INTO TRI-PERFORMANCE!**

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TRI-Z250



TY350



XR200



CRX250



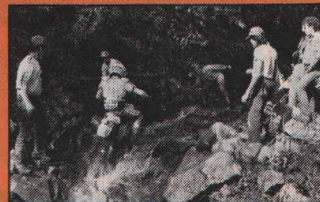
ATK 560



KDX200



BEACH RACING



ROCK RIDING

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ON THE COVER:—Captain John P. O'Mara navigates Honda's '86 CR250 through the airspace over Chatsworth, California, while Mike Webb launches the latest XR200 (upper left) and Jim Holley bushwhacks Kawasaki's stunning KDX200. Photos and ground control by Fran Kuhn; cover design by DeWest; color separations by Valley Film

WARNING: Much of the action depicted in this magazine is potentially dangerous. Virtually all of the riders seen in our photos are experienced experts or professionals. Do not attempt to duplicate any stunts that are beyond your own capabilities. Always wear the appropriate safety gear.



YAMAHA TY350 TRIALS

PLONKIN' ON A THIN LINE

Is it good enough to revive the trials scene?

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE
Photos by Dave Bush

SoCal trials expert Matt Pritchard put our TY through the wringer in National competition. While Matt thought the bike's lack of top-end punch was a liability at this level of competition, he also thought the bike would be exceptionally good for everyone, up to and including intermediate riders.

It's been almost a decade since the last Japanese trials bikes hit the U.S. shores. Back in those early days, observed trials riding looked as if it were going to be the next great off-road rage. It had everything going for it: It was challenging but because of the low speeds involved, relatively safe; it was quiet and inoffensive; events could be run using small amounts of land; and it didn't require gobs of machine maintenance or money to stay competitive. The perfect motorsport—right? Wrong! At least to the average American motorcycle enthusiast. The flood of new trials machinery was not well received. Soon, one by one, all of the Big Four Japanese manufacturers pulled out of the U.S. trials market.

Today little has changed. As a sport, observed trials still looks good for all the same reasons, and now it appears that we're being given a second chance. Yamaha is back on the U.S. trials scene with an all-new machine—the TY350.

REFINEMENT BEFORE AN AMERICAN DEBUT

Last year Yamaha introduced the TY250 in both the Japanese and European trials markets. The bike was lightweight, highly maneuverable and utilized a unique (to



We installed a pair of Hyper Products fork leg protectors to fend off stubborn boulders. The TY's chain tensioner design needs some work—it pins the chain between the nylon rubbing block underneath the swingarm before it can apply proper tension.

trials) single-shock rear suspension system. It didn't take long to figure out that Yamaha had just upped the ante in trials bike design.

When it was decided to try this new TY on the American market, Yamaha chose to increase the engine displacement to 350cc.

In stock trim the TY350 is a pretty sound package, with only a few minor changes needed to ready it for local competition. If you're over five-foot-nine, chances are the standard handlebars are too low. We immediately fitted our test unit with a set of Answer Products Bernie III trials bars for a less cramped and more erect stance that helps keep you from fatiguing quite as quickly.

The standard Michelin tires are decent. However, when it was time to replace the rear tire, we went with the super-trick Michelin XI series. These super-soft, two-ply radial design tires are available in summer or winter compounds and provide superb traction.

YOUR BASIC ENGINE TECH

The new TY350 uses a chrome cylinder bore that measures 80mm, and a stroke of 86mm. Actual displacement is 341cc. As you would expect, the crank halves on the TY are huge units and comparable in size to the YZ490 motocrosser. An additional heavy flywheel magneto is bolted to the left-side crank and is coupled to a CD ignition system. The compression ratio is a low 5.3-to-1.

Intake is handled by a 26mm Teikei carburetor feeding into a four-pedal reed-induction system.

The engine is fitted with a tight-shifting six-speed transmission with gears appropriately spaced for observed trials duties.

LET'S GO TRIALIN'

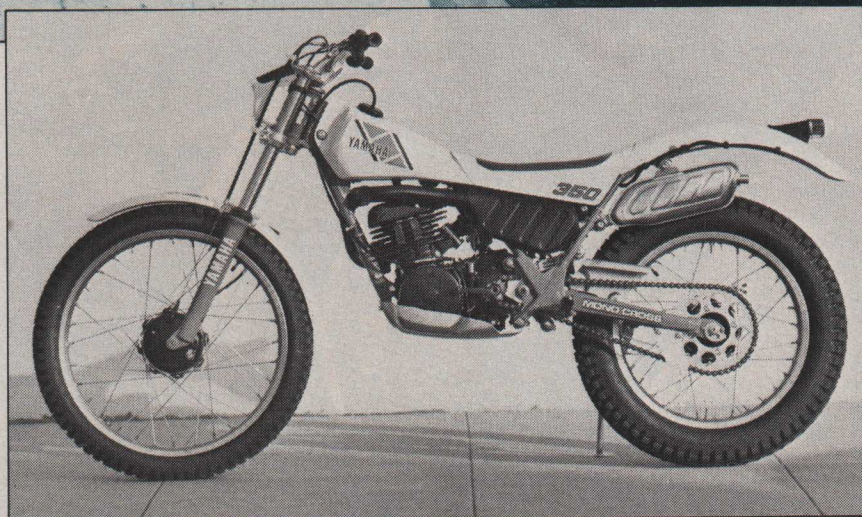
Riding the TY is a real pleasure. The engine is forgiving, with loads of good, predictable low and mid-range power to fall back on. The only glitch in its power delivery is on top, where the motor flattens out and refuses to rev. This lack of power at higher rpm would, however, be a problem only at National and World class levels, where top-end engine performance is critical. It has



YAMAHA TY350 TRIALS



The TY's engine was practically bulletproof for the duration of our test, though we did hear a few strange sounds coming from the cases on occasion. The Yamaha's stock aluminum skid plate may be lightweight, but it gets hammered unmercifully by rocks and stumps.



A lightweight, slim design is essential for trials, and the Yamaha has the goods to make it a success. The bike's excellent maneuverability lets the rider perform "Schreiber-like" moves.

been reported that some TY350 owners have shaved weight off the magneto flywheel and added an extra head gasket to alleviate the problem; others have ordered a complete TY250 top-end kit from overseas. It seems

that in Europe the smoother and higher-revving TY250 is preferred for attacking the more difficult World caliber sections.

Our test bike developed a strange scuffing sound inside the engine. We pulled both

side cases off to have a look but couldn't find anything out of place or rubbing. We asked a few Yamaha TY350 owners if they'd heard of this. One fellow said that his bike had made the same type of noise for a while and then stopped, and he hasn't heard it since. We continued to ride our test bike with absolutely no engine performance problems. As a matter of fact, the sound has pretty much subsided now, though it's still noticeable during engine warm-up.

The real key to the TY's success is not its engine, but its lightweight, slim design. The bike is appreciably smaller than traditional trialers of the same displacement. Its general maneuverability allows mere mortals to perform "Schreiber-like" moves.

Another tribute to the TY's overall good handling is its Monocross rear suspension. All but the very worst terrain is soaked up smoothly, allowing the rider to stay balanced and in control.

We feel that the system could be further improved by adding an inch or so of wheel travel and an adjustable rebound damping control for the rear shock. This would make the bike a little more adaptable to a larger variety of riders and terrain challenges.

The 36mm front fork works equally as well as the rear, and combined they make one of the best trials suspensions on the market today.

ODDS AND ENDS

While Yamaha gets a "10" for ease of air cleaner maintenance, they would get about a "6" for its effectiveness. The filter itself is too coarse and does not have a cover to protect it from water. During the course of our testing, we drowned the TY twice, once while trying to follow a common 125cc dual-purpose bike across a moderately deep stream. You wanna talk embarrassed?

As with most trialers, the TY skid plate gets hammered by rocks, logs, etc., which then start to work on the engine cases. It's too bad Yamaha didn't slow this process by fitting the TY with a heavier-gauge metal skid plate.

Equally disappointing is the lack of a U.S. Forestry-approved spark arrester/muffler. Most of the trials we entered were on Forestry land, where an approved spark arrester is required. Fortunately, Answer Products has available a bolt-on replacement unit that is U.S. Forestry-certified.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Yamaha has done an excellent job with the TY350. The machine is very competitive and has no doubt left several European manufacturers playing catch-up. But then, we always knew that if Yamaha put their mind to it, they could produce a competitive trials bike. The real question at hand is, is that all it's going to take to stimulate a sluggish trials market? So far we've not seen any attempt on Yamaha's part to promote the sport. And with Honda soon to come on the scene with their new trialers, the market may again become too saturated to support all the new machinery. They say history has a way of repeating itself; for the sake of the trials community, we certainly hope it doesn't. □