

**SUZUKI
AMA400C TEST**

250 MX SHOOTOUT: RED, GREEN & YELLOW

DIRT BIKE

MAY 1978 • \$1.00 UK60p

**SUPER CROSSER
YAMAHA YZ250E**

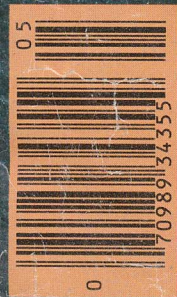
**BULTACO 350
SHERPA T**

**YAMAHA
XS400E**



Bob Hannah

**YAMAHA IT175 TIPS
GO FASTER WITH BRAKES**



DIRT BIKE

VOLUME EIGHT NUMBER FIVE
MAY 1978

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ON THE COVER:
Bob Hannah stylin' at Indian Dunes.
Can you tell if he's wearing underwear?
Photo by Len Weed

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE MAY 18

Health food for all Suzuki 2-strokes.

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fantastic. Because the sophisticated
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oped formula, Super 2 contains a super
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generated by competition engines and
still burn cleanly.

In other words, clean-burning Super 2
minimizes carbon deposits, gum formation,
plug fouling and sticky rings. While protecting
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250 SHOWDOWN

At the DIRT BIKE Corral

□ Red, yellow or green. That is the question. Whether it is knobbier in the minds of man . . .

Which is best? How do they stack up together? As we've said, the bikes are getting so good we're left looking for bigger and better superlatives every month. Zoot supreme. Ono ultimate. The best bike we've ever ridden. But the only way to really match 'em is to get them together the same day. And when it was over we were kinda surprised. Three quality bikes. We thought it would be closer than it was. But even in the land of near ono ultimate there can be warts on the face of the sad-eyed gypsy goddess.

All the details — what's trick, sanoed, added, deleted, tricked-out or trumped-up — have appeared in the individual tests. The Kawasaki in March, the Honda in April and the Yamaha elsewhere in this issue. What follows is same-day riding impressions. And when the dust had settled the winner was . . .

The envelope please

Every rider was asked to rank the bikes 1-2-3. Every rider (staffers, local pros, national pros) ranked the bikes: Honda, Yamaha and Kawasaki.

What really surprised us was the Kawasaki placing. Two short months earlier it had us and our testers drooling like a whips and chains freak at the Fourth Annual Marquis de Sade Perversion and Sandwiches Convention. Yet on this given day it was the least best.

Regardless, without further ado, here is what was said when it came to showdown and tell.

Honda CR250R

Power. "The powerband is not that much wider than the other two bikes, but it's not limited on either end. It will pull up to the powerband from the bottom and rev out past peak power."

"It would rev till you kick it up, then pull again. It'd keep pulling till you shut off. Even in the fifth gear whoops it would stay right up on the pipe."

"It has more flywheel than the other two bikes. The power isn't as nervous. That means more control on slippery tracks."

"It has more low-end and mid-range. It doesn't bog."

Shifting. "It's the poorest shifter. The lever is short and has less leverage and it's in a poor location. It sticks out."

"You can get a bad case of Mototoe unless you use the clutch or back off."

"You can't shift it under power."
Suspension. "The Yamaha and

Honda suspensions are very comparable. I couldn't tell the difference if I didn't know what bike I was on."

"It has the best front end on any production bike yet. I never even thought about the front end."

"No complaints at all about the front end. You pitch it in and it stays there. It stayed straight in the one-foot whoops, none of that left and right stuff."

"Those accessory shock springs (soft) made the difference for my 165 pounds. Now the rear end is perfect. The stock springs are too stiff. Now the front and rear work together. The rear doesn't transfer any load to the front end anymore."

"The rear end is a little stiffer than the Mono, but really nice."

Turning. "It steers similar to the Yamaha but the front end is lighter."

"With that head angle under 29 degrees you just point it and it turns."

Riding Position. "It's high, but the riding position is perfect. The pegs and bars are up to match the high seat."

Miscellaneous. "The brakes are excellent. They're great on all three bikes. The rear brake pedal could be vulnerable. Maybe it could use folding foot levers."

"It started first kick every time."

"The chain roller seems to be the only weak link. They don't last very long."

Yamaha

Power. "It has an excellent powerband. It'll scream on top, unlike the Kawasaki. There's a clearly defined lower limit. It won't pull up to the power. You have to clutch to get it."

"Fifth didn't seem to jump out as much as I'd like, but sixth was OK."

"The six-speed box makes it more versatile for cross-country use."

"It has good bottom end and mid-range for a 250."

Shifting. "It has the nicest located lever and best leverage. It shifted well. Best of the bunch."

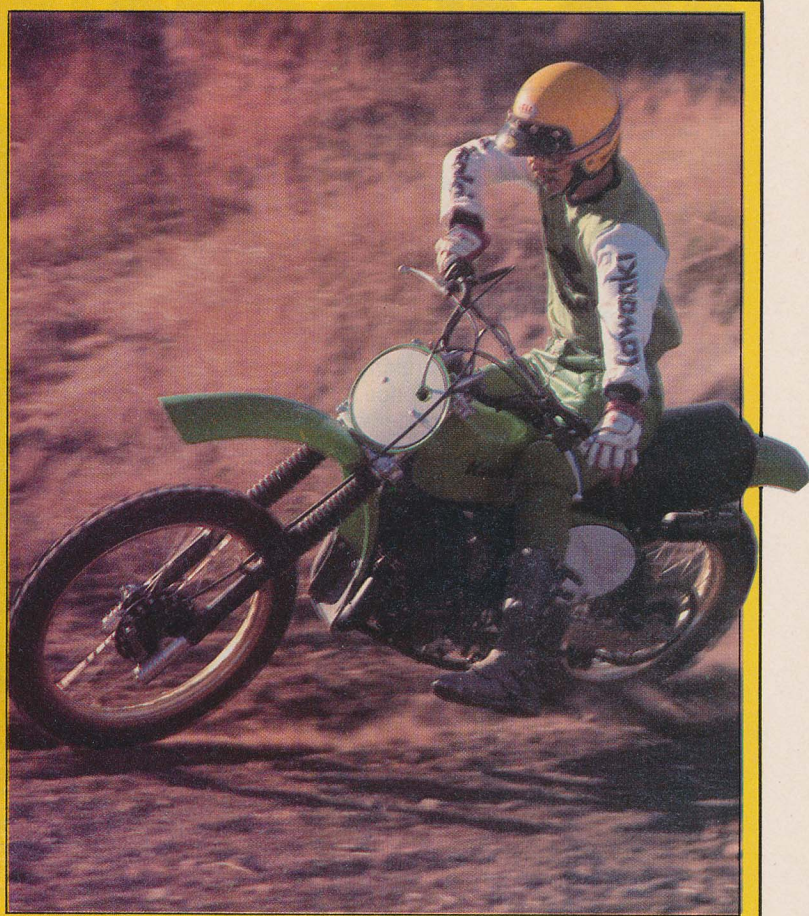
Suspension. "Really plush suspension. I'm 165 pounds, and it was soft but didn't bottom. It's like riding on two pillows."

"The front end is excellent; not as good as the Honda, though, but better than last year's Maico that I ride."

"All the past problems with the monoshock seem solved. I weigh 195 and I couldn't bottom the shock or the forks."

"The shock was a bit stiff for my 150 pounds in the fast stuff. It'd chatter a little."

Turning. "It was the hardest to turn in



250 SHOOTOUT

the sand, but it was fine on hard surfaces."

"It turns almost as well as the Honda."

"It's a better tight-steerer than the Kaw."

Handling. "You can tell it's the heaviest bike; it's harder to change lines."

"It's really stable on fast straights."

"The height is liveable with once you're under way. It can be ridden by smaller riders."

"It's really fast and fun to ride. It's just less fun than the Honda."

Kawasaki

Power. "It's very quick out of a corner."

"It's down a little on power on top end. It flattened out sooner than the others. Fourth seemed a little slow."

"There's good performance there. It has very defined power limits on both ends. The shortest powerband. There's not that much flywheel. It picks up revs very fast."

"It's not real pipey. A less-experienced rider could get used to it even though it is so fast."

Shifting. "It shifts nice, not quite as good as the Yamaha."

"I guess I'm the only one who had any problems shifting it."

Suspension. "The suspension just wasn't as nice as the other two bikes."

"The rear end is too stiff for 160 pounds."

"For 195 pounds the rear end compresses just from sitting on it. It's quite comfortable over the small stuff, but in the bigger bumps it approaches bottom and starts to wiggle some."

"The front end didn't hang on as well for me as the other bikes."

Turns. "You can really pitch it in, it's so light."

"It was the most difficult to steer in tight corners. That may be a result of the suspension not compressing as much as the other bikes for my light weight."

Handling. "It stayed straight out of the hole, got good traction."

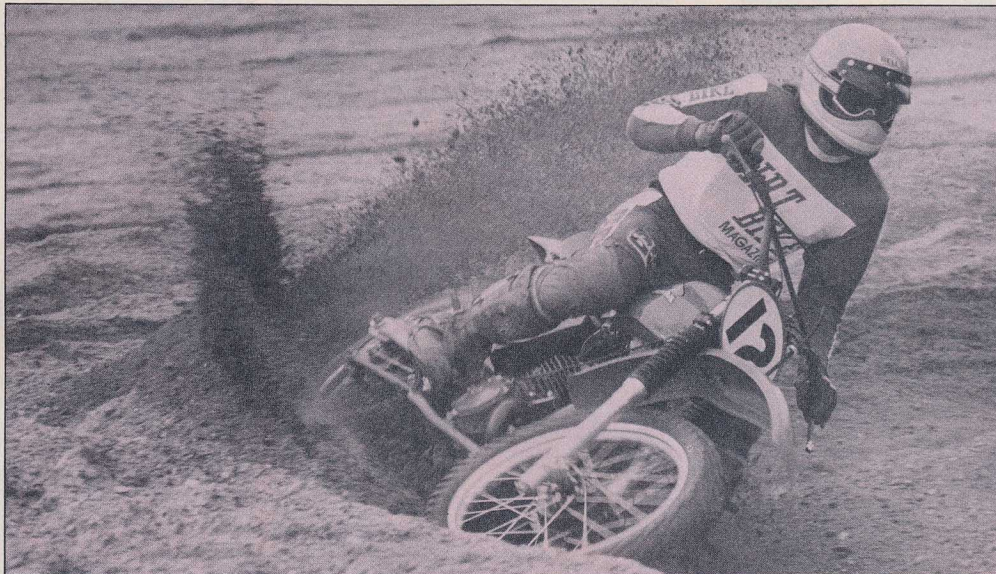
"It worked well on berms because it's lower."

"The front end is too light."

"I like the front end light like that."

"Because the bike is so light, weight affects it more and the springing has to be right-on. My 195 was too heavy for the standard springing. It had good straight-line stability until it bottomed."

"Its lowness compared to the other bikes could be an advantage once you got used to it. It's built to suit a shorter rider."



"You can throw it around like a 125. It's so responsive to body input."

"It seemed really neat when we rode it before by itself, but it's not as impressive when you jump from one bike to another."

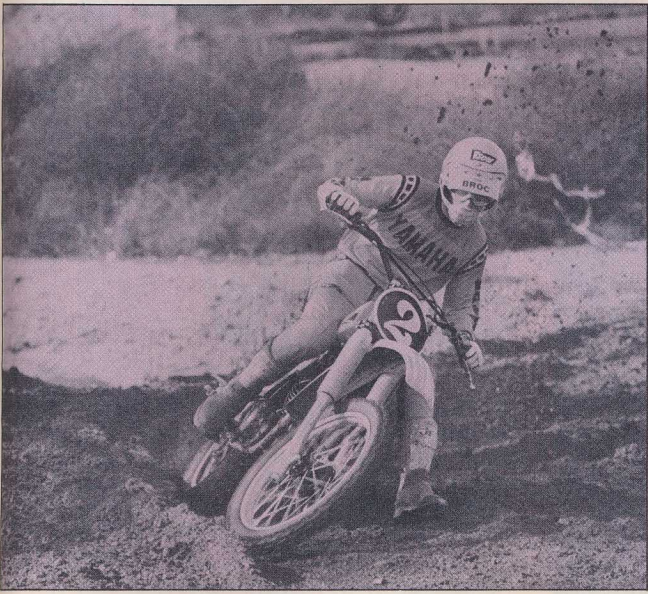
arranged comments of staff and testers. We thought it would be closer, with some choices split among the numerous riders. But it wasn't. Right down the line: Honda, Yamaha, Kawasaki.

In all fairness to Kawasaki, the bike we rode for the one-day shootout was not the same one we had for our solo

Fade out

There you have it. The orderly,

	HONDA CR250R	YAMAHA YZ250E	KAWASAKI KX250A4
PRICE:	\$1498	\$1568	\$ N/A
DISPLACEMENT:	247cc	246cc	249cc
BORE & STROKE:	70x64.4mm	70x64mm	70x64.9mm
COMPRESSION RATIO:	7.3:1	7.3:1	7.6:1
CARBURETION:	Keihin 36mm	Mikuni 38mm	Mikuni 38mm
PEAK HORSEPOWER:	30.1 at 7000 rpm	T/K	T/K
PRIMARY DRIVE:	3.25, straight cut	2.61, helical gear	2.68, helical gear
TRANSMISSION RATIOS:			
1)	1.90 (21.6 overall)	2.38 (23.9 overall)	2.33 (22.3 overall)
2)	1.59 (18.1)	1.81 (18.2)	1.73 (16.6)
3)	1.24 (14.1)	1.44 (14.5)	1.41 (13.5)
4)	1.00 (11.4)	1.32 (13.3)	1.16 (11.1)
5)	0.84 (9.6)	1.05 (10.6)	1.00 (9.57)
6)	—	0.92 (9.2)	—
FINAL DRIVE:	14/49; 3.50	13/50; 3.85	14/50; 3.57
ELECTRICS:	CDI	CDI	CDI
FUEL TANK CAPACITY:	2.2 gallons	2.0 gallons	2.1 gallons
SUSPENSION:	Showa oil/spring forks (11.9 inches) Showa gas shocks (11 inches)	Kayaba air/spring forks (9.8 inches) Yamaha DeCarbon monoshock (9.8 inches)	Kayaba air/oil forks (9.3 inches) Kayaba reservoir gas shocks (8.9 inches)
DIMENSIONS			
Wheelbase:	57.5 inches	57.1 inches	55.8 inches
Swingarm length:	20.2 inches	17.6 inches	18.6 inches
Ground clearance:	11.9 inches	12.5 inches	11.5 inches
Seat height:	37.0 inches	38.0 inches	36.5 inches
Fork angle:	28.8 degrees	30.5 degrees	30 degrees
Weight, ready for gas:	218 pounds	221 pounds	206 pounds



test. Those who had ridden both commented that the shootout bike seemed less impressive than the other unit. We were quite surprised that what we had guessed would be a tight tussle between the Red and the Green came out so decidedly one-sided. And the Yellow Zonker outperformed our initial

expectations, those we held before first climbing aboard.

So we can say, as we said last month, the CR250R is our pick for best bike to date. Only its margin of superiority seems wider than a month ago. What's left? We'll have the first test on the new Suzuki RM250C2 next

month and, hopefully, the new 250 Maico Magnum and KTM Moiseev Replica before long. And this shootout didn't include the fine new 250 Husky we tested in February. So maybe we'll do it all over again, with all the 250s. But for now, red-yellow-or-green, it's unanimous. Big Red. ■

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