

KAWASAKI'S KDX200

How to set up and prepare Kawasaki's mighty little KDX200 for anything.

In the 200cc enduro class, there's really only one choice this year — the KDX200. It has more and better of everything, but like always there are ways to get even more and even better things out of them.

About the only real drawback we can see at this point to owning a KDX200 is that for 1983 they didn't land in Australia with a compliance plate, meaning that technically they can't be legally registered for road use. They are also fairly hard to find because of this: Kawasaki didn't bring too many into Australia.

But the problem will be solved soon — at least by the end of '83. By then, the new model KDX200s will arrive here with full street legal equipment to satisfy Australian laws.

With that in mind, there'll be a lot of KDX200s running around, so it's only fair that we pass on to you all the information we have learnt about them.

WHILE NEW

Before you even start the engine there are a few things that must be done.

First on the list is that you pull the barrel off and check the clearance between the piston and the cylinder. 1983 KDXs were too tight and they nearly all nipped up (ie, they start to seize) when being run in because the piston heats and expands to much for the too tight tolerance it has. There are two ways around this. One, you give the cylinder a very light hone, and since the bore is Kawasaki's patented Electrofusion process which prevents the barrel being rebored you need to be plenty careful. We suggest you get a Kawasaki dealer to do it.

The other way is to lightly sand the piston using a fine grade of wet

and dry paper, until your clearance has been increased by a couple of thou. That's all you need. Reinstall the piston and barrel, then run the bike in **carefully**.

But while you've got the barrel off, you might want to perform a few simple tricks. You leave the ports and port bridges alone because there's no steel cylinder liner to be mismatched with the barrel porting, but you can clean up the bottom edges of the transfer ports where they head off into the cases so that the fuel/air boost flows more evenly.

Then, at the rear of the piston, you'll notice a round hole facing the inlet port. This can be enlarged to a square shape using the inlet port bridges as guides to how wide to make it. You don't increase the top-to-bottom measurement of this hole. That'll help improve the punch.

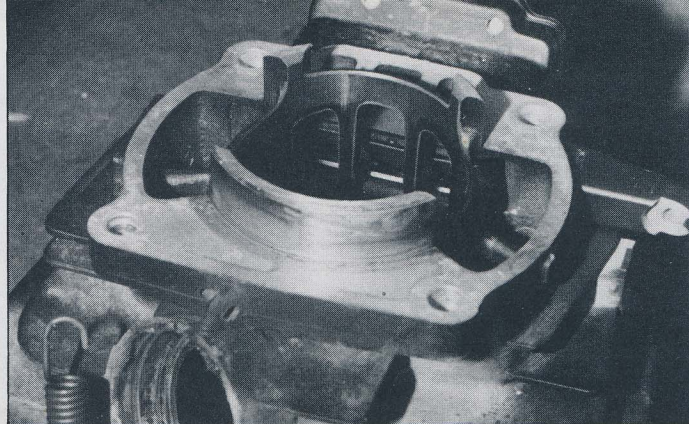
We've heard that another trick is to use KX125 reed petals but that involves buying the whole reed block, so it adds to the price of the project. The KX petals are slightly thinner and are made of carbon fibre resin, a tougher material than the stock phenolic reed petals. This is a midrange improvement, although a minor one.

The only other thing you might want to do to your engine performance is use a different silencer. Both Answer and Richter are recommended, as is O'Neal. Locally made Accord silencers can also be had (see ads).

Now, on to more setting up.

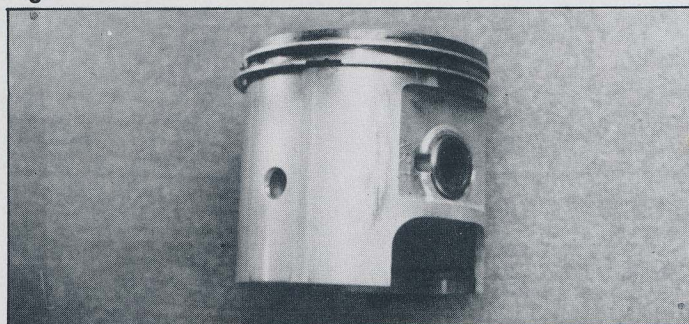
SETTING UP

You need to pull the airfilter out and Locktite all the bolts which hold



ABOVE
Kawasaki's Electrofusion cylinder coating means you leave the ports alone, but you can polish the bottom of the transfer port bridge where it goes into the cases, and get it to a sharp edge.

BELOW
See this hole in the rear of the piston? You can enlarge it make it as wide as the bridges on the intake port, and square it off. Don't touch the bridges in the ports.



the metal base of the filter cage into the plastic of the airbox. Reverse them while you're at it so the nuts are facing out. We've heard of these bolts ruining a KX125 which has the same system. Be warned. While you're at it, pull the whole airbox out and carefully elongate the mounting holes of the bolts so that when you reinstall it you can slope the whole airbox further forward. The shock actually rubs on the airbox at full compression and you wouldn't want it to rub a hole in it. You can't move it too far, but every bit helps.

Then, completely dismantle the rear suspension and swingarm and use a waterproof grease like Bel-Ray to lubricate everything properly. Do this and your maintenance is cut in half from then on. Same with the steering head bearings.

The forks are too soft. Measure the distance of the fork oil level from the tops of each tube (springs removed), then add oil to raise the level by up to 25mm (1"). We found that Bel-Ray 10 weight works best. Some suspension freaks have found that changing the oil in the Uni-Trak shock is also an improvement, but it's important to use shock absorber oil and we recommend you use about 12 weight. The shock is easily pulled down (if you have access to a nitrogen cylinder), as full instructions are in the owner's manual. Leave the damping on the II position.

Then, finally, go over the bike with Locktite.

OTHER THINGS

The plastic Kawasaki uses in their mudguards is substandard. We

recommend that if you're serious you at least replace the front guard with an unbreakable accessory.

The tool pouch material rips easily, so don't stow anything sharp in there.

Remove the two little pins at the rear of the swingarm. If you do your axle nut up properly, you won't need them and you can get the wheel out faster. You might want to chuck the rimlocks away and use Sun rim studs, but if you're only a casual rider, leave the rimlocks because you can still ride with a flat (slowly...).

Pull off the tank stickers. We used O'Neal stickers and they're much better. Put a new overflow vent tube on the petrol cap — the stocker keeps popping off. Get one of those little Suzuki gadgets that keep the tube clipped to the crossbrace.

We'd love to have a centrestand, but there are no mounting positions.

When you've worn out the stock tyres, replace them with different brands: we suggest either a Metzeler or a Dunlop K139 up front, with your choice on the back. We used a Metzeler.

It's an idea to use silastic to seal off all the snap connectors in the electricals, otherwise water gets in and sits there. The oil you use in the gearbox is important, too: a 50:50 mix of Castrol GTX and ATF is recommended to eliminate clutch drag.

Pull the rear axle out and turn both snail cam adjusters round the other way, so they are sitting above the axle, not below — this saves



ABOVE
As it stands, our KDX is enduro ready. All the suspension linkages have been greased with Bel-Ray waterproof grease, as has the swingarm and steering head. The snail cam chain adjusters have been shifted

above the axle, the pins at the end removed, the throttle rotated behind the bars, levers loosened, the whole bike Locktited, new stickers, overflow vent tube with clip, tyres, Sun rim pins, fork oil. Read the story for details.

them from hitting rocks. When you've finally worn out the stock chain, you may want to go full on and replace it with an O-ring: since the bike is a 200, you want the O-ring chain with the least drag, which means you use an Izumi. Good chain.

We don't go much on the front brake cable guides (Yamaha parts

are better), but unless you hit a tree they should do the job. Another thing not real popular is the length of the kickstart lever — it makes awkward starting (ie, side of a hill) even more awkward. Cut it in half and chop about 40-50mm out of it. It's still easy to kick over. Rotate the throttle assembly around on the bars so the cable comes out at the back, not the front where the first good crash is going to wreck it. This applies to any bike. Naturally, you slightly loosen the front brake and clutch lever brackets so they spin on the bars rather than break (the KDX levers are great — they bend without snapping).

CONCLUSION

This list may sound pretty extensive, but nearly all the mods mentioned here are designed to make what's already a good bike into something even better. And other mods are merely the usual setting up mods any rider should make to bulletproof his bike.

With the KDX200 having full Australian compliance for 1984, these mods will be a handy tip to anyone thinking of getting one. We should really stop telling you all these things — it makes it too hard to beat you.

Of all the bikes available in this class during 1983, the KDX stands head and shoulders above in performance, and we can't see an easy job for anyone to create something better.



2 SHOPS UNDER THE ONE ROOF

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TYRES



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SPOKES AND TREADS

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