

# LEARN TO RIDE

Yamaha's safety program continues across the U.S.  
By Scott Harrison  
photos by Dennis Greene



"Round and round the corral they trot," ...Novice motorcycle riders of all ages gathered at the Yamaha Learn to Ride school held at Anaheim Stadium, where they learned motorcycle fundamentals.

■ "The left hand lever is the clutch," explains the Learn to Ride instructor. "The right hand lever is the front brake and the right hand twist grip controls the throttle." The instructor is a lovely blonde with bright blue eyes and it's hard to concentrate on the motorcycle. She has taught hundreds of students already this morning and continues on.

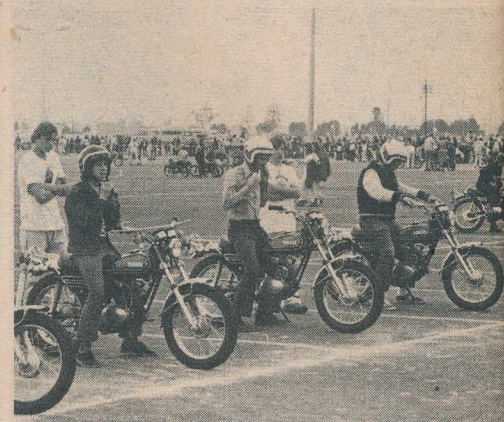
Thousands of hands; old hands, young hands, all unsure of the moves, are being taught how to ride motorcycles—the proper way—in the second year of Yamaha's Learn to Ride Safety Program. As the use of motorcycles continues to boom in the U.S., the need for riding and safety instruction is critical, especially in light of national statistics which indicate that 60 per cent of all motorcycle accidents involve riders with less than six months' experience.

Since the Yamaha program was begun last year, the Learn to Ride instructors have visited more than 100 cities and taught more than 150,000 new motorcycle riders the essentials of motorcycle safety. Included in the program is a maintenance clinic where expert mechanics give lectures and demonstrations. Here new riders learn how to keep their bikes in top condition.

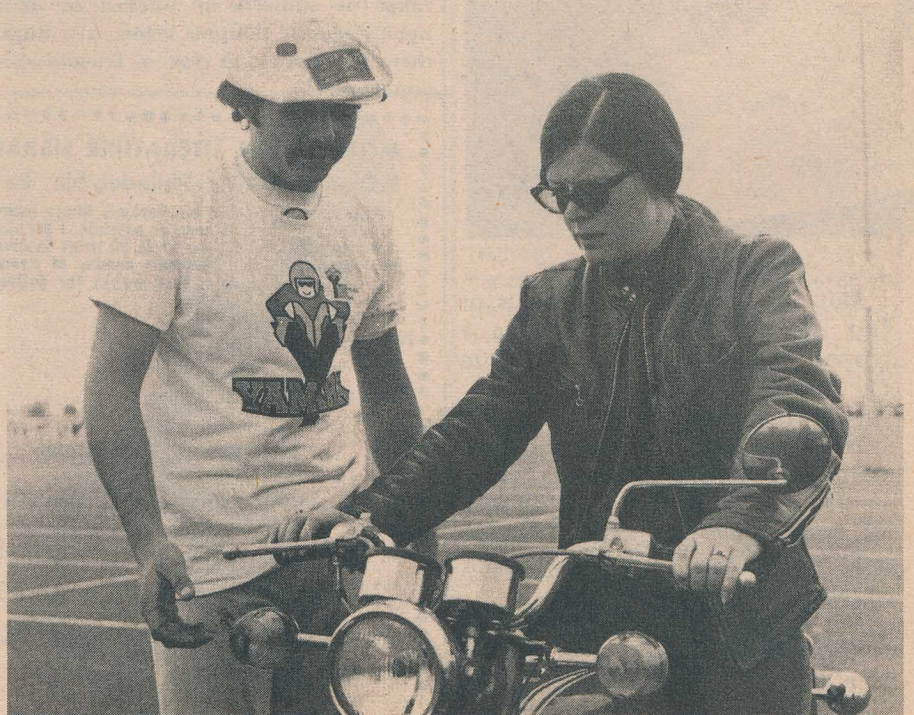
The main thrust of the program is teaching motorcycle safety and it begins with an introduction to the motorcycle. Yamaha 125 enduro bikes are used for the school and all riders are furnished with helmets. In the first stage, the instructor takes the students in groups of five and explains the layout of controls and the basics of riding. The students sit on the bikes and actually work the clutch, brakes, starter and turn indicators. They are also taught the proper method for starting the bike.



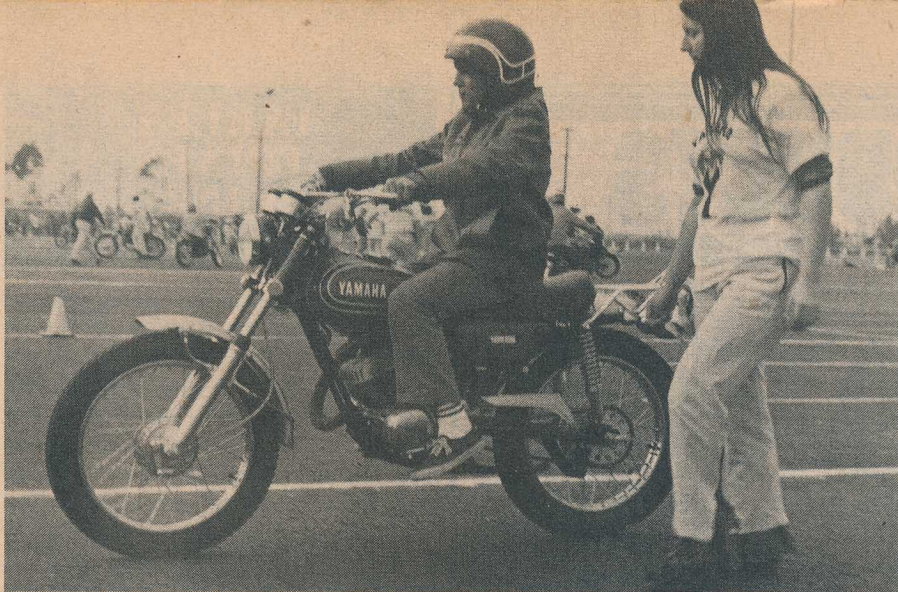
Students were of all sizes, ages and sexes. The instructor, shown here describing the controls of the 125cc Yamaha, isn't bad either.



Students moved from area to area. Here they get their first on-bike experience.



"Now, just let the clutch out slowly as you give it a little gas." Sure, which one is the clutch?



Once they get underway the instructor walks along for several laps until the student looks steady. By the end of the course most students are weaving in and out of the pylons like experts.



Trials demonstration was a popular attraction. Yamaha used the occasion to show off their two excellent trials bikes, the adult and the children's mini trials bike.



With that completed, the students head for the riding area where each student gets his own 125cc motorcycle and a helmet to use. The basics are reviewed briefly and then the neophytes, each with an instructor alongside, click the left foot lever into low and ease off the clutch lever and begin to make slow circles within the painted lines. Once the instructor feels the student is ready, he steps aside and the student shifts to second for several laps, then practices downshifting.

Next, it is time for a little bit of precision riding. In and out of the pylons they go, learning at low speed, the feel of the motorcycle. We had expected to see some timid ladies crying, or at least falling down. We expected to see some stalled bikes or some unplanned wheelstands, but the instructors had done their job well; the riders knew what they were supposed to do before they ever climbed on the bike. With a bit more practice, these graduates of the Yamaha Learn to Ride Safety Program will be ready for some safe, serious motorcycle riding.

For those who already know how to ride, the program offers an intermediate rider safety course, which covers more advanced rider techniques.

With nearly seven million registered motorcycles in the U.S. and another one million expected to be added this year, motorcycle training is an important factor in saving lives. The Yamaha Learn to Ride Safety Program is scheduled to be at the Minneapolis, Minn. Metro Stadium and at Washington, D.C.'s North Virginia Community College on July 20-21; in Milwaukee, at the State Fair Park; in Baltimore, Maryland at Security Square Mall and at Metropolitan Park in Norfolk, Virginia on August 17-18; and at Old Municipal Airport in Kansas City on September 14-15.

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