

SUZUKI RM125T: STILL NUMBER 1?

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DIRT BIKE

DECEMBER 1979 • \$1.25 UK60p

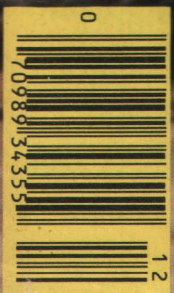
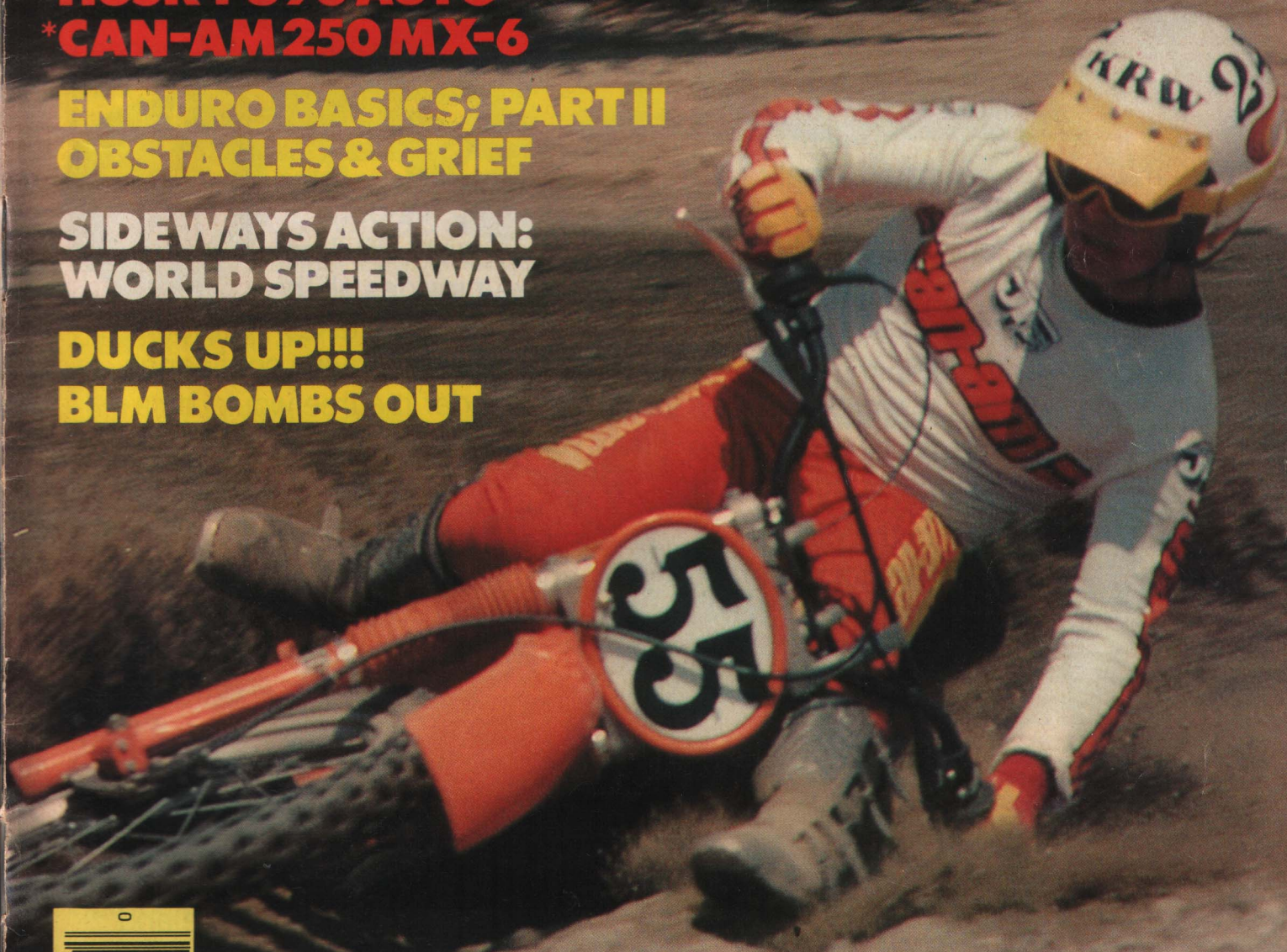
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**ENDURO BASICS; PART II
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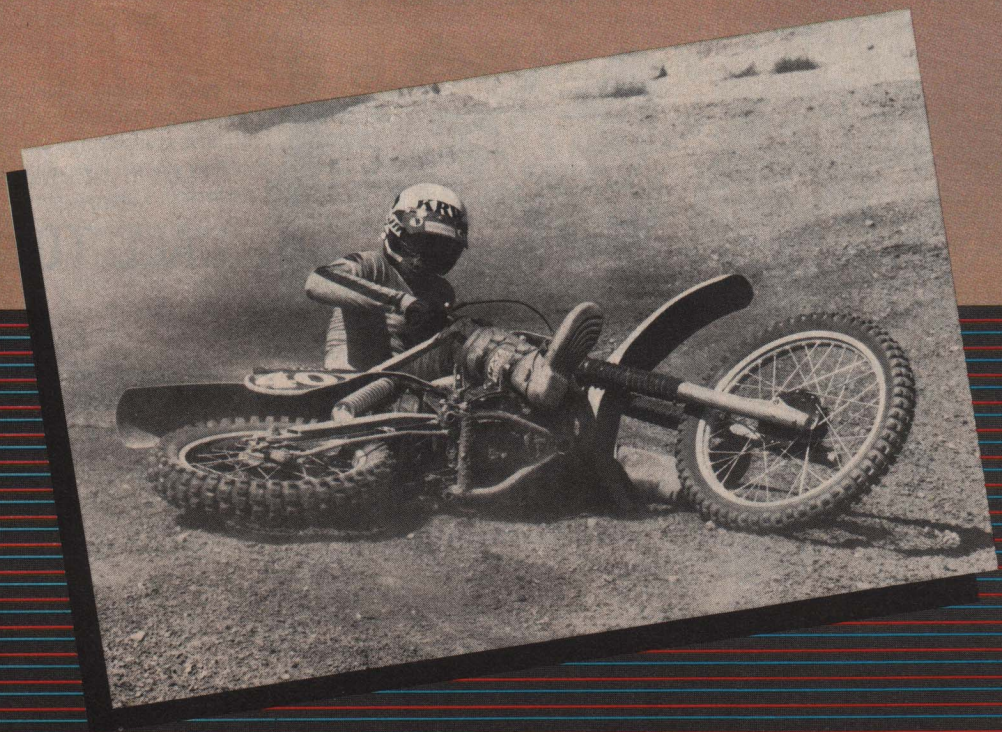
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**MINIS
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A STEP IN BOTH DIRECTIONS

Some things you win, some things you lose

By The Staff of Dirt Bike

Suzuki RM125N owners, rejoice! For the first time in years, your one-year-old motorcycle isn't outdated! Yep, it's just revised.

That's the whole story of the Suzuki RM125T. Revision. Nothing on the 1980 Suzuki is new and spectacular, like the change from the C to the N, but rather just enough has been done to the RM125N to make it slightly better.

In some ways, that is. In other areas, the additions have lost ground over the previous year's attempt. The classic example is the new powerband of the T compared to the N. A heavier crankshaft has been stuffed inside the cases, the timing has been advanced four degrees, and a new exhaust pipe has been fitted on the T. This all adds up to more revs on top for a longer period. If you'll recall, last year's model was fast, but once the revs reached a certain limit, they dropped off like a lead balloon. Just like someone hit a kill switch in the engine. But, with the new crank and associated modifications, the power keeps building and doesn't chop off abruptly.

That's the good part. The bad part is that, with that longer band, it takes more time for the engine to rev, which means there is a slower delivery of power to the ground. Suzuki's N-model

is every bit as quick as the T, if not quicker, but takes a bit more footwork throughout a race. On a dry track, the slower revving is a big help to maintain traction.

What does all of that mean to you, the racer? It means that the T will dive into a corner in one gear, without having to grab another two feet in front of the berm, just to kick it back down five feet later. But, that will also tend to make you lazy. With the N, you grabbed the gear because you were attacking the corner, and to get into a higher gear, high revs had to be maintained. In contrast, the T will allow you to "roll" in the same gear, which tends to lull the rider into going in slightly slower, even though it may feel better.

There's a trade-off in there. Do you really want to shift that quickly, or would you rather go in more smoothly and easily? That's up to you. If you're not a pro yet, we'd recommend the latter. Shifting quickly demands concentration and skill.

As far as the crank, timing and pipe are concerned, that's it to the motor. Nothing else. Everything comes straight from last year. The other changes were all to the chassis, right where it needed it.

Minor things are different decals that stay on a little better, with the exception of the side panel one-twenty-five sticker and striping. That goes within 30 minutes at the most.

Fenders have been altered, from the weird, box-shaped units to old Preston Petty-like ones. Last year's fenders had a nasty habit of breaking right in the middle once a little mud built up on the insides, but the new, more rounded plastics seem to be free from that illness. The rear unit sticks out long and thin, which resembles a tail on a big dog.

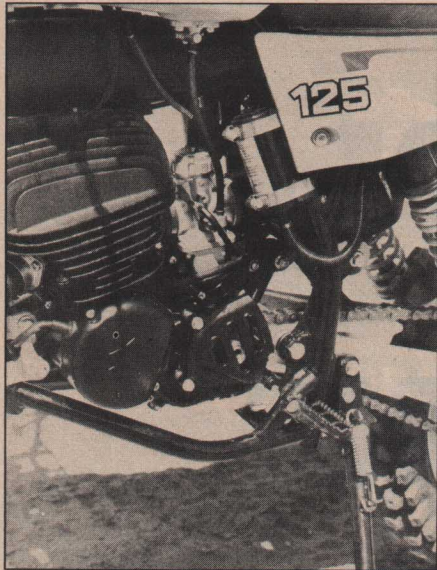
As for the plastic side panels, they're still the same, but the striping runs horizontally instead of vertically. The front number plate is also a direct descendant from last year.

Suspension hasn't been radically changed either, although the rear shocks are now the hottest units put on a stocker to date. The damping adjustments of last year have been doubled, from two to four, and the reservoirs are now both air-adjustable and rebuildable. Suzuki found that although the pressure in the KYBs didn't need to be fooled with, by the end of the season, the oil in the shock body had broken down considerably, which produced deterioration. Bel-Ray five-weight oil is

"In a tight, hard-packed hairpin, the RMT, like all other long-legged racers, demands constant attention."

the recommendation from the KYB plant, but they haven't tested the new PJ-1 2½-weight fluid as yet, so we'll keep you posted when we learn anything on that situation.

The preload spring settings are still the same three as in '79, but if you decide to go from your old pair to a new set, the factory recommends playing



A new rebuildable/rechargeable shock reservoir has been added in 1980, along with rollers instead of a chain tensioner.

around with them instead of just throwing the clip to the same stop, because the springs have a tendency to vary slightly in their characteristics.

Front forks have been left alone, and the travel both front and rear remains the same for the second straight year, which is odd in this day and age of rising seat heights.

On the swingarm, last year's chain tensioner has been replaced with a new guide, accompanied by various rollers bolted to the frame tubes. A urethane strip still protects the aluminum around the swingarm bolt, and the same flimsy countersprocket cover still sits in wait for a thrown chain to demolish it.

Suzuki finally went with rider demand and installed a 520 chain and sprockets to give a strength advantage over the smaller chains.

Sprockets went through a rebuild, changing from a 13-59 to a 12-51 tooth counter and rear. If you're pretty good with your oiling and lubing, last year's 428 chain and sprocket set will do its job quite efficiently.

On the other side of the rear hub stretches a new type of brake cable. The unit, which runs parallel to the swingarm like a rod, but is a cable without the black coating, gives a bit better feel during braking, and came

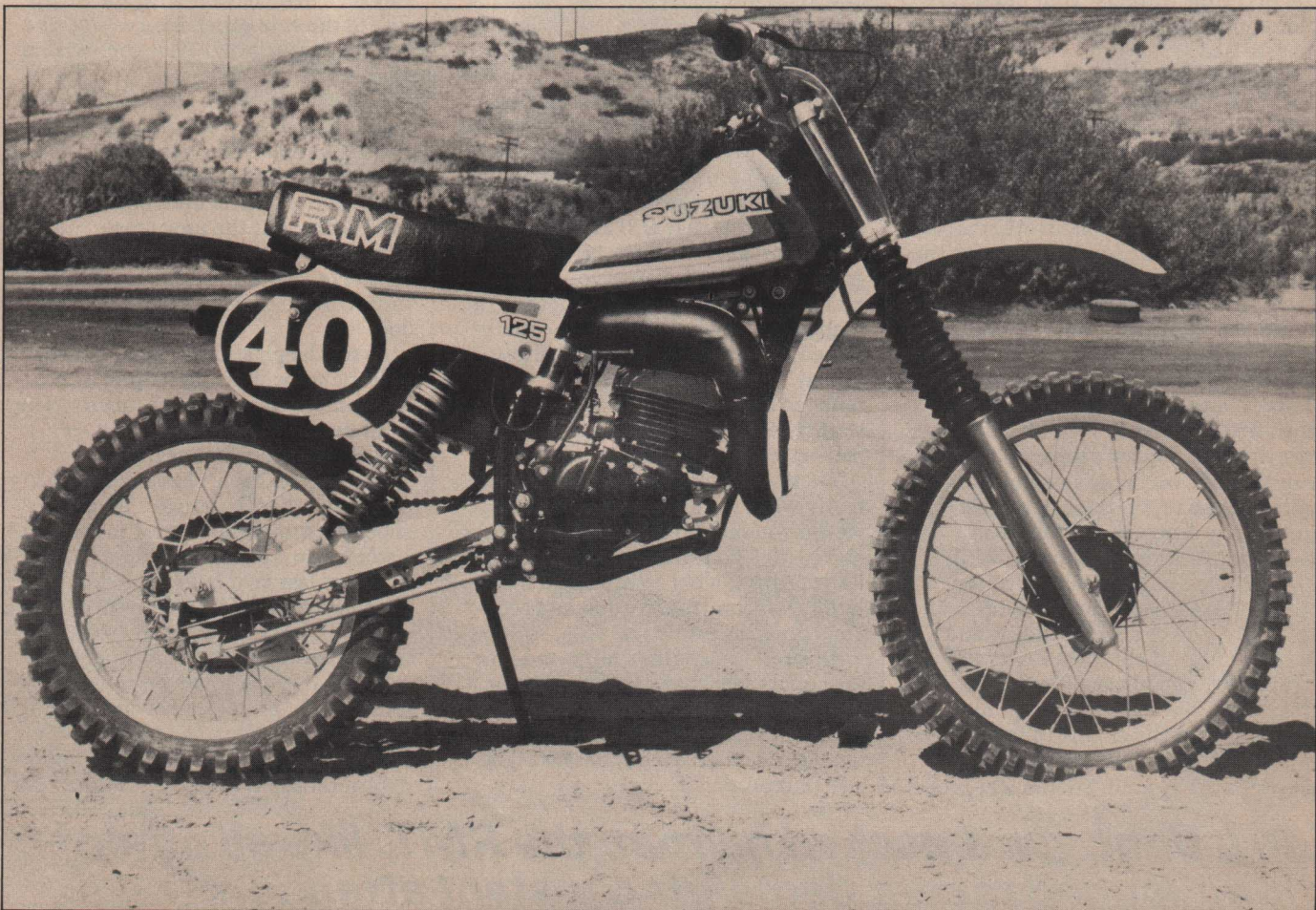
straight from the works GP bikes.

That's about it on the total reworking of the RM125T, which, as you can see, is not a whole heck of a lot, considering moves in the past. Let's slip into a race or two and see how the bike works.

Our first riding impressions of the RMT were unimpressive. The suspen-



The T appears slimmer and trimmer than the N, with a higher profile rear knobby and new, longer fenders that don't snap off.





Suzuki RM125T

NAME AND MODEL	Suzuki RM125T
ENGINE TYPE	Two-stroke, air-cooled, reed valve
BORE AND STROKE	54.0mm x 54.0mm
DISPLACEMENT	123cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED BY FACTORY)	Actual 24.9
CARBURETION	Mikuni VM32SS
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	250
NEEDLE JET	6DP17
JET NEEDLE	S-0
PILOT JET	30
SLIDE NUMBER	2.5 cutaway
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.)	CCI
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	1.7 gallons
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
GAS/OIL RATIO	20:1
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
AIR FILTRATION	Oiled foam element
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed constant mesh
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.333
2	1.750
3	1.411
4	1.190
5	1.045
6	0.956
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	12/51
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK B9E6V
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	N/A
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Expansion chamber up-pipe
FRAME, TYPE	High-tensile steel, double cradle

WHEELBASE	56.7 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	13.2 inches
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK	36.2 inches
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	30 degrees
TRAIL	133mm
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	204 pounds
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZES:	
FRONT	3.00x21
REAR	4.10x18
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Leading axle air/oil fork, 11.2 inches
REAR, TYPE AND TRAVEL	Swingarm/reservoir shock, 11.0 inches
INTENDED USE, MFR	Off-road competition
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
PRICE, APPROX	\$1329
PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON	\$19.43
RINGS	\$11.10
CYLINDER	\$98.08
SHIFT LEVER	\$10.96
BRAKE PEDAL	\$11.32
FRONT SPROCKET	\$8.33

DISTRIBUTOR:
 U.S. Suzuki
 13767 Freeway Dr.
 Santa Fe Springs, California 90670

OVERALL RATING, FROM 0 TO 100, VARIOUS CATEGORIES, KEEPING INTENDED USE OF MACHINE IN MIND:

HANDLING	91
SUSPENSION	97
POWER	89
COST	90
ATTENTION TO DETAIL	95
EFFECTIVENESS, STONE STOCK	95

sion felt harsh and the motorcycle turned stiffly. After fiddling with the fork pressures, adjusting the shocks, and dialing in the jetting, we finally got the bike to work the way we wanted it to.

No matter what you do to the long-legged bikes of today, they just don't seem to want to turn where there's no berm. On hard, slick surfaces with a 180 hairpin, the T didn't feel supple and agile and sent our testers down more than once. But in the rough stuff, the RMT really shone. No doubt the extra travel is worth the loss in turning, when you consider the overall reduced lap times.

As for the longer-revving engine, that actually turned out to be a plus during the race, but hurt badly off the line. On starts with uphill grades separating you from the first turn, the T is penalized compared to the other quick-revving one-two-fives, because of the extra time it takes to build the power. And those precious seconds lost while the engine is gaining revs can mean the difference between a first-turn exit with the top five, or a first-turn pileup in mid-pack. Once under way, in a long moto, it's nice not to have to shift so often.

Everything on the bike is well-tucked-in, and the RMT is very easy to throw around on a bermed course. The tires bite well when new, but the new, higher-profile rear rubber doesn't give as much traction as the old low-profilers.

This year's saddle seems to be a bit shorter and thinner than last year's, but is very comfortable and allows free movement both forward and backward. That's pretty good, considering some of the oversized bun-protectors coming from other manufacturers.

If you've been sitting beside your RM125N and waiting for a totally berserk 125 racer to come out of the Suzuki factory, don't bother.

For 1980, Suzuki just took what they had last year, which basically worked better than any 125cc motocrosser produced, and made detail changes for it, hoping to remain the standard once again. You could say that they're relying on their laurels of last year.

The changes that the RMT has incorporated are those that the race team and riders throughout the country have been calling for.

Suzuki obviously had a lot of faith in the basically strong design of last year's model. The only big question that remains is this: What will the competition deal out on the table? Will an update be enough to keep the Suzuki on top? Will the new Uni-Trak Kawasaki 125 put a stop to the domination of the 125 class by Suzuki? Stay with us... it's going to be an exciting year. □