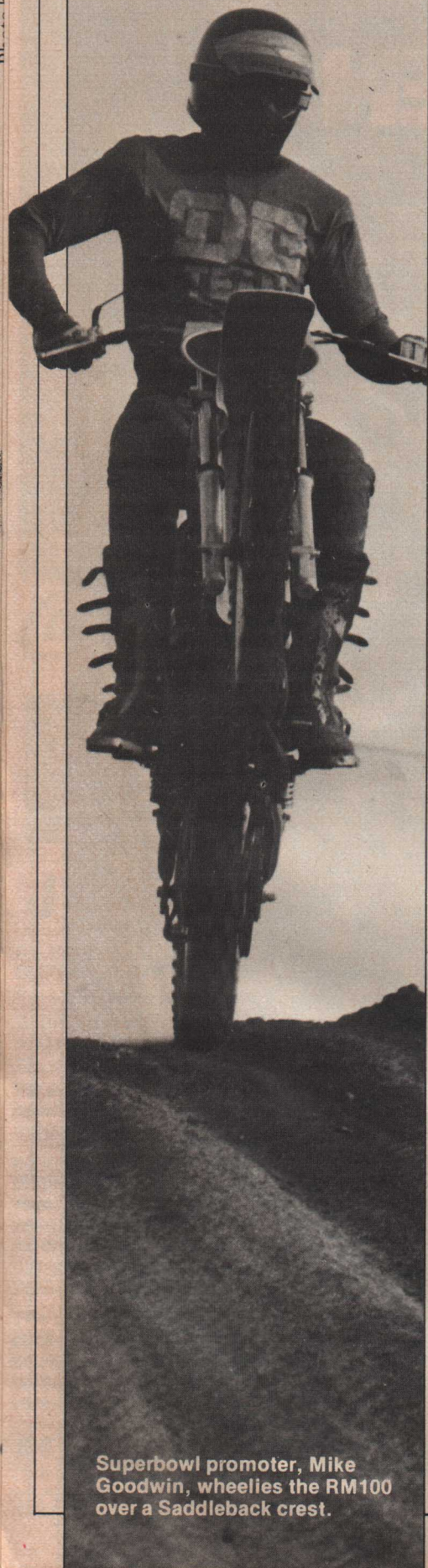


Suzuki RM100 Motocrosser

THE IN-BETWEEN RACER

Two bikes dominate the 100 class.
This is one of them.





Superbowl promoter, Mike Goodwin, wheelies the RM100 over a Saddleback crest.

We ran the entire gamut of emotions when we received the new '79 Suzuki RM100 for a test. First, we were delighted that the bike looked so totally professional. Wow! Bristling with trick stuff. Long suspension, front and rear, aluminum swingarm.

Uh oh. Wait a minute. The arm, we found out, was not aluminum, but steel, painted to look like aluminum. Disappointment.

Then, we weighed the bike on the incredibly accurate DB scales, which are accurate to one ten-thousandth of a ton, plus or minus. Very, very light. 183 pounds dry, then add ten pounds for gas and oil in the forks and gearbox, and you're still way under the 200-pound mark, ready to race. Happiness.

Next, we had one of our lighter testers hop on the bike and put in a few laps. He came in and sighed, "The thing is sooooo slow I can't believe it." Utter disappointment.

We rode the bike a few more times, half-heartedly. While we were favorably impressed with the handling and the suspension, we still could not understand the horsepower. Or rather, the lack of horsepower. It was only when we started to tear the bike apart to examine it, in the plush, well-lit DIRT BIKE garage, that we found the culprit. Right on top of the air box was a strange plastic piece. We pried it off and underneath, we saw a regular Suzie air filter/air box setup.

We wondered if this would make any difference, so the bike was fired up and blitzed down the alley a few times. Hoo-hah! So, there's where all them ponies was.

Elation!

Back to the track. We called up the same rider who had put the first few hours on the bike, and asked him to ride it again. After a few laps, he came back in, with the legendary guano-eating grin on his face and the following comment: "Now, this sucker runs OK. What'd you guys do, take it down to DG and get Harry to grind on the barrel some?"

More happiness!

"However, it's still not as fast as my YZ100, and that's the truth."

Sadness.

Whatever.

We went on with our test, satisfied with the knowledge that our test machine was at least running decently. After a bit of prying, we found out that the offending plastic lid was placed on the bike to quiet the inlet tract airflow noise down. We hear that Oregon has ultra-strict laws on noise, and this may have been done to allow sales of the bike in that state. No matter what the reason is, it surely strangles the power of the RM100, especially down low.

So, we'll report how the bike ran

after we took the lid off, simply because the lid made the bike a total slug. It's probably possible to drill enough holes in that plastic lid to obtain a compromise, we suspect, but in stock configuration, it murders the horsepower and response.

Naturally, the bike will be compared to the YZ100. There's no escaping the logical battle between these two machines. In many parts of the country, there's a very active 100 class. In other parts, anything up to 100cc is considered a mini-bike.

Here's where the beauty of a full-sized real 100cc motorcycle comes in. It's not a mini-bike, not by a long shot. But, it's also not ferocious enough to take an emerging mini rider and intimidate him. The bikes are still light, low and easy to handle. The big plus, though, is that they have full-sized wheels and a decently proportioned chassis, which allows the rider a reasonable transition from minis to the long-legged big iron. Also, the 100s are (in general) very reliable and nowhere near as fussy as the 125s. Parts are also much, much cheaper.

Back to the RM100. Here's the bottom line: It's not as fast in a drag race as the YZ100. Simple as that. It does, however, have more low-end response and a smoother mid-range spread of power than the YZ100.

We also felt that the suspension on the RM was superior to that of the YZ, especially at the rear. And, most importantly, we think that the RM turns easier and steers more accurately than the YZ. The YZ will work better in a straight line at high speeds than the RM. It all sort of boils down to what kind of riding you want to do. On a tight, twisty track, the RM will be hard to get around. But, on a decent straightaway, the YZ should pull even a crisp RM.

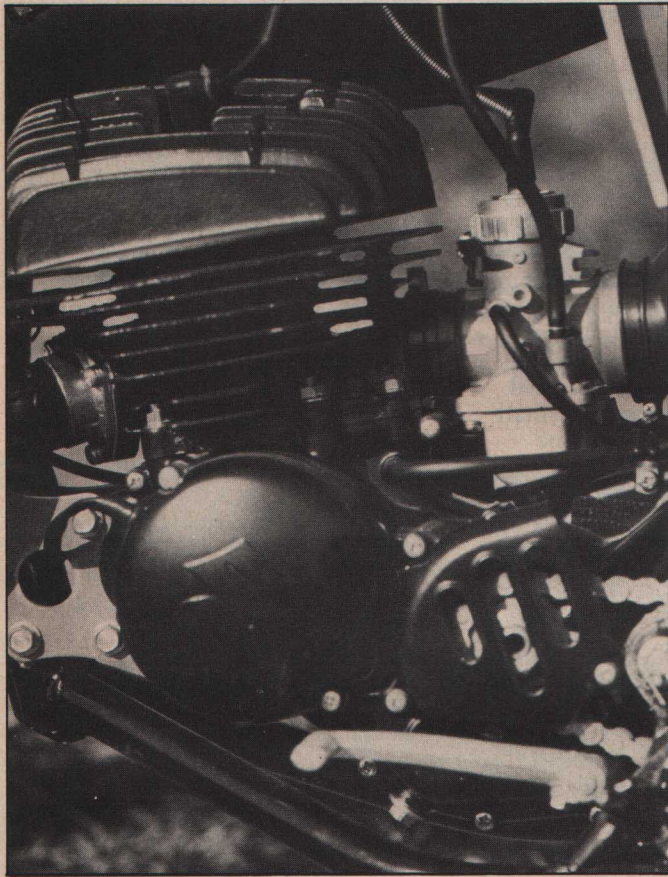
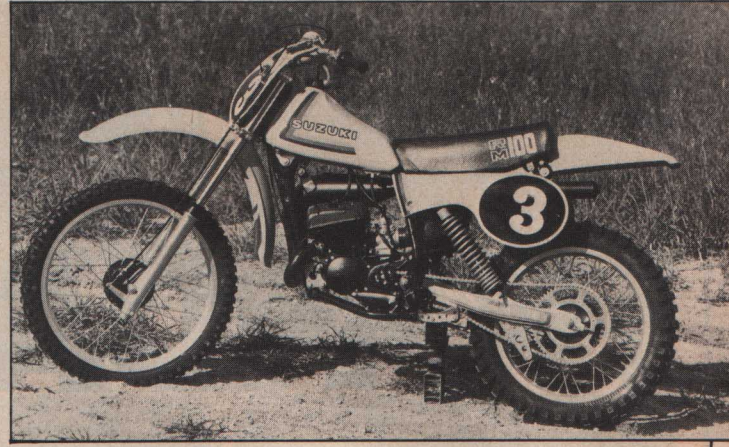
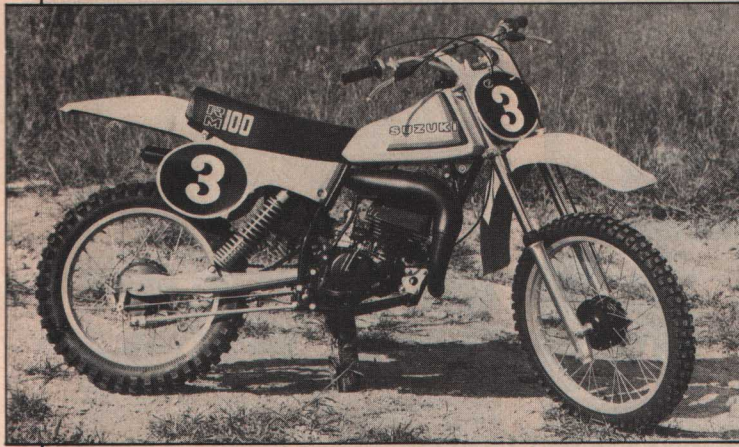
The 1979 RM100 appears to be a totally different machine, sharing very little with the '78. Even the frame has the same shape and angles as the larger 125, 250 and 400 RMs.

Side panels, styling and suspension are also all different. Gone are the low frame rails and footpegs of last year that snagged and snared so many unwary toes. Now, the engine rides higher and the peg location is improved.

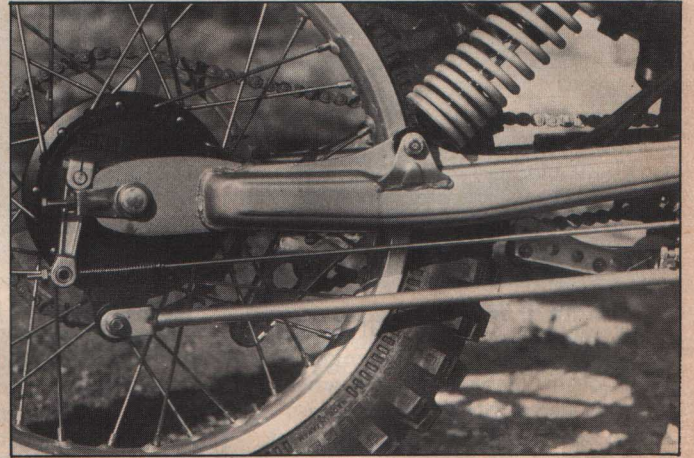
Gone, too, is the bulge in the side panels that used to force the rider's legs outward when standing for a jump. Everything is tucked in cleaner and closer.

Forks are not air capped, but travel is very close to nine inches. Matching the long front, there's 8½ inches at the rear; more than enough for an average 125, let alone a 100.

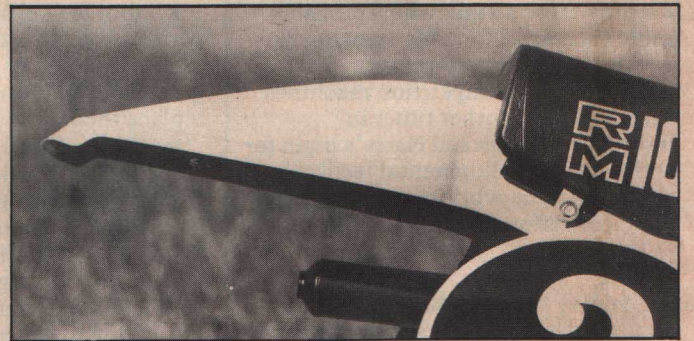
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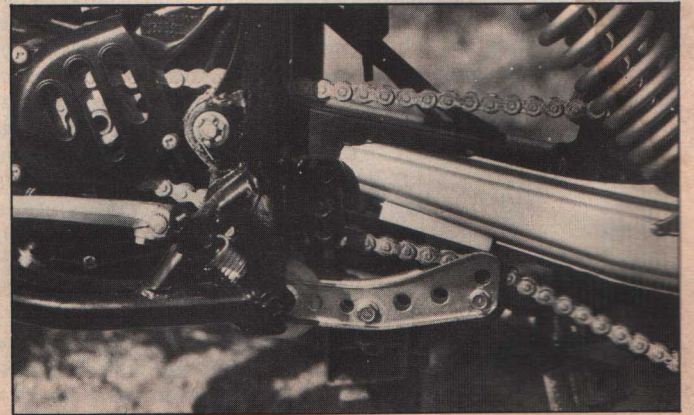
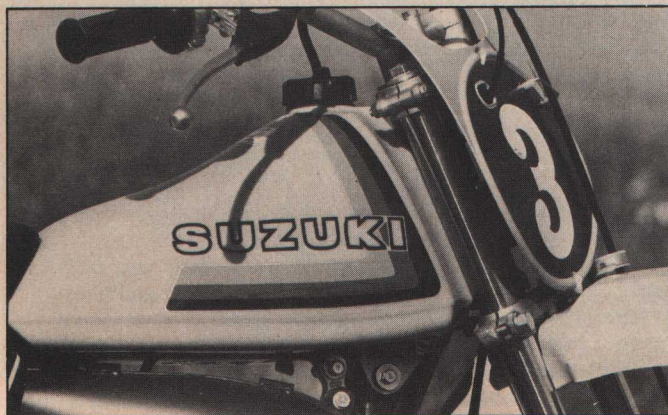
Torquey engine looks much bigger than a 100 and even shares some components with the 125 RM.



Swingarm looks like an aluminum special, but, in reality, is steel, painted to fake you out.



New plastic, all the way around, keeps the '79 RM image intact for the 100.



THE IN-BETWEEN RACER

(Continued from page 43)

Weight is also reduced on the '79 model. Even though travel has increased, plastic has been added and a number of other goodies have been incorporated, the RM100 has lost five pounds of dead weight. The '78 version weighed in at 187-plus, bone dry.

Bits and pieces

We felt that the exhaust was among the quietest of all the dirt bikes we've tested recently, including a number of street-legal trailbikes. Also, there was very little engine noise. In all, the Suzuki seemed like a very tight, well-constructed machine. As we put more time on the bike, it limbered up a bit, but never got noisy mechanically.

Shifting was smooth and easy, but neutral was a bear to find, even with the engine shut off. This seems to be a Suzuki characteristic.

While the front brake was strong, controllable and progressive, the rear brake was an on/off switch. It chattered and hopped about without warning. Bending the brake rod in a

bow helped a bit, but not much. The rider of an RM will have to develop an educated toe, or perhaps attack the brake shoes with a file.

Starting was odd... sometimes the bike would light right off, then again, it would take 20 kicks. We never could figure out a proper drill.

All things considered...

It's an excellent bike, especially for the rider making the move up from the minis. There's so much detailing done on the RM, that it must be considered a serious effort, rather than a hashed-together bunch of trailbike parts.

In fact, if the RM had as much horsepower as the YZ, there would be no contest about which bike to buy. It has superior suspension, attention to detail, excellent manners in the corners and is feather-light. However, the RM rider will still not beat the YZ rider to the first turn, all things being equal. This means the RM rider will *have* to make it up in the rough stuff and the turns. Which, we feel, is entirely possible. □



Suzuki RM100 Motocrosser

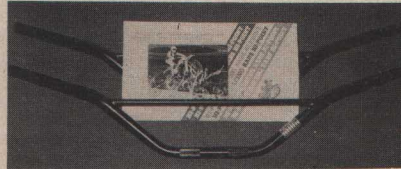
ENGINE TYPE . . . Single-cylinder, two-stroke, power reed induction
BORE AND STROKE . . . 50.0mm x 50.0mm
DISPLACEMENT . . . 98cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED BY FACTORY): . . . N/A
CARBURETION . . . 30mm Mikuni (VM30SS)
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:
 Main jet . . . 190
 Needle jet . . . R4
 Jet needle . . . 5DP11
 Pilot jet . . . 30
 Slide number . . . 2.5
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE . . . Premium
RECOMMENDED OIL (MFR.) . . . Suzuki CCI
FUEL TANK CAPACITY . . . 6.5 liters (1.7 gallons)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL . . . Plastic
GAS/OIL RATIO . . . 20:1
LUBRICATION . . . Oil in gas, pre-mix
OIL CAPACITY . . . N/A
AIR FILTRATION . . . Oiled foam in air box
CLUTCH TYPE . . . Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION: Six-speed, constant mesh
GEAR BOX RATIOS
 1 . . . 2.33
 2 . . . 1.75
 3 . . . 1.41
 4 . . . 1.19
 5 . . . 1.04
 6 . . . 0.95
GEARING, FRONT/REAR . . . 13/61
IGNITION . . . CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM? . . . Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG: NGK B9EV
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY: . . . Excellent silencer
EXHAUST SYSTEM . . . High-pipe, right side, through frame
FRAME, TYPE: Single downtube, split cradle

WHEELBASE . . . 1410mm (55.5 inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE: 270mm (10.6 inches)
SEAT HEIGHT AT TANK . . . N/A
STEERING HEAD ANGLE . . . 30 degrees
TRAIL . . . 130mm
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS . . . 191 pounds (183 pounds dry)
RIM MATERIAL . . . Aluminum
TIRE SIZES
 Front . . . 2.75x21 knobby
 Rear . . . 4.10x18 knobby
SUSPENSION
 Front, type and travel . . . Telescopic, 8.7-inch travel, forward axle
 Rear, type and travel . . . Gas/oil shocks, swingarm, 8.5-inch travel
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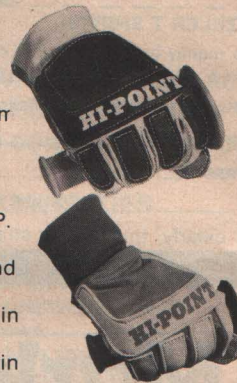
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