

PRODUCT EVALUATION

THE METZELER SIDE VALVE TUBE

No More Rim Locks

By the Editors of Dirt Bike

We recently noticed a bizarre photo in one of the Metzeler press information sheets. It was a knobby tire with the tube valve sticking out of the side of the tire carcass. Now, we've seen this sort of thing before on speedway bikes, but never on a full-blown knobby motocross tire.

Intrigued, we checked into it and found out a few facts. Firstly, Metzeler doesn't even push this tire/tube combination at all. They say it's only for bikes that have a chronic problem with the tire creeping on the rim, in spite of rim locks.

Well, we're lazy, and besides, we can't stand rim locks. So we ordered a 4.50x18 Metzeler tire with a side valve tube. That's the only way you can get them, according to the Metzeler folks. You see, a hole must be drilled in the side of the carcass, and Metzeler doesn't know how the other tires will hold up under this condition.

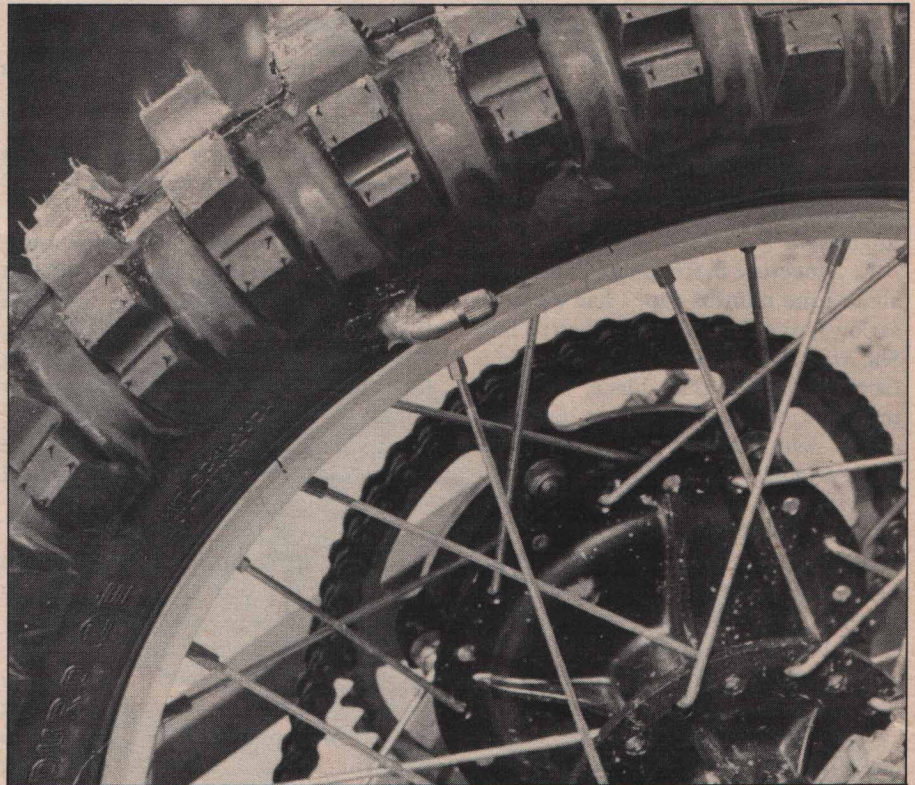
In fact, they'll volunteer that tire life may be shortened with even the most careful installation of a side valve tube in a fresh Metzeler tire.

Mounting the tire/tube couldn't have been easier. You just leave the tube in the tire, lightly inflated, and work it over the rim. It practically falls in place, because you don't have any of the usual rim lock and valve stem hassles.

You must mount the tire with the valve away from the chain side and with the valve inlet pointing toward the rear of the bike. This keeps the stem from snagging anything as it rotates.

Additionally, we applied some Silicone Seal around the stem where it exited the side of the tire wall. Metzeler told us that the few tires that have given them trouble have done so because dirt and grit worked inside the tire through the stem hole. Thus, the need for sealing it off.

With the tire mounted properly and



15 pounds of air in the new-style nylon Metzeler, we took the bike to the races. Maybe it was all in our heads, but not having those rim locks in actually made the rear end feel lighter. Then, too, the nylon Metzeler is about two pounds lighter than their conventional rayon carcass tire.

As of this writing, we've raced the bike four times and practiced with it twice. Conditions have mostly been dry, but one race day we had the chance to compete on a deeply rutted track with lots of loose dirt clods and small rocks. No problems were experienced. None.

The tire seems to be wearing well and no cracks are developing in the sidewall where the hole was drilled. By the way, traction at the rear was perfectamento. But then, we've come to expect that from Metzeler's. □

WHERE TO GET IT AND WHAT IT COSTS

MOTO RACE DIST.

Metzeler Side Valve Tire

Retail, tire and tube 4.50x18 \$80.00 plus F.E.T.

Where to write: (for more info)

Metzeler

P.O. Box 15536

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15244

Distributed by:

Hi-Point

3709 West Erie Ave.

Lorain, Ohio 44053

Berliner Motors

Railroad St.

Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey 07604

Motorace

Box 861

Wilbraham, Massachusetts 01095