

KAWASAKI KDX200: ANYTHING ELSE IS A HANDICAP!!

DIRT BIKE

WPS 34355

DIRT BIKE

MAY 1985

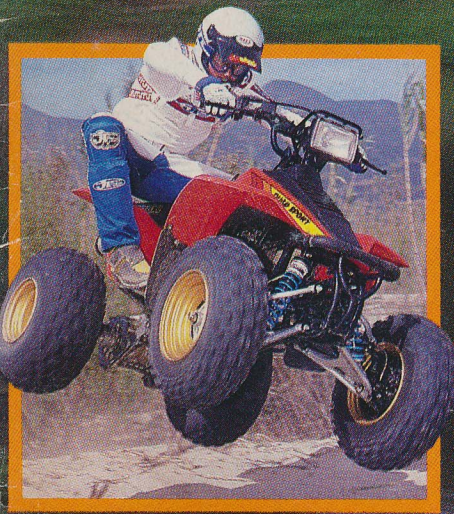
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DIVE!! HOW TO HANDLE DOOMSDAY DOWNHILLS!

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WHAT HAPPENED?**

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FEVER SWEEPS
DESERT: ATK 560
RULES THE
WEST!**

**ALL-NEW
KX250:
WHICH
WORKS
REPLICA ARE YOU
REALLY GETTING?**



**QUADSPORT:
WILL THE 3-WHEELER
BECOME EXTINCT?**

HOW TO MAKE THE FASTEST 125 EVEN FASTER!



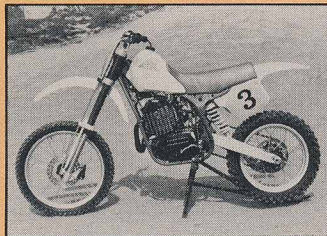
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ANAHEIM



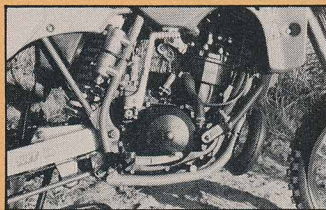
ATK560



YZ125



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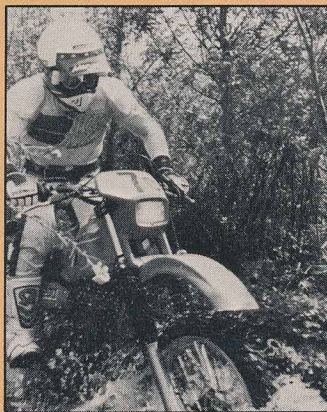
CAGIVA 500MX



KX250



QUADSPORT



KDX200

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ON THE COVER:—Todd Peterson approaches apogee on the YZ125, styling for the camera of Fran Kuhn, one of Clipper's home boys from Philadelphia. Also, Kevin Sirois gets serious on the QuadSport, while the late lamented Tom Webb controls the shutter. Color separations by Valley Film.

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WARNING: Much of the action depicted in this magazine is potentially dangerous. Virtually all of the riders seen in our photos are experienced experts or professionals. Do not attempt to duplicate any stunts that are beyond your own capabilities. Always wear the appropriate safety gear.



STILL A THRILLER

Minimum changes,
but still a maximum bike

By the DIRT BIKE Staff

In an effort to keep our self-respect intact, we're going to keep this test short and sweet. It's no secret that we've been in love with the KDX200 for the past four years. It seems to do everything right, from poking around trailriding to honest to George international enduro competition; Jeff Fredette even rode one to a top American placing at the Six Days last year, beating out the entire Husky team for the honor. He did it on a nearly stock bike. In '84 we called it "annoyingly perfect," and we'll tell you up front that this year our judgment will be the same.

MINIMAL CHANGES

This is another "off" year for the KDX, meaning to say, it doesn't have watercooling or a disc brake yet. The only major change Kawasaki made to the bike was the addition of a 34mm Mikuni "R" slide carb like the one used on the '84 KX125. This carb does not make a radical change to the basic KDX200 powerband; rather, it increases the power output throughout the range. There's still a healthy mid-range blast and a very tall rev limit, but we could really notice the low-end increase. There's just a little more torque right off the bottom which ultimately makes the KDX even easier to ride.

The suspension hasn't changed a bit. The forks are still 38mm Kayabas with 10.24 inches of travel, and the back end is still a Uni-Trak with rebound adjustment only and 11 inches of travel. For cruising around and medium fast trailriding both ends work fine, but for serious thrashing and racing they're a little too soft. You can correct it cheaply by fitting the optional heavy-duty Kawasaki springs.

TAKE IT OUT AND THRASH IT

The best part about a KDX is riding it. For this test we took our bike out to an area we hadn't visited in over two years. The most distinguishing feature of this place is a long, long mountain ridge that is hilly and rough, and your top speed is only limited by intestinal fortitude. This would be a good test—the bike was completely stock, and we wanted to feel the limits of the suspension.

It took us a while to get used to the KDX. For the last few months we've been testing big European bikes, and in comparison the KDX felt low and small. It is. Riders as short as five feet six inches should have little trouble reaching the ground, but it is an unnerving feeling having your feet so close to the ground. We never mashed our toes on any rocks, but we were careful.

Dunlop K-890s are the stock tires. They work okay on hard terrain, but tend to load up when forced through muddy sections. ►



◀ "Scuse me, bush—coming through!" The KDX is very narrow and sensibly laid out. It's no problem to move around while negotiating tight terrain.

The handlebars are also a source of complaint. They are too wide, and even after we cut them down to 30½ inches, not many of our testers liked the bend. The bars we've come to like on past models are the Answer Products OW-High bars, and we suspect they'll feel just fine on this one.

After a tight warm-up, we started feeding the fuel to the KDX. The powerband seems quite mellow, but it is deceiving. At high revs in the upper gears, the KDX is a small rocket, and even on nasty uphill it never seemed to gag and run out of torque. The bigger carb is definitely an improvement.

The suspension was soft, just as we thought, but we were surprised that it never turned into a handicap at high speeds. We spent many long miles in the fat part of fifth gear, and even though both ends were bottoming—sometimes rather harshly—the KDX never went out of control. This chassis is *correct*, there's no question about it. Even at hair-raising speeds on rough downhill sections with the forks slammed to the stops, the bike refused to get out of shape. It reacts the same as it has for the last few years, but it's always a surprise to experience it again. You *can* crash on the KDX, as with any other bike, but you have to do something awfully stupid to wind up on the ground.

BITS AND PIECES

The transmission gear ratios are perfect. Credit for all the correct ratios has to go to former Team Green manager Dane Leimbach, who worked out the transmission on paper while he was still on the development team at Kawasaki. There are absolutely no gaps in the transmission, and every gear works in perfect harmony with the powerband. Bravo, Dane!

The brakes are still a point we have to complain about. The rear brake is fine, but the front brake is weak. It is fine when the bike is new, but after a bit of riding, it glazes over and loses about 40 percent of its stopping ability. As near as we can tell, this is simply a characteristic of the shoe lining material. Take the shoes out and clean them up, and the brakes work well again. Perhaps with aftermarket shoes the problem would disappear, but it would be nice to have a disc brake.

As we said, the KDX is still not water-cooled, but maybe we should take a long, hard look at watercooling and enduro bikes. At last year's ISDE many of the entrants had

KDX200A3



Lofting the front wheel is as easy as tweaking the throttle and abusing the clutch for a second. After a while you learn that a wheelie is the KDX's best offensive tactic.



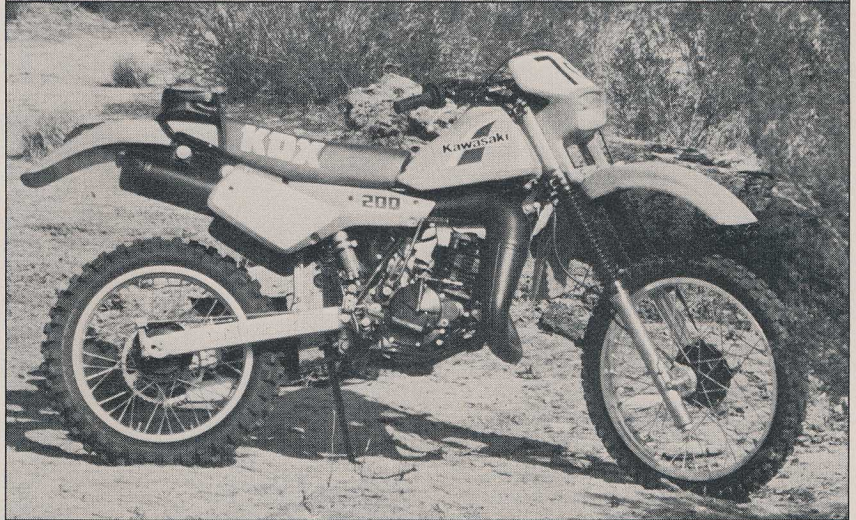
Compared with the past, there's nothing radical here. The only difference is the bigger carb, a change that gave the bike more low end and an even more brutal mid-range.



Listening to complaints from less nimble owners, Kawasaki decided to give us both a plus and a minus button this year. They also added a clock—an on/off button underneath the unit starts everything up from zero.

trouble with sand plugging up the radiators on liquid-cooled bikes, while the air-coolers never missed a beat. More horsepower would be available from a water-cooled cylinder, but remember that air-cooling is a lot simpler and more maintenance-free.

A new electronic odometer/clock unit is standard this year. When you turn it on, it displays mileage and time, both starting from zero. Mileage can be added or subtracted by a



KAWASAKI KDX200A3

Engine type	Reed-valve 2-stroke	Wet weight, no fuel	217 lbs.
Bore and stroke	66mm×58mm	Tire size and type:	
Displacement	198cc	Front	3.00×21 Dunlop K-890
Carburetion	34mm Mikuni	Rear	4.00×18 Dunlop K-890
Factory recommended jetting:		Suspension, type and travel:	
Main jet	260	Front	38mm Kayaba forks, 260mm (10.24 in.)
Needle jet	R-6	Rear	Uni-Trak, adj. reb., 280mm (11.02 in.)
Jet needle	5 FJ 57-3	Intended use	Off-road, enduro
Pilot jet	40	Country of origin	Japan
Slide number	30	Retail price, approx.	\$1799
Fuel tank capacity	12 L (3.2 gals.)	Distributor/Manufacturer:	
Lubrication	Pre-mix	Kawasaki Motors Corp.	
Gearbox ratios:		2009 E. Edinger Ave.	
1	2.769:1	Santa Ana, CA 92705	
2	2.000:1	Overall rating of bike, keeping intended use in mind:	
3	1.533:1	Handling	Excellent
4	1.235:1	Front suspension	Excellent
5	1.041:1	Rear suspension	Excellent
6	0.869:1	Power	Excellent
Gearing, front/rear	13/48	Cost	Excellent
Ignition	CDI	Attention to detail	Good
Recommended spark plug	NGK B9ES	Effectiveness, stone stock	Excellent
Silencer/spark arrester	Yes/yes		
Wheelbase	1430mm (56.3 in.)		
Ground clearance	340mm (13.4 in.)		
Seat height	927mm (36.5 in.)		
Rake/trail	28°/121mm		

This rating system is included to aid in comparison of bikes in the same displacement and intended-use categories. Comparing the ratings of two dissimilar machines is a meaningless exercise in futility.

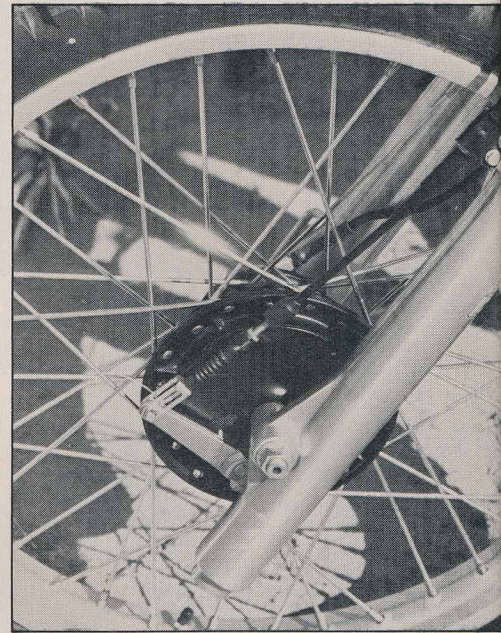
set of plus and minus switches, and a reset switch returns the timer to zero. All you need is a cheap roll chart holder, and you're ready for any enduro.

Reappearing this year is the massive silencer we had a few laughs over in '84. It weighs in at five pounds, nine ounces; you can save three pounds by going to an aluminum accessory. The only positive thing you can say about this unit is, it's quiet.

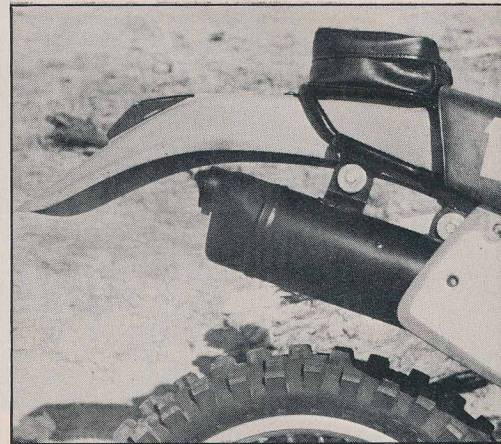
In order to get the air filter out, you need to remove three screws in the side panel and then three more from the airbox lid. Pretty sad for an enduro bike. We told you about it last year, and this year it is the same story.

Stock tires are Dunlop K-890s. They work well on soft ground but wear quickly on hard-pack. If you replace them with good Metzlers or Dunlops you have nothing to complain about.

KDX200A3



Sore point number one: The KDX needs either a disc brake or a double-leading-shoe front stopper. The standard brake (which we've been living with for the past few years) is not enough for the speeds this bike will do.



Too big. Too heavy. Steals power. But at least it's quiet.

STILL EXCELLENT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

The fact that we could test this bike for the last three years without finding a major complaint speaks highly for the basic design. It is a very easy bike to ride, with plenty of horsepower and excellent handling. For simple trailriding we can think of nothing better. For enduro competition you may have to push it pretty hard to win the overall, but it is possible.

If you want to set up a KDX for no-compromise competition, the bike will respond. A better rear shock, stiffer forks springs or KX forks, a horsepower pipe, and a porting job will turn the KDX into something best not tampered with by the casual rider. But that's the beauty of it. You can do anything with this bike. It is a great machine. □

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