

KAWASAKI KDX200: ANYTHING ELSE IS A HANDICAP!!

DIRT BIKE

WPS 34355

DIRT BIKE

MAY 1985

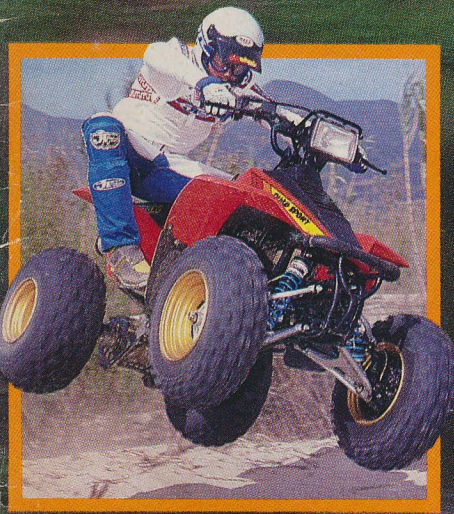
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DIVE!! HOW TO HANDLE DOOMSDAY DOWNHILLS!

**YZ125:
WHAT HAPPENED?**

**4-STROKE
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!



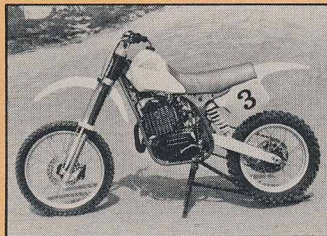
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ANAHEIM



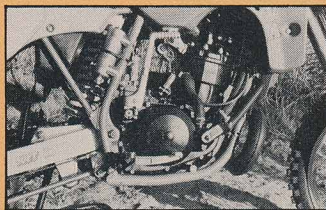
ATK560



YZ125



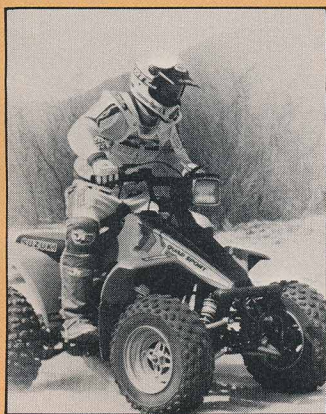
DOUBLECROSSED



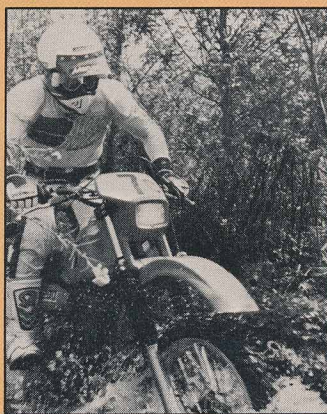
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KX250



QUADSPORT



KDX200

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Not recommended

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.

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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.



MEAN SEASON

How trick is too trick?

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

Kawasaki's innovative KX250 has an identity crisis. You see, Kawasaki earned its reputation in the mini and 125 ranks where high rpm, light weight and snappy motors rule the roost. The Hamamatsu firm took that successful technology and set out to build a 250 MXer that more than casually resembles its much heralded mini and 125 racers.

After all, doesn't success breed success? Would 1985 finally be the year that Kawasaki built a winning machine in the 250 class? That's what the engineers at Kawasaki believed. Therefore, a completely new KX250 was born. And guess what? It thinks it's a 125. So much so that it even feels like a 125 when you sit on it. It has the light weight, agility and overall svelteness one normally associates with hyperactive one-two-fives. Even the quick-revving nature of the new motor adds to this special effect. But one thing is apparent when you ride the bike: This is no 125.

AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. . .

Trying to ride the KX250 like it's a 125 is a lesson in frustration. Bumps, turns, and berms that you would normally rail on a 125 are suddenly causing you all kinds of grief on the 250. What works on a 125 doesn't necessarily make for a rideable and competitive 250. A good example of this would be to take a good-handling 125 with average power and bolt on a hot 250 motor. What was a smooth and controllable motorcycle as a 125, is suddenly bouncing all over the track with a 250 motor tucked inside.

This seems to be the crux of the KX250's dilemma. It feels light like a 125 and has a snappy motor handicapped by a jerky clutch. It's a revver that suffers from a too-tight gear ratio between first and second and a too-large gap from second to third. It has all the ingredients for success but is flawed in each category. The new KX250 has the same frame geometry used by team riders Jeff Ward, Kent Howerton, Billy Liles and Goat Breker on their 1984 works bikes. The motor is fast and is a refined version of what the factory riders were racing in '84. New suspension components are as close to factory specs as cost limitation factors will permit.

A casual glance at the sticker on the radiator shrouds says it all: "Works Replica." The 1985 KX250 is a factory replica racer. Or is it?

WORKING IT ALL OUT

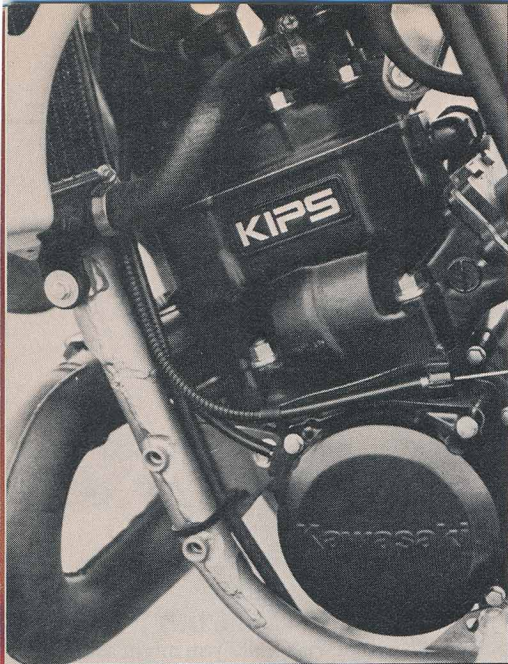
What's wrong with that? you might ask. Nothing, except that as a total package, the KX250 needs work. *DB* felt that the KX motor has the potential to be the best 250 motor in its class. There are several factors keeping it from that, though.

Gearing hassles aside, the potential of the KX250 is confused by the KIPS (Kawasaki Integrated Power-valve System) equipped motor. The power transition from the bottom end to the mid and top end is too explosive and not tractable enough.

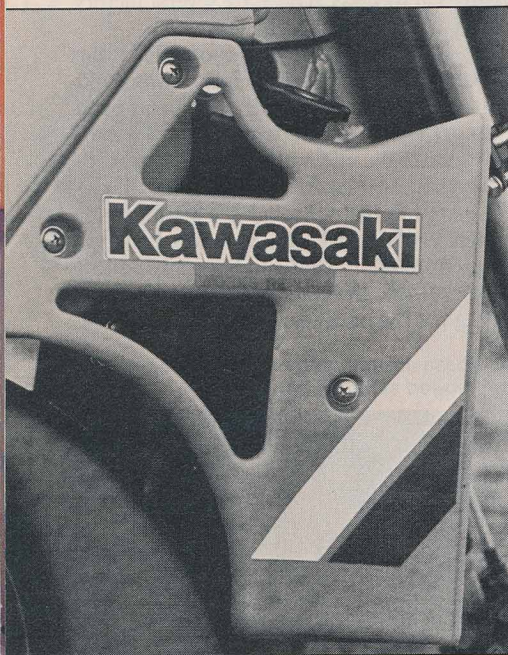
It literally leaps through the low and mid-range to the hard-hitting but short-breathed top-end punch. That sudden transition of power leaves the rider grasping and struggling for the next gear.

With the shortest 250 wheelbase around, you can rail any berm. You have to sacrifice some high-speed stability, however.

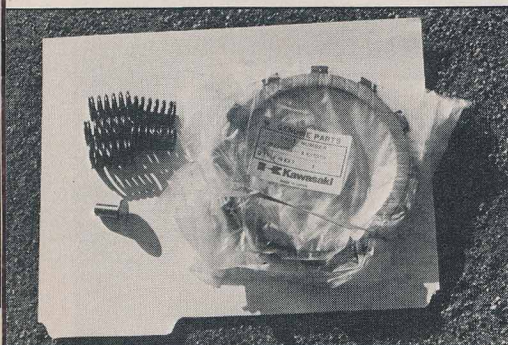




We liked the power of the KX250 motor, but it was handicapped by the wrong gear ratios and a jerky clutch.



Is it a real works replica? Yes and no. Yes, it is the same basic bike that Jeff Ward raced last year, and no, the suspension components are not the handmade units Jeff Ward used.



You'll need these parts to get your stock KX clutch working right: 1mm shorter push rod, KX500 clutch springs and Tecate clutch plates (part no. 13088-1055).



KX250D1

Although the KX250 feels like a 125, if you try to ride it like one, you'll be swapping all over the track.

Further hindering power hookup is the dismal clutch action. Clutch action is either full on or full off. Slipping it out of turns leaves the rider either overrevving the engine or bogging. The hot setup for fixing the clutch is to machine 1mm off the clutch push rod end and replace the stock clutch springs with heavier units off Kawasaki's Tecate three-wheeler. They fit right in, and along with KX500 clutch plates and the shorter push rod, give the KX's clutch a smoother, more positive feel. A slightly heavier clutch pull is the trade-off.

ACCELERATION TEST

To get a better idea of how the KX250 motor performs, we drag-raced it against an '85 YZ250N. Our YZ smoked the KX eight times out of ten coming off the line. The KX's flighty low-end power was no match for the tractorlike pull of the YZ. But if you did everything right on the KX, hit the clutch perfectly, backed off the gas to make your shifts (the KX250 will not shift under full power) and concentrated, you could actually start pulling the YZ from third gear on up.

GETTING A HANDLE ON IT

With a 57.7-inch wheelbase the KX250 feels as if it has a short wheelbase. Actually, it's the shortest 250 around. On high-speed washboards or rough sand whoops, the rear end has a decided tendency to swap places with the front. For desert or cross-country racing we'd recommend running the rear wheel all the way back to the swingarm to help increase the wheelbase and the high-speed stability.

For motocross use the KX turns exceptionally well. It will turn inside, outside or go for the berm with equal ease.

SWAP CITY

Sure, it turns, but what about the suspension? Kawasaki has put all manner of adjustments on the Kayaba-suspended forks and Uni-Trak shock for 1985. It is one of the most adjustable suspension systems ever. It's also one of the hardest to figure out.

The new Kayaba rear shock has both high- and low-speed compression adjustments, as well as rebound and ride height adjustments.

We set our high-speed compression damping at the number four setting (full firm—all the way stiff) and the low-speed compression at full soft. We ran 100mm of sag in the rear and set the rebound at the number four setting. We're currently experimenting with heavier springs and different valving, and will let you know what we come up with.

Trick external preload adjustments are new this year on the Kayaba forks. Neat. A six-way compression adjustment on the forks, as well as the usual variety of fork spring rates, should allow the home mechanic to set up this front end. At least that's the theory.

NO HOME RUNS HERE

The forks have way too much high-speed compression damping combined with a too-soft spring rate and too much preload. There is too much high-speed rebound damping, as well. To counteract all this, we epoxyed up the rebound damping holes in the fork damper rods. We also ran the heavier KX fork springs, smaller preload spacers (10mm smaller) and ran ten-weight oil (150mm from the top of the fork, tubes collapsed). We ended up adjusting the compression damping all the way out to full soft. With our mods, we'd rate the forks a solid "7"; stock, call them a "5," tops.

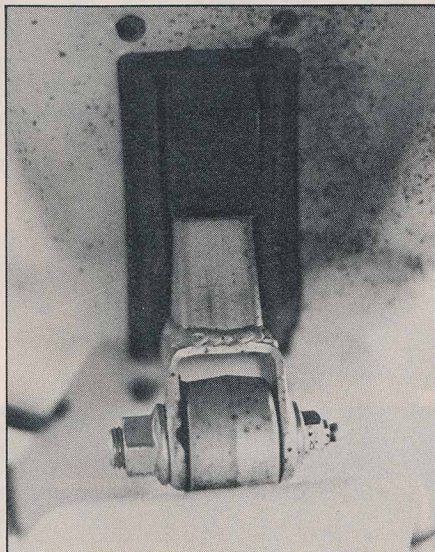
On the rear there was a problem with the shock pogoing off sharp, square-edged bumps. The first four inches of the 12.6-inch travel felt plush, but after that initial plushness, the shock would hydraulic in its travel, stop, and pogo off the square-edged bumps. No amount of adjusting on the high-speed, low-speed and rebound damping settings seemed to get rid of this effect.

We've heard that a lot of KX250 riders have been using the KX500's internal valving and spring rates. We're experimenting with ours and will let you know if it works.

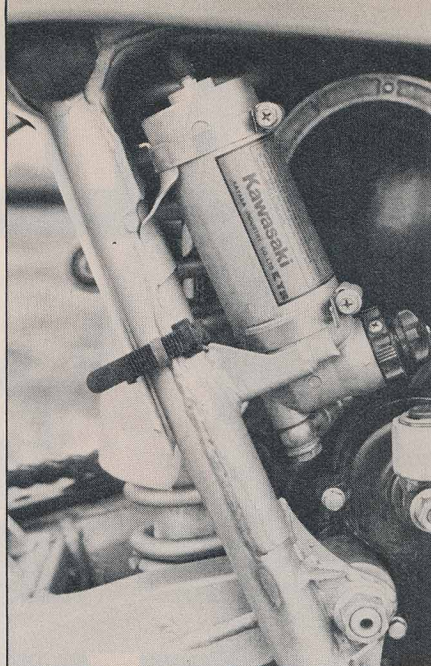
BITS & PIECES

We noted that the trick aluminum silencer started to blow out big-time where it mounts to the pipe. It's also a non-repackable unit, so we would opt to replace it with one that didn't clog as easily and was repackable. Zerk fit-

KX250D1



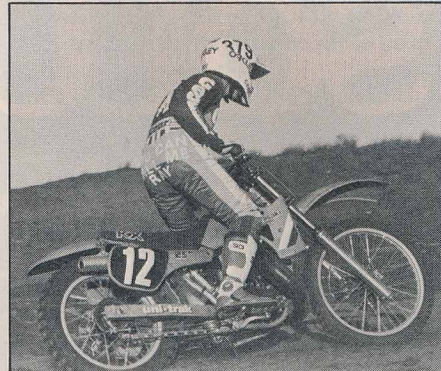
Keep an eye on the rear rocker arm mounts. The washer on the end has been known to break loose from its tack weld. Reweld it or see your dealer about a replacement part.



Adjustable high- and low-speed compression damping is a good idea, but the rear shock action is bogus. The KX500's internal valving and spring are the hot setup for the rear end.



Too much compression damping causes the forks to give a harsh ride. Epoxy up the rebound holes and use heavier fork springs and smaller preload spacers to get the front end up to snuff.



Too much compression damping in the forks and a hydraulic lock on the rear shock kept our Kwacker's suspension out of the ballpark.

KAWASAKI KX250D1

Engine type	Reed valve, liquid-cooled 2-stroke
Bore and stroke	70mm x 64.9mm
Displacement	249cc
Carburetion	Mikuni VM40SS
Factory recommended jetting:	
Main jet	350
Needle jet	R-4
Jet needle	6DJ1-2
Pilot jet	30
Slide number	3.0
Fuel tank capacity	8.0 L (2.1 gals.)
Lubrication	Pre-mix at 32:1
Gearbox ratios:	
1	2.133:1
2	1.764:1
3	1.388:1
4	1.136:1
5	1.000:1
Gearing, front/rear	14/49
Ignition	CDI
Recommended spark plug	NGK B8EG
Silencer/spark arrester	Aluminum silencer only, average noise
Wheelbase	1465mm (57.68 in.)
Ground clearance	375mm (14.76 in.)
Seat height	925mm (37.0 in.)
Rake/trail	28°/120mm (4.72 in.)
Wet weight, no fuel	218.5 lbs.

Tire size and type:	
Front	90/90-21 4PR Bridgestone M37
Rear	130/80-18 4PR Bridgestone M38
Suspension, type and travel:	
Front	43mm Kayaba forks, adj. comp., 300mm (11.81 in.)
Rear	Uni-Trak single KYB shock, adj. comp./reb., 320mm (12.60 in.)
Intended use	Motocross
Country of origin	Japan
Retail price, approx.	\$2499
Distributor/Manufacturer:	
Kawasaki Motor Corp. 2009 E. Edinger Ave. Santa Ana, CA 92705	
Overall rating of bike, keeping intended use in mind:	
Handling	Good
Front suspension	Good
Rear suspension	Fair
Power	Very good
Cost	Very good
Attention to detail	Excellent
Effectiveness, stone stock	Fair

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.

tings on the Uni-Trak shock are a welcome addition and make servicing the single shock linkage quick and easy.

A vented numberplate directs fresh air to an air duct located under the tank which leads directly to the airbox. Neat idea. The airbox is large and easy to service—service with a smile. Seating, bar, peg and control layout all take some getting used to. Brakes, front and rear, are excellent. We had no problems with spokes loosening after the first few adjustments.

IDENTITY CRISIS SOLVED

What we have in the KX250 is a motocrosser that has all the ingredients for success. It's *fast*, it turns, it bristles with high-tech ideas.

And while everything is there and *could possibly* be dialed in to make a rider delightfully happy, we haven't been able to find the combination to that lock yet.

So what you have is a bike that borders on greatness, but misses for reasons that are not only eluding us, but the Kawasaki factory, as well. □