By the editors of DIRT BIKE

OUR ENDURO-CROSSER GETS A DASHBOARD

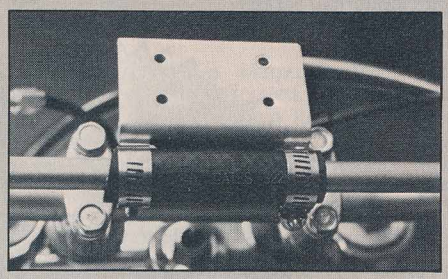
It's important to know how late you are

In part one of "Project RPM," we got some basic enduro-type stuff on our motocrosser, like lights, a rear fender, a pipe with better ground clearance, and an exhaust system with a spark arrester that wouldn't strangle the engine. We also slapped on a small carb for better low-end power and increased range out of the stock gas tank.

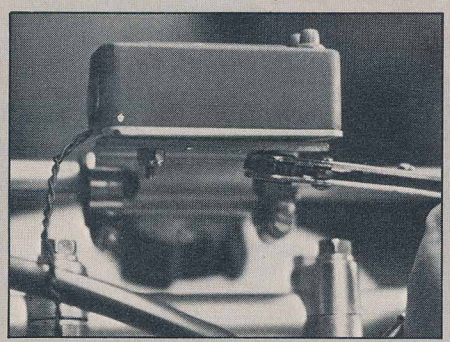
Cosmetic changes were also done, such as getting rid of the green numberplates and replacing them with classy blue backgrounds.

This month we'll concentrate on the dashboard of our Project RPM, the instruments that will guide us from checkpoint to checkpoint. The disc brake of the RM presents its own special set of problems that must be overcome. Answers are there. Also, we'll dump the smallish stock front fender in favor of something that'll keep the mud and water off our goggles.

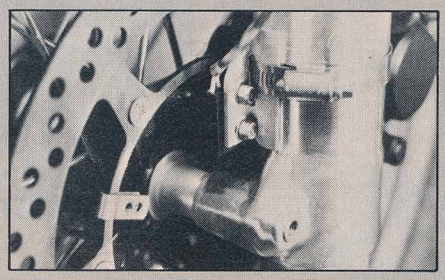
Next month we'll dial in the jetting of our slightly undersized carb and let you know what worked best. Gearing changes will be considered, and we'll have a skid plate and some pipe protection options. Also, we'll try to fit some Brush Busters over a disc master cylinder. Whooeee! Heck, we might even start up the sucker and ride it around a bit before it's ready to enter an actual enduro.



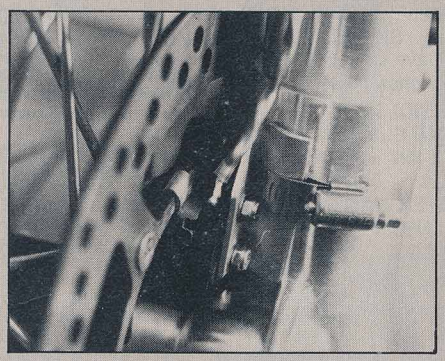
The first step in mounting the electric odometer/speedo from Performance Products is simple: just slip a rubber mount over the bars and hose-clamp the supplied formed aluminum plate in place.



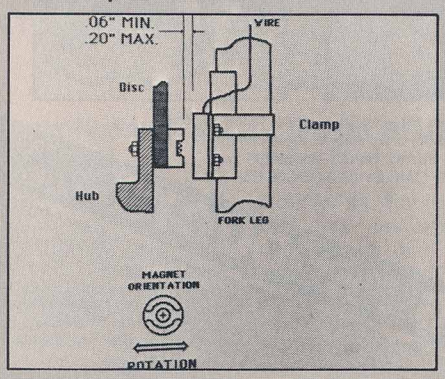
After the base plate is mounted, the unit itself can be bolted in snugly by tightening a pair of 9mm nuts.



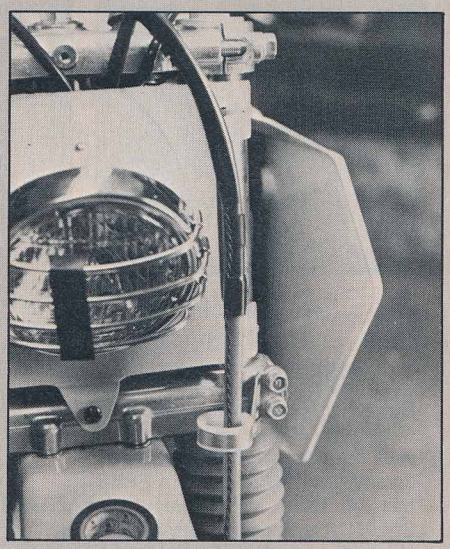
The sensor for the speedo pickup must be attached to the fork leg. You'll need to experiment from bike to bike to get a spot with the correct clearance. The instructions are very fuzzy and will not offer much in the way of advice. On our Suzuki we had to remove the yellow plastic lower fork leg protectors to install the sensor with its basic hose clamp mounting setup. You can put the protectors on later, after you modify them to fit over the clamp.



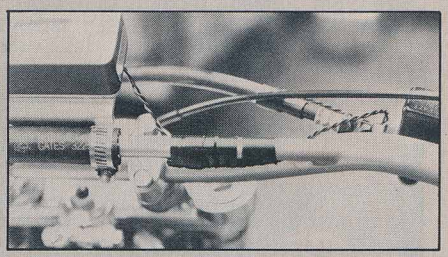
Now you'll have to install the magnet somewhere on the disc brake. While we're sure there are some disc brakes that will easily accept the magnet, our Suzuki was a real bear. We had to fabricate a magnet holder out of an old front brake cable clevis, and hang the magnet lower than the bottom of the disc. Again, the instructions are right out of the stone age and offer no advice whatsoever should you encounter a problem of this sort.



Alignment is critical. Here's a drawing that shows how the magnet must be placed in relation to the sensor.

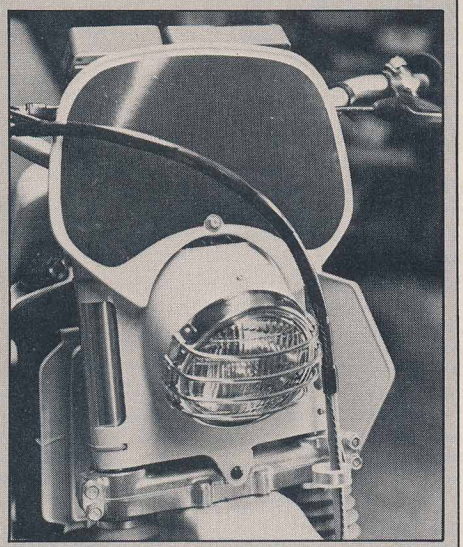


When the magnet and sensor are installed, you must then tape the wires safely out of the way behind the disc brake line. Later on you'll want to put a protective sheath over the wire to keep the up-and-down motion from rubbing through the sending wires.

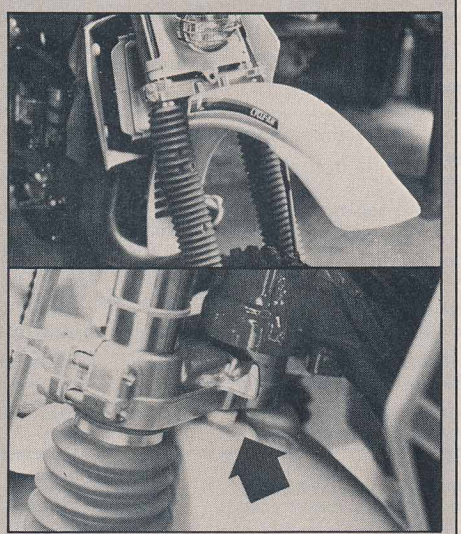


Connect the two wires from the sending unit to the speedo and tape them out of the way on the bars. Any slack or extra wires should be doubled over and taped cleanly to the bars.

For timekeeping we chose a full-blown computer from Performance Products. This is one of the best, the Super Pro II. Mounting was straightforward, with split rubber hose and hose clamps doing the job. This gave us a full dashboard. The Super Pro II lets you program in the entire run ahead of time, and you will not have to turn a route sheet as you ride. The DB staff has used this fine unit in the past and found it reliable and accurate.



Once we got our dashboard in place, the numberplate was installed. This was a simple matter, as we used a stock PE175 plate and the stock screw hole in the top triple clamp. All we had to do was find a slightly longer bolt and a spacer behind the plate to get the correct clearance. Naturally we used some blue vinyl backing over the numberplate to set off the looks of the bike.



Anyone who has ever ridden a stock RM will tell you that the stock front fender does not do a very good job of keeping the mud and water off of you. So we opted for one of the spacey-looking Cycle Am fenders. They're much wider and longer than stock and look worlds better. In order to get the rear part of the fender to clear the pipe, we had to use two of the supplied spacers on the rear of the fender to get the right angle.

WHERE TO GET IT AND WHAT IT COSTS

Electronic Speedo/Odometer: $159.95 (available May 1985). Super Pro II: $165. Available from Performance Products, P.O. Box 1294, Lacombe, LA 70445; (504)882-3107.

Front fender: $27.95. Available from Cycle Am, 28621 Canwood St., Unit D, Agoura Hills, CA 91301; (818) 706-1300. □