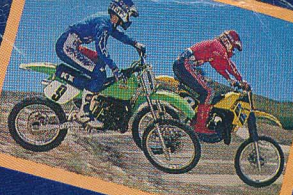


125 SHOOTOUT: HOT AERIAL DOGFIGHT FOR #1



DIRT BIKE

JULY 1986

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WHICH BIKE HAS THE RIGHT STUFF?
PAGE 24



F-14 TOMCAT

SUZUKI RM125

KAWASAKI KX125

YAMAHA YZ125

HONDA CR125

HI-PERFORMANCE HOP-UPS:
XR250, CR250 & KTM 250
VISIT DB'S GO-FAST FACTORY!

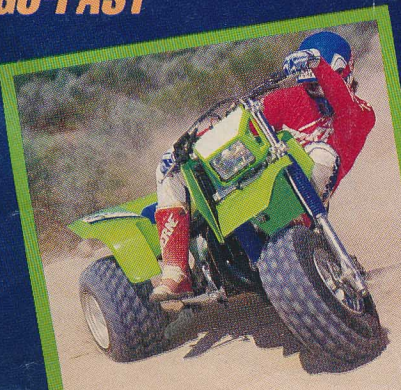
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KXT250: MEAN GREEN ATV KING?

YZ80: GO TO THE HEAD OF THE PACK!

MINI BUYER'S GUIDE - PART 3: ALL OF THE HOTTEST GEAR IN YOUR SIZE ONLY!!



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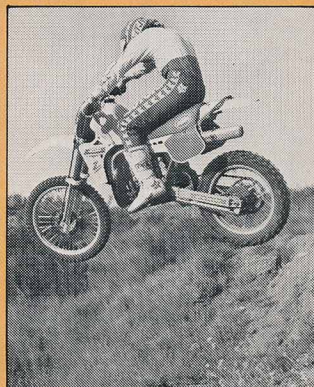
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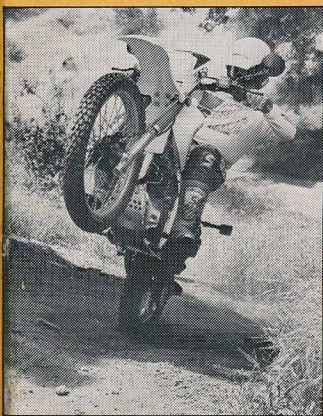
HANGTOWN



XR250 HOP-UP



KTM 250MXC



HONDA XL250



RJ REPLICA



125 SHOOTOUT



YZ80



KXT250

DIRT BIKE Magazine, ISSN 0364-1546 (July '86) is published by Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc., with editorial offices at 10600 Sepulveda Boulevard, Mission Hills, California 91345. Subscriptions \$14.98 for 12 issues (one year). Canada add \$4 per year, and all other foreign add \$5 per year for additional postage. Copyright © 1986 by Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing in this magazine may be reprinted in whole or in part, by mimeograph or any other means, without the express permission of the publisher. Contributors: Photographic submissions must be 5x7 or 8x10 glossy black and white, or 35mm and larger color slides. Please mark each photo with owner's name and address. Manuscripts should be typewritten. Unsolicited contributions, manuscripts, photographs and illustrations must be accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. Unless special arrangements are made in advance, all published material becomes the sole property of Daisy/Hi-Torque Publishing Company, Inc. The publisher does not assume responsibility for unsolicited material. Second class postage paid at San Fernando, California 91340, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **DIRT BIKE** Magazine, P.O. Box 9502, Mission Hills, California 91345-9502.

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ON THE COVER: Official Team Dirt Bike test pilot LCDR John Wroblewski and the U.S. Navy's awesome F-14 back up the regular *Dirt Bike* wrecking crew and Japan's hottest 125 MX fighters. At 1400 mph, Lance Johnson and Steve Schmitz thought the stock jet was plenty fast, but Randy ("Which one's the bomb button?") Johnson said it could use a pipe for more top end. Mike Webb was quoted as saying, "Hey, when you gonna port this thing?" The in-flight 125 snapshots, Tom Webb's Tecate shredder and our boot shoot round things out. Photos by Fran Kuhn, cover design by DeWest and, as always, color seps provided by Valley Film. Special thanks to LCDR Don Lewis, LCDR Steve Duba, Chief Petty Officer Gary Rice and the United States Navy.

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.

THE ULTIMATE LIGHTWEIGHT FIGHTER SHOOTOUT

This may sound like a cop-out, but there's really not a horrible bike in the gathering of Asian 125s this year. There's also not a single bike that is outstanding in every category. Each machine suffers from some flaw that in itself isn't enough to keep the machine from winning races. The winner, ironically, has the least number of flaws and the best powerband.

Throughout the year, we've raced, ridden, flogged and hogged the Honda CR125, Yamaha YZ125, Kawasaki KX125 and Suzuki RM125. Here's our final ratings on the machines (their strengths and weaknesses), and the winner.

HANDLING

The way a bike handles encompasses the following: cornering, stability and ergonomics. By far the hardest bike to ride is the Kawasaki. Under the right pilot the KX is competitive, but it doesn't crave the inside line, requires too much rider input to corner, and hops like a wounded hyena in braking bumps. The Suzuki comes equipped with excellent suspension, is extremely stable at higher speeds, and turns extremely well, but suffers from a weird bars/seat relationship.

Basically, the battle boils down to the Honda and the Yamaha. There's no contest through the corners—the CR sticks like flypaper, and it takes no effort to grab any line through a turn. The Yammie takes a bit more rider input, although it's the closest to the Honda. On the high-speed part of the track is where the glitches surface on the Honda. A nasty headshake requires a delicate throttle and brake technique to overcome the oscillation. The YZ tracks as straight as a line drive and, therefore, wins the handling wars.

SUSPENSION

None of the contestants get perfect marks here, although the YZ gets top marks for an excellent tail end and average front silverware. Hot on its heels comes the RM, which comes outfitted with the best forks and a ho hum rear boinger. Had Kawasaki done its homework on the new Uni-Trak, it would have rated higher, but the rear end is too vague and chatters mercilessly. The Honda's KYB forks are average, as is the Pro-Link rear hardware. It doesn't do anything wrong, but then again, it's not that great either.

EASE OF MAINTENANCE AND RELIABILITY

While the Suzuki and Kawasaki suffered no glaring problems, the RM loosened up too quickly (all the nuts and bolts need to be Loctited). Kawasaki delivered our bike pre-Loctited. They don't do this for the public, and the showroom models rattle loose quickly. The KX also blew its fork seals after four races. Our YZ suffered a major bottom-end explosion after one ride. Yamaha said it came delivered with a too-tight lower end. Also, the stock air filter is garbage and sucks dirt like a funnel. The winner, hands down, is the Honda. It's been



IN SEARCH RIGHT

What hits hard & fast &

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE



whipped and beaten, yet it hasn't required any serious attention.

THE MOTOR

This department deals with the engine's performance, the clutch, shifting and tractability. While the RM shifts all right and the clutch is decent, it gets the Hurt Dog Award for a complete lack of low end. In fact, it's an uninhabited cave off the bottom. The mid-range is painfully average, and it only shines on top with a good upper hit.

While the Kawasaki has a killer mid-to-top-end punch, the bottom end is anemic and makes gating the KX tougher than either the CR or YZ. This hurts it in the tractability department, but in the hands of a pro, it is quite capable of winning. The Yamaha narrowly edged the KX, even though it is the worst-shifting bike and has the hardest clutch. A healthy bottom end, combined with a fluid transition of power to the middle muscle, gets good marks. It falls short of any killer upper revvability, but this can be easily attained with money and the right tuner.

By far, the bike with the best overall spread of power is the Honda. It produces a monstrous roar off the bottom, a blistering mid-range throb and revs out far enough to make it the king of the powerbands. Combine the rideable, tractable juice factor with an effortless clutch and perfect shifting, and it's easy to see why the Honda wins the power wars.

HERE'S THE SKINNY

In descending order, the Suzuki gets last place by virtue of poor brakes, average reliability, and a motor that lost its bottom end on the way to the showroom. More snap down low would have made the RM a contender.

The KX is next. It has great brakes, a weird rear end, good forks, and a better-than-average motor. Nevertheless, it's too hard to ride, won't turn with anything less than total commitment from the pilot, and has a hop-skippity-whoa feel out back caused by the non-floating rear brake. All the right parts are there; they just need some rearranging. A little more thought, and the KX would have been second.

Yamaha really did its homework and came up with a sound 125 racer. It bristles with excellent handling, has a suck-em-up fanny, and a good overall spread of power. Had it shifted smoother and come equipped with a knockout punch on top, it too would have been a threat for the overall.

You guessed it! The Honda CR125 flattened the competition with a tractable, yet spirited engine, decent suspension, a turning prowess second to none, excellent reliability, an ergonomically flawless chassis and the least amount of glitches. Hail to the king!

• Thanks to the folks at the U.S. Navy's Pacific Missile Test Center in Point Mugu, California, especially LCDR Don Lewis, LCDR Steve Duba, Chief Petty Officer Gary Rice, and Official Team DB test pilot LCDR John Wroblewski. •

H OF THE STUFF

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1985	500 cc World Championship
1984	125 cc World Championship
1984	500 cc World Championship
1983	125 cc World Championship
1983	500 cc World Championship
1982	125 cc World Championship
1982	250 cc World Championship
1981	125 cc World Championship
1981	250 cc World Championship
1981	500 cc World Championship
1980	125 cc World Championship
1980	250 cc World Championship
1980	500 cc World Championship

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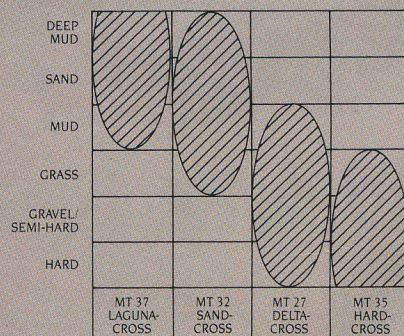
And if there's an ideal "all-around" MX tire, our MT 27 Deltacross is it. Thanks to an impressive versatility that extends from mud and grass to gravel and adobe.

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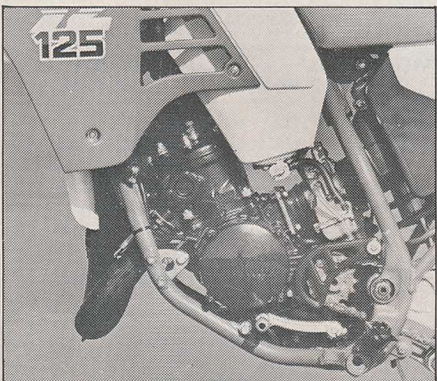
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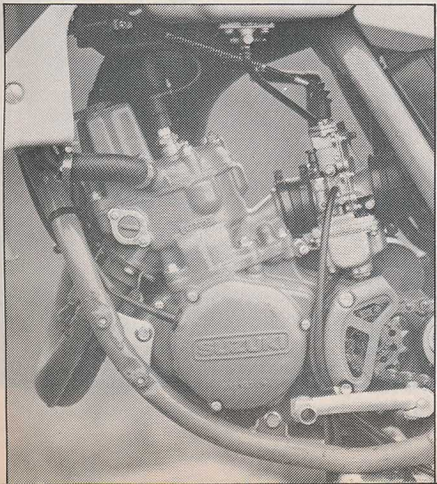
LIGHTWEIGHT SHOOTOUT



Ergonomically, the Honda is excellent and wins the cornering wars with a point-it-and-go feel. None of the others will cut inside the CR.



While the Yamaha has a potent throb in the middle of the horsepower range, it's a shade weaker than the CR off the bottom, and it won't rev quite as far. A better-shifting tranny and a smoother clutch would help.



The RM's low saddle height and good flick-ability in turns put it in a runner-up position in the cornering wars, behind the Honda.



Although the Yamaha tied with the RM for second in the cornering department, it's the winner of the stability wars. You can take the YZ through a set of whoops at speed, and the head never whinnies or shakes.

◀ Suzuki has the rever of the class, but they completely lost interest in the low-end department. Experts can get along with the power, but everyone else will suffer. Sorry, it loses here.

The Kawa's strength is the hard-hitting mid-range and a decent top-end hit. It's soft off the bottom compared with both the CR and YZ. ▶

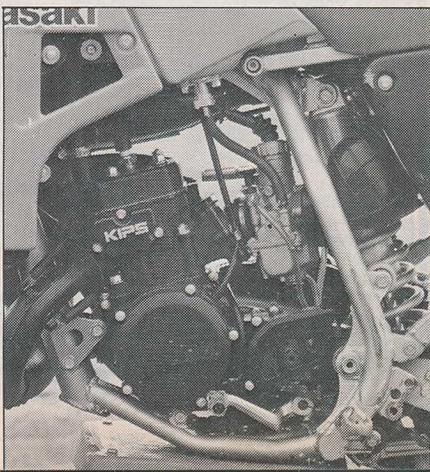
Associate Editor Mike Webb, Randy Johnson, Larry Baker and Steve Schmitz put the high-tech 125s through a merciless test program, then they went out and ate yogurt-filled bagels for a week.



Good ergonomics can't overcome the in-bred problems with the KX's squat-and-lock rear end. It'll turn with enough rider input, but rates last when compared with the other machines.



Best motor of the year goes to the Honda. The power is nearly perfect with a strong whack off the bottom and a good flow into the mid-and-upper hook. Add a flawless clutch and a smooth, well-spaced gear-box, and it easily outdistanced the competition.



LIGHTWEIGHT SHOOTOUT























































































	1986 HONDA CR125R	1986 KAWASAKI KX125E1	1986 SUZUKI RM125G	1986 YAMAHA YZ125S
Engine type	Single-cylinder, liquid-cooled, 2-stroke	Single-cylinder, liquid-cooled, 2-stroke	Single-cylinder, liquid-cooled, 2-stroke	Single-cylinder, liquid-cooled, 2-stroke
Bore and stroke	54mm x 54mm	56mm x 50.6mm	54mm x 54mm	56mm x 50mm
Displacement	124cc	124cc	123cc	123cc
Carburetion	34mm flat-slide Keihin	Mikuni VM35SS	Mikuni VM34SS flat-slide	Mikuni TM34SS/1
Factory recommended jetting:				
Main jet	152	340	280	270
Needle jet	N/A	R-8	R-O	P8
Jet needle	R1470N	6J7-3	6FP55—2nd	7DJ1—3rd
Pilot jet	65	35	55	40
Slide number	N/A	N/A	4.0	4.0
Fuel tank capacity	6.5 L (1.7 gals.)	7.5 L (2.0 gals.)	7.0 L (1.8 gals.)	7.5 L (2.0 gals.)
Lubrication	Pre-mix	Pre-mix	Pre-mix	Pre-mix
Gearbox ratios:				
1	2.333:1	2.307:1	2.000:1	2.307:1
2	1.875:1	1.750:1	1.692:1	1.866:1
3	1.555:1	1.400:1	1.437:1	1.529:1
4	1.300:1	1.181:1	1.200:1	1.294:1
5	1.136:1	1.041:1	1.052:1	1.150:1
6	1.100:1	0.954:1	0.950:1	1.047:1
Gearing, front/rear	13/51	12/47	12/51	13/50
Ignition	CDI	CDI	PEI	CDI
Recommended spark plug	NGK BR9EG, ND W27ESV, Champion N-84	NGK B10EG	NGK B9EGV	NGK B8EV
Silencer/spark arrester	Yes/no	Yes/no	Yes/no	Yes/no
Wheelbase	1460mm (57.5 in.)	1460mm (57.5 in.)	1445mm (56.9 in.)	1450mm (57.1 in.)
Ground clearance	355mm (13.97 in.)	390mm (15.4 in.)	340mm (13.4 in.)	350mm (13.8 in.)
Seat height	930mm (36.6 in.)	930mm (36.6 in.)	925mm (36.4 in.)	935mm (36.8 in.)
Rake/trail	26°/111mm	27.5°/116mm	29°/109mm	27.5°/115mm
Wet weight, no fuel	192.9 lbs.	196 lbs.	192 lbs.	197 lbs.
Tire size and type:				
Front	80/100-21 Bridgestone M41	3.00 x 21 Dunlop K490	80/100-21 195 Dunlop	80/100-21 4PR Bridgestone M23
Rear	100/100-18 Bridgestone M42	4.00 x 18 Dunlop K480	100/100-18 195 Dunlop	100/100-18 4PR Bridgestone M22
Suspension, type and travel:				
Front	43mm KYB, adj. comp., 300mm (11.8 in.)	43mm KYB, adj. comp., 300mm (11.8 in.)	43mm KYB, adj. comp., 300mm (11.8 in.)	43mm KYB, adj. comp., 305mm (12.0 in.)
Rear	Pro-Link, adj. comp./reb., 315mm (12.2 in.)	Uni-Trak, adj. comp./reb., 340mm (13.4 in.)	Full Floater adj. comp./reb., 315mm (12.4 in.)	BASS Monocross, adj. comp./reb., 315mm (12.4 in.)
Intended use	Motocross	Motocross	Motocross	Motocross
Country of origin	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan
Suggested retail price	\$1998	\$2049	\$2099	\$2099
Distributor/Manufacturer	American Honda Motor Corp. 100 W. Alondra Blvd. Gardena, CA 90247	Kawasaki Motors 2009 E. Edinger Ave. Santa Ana, CA 92711	U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp. 3251 E. Imperial Hwy. Brea, CA 92621	Yamaha Motor Corp. 6555 Katella Ave. Cypress, CA 90630

LIGHTWEIGHT SHOOTOUT



◀ Yamaha wins the overall handling award because of its stability and its turning prowess. Second goes to the Honda, which is a cornering fool but shakes like a blender at speed. The best overall suspension comes on the RM; it turns well and is stable, but it has a sit-up-and-beg handlebar/seat relationship. Kawasaki's 125 gets an average rating across the handling board. □

125 SHOOTOUT RATINGS CHART

RATING SCALE	EXCELLENT 	GOOD 	AVERAGE 	POOR 
	HONDA CR125	YAMAHA YZ125	KAWASAKI KX125	SUZUKI RM125
POWER			 1/2	
LOW END				
MID-RANGE		 1/2		
UPPER HOOK		 1/2		
TRACTABILITY			 1/2	
HANDLING		 1/2		
STABILITY		 1/2		 1/2
CORNERING		 1/2		
ERGONOMICS		 1/2		 1/2
FORKS		 1/2		
SHOCK		 1/2	 1/2	
SUSPENSION	 1/2			
FRONT BRAKE			 1/2	
REAR BRAKE			 1/2	
SHIFTING		 1/2		 1/2
CLUTCH				
RELIABILITY				
TIRES				
BEST MACHINE FOR NOVICE		 1/2		 1/2
BEST MACHINE FOR EXPERT			 1/2	
OVERALL RATING	