

Product Evaluation

SCOTT PLASTIC BOOTS

Sole food, at \$180 a serving

By the Editors of Dirt Bike



We leaned on the Scott boots to find the limit of movement available, front and rear. It'll go farther than your ankle will.



Here's the foam inner liner that goes inside the plastic boots. These are replaceable when they get worn.

Shades of Star Wars! The future apparently is here already. Plastic boots, yet. Sure, we've all seen pictures of Hannah and a few other factory riders with the Scott boots on, but their availability to the general public has been non-existent.

The reason is simple: Scott spent these last few years developing, testing, proving and changing the original design. What you see on these pages, is the end result of all that time and money spent.

Two things are different about the Scott boots, other than the obvious fact that they're made of plastic. First, the price. They're meant to retail for \$180. Right. The most expensive boot offered. Secondly, you get an owner's manual with the Scott plastic boots. Not a brochure, but an actual manual.

This detailed and informative manual tells you how to put the boots on (not easy the first time you try it), how to maintain them and how to get them rebuilt, when needed.

You read that right. According to Scott, all components are available from their facility to totally rebuild any part of the boot, from re-soleing to putting new buckles on. One of the strongest selling points, says Scott, is

that you should never have to buy another pair of riding boots.

Since the soles always wear out first on any boot, the bottoms of the Scott boots are made of rubber. An eye should be kept on the part of the sole making contact with the peg. The soles should be replaced before the rubber is worn away and the plastic gets chewed up. For this reason, Scott recommends that "overly aggressive" pegs be dulled down a bit with a file or some sandpaper.

When the boots are ready to be re-soled, the rider has to ship them to Scott at the following address:

SCOTT USA
Freeport Center
Building D-11, Section 3
Clearfield, Utah 84016
Attention:
Motorcycle Service Department

Now that all the technical stuff is out of the way, you're probably wondering how they *feel* on the foot. Once you get past the hassle of putting them on and buckling up, they feel great. No actual break-in time is needed, as there is a removable foam liner inside the boot. Your feet never touch the plastic.

To get the boots on, one has to

spread the boot well open and grasp the liner top with both hands. Then, the foot must be arched with the toe pointed down. While this ballerina-type position is maintained, you must then pull up firmly on the liner top as you insert the foot into the foam inner liner.

Once the foot is inside, you can then start interleaving the two sides together. The first few times you try this, it's frustrating and awkward. After a while, it becomes easier. Then, the boots must be buckled. This is one area that should be re-thought. Even after wearing the boots a half-dozen times, we had problems with the bale-type buckles. Not only is it difficult to lock the buckles firmly into place, it's hard to get the right tension. Too tight, and your calf will go to sleep. Not tight enough and the boot will move around excessively. It takes practice to get the right feel for snugging up the boots.

Now that you have the boots on and buckled, you'll find they are genuinely comfortable. Surprisingly so. And, they are very light. Walking around presents no problem and the ankle flexing hardware functions smoothly. You feel

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SCOTT BOOTS

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a bit silly at first and tend to clomp around like a robot in one of those wretched Japanese monster movies.

When riding, it's wise to check your particular bike for possible hazards before you wheelie off into the sunset. On the Honda Elsinores, for example, there's a thin metal rod near the brake pedal that fits exactly under the lip of the ankle area. This could snag your foot and prevent you from getting free of the peg. So, check closely before you ride.

Also, it's a good idea to check the sides of your bike where they might come in contact with the inner side of the boots. A sharp edge, or a stray hose clamp, could carve right through the plastic as you ride.

Naturally, because the Scott boots are so strong, feel is reduced. It takes a while before shifting and braking become natural. But, that's normal, even for a pair of new conventional leather boots. By the third riding session with the Scotts, we had compensated and adjusted for the difference.

The feeling of being bulletproof with the Scott boots on, is a real one. You just don't worry about nailing your foot on a rock when sliding. And, when kickstarting a bike, the occasional slip and whack on the instep is ignored, rather than bringing tears to your eyes.

Because the boots are light, it's easier to move your foot around. No hindrance or binding has been noted while moving around on the bike.

The only thing that did bother us, was, pardon the expression...sweaty feet. Even with a pair of heavy absorbent socks, your feet get very wet while riding. Scott recommends that you have an extra pair of socks with you and to change between motos.

However, everything is a trade-off. And, with the ability to seal the interior of the Scott boot off, no water or dirt can enter. On a muddy, wet track, the riders with Scott boots should have no effluvia get inside. Too, because the boot is plastic, water will not soak in (as with leather) and add to the weight of the boot.

This means that the owner of a pair of Scotts will be able to clean his boots by squirting them off with a hose, inside and out, then let them air dry.

Should you use Scott boots? If you're a working pro, you'd be foolish to use anything that offers less protection. We've seen more than one budding racing career come to a screeching halt from foot and ankle injuries.

Yes, the Scott boots are a hassle to put on. But, yes, if you value your lower extremities, you should consider them. They're not perfect, but they are the absolute maximum in protection. □

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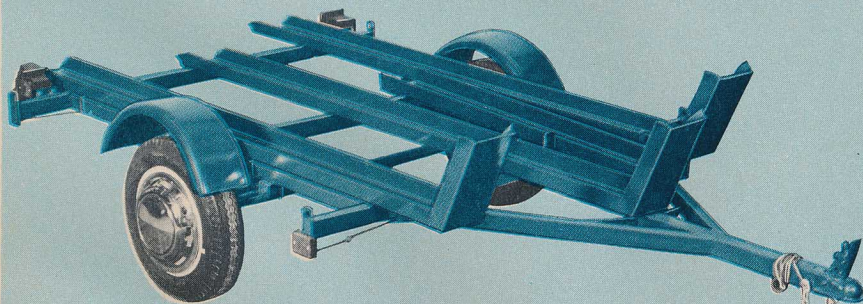


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