

COMPETITIVE EXERCISE

◀ Jeff Hicks performed high-flying, samurai tricks aboard the all-new KX250. The machine is a stable flier, and handling is first-rate.

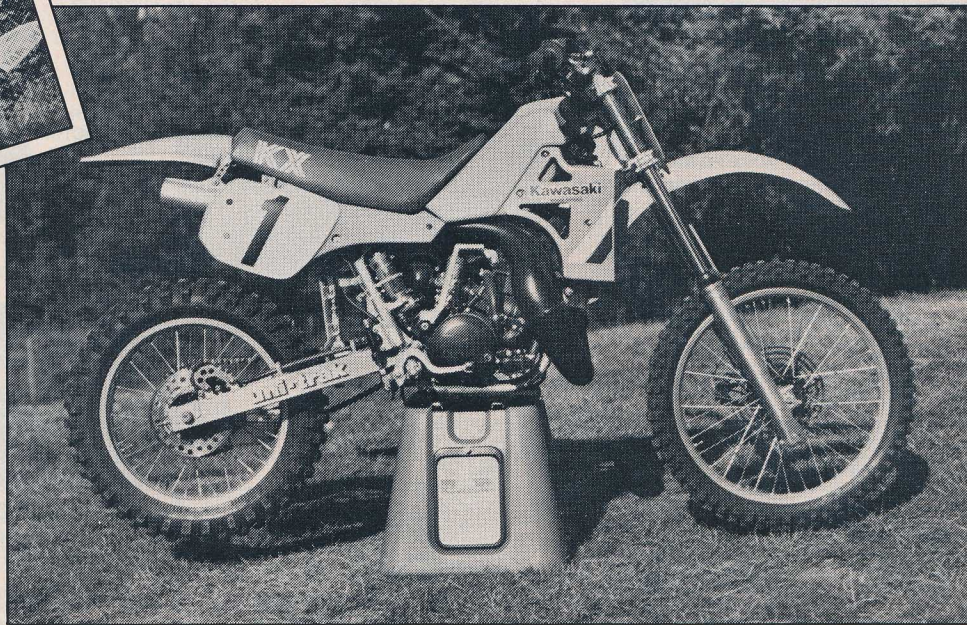
The KX250 has several new features that improve its overall performance and raceability. The tranny has been beefed up, the KIPS valve modified, and the shock now has a larger piston and shaft. ▼



By the revanchistic Staff of DIRT BIKE

For the past six months we've been looking at Jeff Ward's works Kawasaki 250, trying to figure out how close the bike would be to the '86 production unit. The top guns at Kawasaki insisted that the bikes the factory team riders were using were nearly identical to what would be offered to the general public, but we couldn't be sure just how true their claim was.

Until now. We've ridden the 1986 production KX250, and the predictions weren't too far off the mark.

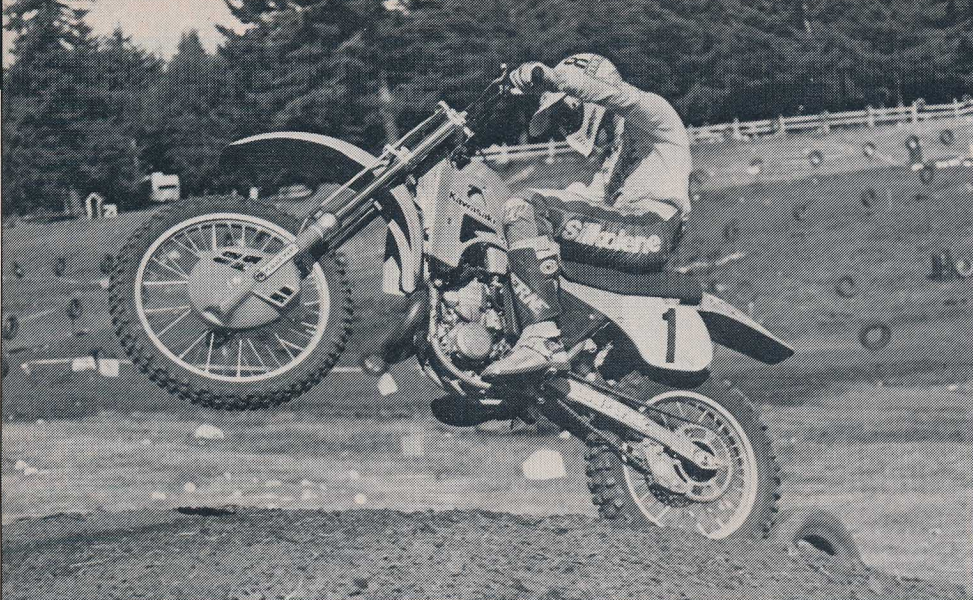


RIDING KAWASAKI'S '86 KX250

No more wild-hair
predictions



The new KX has no bad habits in the cornering department. The bike tracks well through the berms, so there's nothing to snivel about.

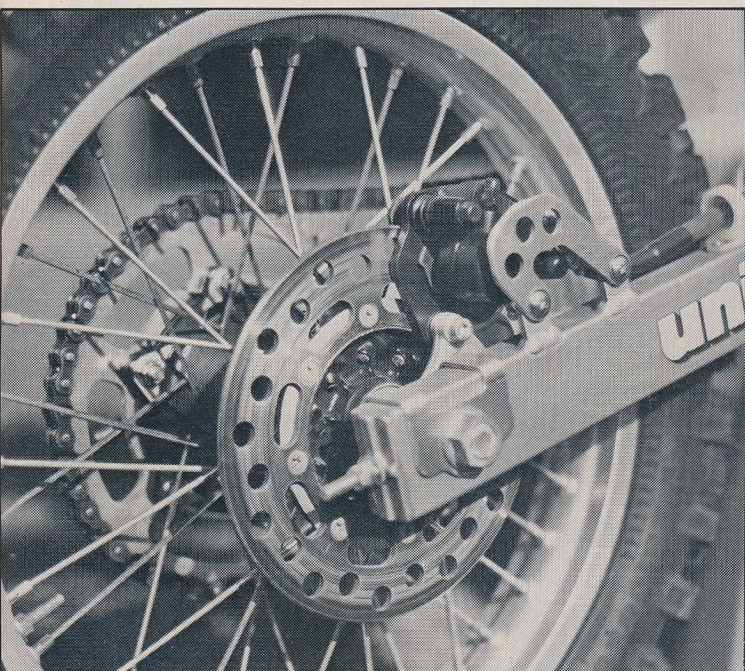


tered ignition timing and a refurbished KIPS system that combine to produce a wider, stronger powerband than the already impressive '85 motor. Compared to any of the 1985 250s we've ridden, the '86 KX motor hits harder and runs stronger through the entire powerband. It is safe to say that this motor will be a contender for the "Best of the Year" award.

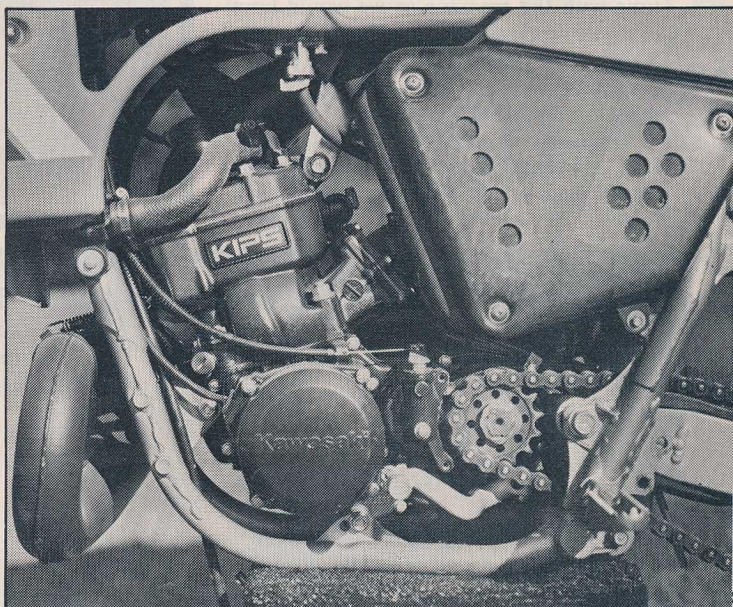
MORE SLEUTHING

Improvements for the new year aren't limited to the KX's engine. The single Uni-Trak shock has a larger-diameter shaft and pis-

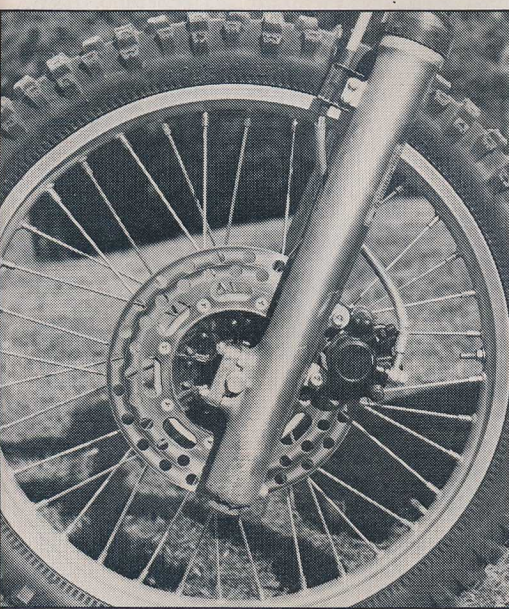
◀ *We had a chance to ride the 250 works Kawasaki and compare it with the new KX production model. Even Jeff Ward preferred the easy-to-ride, torquer production motor over the works horsepower maniac.*



The exclusive rear disc brake has excellent progression, doesn't fade, and isn't affected by mud or water.



The very same engine that won the 250cc National and Super-cross titles will be sold to the public in the '86 KX250. Jeff Ward chose to win his titles with a pre-production '86 engine rather than the works motor Kawasaki had built for him. The power is smooth throughout, and this year the clutch works.



◀ *The KYB forks feature a TCV (Travel Control Valve) which keeps the forks progressive throughout their motion, and a blow-off valve which prevents your arms from being torn from their sockets in a high-speed hit.*

SAMURAI EXCLUSIVE

Getting a ride on the newest quarter-liter KX proved simple enough—we met with Kawasaki's representatives at the Washougal motocross track the day after the National. Not only was the '86 production bike available, but Jeff Ward's works machine was there as well, prepped and ready for a direct comparison. We brought along 250 National rider Jeff Hicks to perform samurai tricks aboard the all-new KX250 and to use his input as a working pro to balance out our initial riding impressions.

BUZZ WORDS

Lighter, stronger, faster—all these adjectives apply to the newest KX250. The '86 engine has an increased compression ratio, al-

ton. The adjustable strut bolt's thickness has also been increased to prevent the failures that sometimes occurred on the '85 model. A TCV (Travel Control Valve) has been added to the forks to improve damping adjustability and overall control. The device is actually a rider-adjustable compression valve that increases damping as the forks are compressed. This is helpful in situations where the forks would normally compress to the point of making the machine hard to control—such as under hard braking. With the TCV system this type of nose-down behavior is significantly reduced, and our test ride confirmed the improvement. The fork also features a TCV system bypass—a "blow-off" valve—that takes over when the suspension hits a severe bump, thereby allowing full fork travel.

The Uni-Trak shock now has separate high- and low-speed compression adjusters. There's also a heat-sensitive 22-step rebound adjustment.

'86 KX250

ENOUGH TECHNICAL SNIVELING... HOW DOES IT RUN?

The works bike and the production unit have identical frame geometry, and their handling manners are quite similar. Cornering has improved a bit compared with the '85 model, and overall steering accuracy is very good. The suspension on the '86 model was a bit on the harsh side, but since the machine was new, this wasn't totally unexpected. Since this is only a riding impression, we'll have to wait and see just how the "real" test bike survives in the hands of our pro test pilots during the course of our standard comprehensive race testing sessions. Holley and Schmitz can't wait!

Even though we didn't spend as much time with the machine as we would have liked, we were quite impressed with the latest KX250. The bike is a refined, more powerful, better-handling version of last year's machine, and reliability seems to have been enhanced as well. Not bad for a first-impression, mid-August report, eh? Keep watching, there's more to come in the months to follow! □



1986 KAWASAKI KX250

Engine type	Liquid-cooled 2-stroke	Handlebar width	32.0 in.
Bore and stroke	70mm x 64.9mm	Tires:	
Displacement	249cc	Front	Bridgestone M23/21
Carburetion	Mikuni VM40SS	Rear	Bridgestone M22/18
Fuel tank capacity	2.1 gals.	Suspension:	
Recommended pre-mix	Kawasaki oil at 32:1	Front	KYB, adj. preload/comp., 11.8 in.
Clutch	Wet, multi-disc	Rear	KYB Uni-Trak shock, adj. comp./reb. damp. w/heat-compensation, 12.6 in.
Transmission	5-speed	Claimed weight, dry	212.8 lbs.
Gearing, front/rear	14/48	Distributor/Manufacturer:	
Ignition system	CDI	Kawasaki Motor Corp.	
Frame	Single downtube, double cradle	2009 E. Edinger Ave.	
Wheelbase	58.3 in.	Santa Ana, CA 92711	
Ground clearance	14.8 in.		
Seat height	37.8 in.		

PHOTOS & INFO: '86 KAWASAKIS

More off-road greenery



The '86 Kawasaki KX80 has a new frame design that features square-section tubing, a bottom link Uni-Trak rear suspension system that lowers the overall center of gravity and a removable rear subframe.



The '86 KX125 sports some improvements for the new season. The frame features a bottom-link Uni-Trak rear suspension that lowers the center of gravity. Other new items include a larger air-box and a removable aluminum rear subframe. The KX has a new look with its redesigned fenders and side panels, and disc brakes, front and rear.



Kawasaki's KDX80 is a good play bike or entry-level racer for the young off-roaders. The 82cc two-stroke features a six-speed tranny, lightweight frame and Uni-Trak rear suspension.



The '86 KX60 has many of the same features as the larger KX motocross weapons, such as liquid-cooling, six-speed transmission, Uni-Trak rear suspension and adjustable front forks.



Kawasaki's liquid-cooled Open class KX500 has incorporated the KIPS system used on the KX125 and 250 for 1986. The new Kawasaki big-bore also has front and rear disc brakes, wider footpegs, and a larger rear shock shaft.