

FIRST '86 TEST RIDES:

PRE-EXCLUSIVES!

'86 KX250 • '86 CR500 • '86 YZ250 •

'86 HUSKY 4-STROKE • FIRST LOOK AT HONDA'S WILD NEW FAT CAT 200!

DIRT BIKE

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NOVEMBER 1985

WPS 34355

**NEW YORK NATIONAL ENDURO:
SURPRISE! SURPRISE! HONDA
STINGS TEAM HUSKY!**

EXOTIC BIKE TESTS:

- SUPER-FAST XR MINI
- HONDA XLV750
- 200 LB. YZ250
- HONDA'S WORKS 4-STROKE

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CAN IMPROVE
YOUR MX SKILLS!**

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HONDA
CR500

**NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS GO
INTO SUDDEN-DEATH SHOWDOWNS:
WARD HAUNTED BY "INSTANT REPLAYS"!**



1986
HONDA
4x4

**4-WHEEL-DRIVE 350:
HONDA'S FLOATING BATTLESHIP
SINKS THE COMPETITION!**



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1963 vs. 1971 vs. 1985 SHOOTOUT



'86 YZ250



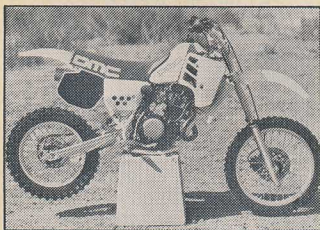
'86 KX250



'86 HUSKY 510TE



'86 HONDA 4x4



RADICAL XR MINI



'86 HONDA CR500

ON THE COVER:—Lots of new stuff for '86. Jeff Hicks twists the latest KX250 production 'crosser while our spy (cleverly disguised as a barm) snaps the shutter. Hard-working Steve Schmitz plows a sandy Hondaland corner aboard the equally hard-working '86 CR500 Honda. Photo by Fran Kuhn. Tom Webb got into his Lewis-and-Clark mode while blazing the Rubicon Trail aboard the incredible Honda Four Trax. Photo by David Gerig, who sneived profusely because his socks got wet. DeWest stayed late to arrange this startling array of off-road activity into a rather small rectangular layout, and Valley Film did the separations. Thank you, Don Pardo.

DIRT BIKE Magazine, ISSN 0364-1546 (Nov. '85) 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 © 1985 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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Even Mary Lou Retton couldn't top this one

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.

INTERIOR COLOR PHOTOGRAPHY:—Pages 22, 39, 45, 61, 64, 65—Fran Kuhn; Honda Four Trax, page 65—David Gerig.



1986 YAMAHA YZ250S

Is it real?

By the DIRT BIKE Staff

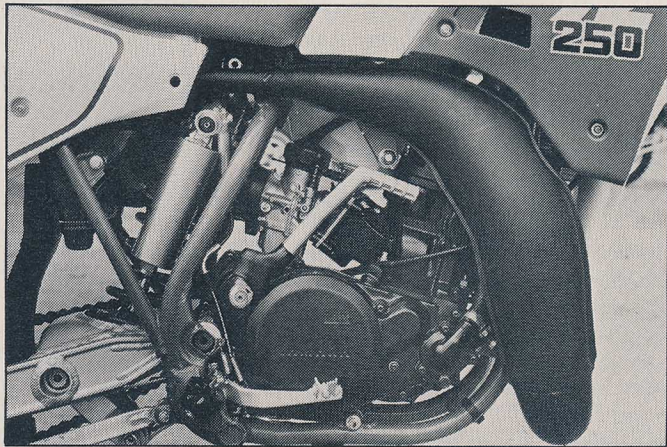
Even though Yamaha chose to mellow the mid-range in '86, the new YZ250 is still capable of rearranging monster berms. Almost everyone thought the motor put out plenty of power, and a few said it was easier to ride than last year's version. The new engine will also rev out a bit more than its predecessor—about 1000 rpm higher. The improved clutch action makes it easier to get out of the corners quickly.



Yamaha's Ohlins-designed rear shock is a drastic improvement over the '85's pogo-spring device. Ergonomics have been improved as well—the YZ's seat/peg/bar relationship is correct for more people this year. The new, lower tank allows for more weight transfer in the corners and makes for easier air-time maneuvers.



Lots of changes for '86: The newest YZ250 sports a low-sided, low-center-of-gravity fuel tank; a new, smaller disc brake; improved suspension; a new chassis (10mm longer); better clutch and shift action and better tires.



Gearbox ratios have been altered in '86: Third, fourth and fifth gears are more widely spaced. The newest version of Yamaha's Power Valve retains the same basic shape, but its overall size has been decreased to reduce thermal deformation of the cylinder. The redesigned cylinder head is held in place by a stronger head stay boss and seals with two O-rings instead of a single flat gasket. This is said to improve cooling through increased metal-to-metal contact between head and cylinder. The Monocross linkage system has been revised this year, being mounted below the aluminum swingarm for lower shock placement.

Yamaha's 1985 YZ250 wasn't the best 250 motocrosser of all time, but it wasn't that far off the mark, either. Score it an eight out of ten as an overall package. The middle-weight YZ's biggest problem was its confused suspension package—both the front and the rear suffered from damping and spring rate maladies that overshadowed the bike's above-average handling potential. Most serious racers were forced to lay out over \$500 to correct the oingo-boingo mannerisms of the Y-Zed. The aftermarket suspension guys loved the bike.

Of course, there was good reason to spend the extra cash on the Yamaha—the 1985 motor was absolutely fantastic! Most racers found the stock Yamaha's power to be more than a match for anything else on the line, which had us all wondering what Yamaha would do for an encore in '86.

A TOUGH ACT TO FOLLOW

Yamaha held its new model introduction shortly before this issue went to print, and we were anxious to see which ingredients of the 250 formula had been changed. Though we didn't have the bike long enough to do a

full-fledged test, we were able to spend several hours on the track—long enough to come away with a few initial riding impressions.

IS THE POWER ANY BETTER FOR '86?

Not necessarily, but it *is* different from last year's mid-range storm trooper. The new motor has approximately the same overall output as the '85 version, but the power doesn't build as quickly or hit with as much authority. The YZ is by no means slow; it's just that it comes on the pipe a little flatter than its predecessor. (It's also willing to rev out more than last year's mill—the power continues to build about 1000 rpm higher than the '85 motor.) Some of our testers missed last year's maniacal mid-range hit, while others felt it was plenty strong anyway, and with the milder low-to-mid power transition, easier to ride, as well.

HANDLING AND SUSPENSION

A lot of good news here. The overall suspension package has been much improved for '86, especially at the rear. The new YZs feature an Ohlins-design Yamaha shock that feels almost, if not as good as last year's

aftermarket items. Both rebound and compression characteristics are refined, and the new heavier spring rate suits a wider range of riders. Overall control at the rear is very good. It looks as though the aftermarket guys are in for a rough year.

Though the YZ's KYB forks have a long list of subtle improvements, their action isn't as refined as we'd hoped for. They feel a little smoother than before, and the new, heavier spring rate is closer to being in the ballpark, but overall performance still feels a bit harsh. We'll need more time to play around with different settings, oils, etc., before a final verdict can be rendered.

With its improved suspension the YZ's good handling manners become more apparent. Cornering is accurate, and the new, lower fuel tank allows the rider to transfer more weight to the front end, keeping the bike headed in the desired direction. A small amount of headshake was noticed while braking heavily over rough ground. Nothing to get too concerned about, but it *was* there and proved to be somewhat distracting on occasion.

1986 YZ250S

The bike is well poised during flight maneuvers. It doesn't get into any compromising positions mid-flight, and will respond to the pilot's demands for midair corrections without special clearance from the tower.

THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

Shifting on the '86 YZ250 has been improved, in part due to the slightly longer YZ490 lever, in part due to internal shift dog modifications. Third, fourth and fifth gear ratios are wider this season—they work well with the revised powerband. The clutch actuating arm has been extended to lighten the pull required at the lever. It works well. The new front brake disc diameter is shortened by 20mm. Both brakes are strong and progressive—we didn't get any complaints about either once they were correctly adjusted. New Bridgestone M23 (front) and M22 (rear) tires replace last year's M37s and M38s. The new knobbies are superior performers on hard-pack, while providing acceptable traction on the softer stuff.

THE VERDICT, PLEASE

We like the new YZ250. The improved suspension is, in itself, worth the price of admission, and while the motor is a little less overwhelming than last year's, it still has plenty of muscle. All in all, a good package, and we'll have a more in-depth report in the near future. Stay tuned. □



YAMAHA YZ250S

Engine type	Single-cylinder, liquid-cooled, 2-stroke	Seat height	955mm (37.6 in.)
Bore and stroke	68mm x 68mm	Rake/trail	28°/119mm
Displacement	246cc	Wet weight, no fuel	213 lbs.
Carburetion	38mm Mikuni	Tire size and type:	
Fuel tank capacity	8 L (2.1 gals.)	Front	Bridgestone M23 80/100-21
Lubrication	Pre-mix	Rear	Bridgestone M22 100/100-18
Gearbox ratios:		Suspension, type and travel:	
1	2.142:1	Front	43mm KYB telescopic, adj. comp., 305mm (12.0 in.)
2	1.750:1	Rear	Monocross, single Ohlins-design BASS shock, adj. comp./reb., 320mm (12.6 in.)
3	1.368:1	Intended use	Motocross
4	1.142:1	Country of origin	Japan
5	0.956:1	Retail price, approx.	N/A
Gearing, front/rear	14/50	Distributor/Manufacturer:	Yamaha Motor Corp., USA 6555 Katella Ave. Cypress, CA 90630
Ignition	CDI		
Recommended spark plug	NGK B8EV		
Silencer/spark arrester	Yes/no		
Wheelbase	1470mm (57.9 in.)		
Ground clearance	340mm (13.4 in.)		

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