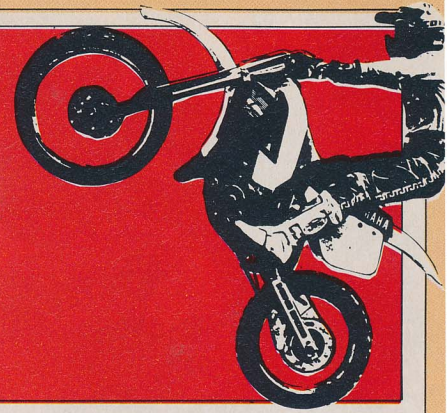


Late-breaking sports!

1986 YAMAHA YZ80/YZ125

No more blues for the red & white?

From the DIRT BIKE Metro Desk



The phone call came, and it wasn't a minute too soon. A few hastily written notes were scrawled on a notepad, then the receiver hit the floor as the copy boy rushed from Metro Desk to the Art Department.

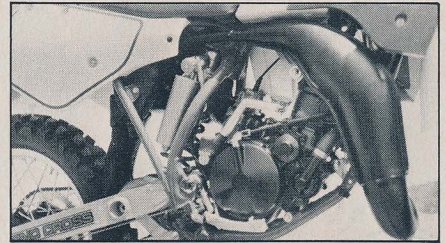
Hold the presses!

Yamaha's Willy Amaradio dangled helplessly at the end of the abandoned receiver. His message: The 1986 YZ125 Yamaha was now on American shores and would be

available immediately for photos during a brief technical seminar. Not only that, but the newest YZ80 would make its debut at the same meeting.

A quick glance at the calendar revealed a quickly approaching deadline, but no matter, this was just too good to pass by—the presses would have to wait another day.

We grabbed our notebooks and cameras and headed out to the secret rendezvous.



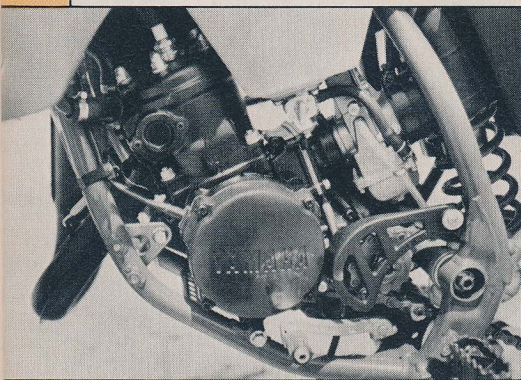
Surprise: Yamaha elected to retain the BASS rear-braking system on the '86 125. The rear suspension duties are handled by an Ohlins shock built to Yamaha's specs, and the linkage system has been revised for the new multi-adjustable shock. Frame design is all new and features a boxed-in swingarm pivot, and the new footpegs are lower than the '85 Skywalkers.



Yamaha's 1986 YZ125 is new from the knobbies on up. The biggest and most important changes are engine related, but the rest of the machine is revised as well.



What's new for the '86 YZ80? How about a front disc brake for starters . . . or stoppers, as it were. Though not as radically revised as the YZ125, the 80 is nonetheless improved for the new season.



At the heart of the matter: This is the engine Yamaha fanatics have been waiting for—at least that's what we hear. Highly reliable sources (spies) indicate that there's not a 125 around—stock or modified—that has the legs to run with this motor. The engine hits its stride right off the bottom, rockets into the mid-range, then blasts off in a frenzy of eyeball-flattening top-end power. The motor gets its fuel from a huge 36mm flat-slide Mikuni mixer.



Last year's Showa forks were shelved and replaced by a pair of Kayaba telescopics. A newer, lighter front hub design does away with the Z-spokes of the past, and the disc brake unit is lighter as well. Damping is rumored to be much improved compared with the 1985 YZs.



Yamaha replaced the steel swingarm on last year's YZ80 with a stronger, light-weight aluminum unit. Note the redesigned fuel tank—much of the gas rides in the lower side reservoir, keeping the overall center of gravity low as well. □