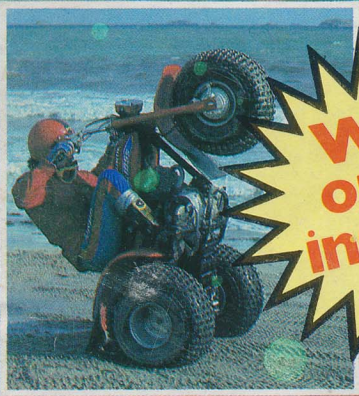


DIRT BIKE

Rider

A Motor Cycle News magazine
July/August 1982 85p



Win
one-
inside!

**ATCs-
Are
they
here to
stay?**

**Hudson
should never
have won-Jobe**

**Dave Thorpe-
Exclusive
colour feature**



COMMENT

IT used to be the case that if something was running smoothly and successfully you left it alone. Nowadays it seems that the men who govern our sport have a different philosophy - if something is running smoothly and successfully for the benefit of the majority then it must be time for a change.

Both the ACU at national level and the FIM at international have recently taken giant backward steps for moto cross by messing around with systems and procedures which even if they had thrown up problems, at least worked to the good of the majority.

This year, the ACU's moto cross committee introduced a new scoring system for British championships with the intention of: a) making downfield racing more intense and b) easing the problem of selecting candidates for relegation to the support series.

What they have succeeded in doing with what is undoubtedly the most complicated score-system in use anywhere in the world is to reward consistent mediocrity at the expense of race-winning talent which might not exhibit the same consistency; make sure that no-one injured early in the season can get back into the reckoning; and make points chart keeping an almost impossibly-confusing task.

What they have failed to do is make

downfield racing more intense though it must be admitted they have made it easier for themselves to decide who goes down to the support series and who stays up. But most importantly the new system is well on its way to producing final championship positions which bears, at least in the middle ranks, little or no relationship to the true standing of the riders.

The series is only half over but the ACU should admit they have made a mistake and return to the system that served them well since 1978. The riders don't like the new system, the fans don't understand it and it hasn't achieved what it set out to do.

The ACU isn't alone in experimenting with changes this season. The FIM has changed its system of qualification for grands prix to almost universal condemnation.

They are looking into the possibility of bringing in a new scoring method for the GPs which will give points down to 15th position. One of the plans they are looking at is a French idea but the other is more interesting. It's a British system - the one we abandoned at the start of this season. Interesting eh?



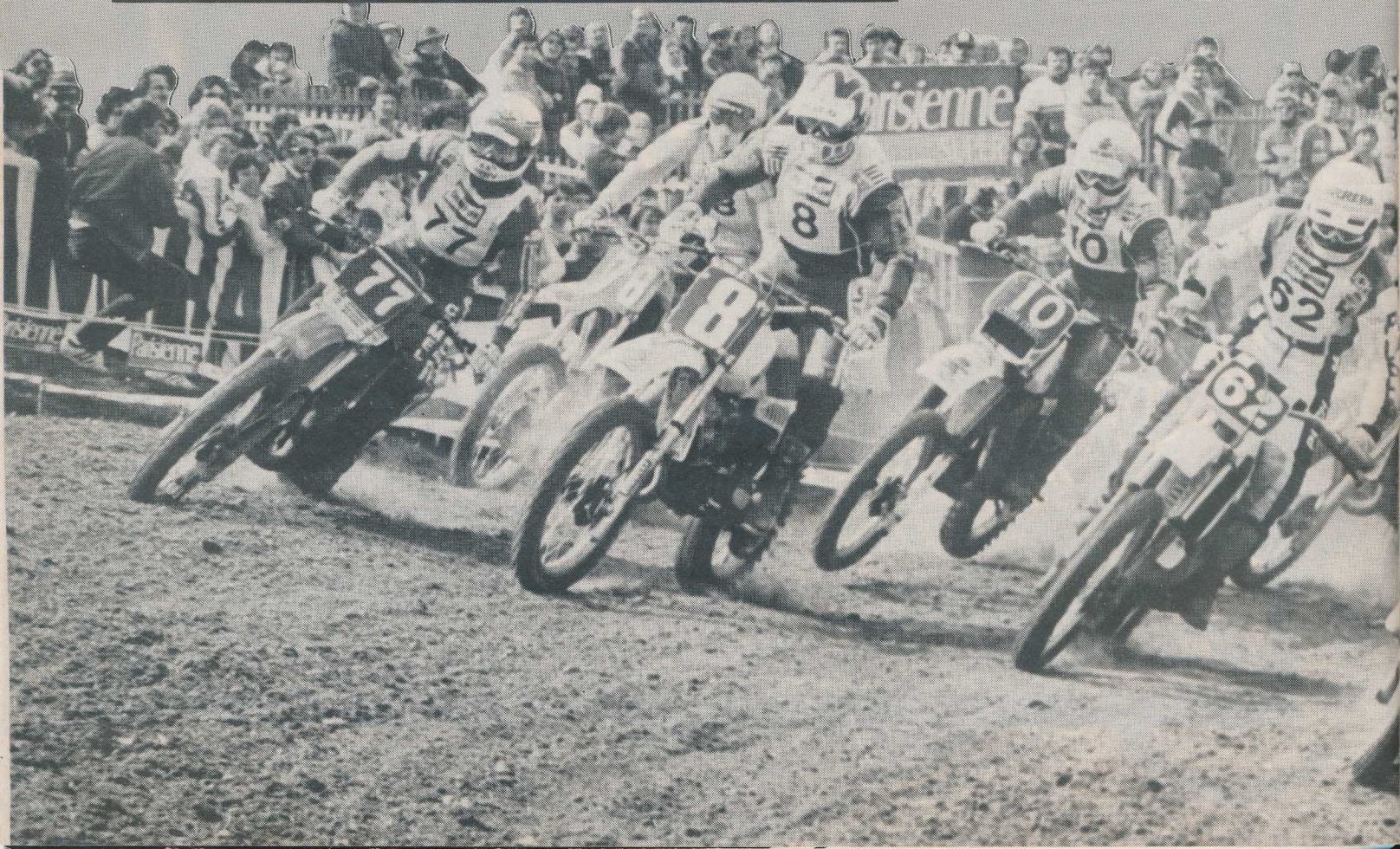
EDITOR

COMPETITION WINNER



Lucky winner of our recent 'Win a Yamaha' competition is Neil Titterington, seen receiving his prize here from Jim Tyrer of Tyrer Brothers Motorcycles, Preston.

Neil, 26, from Ingleton, Lancashire is married with one child and works as a fork lift driver.



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EDITOR: Paul Fowler
PRODUCTION EDITOR: Tony Smith
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER: John Noble
EDITORIAL SECRETARY: Lesley Nagys
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Andy Foulkes
CONTRIBUTORS: Bev Bridges, Jack Burnicle, Martin Christie, Nick Haskell, Alex Hodgkinson, Peter Howdle, Eric Kitchen, Don Morley, Jim Reynolds, Harry van Hemmen.
EDITORIAL OFFICE: Dirt Bike Rider, P.O. Box 11, Huxloe Place, High Street, Kettering, Northants, NN16 8SS. (Phone 0536-84692). Telex: 34557 - Dirtbike

ADVERTISING OFFICE: Dirt Bike Rider, 8 Herbal Hill, London EC1R 5JB. (Phone: 01-837-3669)

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Martin Christie, aboard the latest Suzuki enduro, finds the PE pedigree is

A LONG time in the wings, the new PE175X finally takes a bow in this country and marks a major leap forward in Japanese enduro machines. It is very good and the only question it raises is why it's taken Suzuki so long to get round to it.

The introduction of the original PE175 in 1978 scooped the clubmans market, mostly of those who were moving up from trail bikes on to something rather more competitive. Based on the 125 moto cross chassis, it was light, powerful, and had better suspension than most other bikes on the enduro circuits.

It was a perfect mass-production model.

It's ironic to reflect that it was really the introduction of bikes like the PE175 that opened up enduros in this country to a lot more people than had previously competed. They were moved up from being trail riders to full-blown racers, able to tackle terrain and time schedules that had previously been beyond their reach.

The irony is that as enduros became more competitive as a result, the limitations of the original PE175 became apparent. Two more models followed in subsequent years with a little more power and a little more suspension movement, but despite the alloy swinging arm, the package was still the same and rapidly dated.

The first model was probably the best of the line. The more they tried to uprate it with long travel suspension, the peakier power, the harder it was to ride. It needed a complete rethink.

The new bike is that rethink. The name and the basic engine are the same, but virtually everything else has changed, and almost all to the good. The price, of course, is most of the bad news, at almost £1,200.

The most obvious change is the 'Full-Floater' rear suspension system using Suzuki's bell crank leverage system mounted under the seat, but that doesn't just mean better control of the back end. The chassis is about four inches longer, with a wheelbase of 59 inches making it exceptionally stable on two wheels.

All of that length is in the massive rear arm – pushed right up to the gearbox for chain consistency – because the front spindle is actually nearer the bike: Not only to reduce the length, but also to improve the steering, the new PE has two more degrees of head angle – 62 degrees and a shade more than half an inch less trail – 4.45 inch.

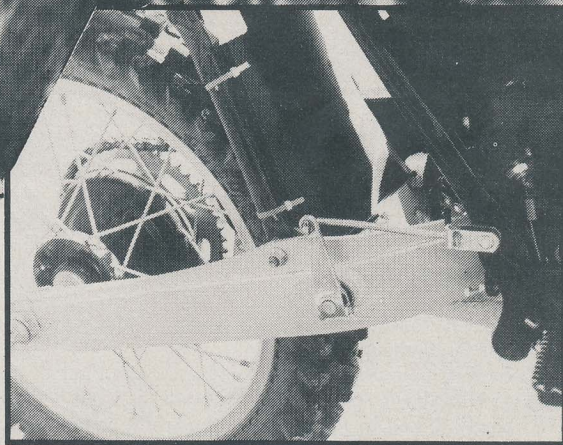
The difference overall is very dramatic. I really liked the original PE175, but to be frank had become increasingly disillusioned with subsequent models, probably because I'd been riding other, more competitive machinery. One lap of the test track on the new bike was enough to convince me I was back on something more substantial.

Gone is the indifferent, rather lazy handling and steering. The Floater is precise and responds immediately, in a fashion that's been

Back with



The rear brake is operated by a rod which pivots through a clever spindle on the swinging arm connecting it to the hub on the other side.



a vengeance!

Back...

more familiar to European makes than those coming from the Orient.

The old PE had two very definite handling traits. It was slow to turn and preferred to be driven through ruts and round berms rather than pivot on the front wheel. Equally it was very twitchy at speed in a straight line, particularly if it had to cross ripples.

No longer. The Floater goes anywhere at any speed in confidence. Now you can square off the turns and get people on the inside. Now you can pass them down the back straight without carrying your back wheel under your armpit. Stability and speed are the keynotes of the new bike.

But there's more. There are a whole host of detail changes. Engine power has been pruned, losing two horsepower at the top end for the sake of a broader and more usable spread of torque, very much like the original version. The bike is fast enough, and it saves a lot of gearchanging to give you a smoother ride and more time to weigh up the track.

It still has the same close ratio six-speed gearbox on tap, with an ultra-light clutch, and a slick positive change mechanism. Like the brake pedal, the gear lever now has a folding tip, though I did find the large stub wore the skin off my big toe.

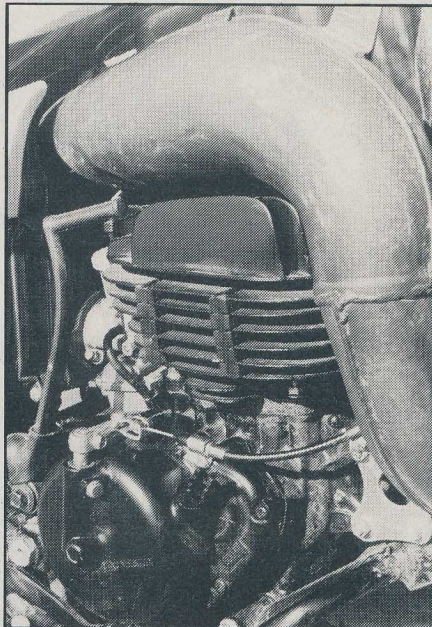
The brakes deserve a big mention. New hubs front and back give a very good feel, and a very powerful action. The rear is operated by a rod which pivots through a clever spindle on the swinging arm connecting it to the hub on the opposite side. This allows a rapidly-detachable rear wheel on cush drive rubbers, with the brake and sprocket still in place. Like the front wheel, all associated nuts are tackled with a multi-purpose spanner which clips onto the fork yolk.

Another useful touch of the adjustment side is the adoption of click-stop adjusters on the handlebar levers which save you messing with threads. It just needs two fingers to set the controls instantly.

Rather more complicated are other tasks, like getting at the air filters – there are two of them, one either side of the main suspension strut. The sidepanels have to be removed, and they have awkward spacers behind the crosshead screws, which immediately fall on the grass and get lost. Even if you do find them, you'll spend half an hour matching them up with the correct screw because they come in different lengths.

In contrast the air filter system itself, underneath, is a magnificent structure, totally sealed-up to seat level, with a large chamber capacity, two side drain vents, and a further sluice pipe.

The air box must have occupied the computer all afternoon, it is so elaborately over-designed to make maximum use of all the nooks and crannies. By the same logic, the swinging arm pivot was tucked in really close



The motor has come in for a lot of attention with two horsepower pruned from the top end for the sake of more attractive torque figures.

SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE: Single cylinder two-stroke.

BORE AND STROKE: 62mm x 57mm

CAPACITY: 172cc

COMPRESSION RATIO: 7.9 to 1

CARBURATION: 34mm Mikuni

POWER OUTPUT: 24bhp @ 8,000rpm

STARTER: Primary kick

TRANSMISSION: Wet, multi plate

CLUTCH: Gear

PRIMARY DRIVE: Six speed

FINAL DRIVE: 520 chain (106 links)

CHASSIS: Semi-double cradle frame

FRONT SUSPENSION: Telescopic fork oil/air assisted

BRAKES: Single linked shock with progressively adjustable springing and four-way adjustable damping. 130mm drum (front and rear)

TYRES: 3.00 x 21" (front)

4.10 x 18" (rear)

FUEL TANK: 2.3 gallons (inc. reserve)

DRY WEIGHT: 228lb

PRICE: £1,199

IMPORTERS: Suzuki Off-Road Division

TEST BIKE SUPPLIED BY: Bob Gollner Motorcycles, London Road, Waterlooville, Hants.

to the gearbox sprocket to give optimum chain run. The only thing is, computers don't have to put new chains on. It's left a gap barely wider than the chain itself between the underneath of the swinging arm and the supporting runner, and because it's tucked underneath the lower cradle of the frame, you can't get your hand in.

It has to be seen in the future how long the rear suspension linkages last up in hard use through sand and all the other nasty things British events throw at it. On that we'll keep you posted because our test bike is currently being raced by former sidecar passenger Mike Ripper.

Like the Maico in the last issue, it's a privately-owned machine, and not one specially prepared by the importer, so it gives a fairer idea of what the average buyer is likely to find. It came straight out of the crate, was rapidly run in, and did the Corinium enduro the next day with no problems at all. At time of writing, it's now got three medals.

The linkage question, of course, hangs over several of the 1982 models, not so much through basic design, as the system obviously works brilliantly, but just because most owners are so bad at doing any preparation more involved than taking the spark plug out. The Floater will need dismantling and re-greasing regularly to give good service, and in sand that means after every event. The system uses eight moving parts – the bell crank itself runs on a needle roller bearing, and the pushrods have ball bearings protected by 'O' rings.

To Suzuki's credit, they supply an excellent handbook with the bike. The fifteen special service tools needed to do the job are a little disturbing, but I don't think they're all necessary. Equally the service schedule which lists a new piston ring every 120 miles, and a new piston, all cables, and both sprockets every 300 miles.

It's the attention to small details, and fittings that remind you it's a Japanese motor cycle. Frankly, when riding it, you could easily be convinced it had another name on the tank. When I stepped off I took a quick look at the manufacturers plate to make sure it hadn't been made under licence in Italy. The bike has that feel, taut and purposeful, with lightning reactions.

It hasn't entirely lost the familiar forgiving lope to the suspension which gives an armchair-like ride. The difference is that now it's only the rider that feels it. The bike itself is staying straight on line as it was meant to.

There's no doubt that the Floater has achieved the trick of providing a comfortable ride, without the associated ill-handling when chucked around at speed. The progressive system copes with the changing load, and despite the overall length, the new steering geometry makes it turn at will instead of under duress.

It's a shame for Suzuki that only the 175 Floater is available for enduro, and there are no plans for a 250 at the moment. Last year's more flexible 250 PE, in a floater frame, would be an equally formidable combination. However, I doubt that many people on the new 175 will need more. The PE is back with a vengeance.

More than just a fashionable update on the original PE 175 the new 'X' is a major leap forward in Japanese enduro machinery.



The XR200R. Makes light work of the heavy going.

Get bogged down in the mire on a peaky lightweight two-stroke and you could end up pushing the bike out under your own steam.

But get into the same situation on our XR200R Enduro and it could be a different story; with its gutsy 195cc four-stroke single-cylinder engine churning out dollops of low-down torque, you can simply chug your way out, leaving the two-strokes screaming in their own wheelspin.

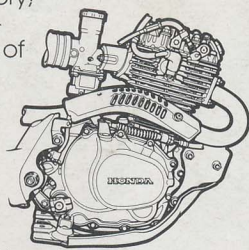
Everything about the XR200R, the bike that Malcolm Partridge won last year's Welsh 4-stroke Enduro Championship on, has been designed to make life easy. On, and off the course.

Compared to a two-stroke, the XR200R requires little effort to keep in tune and on the move. Its single-cylinder engine features an overhead cam with simple screw-type adjusters for the valves, no-maintenance CD Ignition, and primary kickstarting with an automatic compression release. And, of course, it doesn't need the regular decokes, piston rings and rebores that a two-stroke does.

Gearbox has six speeds, drive chain is a long-lasting 520 sealed unit, and the power output is a meaty 19PS at 9,000rpm, with torque at a chunky 1.7kg-m.

The engine is used as a stressed part of the frame, which increases frame rigidity as well as increasing ground clearance without increasing seat height.

Front forks are a sturdy 35mm, leading axle and air-adjustable, while the rear rides on our unique Pro-



Link single shock system with remote aluminium reservoir.

Both damping and spring preload are adjustable.

For good, long-term stability and low maintenance, the steering head is fitted with tapered roller bearings, and the sturdy box-section swingarm pivots on needle roller bearings.

Both front and rear brakes are drums, the front one being our new water-resistant design.

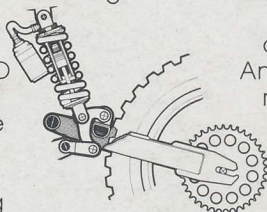
Even the smallest detail has been considered in the effort to remove the effort from the hard slog of an enduro. Take wheel removal, for instance, the rear wheel can be slipped out with the spindle still in the hub, and there's even a lip on the swingarm to guide the axle and hub back into place. The brake cable unhooks without the use of tools, and there's a groove on the backing plate that slides onto a retaining lug on the swingarm. Chain adjustment is a cinch with snail-cam

adjusters, and both the gear lever and the brake lever have folding tips.

And every XR200R sold through our network of specialist competition dealers will be street-legal.

Perhaps one of the best things about the XR200R though, is its combination of

low and mid range grunt and light weight; with a dry weight of only 101 kg it's hardly any heavier than its nearest two-stroke rivals.



HONDA
Engineering the future

XR200R-C Enduro £1245 (Price includes manuf. delivery, m/cycle tax, VAT and 12 month unlimited mileage warranty, exc. PDI, no. plate, etc.)
(Sold only through our 20 Off Road Competition dealers. For address of your nearest dealer, please phone Honda UK on 01-995 9381.)

