

**SCOTTISH SIX-DAY TRIAL: FULL COLOUR REPORT**

# **DIRT BIKE RIDER**

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**KMX125 RIDE  
IMPRESSION**

**We ride  
Andy Nicholls'  
YZ250**

**GEORGES JOBE**  
The Counter-attack



**Plus your chance  
to win one!**

Luscombe/Leek  
Fantic Trials  
Outfit Tested

**MAKING  
A KX80  
QUICKER!**

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**The 1986 pre-production Yamaha YZ250 we rode in France late last year left a fairly favourable impression. But how would it compare on home tracks? That's what we set out to discover when we got our hands on the one that's taken Andy Nicholls to the top of the British 250 Championship points table.**

**I**T wasn't really our intention to grab Nicholls' bike. It's just that Mitsui Yamaha no longer had a standard YZ on its test fleet. Such has been the demand.

In fact Mitsui has been caught short, although they'd probably call it selective marketing. The truth is that virtually the entire '86 Yamaha range was sold (to dealers) by the end of last year.

For 1986 Yamaha has gone for an update rather than radical change. We outlined the changes and our impressions back in the December '85 issue. And asked the question: Is it really this good?

Engine mods have mainly been confined to the powervalve, reducing its diameter to the size of that employed on the 125. Apart from the aim of eliminating heat distortion, the smaller valve means better low down power. Other changes include an O-ring seal between the cylinder and head, plus a trick new exhaust pipe.

The result is a more powerful and grunty powerplant – a claimed whopping 52hp this year – which should make it ideal for British conditions.

But let's go back to the powervalve because this is where Yamaha appears to have the jump on the opposition. Since Yamaha first introduced it in the late '70s, the powervalve has become synonymous with strong bottom and mid-range power, although often to the detriment of top end performance. However, it took little time for tuners to sort out the problem.

As a result, the quarter litre Yamaha engine has always been held in high regard, even if the opposition has begun to catch up in powervalve technology.



*British 125 and 250 Championship leader Andy Nicholls gets up and down to it on his Mitsui Yamaha.*

# YZ? WHY NOT?



Last year's YZ250 engine found plenty of friends among the American stadium fraternity; its raspy bottom-end ensuring a quick exit out of tight turns to the inevitable double jump (oops, sorry, we're not supposed to mention them anymore!)

And speaking of double jumps, brings us to Matchams Park where we hijacked Andy Nicholls' '86 YZ250, the same bike that's taken him to first place in the British 250 Championship after two rounds. Surprisingly it's only slightly modified, all the bolt-ons being available through normal retail channels.

The standard fork springs have been replaced with heavier poundage Simons items with a Simons Anti Cav kit added as well. The improvement over the bikes we rode in France was immediately noticeable.

A Slehton pipe sharpens up the exhaust note, allowing the



# YZ? WHY NOT?

engine to rev out nice and freely. In addition, a Fire Power black box has been fitted – it slots in between the top and bottom coil – altering the power curve for broader rev range.

Up the back Nicholls has slipped in a Dutch made Hulco shock, the original of the Ohlins and White Power, with all manner of compression and rebound damping, plus internal shim adjustment for ultra fine tuning. Again, the difference can be felt. While the standard unit is good, the rock hard French test track soon highlighted fading.

The Hulco shock works well with the new suspension linkages. Similar to the factory 500, the leverage ratio is smaller at the beginning of the stroke, but the final result is a healthy 315mm of travel, 5mm up on last year.

On top Renthal bars replace the standard piping. And just as well. The standard bars have a horrible bend which are hard on the wrists and have your elbows up around your

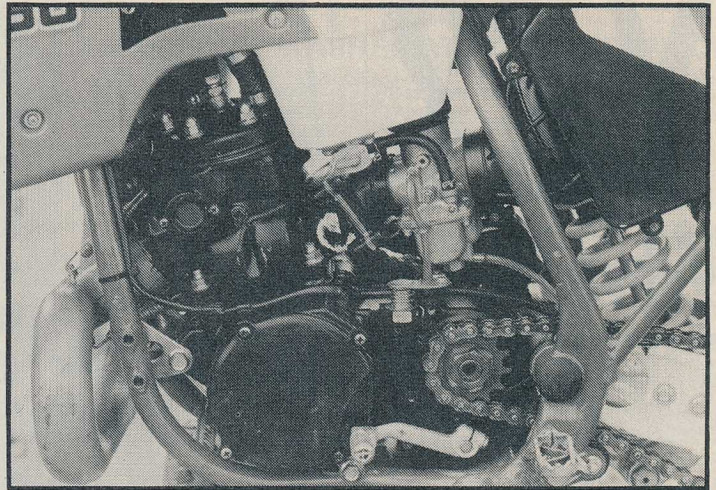
ears. Controls remain the same as '85, although Yamaha has come up with softer grips.

The fitting of Renthals has improved the riding position. From being good, it's now excellent. The '86 seat is flatter, while the new lower rads and associated plastic work means weight can be brought well forward for carving sharp turns. Footpegs are high enough to avoid dragging in all but the deepest sand.

Also new in the bodywork line is the eight litre fuel tank and the full-sized front numberplate. Gone, hopefully, forever is the old colander grill spud strainer. However, we're not too keen to see the fork gaiters removed from the '86 bike. Yamaha's reasoning for this omission? The fork oil runs cooler. . .

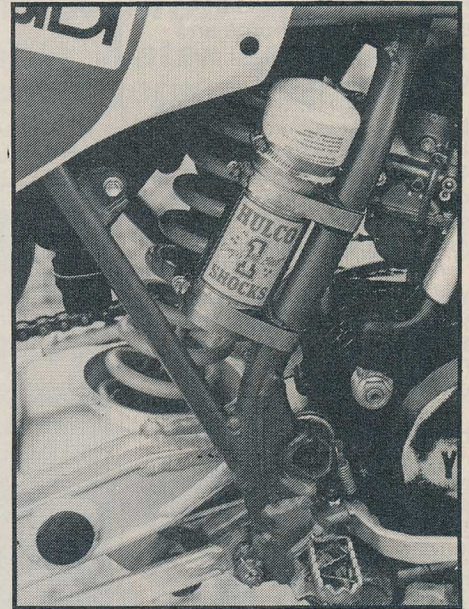
Starting's a formality. Normally two or three prods will bring the engine into life. Second gear is best for the holeshoot, flicking quickly through to third.

We felt the Yamaha liked changing early. There was nothing to be gained from revving it. With its excellent mid-range, the YZ will pull quickly through to the next



*Above: A Slechten pipe improves engine performance already up on last year's YZ through Yamaha's cunning redesign of the power valve system.*

*Right: A tip from the top... Andy Nicholls has fitted a Hulco shock to his Yamaha and that cut down plastic bottle securely screwed over the top of the reservoir ensures wandering fingers don't tamper with his settings.*



# YZ? WHY NOT?

gear. However, it does rev which is handy for shorter straights.

Stock tyres are the excellent Pirelli Sandcross variety, although we'd suggest fitting one of the new MT44s up front. It's a real gripper, and the same tyre Dave Thorpe and Andre Malherbe spent time developing last year.

Another tip is to replace the bottom engine bolt (the longest one) with a 10mm job. This tightens up the frame and cures the little bit of flexing some of the faster YZ owners may have experienced.

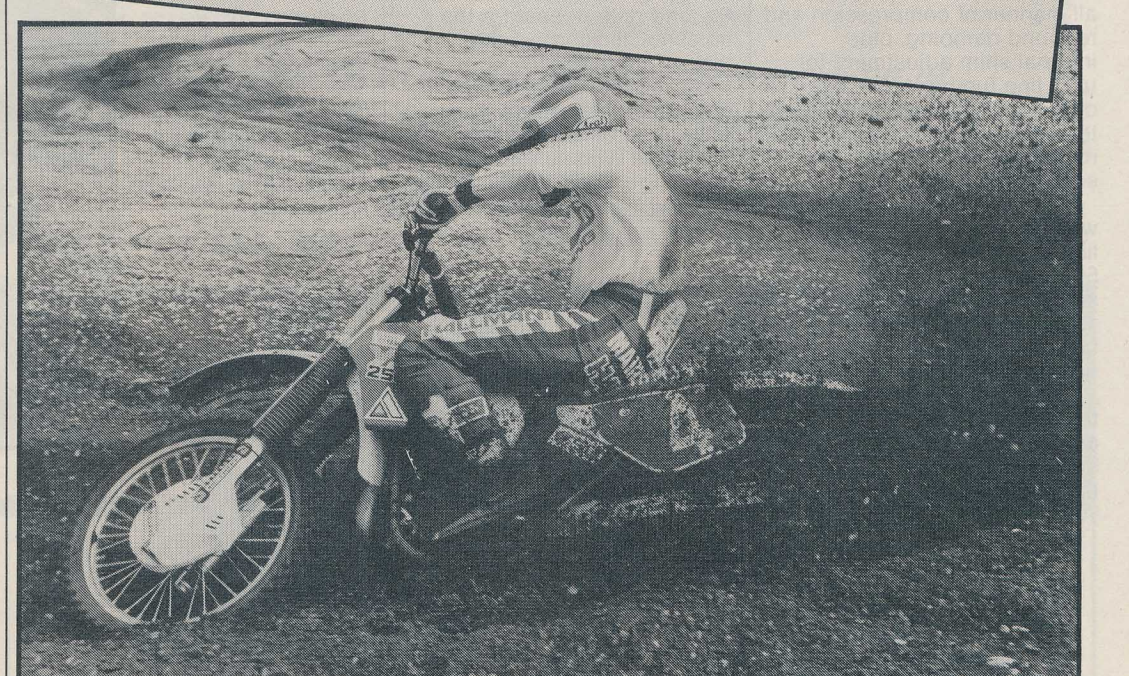
All up, the Nicholls YZ250 is a very complete package. Of course it's better than standard, and the mods are not out of the reach of any owner.

But remember, setting up a bike like this takes time. It's not a one-day job. The idea is to take it in stages, starting with the suspension, then the engine, then going back to the suspension, all the time thinking and learning.



*TOP: Airborne attack; the '86 YZ250 is as good as ever off jumps; there's some stadium breeding waiting to get out.*

*RIGHT: The seating position is excellent, made better by fitting Renthal's Honda-bend bars. Pirelli Sandcross tyres aid what is already a sharp turning bike.*



## TECHFAX

### SPECIFICATIONS

Price (inc VAT and delivery)..... £1999.15  
 Engine ..... liquid-cooled, single cyl 2-stroke torque induction  
 Capacity ..... 246cc  
 Bore & stroke ..... 68mm x 68mm  
 Carburation ..... UM38mm Mikuni  
 Ignition ..... CDI  
 Max power (claimed) ..... 52hp @ 8250rpm  
 Max torque (claimed) ..... 4.63 kg/m @ 7500rpm  
 Transmission ..... 5 speed  
 Clutch ..... wet, multi-plate

### CYCLE PARTS

Tyres ..... Pirelli Sandcross  
 Front ..... 3.00 x 21  
 Rear ..... 4.25 x 18



Brakes:  
 Front ..... 220mm disc  
 Rear ..... drum  
 Suspension:  
 Front ..... Telescopic, air assist, 300mm travel  
 Rear ..... Monocross, 320mm travel

### DIMENSIONS

Weight ..... 95.6kg

Wheelbase ..... 1470mm  
 Ground clearance ..... 340mm  
 Seat height ..... 955mm  
 Fuel capacity ..... 8 litres

### SPARE PARTS (inc VAT)

Air filter ..... £27.42  
 Piston kit ..... £44.78  
 Rings only ..... £7.32  
 Base gasket ..... £2.69  
 Inner head gasket ..... £0.93  
 Outer head gasket ..... £2.04  
 Front sprocket ..... £9.43  
 Rear sprocket ..... £60.52  
 Front fender ..... £9.69  
 Rear fender ..... £40.49  
 Throttle cable ..... £4.49  
 Clutch cable ..... £4.00

Machine supplied by: Mitsui Yamaha, Oakcroft Road, Chessington, Surrey. Phone 01 397 5111.