

EXCLUSIVE 2005 450 SHOOTOUT

DIRT BIKE

WPS 34355

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NOVEMBER 2004

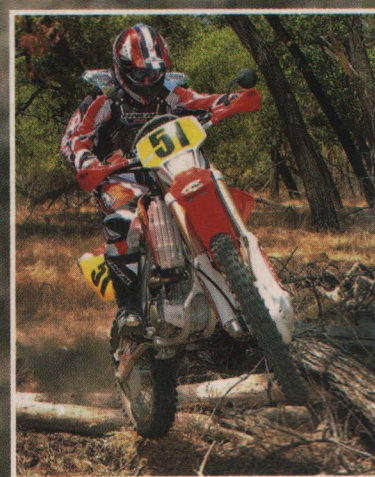


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The KX handles semi-supercross tracks like StarWest with ease.

2005 KAWASAKI KX125

Scream'n green



► Bubba can do the seemingly impossible on a KX125 against a field of well-prepped four strokes; what about you? Kawasaki didn't make any drastic changes to the KX125 for 2005, but instead worked on refining it further with durability in mind. Visually, the '05 looks exactly like the 2004, just with some new graphics. Is it the fastest 125 on the starting gate? And most importantly, can you beat a 250 four stroke on it? Because there is only one Bubba.

WHAT'S NEW

Motor improvements were geared more towards reliability and they include better oil lubrication through the left crankcase to the input shaft bearing and improved waterproofing around the ignition coil. Kawasaki also beefed up the transmission by enlarging the input shaft end by 2mm. Low-friction oil seals in the forks are new, while the front brake pad material is changed and the rear brake pedal is mounted with a larger bolt. The new gripper seat is taller in the middle and with the "bold new graphics" the change list is done. The chassis is identical for 2005.



Keep the motor revving and you'll be grinning ear to ear. Let the revs drop off and your dead in the water.

WHAT WORKS

The motor. Kawasaki had a fast hard-hitting motor last year and since it remains unchanged, it's just as fast, if not just a bit faster due to a slight change in the reeds. They are stiffer to resist warpage from heat. We've ridden the YZ125 and the KTM125 back to back with the KX125 and found it faster than the YZ and very close to the power of the KTM. With stock

gearing, the power band is narrow and at the top, but with one tooth bigger on the rear sprocket, the KX125 becomes an entirely different machine. The power band becomes more broad and usable, making it possible to pull a gear taller in many areas. It's a must-do before even riding the KX. It doesn't completely solve the lack of bottom end, but it helps.

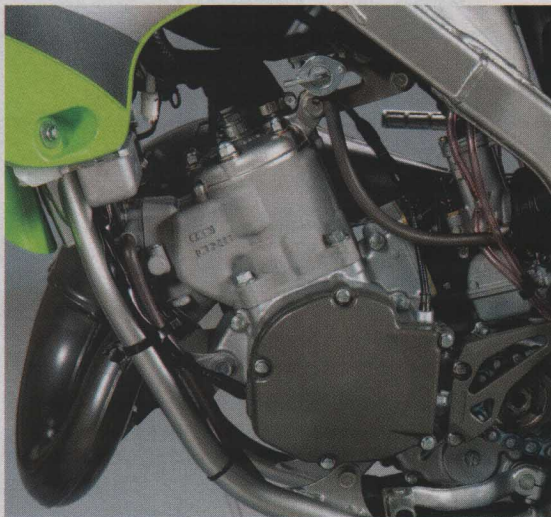
In the suspension department, the

only change for 2005 was the low friction oil seals. We weren't entirely pleased with the 2004 suspension, which means we weren't jumping for joy on the 2005. The problem is that the front end feels a little low while the back end feels high, creating a busy front end and a tendency for the back end to kick, especially on braking bumps. A cure is to slide the forks down in the triple clamps so they are flush and set the sag at 105mm. Increase the compression in the forks a few clicks and start at stock settings on the shock. Another fix is Pro Circuit works linkage, which changes the ride height, rising rate and feel of the suspension. It's pricey at \$450 but balances out the KX.

WHAT DOESN'T

It's so hard to love an average 125 in today's age of great 250 four-strokes. The KX125 is above average in the motor department and has good power, but the suspension needs some attention and balancing. Steel bars? Steel footpegs? A clutch perch without on-the-fly adjustment? Kawasaki needs just a little bit of an upgrade in a couple of areas to com-

plete the entire package. We bent the bars on a small slide-out, then bent them back with our hands. Replace those bars quickly and put that 52-tooth rear sprocket on at the same time. What it all boils down to is that the 2005 KX125 isn't a whole heck of a lot different than last year's bike other than the graphics. Every year the 250 four strokes get some serious R&D while the 125s are left to fight for themselves.



TYPICAL TEST CONDITIONS & SETUP

Tracks.....Piru, Glen Helen, I-5 MX
 Temperature90-100°
 Altitude500' msl
 Fuel.....Chevron 91, Spectro @ 40:1
 Jetting178 main, 40 pilot,
 OBEKS#3 needle, 1.75 air screw
 Fork.....c10, r12
 Shock.....c10, r10
 MSRP.....\$5099

MISSES

- Steel bars
- Zero bottom end
- Suspension unbalanced

HITS

- Strong power
- Clean Jetting
- 6-speed tranny

New reeds help give the 2005 slightly more hit than last year while internal changes to the motor improve reliability.

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2005 KAWASAKI KX125



KAWASAKI KX125	
Engine type	Case-reed, liquid-cooled 2-stroke
Displacement	124cc
Bore & stroke	54.0 x 54.5mm
Carburetion	Mikuni TMX 38
Fuel tank capacity	2.2 gal
Gearing	13/51
Lighting coil	No
Spark arrester	No
EPA legal	No
Running weight, no fuel	207 lb.
Wheelbase	57.9" (1470mm)
Rake/trail	27.5/4.53"
Ground clearance	13.4"
Seat height	37.2"
Tire size & type:	
Front	80/100-21 Bridgestone 401
Rear	100/90-19 Bridgestone 402
Suspension:	
Front	KYB inverted cartridge, adj. reb./comp., 11.8" (300mm) travel
Rear	KYB aluminum piggyback, adj. prld, hi & lo comp., reb., 12.2" (310mm) travel
Country of origin	Japan
Suggested retail price	\$5099
Distributor/manufacturer:	
Motors Corp. (949)770-0400	

First things first. Immediately change out the rear 51 sprocket for a 52. It broadened the power and brought the KX to life. ☐

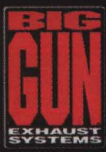
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