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By the overbored Dirt Bike staff

*Although the ergonomics and launch-capabilities are much-improved, as is the suspension, crustier riders will find the suspension on the soft side for really big air. Yamaha went for more ground-based settings, so it'll bottom.*

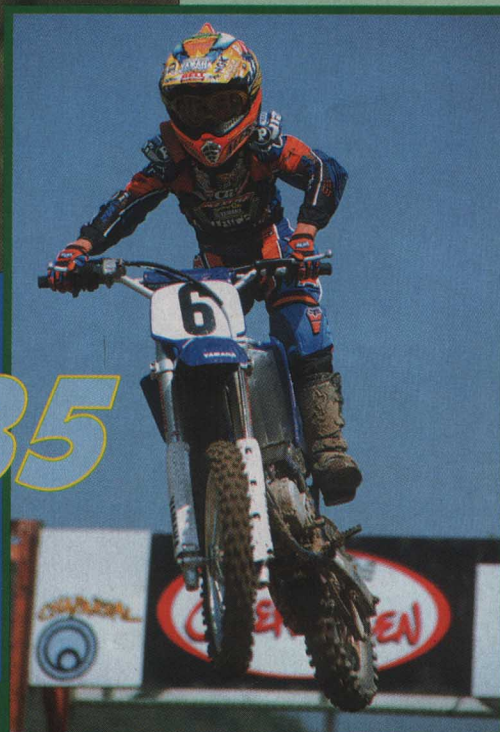


# 2002 YAMAHA YZ85

*Moving closer to the 125 in more ways than one*

**F**rankly, we weren't a bit surprised that Rondo completely looped out at Yamaha's 2002 YZ85 press introduction. We were shocked that Yamaha would invite Rondo after years of Mr. Know-It-All's vitriol towards minibikes and their diminutive pilots. We were even more dumbfounded when Rondo showed up and then sat through the entire tech briefing, with the Yamadudes going on about billions of modifications and Talbot scribbling feverishly. Rondo even managed a smile when amateur support riders Mike and Jeff Alessi nervously introduced themselves. Ron and Lump had placed themselves on each side of Rondo, just in case something or someone lit his infamously-short fuse. As the tech briefing closed and the trackside support opened, Ron and Lump let their guards down...at the worst possible moment.

Mike Alessi was selected as the official DB photo model, and he handed a piece of paper to Rondo. It was a checklist to be performed before he'd ride the bike. "Sag, 88mm, not 85...handlebars in LaRocco mode...levers like Vuillemin's..." As he read on, a nervous tic started in Rondo's left eye, then seemed to spread across his whole face, then his whole body started convulsing, like a robot with a massive short-circuit. He resembled the scene in "Me, Myself & Irene" where Jim Carrey mutated from mild-mannered trooper to his rage-filled alter-ego, Hank. Rondo wandered off, stomping invisible ants, waving his hands wildly and talking to...voices in his head? The last we saw of him, he was muttering "When we were kids, minibike forks were solid, and we liked it!"





# 2002 YAMAHA YZ85



## YZ85 WHEELIES

- Big-bike suspension technology, action
- More power on top, harder midrange hit
- Wider handlebars and pegs aid handling
- Flatter ergos package, thin midsection
- Excellent control package, strong brakes
- Removeable subframe aids shock removal

*Compared to the 2001 YZ80, the new Yamaha YZ85 shares only wheels and internal gear ratios with its ancestors. The new 85 had major improvements in six areas; Mike Alessi demonstrates newfound handling prowess.*

Then again, when Rondo, Ron and Lump were tykes, there were no Loretta Lynn's Amateur MX Nationals, contingencies, big-five support programs or 13-year-olds signing multi-year factory contracts. Nope. Motocross has grown into a bigtime sport and industry, and the factories have to scout and groom riders from a much earlier age. They also have to build products to propel future stars into the limelight. That's why for 2002 Yamaha did more to the YZ85 than to the YZ125 and 250 combined.

Weeks of counseling have opened Rondo's eyes to this reality, but we doubt Sigmund Freud himself could cure Rondo's naked jealousy of mini riders. Equipment-wise, they have it better today than Gary Jones had it his entire pro career, and we have no doubt that Mike Alessi, Davi Millsaps or Bubba Stewart could smoke anybody on any works-bike of the '70s, maybe even the '80s. Time marches on, and so with it, technology.

## WELCOME TO THE MACHINE

Yamaha could've simply slapped a half-millimeter bigger piston in its 80 and renamed it an 85, but the plan was much bigger than that. From footpegs to kickstarter knuckle, Yamaha wanted to upgrade every detail, every part of the competition mini to mimic the 125 and 250. On top of the big four areas to massage—engine performance, suspension action, handling and brakes—Yamaha also addressed styling and durability. No stoned went unturned, as it were. Check out the sidebar for more

## YZ85 WIPE-OUTS

- Wide tank/shroud hinders getting forward
- Radiator shroud rattles and vibrates
- Steel rear brake lever cheap, bends
- No quick-adjust clutch perch
- We like the old 490/695 tires over 739s

on updates and upgrades, but the biggest three engine-performance modifications, besides the 47.5mm piston, are the 2mm-larger D-slide carburetor (now a 28), digital ignition (it's been analog until now) and porting/pipe combination.

Note that Yamaha didn't go with a power-valve. Compared to the power-valved '01 KX85 and RM80, the YZ85 is sleepy off the very bottom. Even the '01 YZ80 seemed to have a little more, but that's the only drawback of the larger carb, which runs rich way down low. Past that, the engine hits harder in the midrange and climbs onto the pipe with more authority. Then it walks away from the YZ80 on top. In the recent past, this would've been called an expert motor, but not anymore. The kids who grew up with the super Pee-Wee 50s and new-generation 65s are now old enough for 80/85s, and Yamaha is following their progression. Call it a factory-support amateur motor. Shifting and clutch action are both excellent, which are what these kids expect.

## LITTLE BIG-BIKE LEGS

Not only is the new suspension aimed for an aggressive rider, it's widely adjustable. Stock, both ends are plush...soft, even. We put a 117-pounder on it at Lake Elsinore MX, and we had to go in three clicks on shock compression to level the ride, but there were no complaints with the stock fork setting. Between the compression clicker and fork oil level, all but the heaviest pilot will be able to get away with the stock springs. The two-bolt lower tripleclamp cuts down on fork flex, compared to the old 80, and there's tons of adjustability up front. Mike Alessi liked the aggressive turning with 25mm of fork above the top clamp, but our tester felt it was too nervous, so we went to 10mm and achieved a good compromise between stability and turning.

## CARVING AND ROOSTING

Handling is much improved over the YZ80. The YZ85 carves corners and rails berms, but it's the stability that's most impressive. The bike feels more solid and connected as speeds increase. As with the motor, the chassis and suspension package seem to be aimed at the larger, faster pilots. It's as if it dares you to go faster.

Part of the handling package has to be contributed to the new ergonomics package. The seat is much flatter, and the whole bike is thin, except the very front of the bike. Not only is the radiator side wide, but the new gastank sticks out farther on the right side, too. The big-bike footpegs are an improvement, too, being wider and replaceable with GYT-R Ti pegs. Also, the inch-wider handlebars provide more room to move and leverage over the front wheel.

## GIVE 'EM A BRAKE

Braking power is more big-bike like, with the new front master cylinder providing more pucker power. Stoppies are no problem. The rear brake is unchanged, other than new O-rings on the brake pedal. As cool and improved as the YZ85 is, we're turned off by the steel rear-brake lever, which the Alessis bend so regularly that their dad modifies a YZ125 aluminum pedal to fit their 80s. The new billet GYT-R pedal costs \$109.95.



# 2002 YAMAHA YZ85

## BITS & PIECES

- Euro, Aussie and Kiwi markets get a big-wheel version, the YZ85LW, but Americans have to order the parts— longer chain, spokes and swingarm, five-tooth larger sprocket, 19/16-inch rims, tires and tubes—separately, to the tune of \$1000. It adds about six pounds of weight and an inch of seat-height, too.

- Stock jetting is 45 pilot, 138 main, NBKF needle in the second position and two out on the airscrew with a BR10EG NGK plug.

- Standard suspension settings are 90mm fork oil level, 0.29Kg/mm spring, six out on rebound and nine clicks out on compression up front, and 85mm of rider sag with the 5.0Kg/mm spring, eight out on compression and six out on rebound out back.

- Our radiator shroud started rattling after a couple of hours.

## LOOK OUT, McGRATH!

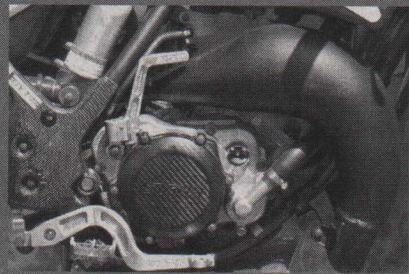
Rondo may be sending us his future columns from an asylum, because minis are going maxi in search of future McGraths, Carmichaels and Pastranas. The new YZ85 has more in common with McGrath's bike than the old YZ80. It's faster, better shifting, more stable, more agile and has more effective, more adjustable suspension. Yamaha hit the bullseye in the power, handling, suspension, braking and ergonomics departments. We'll torture it for many motos to find out about durability, and we're trying to find a head doctor who'll prescribe those motos to Rondo.

## GYT-R PERFORMANCE ENHANCERS

*Why should McGrath,  
Ferry and Fonseca get all the swag?*

- In Yamaha's effort to groom future McGraths and FONSECAS from the amateur ranks to full factory, Yamaha's Genuine Yamaha Technology-Racing department has gone the same route with the YZ85 as its full-sized race bikes. Now mini riders can enjoy the billet tripleclamps and hardware, carbon-fiber guards and covers, oversized handlebars, works Yamaha graphics, and titanium subframe and pegs just like Ferry or Vuillemin. Except that Timmy and David get their swag *gratis*. Until you sign that factory contract, get humping on that paper route or lawn mower! •

*Yamaha GYT-R has already wheeled over the YZ85 after-market gate and has big-bike hop-ups like billet top tripleclamp with ProTaper bars, carbon-fiber engine covers (ignition not shown) and guards, works graphics and titanium pegs and subframe (not shown).*



*DSP builds the carbon-fiber goodies for GYT-R. We think the GYT-R billet brake pedal is the first product to snag for your YZ85, and the billet kick-lever is pretty sweet, too.*



## 2002 YAMAHA YZ85

<b>Engine type</b> .....	Liquid-cooled, reed-valved, 2-stroke
<b>Displacement</b> .....	84.7cc
<b>Bore and stroke</b> .....	47.5mmx47.8mm
<b>Carburetion</b> .....	28mm PWK Keihin
<b>Fuel tank capacity</b> .....	1.3 gal. (5L)
<b>Final Gearing</b> .....	14/47
<b>Lighting coil</b> .....	No
<b>Spark arrestor</b> .....	No
<b>EPA/CARB legal</b> .....	No
<b>Running weight with no fuel</b> .....	156 lb.
<b>Wheelbase</b> .....	49.5 in. (1258mm)
<b>Rake/trail</b> .....	26.3@/3.5"
<b>Seat Height</b> .....	34.0" (864mm)
<b>Ground clearance</b> .....	13.8" (351mm)
<b>Tire size and type:</b>	
<b>Front</b> .....	70/100-17 Dunlop 739FA
<b>Rear</b> .....	90/100-14 Dunlop 739
<b>Suspension:</b>	
<b>Front</b> .....	KYB 33mm inverted cartridge, adj. comp./reb., 10.8" (275mm) travel
<b>Rear</b> .....	KYB aluminum piggyback shock, adj. prel./comp./reb., 11.1" (282mm) travel
<b>Country of origin</b> .....	Japan
<b>Suggested retail price</b> .....	\$3249
<b>Distributor/manufacturer:</b>	
Yamaha Motor Corp., 6555 Katella Ave. Cypress, CA 90630; (714)761-7300	

## GYT-R YZ85 ENHANCEMENTS

Ti subframe.....	\$399.95
Ti footpegs.....	205.00
C-F clutch cover.....	199.95
C-F frame guards.....	99.95
C-F glide plate.....	97.95
C-F fork guards.....	54.95
C-F brake line guide.....	31.95
Billet Al top clamp.....	104.95
Billet ProTaper mounts.....	69.95
Mini-bend ProTaper bars.....	89.95
Bar-mount pad.....	12.95
Replacement graphics.....	59.95
Gripper seat cover.....	59.95
Billet Al kicklever.....	99.95
Billet Al brake pedal.....	109.95
Works panel stand.....	79.95

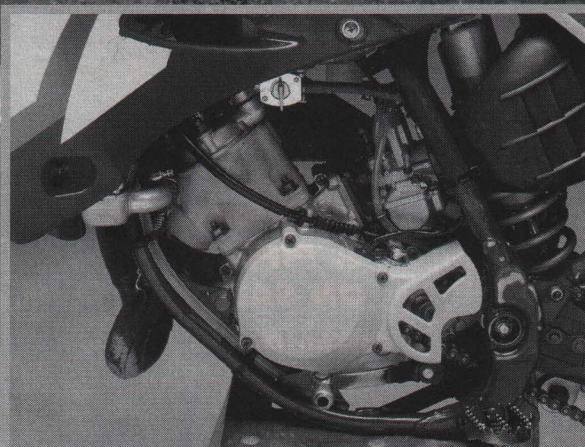


# 2002 YAMAHA YZ85

## 2002 YZ85 TECH INSPECTION *Combining YZ80 and YZ125 technology*

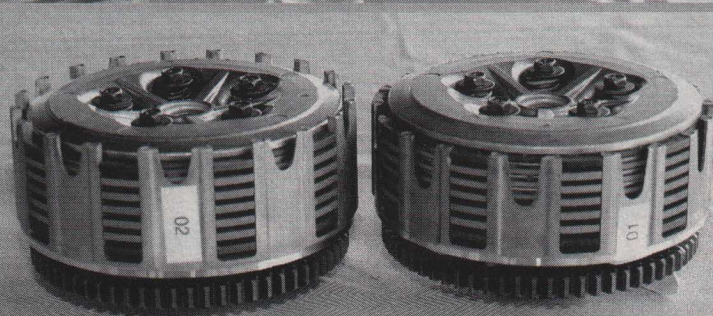
● Yamaha performed a boatload of changes to the 2002 YZ85 and sought to make it more big-bike-like than the '01 YZ80. Here are but a few of the differences for your visual gratification. ●

In an effort to improve durability, Yamaha went to 12-tooth involute transmission shafts, a simplified shifter-return system, larger radiator, 10mm engine bolts, and stainless steel brake discs. The old K490/695 tire combination has been replaced by 739s, and brake pads are more aggressive.



A 2mm larger carb (28mm), new digital ignition, larger airboot, new scavenging ports in the new cases, rebalanced crank and bigger rod-end bearings are meant to improve power, tunability and reliability. The footpegs are now interchangeable with larger YZs and YZFs.

Alessi digs the new suspension settings, flatter ergonomics package, wider handlebars, big-bike front brake master cylinder, new kickstarter, removeable subframe, low-boy pipe, two-bolt bottom tripleclamp and new shock with real shims and adjustment clickers. The jury is still out on the revised steel brake pedal and non-quick-adjust clutch perch, though.



To handle the extra power, Yamaha went to a slightly larger clutch with a new (18/65) primary ratio. The clutch cover is now a two-piece unit, and the engine's coolant impellor was upgraded to aluminum. □