





The rumor mill has been grinding hard on the 1992 Husqvarna motorcycles. An early test in Italy by Karel Kramer tantalized us with the prospect of great engines, excellent Showa suspension components, Nissin brakes and world-class overall detailing from the new Husqvarna organization.

Best in the Desert's Vacation Village Gold Strike World Championship Hare & Hound was the perfect place to race-test the new Husqvarna 250 WXC. This model has a six-speed cross-country gearbox, a USFS-approved spark arrestor and a gas tank that's large enough for just about any off-road event. Even the name WXC suggests that this model is designed for use in this type of cross-country event. January in Las Vegas had brought particularly great weather and terrain conditions; the combination resulted in some snow on the ground, moist dirt on the tighter trails, gnarly rocky sections and the high-speed cross-grain terrain that true desert racers love.

The motorcycle was delivered the day before the race, so I only had about an hour to get acquainted with the machine and do any setup. However, the initial rumors proved to be accurate: A new upside-down Showa fork and a Showa shock grace both ends of the machine, Nissin brakes are mounted on both the front and rear, and the overall attention to detail reminded me of the new Japanese techno-mounts.

A good example of Husky's attention to detail is the sidestand. On the old Huskys the sidestand was mounted to the swingarm almost as an afterthought, usually causing the hardware to bend, break off or let the machine fall over in soft terrain. The new Husky sidestand has an excellent design that works perfectly, is solid yet light and folds completely out of the way.

The machine sports this type of engineering all over. The gas tank is large yet comfortable; it sits low and has a crossover feed pipe to take full advantage of the volume in both sides. The rear-frame subsection is a removable aluminum fabrication that features possibly the easiest-to-service airbox made today. A single Dzus fastener offers one-finger release of the seat to a large and easily accessible air filter.

*I race-tested the Husqvarna 250 WXC at the Vacation Village/Gold Strike World Championship Hare & Hound, taking second Over 38 Expert. An outstanding performer, the Husky could be the off-road 250 to beat.*

PHOTOS: MARK KARIYA

## BURLESON REPORT

# BACK TO THE FUTURE

HUSQVARNA 250 WXC

I was really impressed when I first sat on the machine. The handlebar/seat/footpeg combination is excellent; it felt comfortable and familiar. The kickstarter is an oddly bent unit that comes in contact with the right footpeg, but the motor started immediately and settled down into a smooth idle. However, the note from the exhaust was surprisingly loud for a cross-country-designed machine considering the fact that this is supposedly an off-road-approved model that meets the 82-dBA drive-by sound level. Fortunately, the race was in Nevada, so the noise level wasn't a problem for this event.

### SUSPENSION TUNING

A test ride quickly sent me back to the van for some suspension tuning. The machine had a stink-bug stance; the rear end felt way high, the front end felt way low, and stability at speed was nonexistent.

The rear-end unloaded sag was zero, so we backed off the spring preload in an attempt to get the bike to sag under its own weight. I slid the fork tubes down into the triple clamps until they were flush with the top. In addition, I upped the fork compression damping by one click and reduced the rebound by one click to get the front end to stand up higher initially and not ride so low in the travel. I backed off the spring until it rattled (no preload), and the Husky still only sagged 25mm—proof that the spring rate was too stiff for my weight. I needed more time on the machine, though, and Saturday's race would give me 118 miles of gnarly Nevada desert on which to become much more familiar with the WXC's handling and performance.

### PRERACE FIDGETING

The front brake has an interesting combination of a Magura master cylinder and a Nissin caliper. The Magura has good feel and adjustment for contact point, but it has no adjustment for free position.

With the lever adjusted a comfortable stopping distance from the grip, there was a lot of free play in the lever, and I had to reach pretty far to get to the point of actual function.

The other side of the bar also had a Magura control, using the fine four-starred adjuster. This design, which allows for easy adjustment without tools, was developed for the ISDE. The handlebar is aluminum and has a comfortable bend.

The motor has instant and power-



ful response. The Italian engineers have done a thorough job of combining good bottom-end power, a strong midrange surge, excellent top-end horsepower and a proper amount of flywheel to make the mount rideable in cross-country terrain and powerful for all-out racing. Carburetion was spot-on, and all in all a remarkably small amount of prerace fiddling was required.

In the morning we mounted a new Bridgestone M58 rear tire and headed for the start area. With the new tire installed the front end was still riding too low so we lowered the fork in the clamps 3mm further. Past experience indicated that a further reduction in rear spring preload could make the rear suspension feel loose and uncontrolled in the first part of the travel and possibly deliver a hard hit deeper in the travel, so we left the shock spring as it was.

## THE RACE

The racecourse had two riders starting every 30 seconds and heading off across the flat desert to the first dry lake bed before heading up into the mountains. It was deep, wet sand, and at high speeds that made for a very choppy ride. Every rider complained about headshake and arm pump. In spite of this the fork was surprisingly smooth yet resistant to hard impacts and bottoming. The setting provided excellent absorption of small rocks and chatter bumps, and it could still easily absorb the biggest G-load ditch and big hit. However, while the front end

was working well, the overall package was still not quite comfortable at speed. My arms totally pumped up in this fast, rough desert; I just tried to keep in control until I could warm up, get more used to the bike and get up in the higher mountain trails.

This section of the race is the best. It's a twisty up-and-down trail through rocks and cactus that's tight enough to be used into an enduro



**A 45mm Showa fork in the rocks? On most bikes we'd be scared, but this Italian-dialed fork was the best Showa we've ever ridden with. I liked the bike, and my race debut on it was a successful one.**

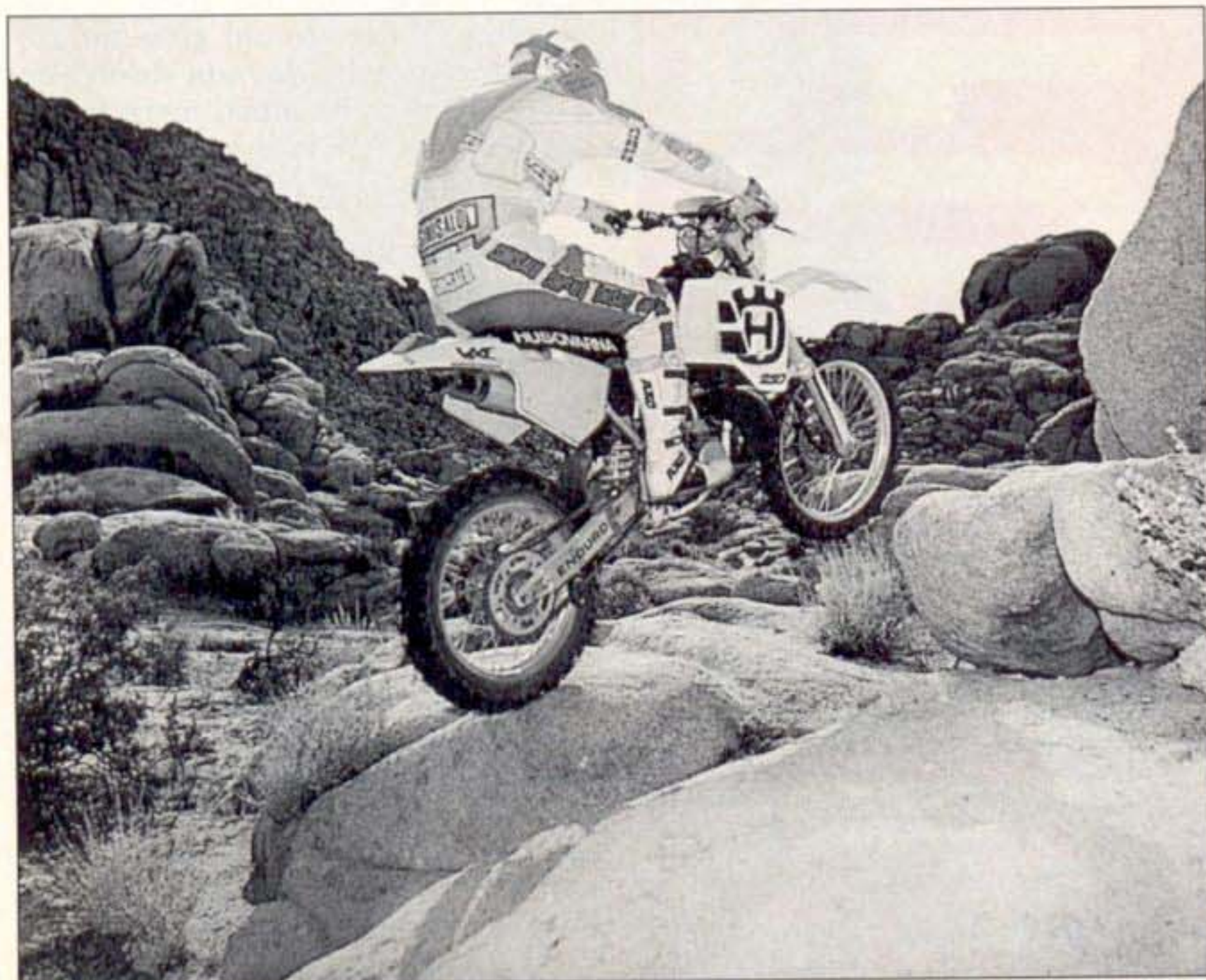
and fun enough to match any trails anywhere. The stink-bug feeling that makes you tense at high speed made for good cornering and tracking in this tighter stuff. The combination of the six-speed gearbox, strong-everywhere motor and quick-handling chassis was perfect for this type of terrain.

In the first bit of high speed I had trouble with shifting the engine from third to fourth and fourth to fifth. The wet sand loaded the transmission, and I had to try to shift many times, but I couldn't find a system that made for perfect shifts.

This is not the best situation for powering up a soft, sandy wash. All day this problem plagued the engine and held back its performance. It was unfortunate that this particular engine had a shifting problem, as the other new-generation Husqvarna motors we have tested have exhibited excellent shifting manners.

The first loop was 41 miles long, and the Husky had no problem making the mileage with the large gas tank. At the gas stop I further increased the fork compression by two clicks, reduced the fork rebound by one click and reduced the shock compression adjustment by two clicks to improve the bike's stance. I wanted to increase the shock rebound adjustment to keep the rear of the machine down, but the adjuster is behind the casting of the swingarm and impossible to get at while mounted on the machine.

The second loop went across the fast desert, and the setting changes



**We wouldn't call the power of this motor anything but excellent. DB found the engine difficult to shift under big loads. Other riders never loaded it that hard, and it shifted well for us. The kickstarter is a bit awkward, but it works.**

**Our initial ride on the Husky came in this rock garden in Lucerne Valley, California. Dan Nielson is the lunatic here. He was performing sheer magic in the rocks. We hate him. We felt like geeks riding with him. He'll be riding Huskys this year.**



improved the stance of the machine somewhat but not radically. For my weight (145 pounds), a softer spring is required. Once the course climbed back up into the mountains, the trail turned into one of the gnarliest rocky, dry creek beds I've seen in a long time. As tough as any enduro trail, the course headed up a dry creek bed (actually just a continuous pile of rocks, the smallest of which was the size of a football) spread out over miles of the desert. Even with the increased compression damping in the fork, the action was smooth and controlled.

By this time I was getting pretty familiar with the characteristics of the new Husky WXC. In a '91 test of the Husky 260 enduro model I complained about the design of the seat. The WXC has the same problem, only it's been improved a bit. The front of the seat rests on a hump in the gas tank and gives the rider little cushioning, while the rear of the seat has virtually no padding and provides a hard paddle on the butt when the rear kicks up.

The final loop was a desert racer's delight, with the course staying low in the fast, cross-grained terrain and venturing out into the ultrafast open desert. I had enjoyed the first and second loops a lot, especially when the trails were tough, rocky and twisty, as the Husky worked great in those conditions. In the final loop's fast, rough, soft sand terrain, I had to forcefully guide the machine on the trail to keep it straight. I turned my overall speed



*I did some fiddling with the suspension but no more than with other machines. I liked the suspension action but wanted to balance out the feel of the bike in the deep, wet whoops.*

# RACE TEST

**MOTORCYCLE**.....Husqvarna 250 WXC  
**LOCATION** .....Jean, Nevada  
**WEATHER** .....Sunny  
**TRANSMISSION**.....Six-speed  
**TYPE OF EVENT** .....Hare & Hound  
**LENGTH OF TRACK** .....118 miles  
**TEMPERATURE**.....55 deg.  
**ALTITUDE**.....2500-3000 ft.  
**FUEL**.....Chevron Supreme Unleaded/  
 Trick racing  
**OIL**.....Motul  
**MIX** .....32:1  
**CARBURETOR** .....Mikuni TM38  
**MAIN JET** .....430  
**PILOT** .....40  
**NEEDLE**.....6AEJ1-64  
**SLIDE** .....4.0  
**NEEDLE CLIP POSITION** .....4  
**FORK** .....45mm inverted Showa cartridge  
**COMP. ADJ.**.....7 clicks out  
**REBOUND ADJ.** .....11 clicks out  
**FRONT TIRE** .....Dunlop D752  
**PRESSURE** .....14 psi  
**SHOCK**.....Showa  
**SHOCK SPRING** .....Standard  
**SAG** .....95mm  
**COMP. ADJ.**.....16 clicks out  
**REBOUND ADJ.** .....N/A  
**REAR TIRE** .....Bridgestone M58  
**PRESSURE** .....14 psi  
**RACE RESULTS** .....Second Over 38 Expert  
**TOTAL TIME ON M/C** .....4½ hours

**ADJUSTMENTS DURING OR BEFORE RACE:** Lower fork, increase compression, reduce rebound, reduce preload on shock spring, install new rear tire.

## PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

Headshakes, sits low in the front and high in the rear, hard shifting 3-4 and 4-5, standard chain got loose, exhaust note too loud.

## ENGINE PERFORMANCE:

Power excellent, responsive, powerful and ridable; shifting bad.

## SUSPENSION PERFORMANCE:

Headshakes at speed; fork great, smooth, controlled, not harsh; shock occasionally hits hard and is sprung too stiffly.

## OVERALL IMPRESSION:

Really good choice for cross-country. Strong, ridable engine, large gas tank and good attention to detail. Excellent fork. Raceable with very little work.

## SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

If you're moving, please fill in the information below and we'll see that DIRT RIDER gets sent to your new address.

**OLD ADDRESS** (Please write your old address exactly as imprinted on the front cover.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## NEW ADDRESS

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

For questions or problems regarding your subscription, please call our toll free number or write to the address below. Call 1-(800)-800-DIRT or (3478).

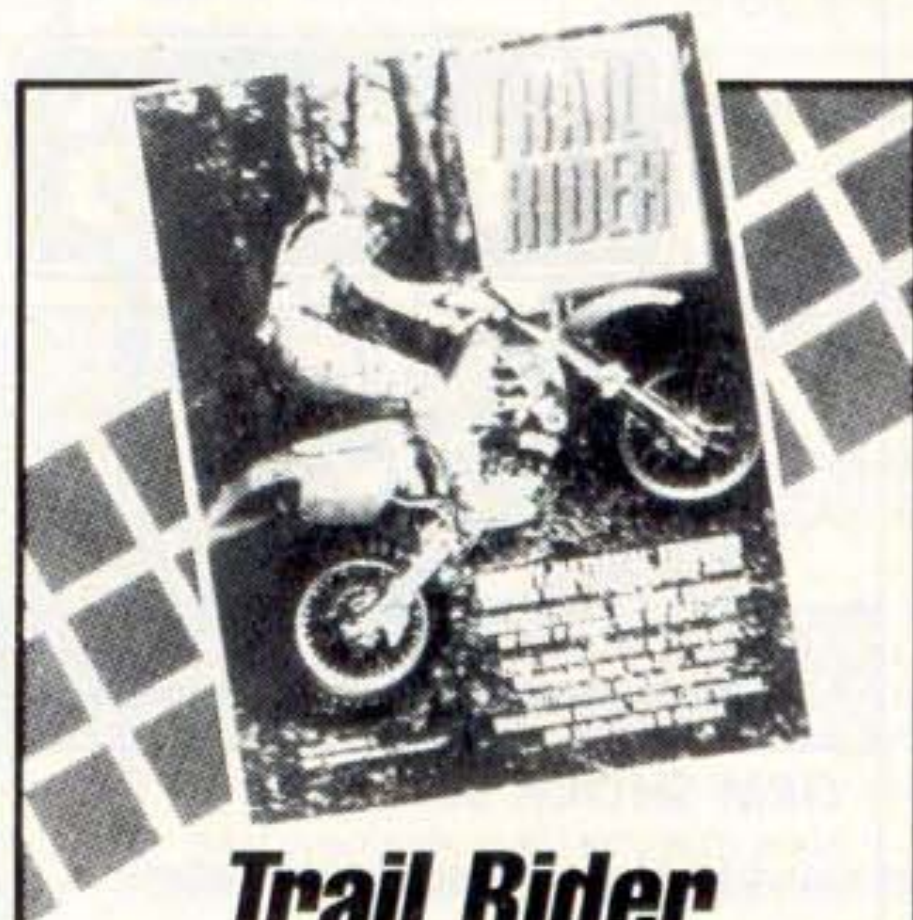
## For New / Renewal Subscription Orders

1 year (12 issues) of  
 DIRT RIDER only \$17.94

☐ New subscription ☐ Renewal order  
☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me (U.S. only)

For renewal orders please write your address in the old address section, above. The subscription price, quoted above, is good in the U.S. only. For all foreign subscriptions please add the following amount (in U.S. funds) to cover surface mail postage: Canada add \$9.26 (price includes GST). All other foreign add \$11.00. Please allow 4-8 weeks for your first issue to be mailed.

Mail to: DIRT RIDER,  
 P.O. Box 58722, Boulder, CO 80322-8722



## Trail Rider Magazine

There's a magazine on the East Coast that specializes in hare scrambles and enduro riding called **Trail Rider**! We cover ECEA, NETRA, VCHSS, GNCCC and all interesting events and two-wheeled happenings in the northeast. **Trail Rider** is for people who love to ride in the trees, mud and rocks; have a bike with a headlight on it; and think that the first priority in life is having fun!

**Trail Rider is not available on the newsstands. For a 12-month subscription, send \$18 in U.S. funds to:**

Trail Rider Magazine  
 P.O. Box 129, Medford NJ 08055

CANADA PLEASE ADD \$4 U.S. AND OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES \$5 U.S. PER SUBSCRIPTION FOR ADDITIONAL POSTAGE. PLEASE ALLOW FOUR WEEKS FOR DELIVERY OF FIRST ISSUE.





A low seat height, nimble handling and plenty of usable power make riding the Husky in the twisty stuff a lot of fun. Our heavier/taller riders felt that the seat foam was too soft and the seat a little low. We can work with that, though.



I had a minimum of time with the bike before the race—less than with any previous Bursen Report bikes. In spite of that, I was able to dial the bike in with a minimum of effort. I installed a new tire minutes before the race.

down a notch, and my number one priority became avoiding taking any desert soil samples.

#### SNIVELING BUT HAPPY

Tom Webb had started two minutes in front of me on a powerful KX500, and my goal on the first two loops had been to try and reel him in. Compared to the performance of Tom's modified KX500 and his youthful (barely legal) 38 years, the combination of the ultrafast terrain and the Husky's headshake han-

dling gave me second thoughts about this goal and a second in class. Considering that I had slightly less than one hour to acquaint myself with the machine, I was very happy with my results and definitely impressed with the new 250 WXC.

I am sure that with a little more time to adjust the suspension or at least change to a softer rear spring, the WXC's handling characteristics would be comparable to any machine out there. The standard fork is

# ÖHLINS



Whether you have a brand new 1992 motocrosser, or updating an older bike; Ohlins makes a difference. Fade-free performance, infinite adjustability, and state-of-the-art construction - Ohlins are truly state-of-the-art. Now with 16mm shafts!

# NOLEEN PERFORMANCE

## ...1992!!!

Phone: (714) 947-5773

#### OEM SHOCK SERVICE

Now that you have your new bike, let Noleen dial it in for you.

#### For All Motocross Bikes

Re-valve: (blueprint, revalve, new oil, re-charge)..... \$115<sup>00\*</sup>

Noleen Springs: (stiffer and lighter springs available)

\$81<sup>95</sup>

Oil Change..... \$65<sup>00\*</sup>

Re-build..... \$85<sup>00\*</sup>

\*includes oil change & service, and all necessary shims.

#### REGINA CHAIN

The finest chain money can buy. Used exclusively by Team Noleen because there's nothing stronger. From..... \$72<sup>45</sup>

#### UNI FILTERS

The unique double sealing lip locks dirt out while keeping power in!..... \$21<sup>95</sup>

KYLE LEWIS



#### PORTING (Yamaha & Kawasaki Only)

Pull the power out of your '92 (or earlier), machine! What we learn on the track goes straight into our porting specs. Racing experience plus our in-house dyno testing, yields impressive power.

PORTING: (includes head mods, power valve mods, & porting)..... \$198<sup>00</sup>

#### PIPES

Noleen Pro-Flow pipes bring your Kawasaki or Yamaha's power to life. Because we specialize on these two makes, we can spend more time on R&D. Dyno tested, and ready to roost..... \$169<sup>95</sup>



#### NOLEEN LUBRICANTS

01 fork fluid (for cartridge forks) - \$8<sup>65</sup> Qt.

Noleen Aluron Shock

Fluid (Aluminum bodied shocks) - \$6<sup>95</sup> Qt.

Noleen Unvis-2 shock fluid (steel bodied) -

\$6.50 Qt.

Noleen SF-3 Waterpump/fork seal grease - \$1<sup>95</sup> tub

#### PRO-LEVEL GAUGE

Easily measure your forks oil level with this handy tool. Works on upside-down forks - \$49<sup>95</sup>

#### NOLEEN FORK SERVICE

Our legendary Base Valves are back for 1992. Noleen Works Base Valve Kits soak up the big hits as well as smooth out the action overall. Available for all the 1992 motocrossers, (as well as earlier model cartridge forks).

Base valve kits..... from \$89<sup>95</sup>

Complete Fork Fix: (includes BVK, blueprinting, oil change)..... \$139<sup>95</sup>

Oil Change..... \$65<sup>00</sup>

Re-valve (all of the above w/o

Base Valve Kit..... \$95<sup>00</sup>

Noleen Fork Springs... from \$54<sup>95</sup>

NOLEEN RACING  
2141 E. Philadelphia #T  
Ontario, Calif. 91761  
FAX: (714) 947-1513

Visa/MC accepted Order by Mail, Fax or phone Dealer inquiries invited



outstanding at absorbing big hits, it's supple in the small stuff, and it remains controlled all the time.

The chassis offers a good combination of features, making this machine capable of racing in the desert as well as in Eastern hare scrambles. The noise level is too loud in both intake and exhaust for today's standards, but the motor is as good

as a rider could want as it was well suited to slow-speed plunking through the rocks as well as high-speed motoring out in the open.

They say everything is relative, and relative to the other 250cc bikes available to the cross-country rider, the Husqvarna 250 WXC is at the top of the list.

—Dick Burleson



Take a close look at this machine. It is shockingly well engineered. The fact that the rebound adjuster on the shock is nearly impossible to reach is the only flaw in the execution of the machine.



After the race the Husky was in surprisingly good shape, so we took it out to our favorite testing area. The engine feels remarkably smooth and well engineered. It feels like it will last.

## THE BASICS

Suggested retail price .....	\$4240
Warranty ...30-day (frame and engine only)	
Weight (wet, no gas) .....	242 lb.
Seat height .....	36.4 in.

## For riders who must depend on their equipment

Scott Summers



Cross Country Hare Scrambles Champion

Jeff Russell



Enduro Champion

Danny Hamel



Hare & Hound Champion

David Rhodes / Steve Hatch



ISDE Jr. World Trophy Team

## "Titan Tough" simply last longer

Any tooth size  
Always in stock  
American made

SPROCKET  
SPECIALISTS

Your local dealer can get you the best sprockets on the market, in any tooth size, without delay. Try Sprocket Specialists once - you'll be sold on them for life.