



Comfortable ergonomics make the DS a good choice for seven- to 10-year-olds.



Jason Webb (the big guy's nephew) catches air on the DS. According to Jason, the rear end is a little stiff and the front a shade soft, but the brakes are good and the reedless, oil-injected engine is plenty fast.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Mark Hyde on the treatment of injuries: "The only time I like to go to the hospital is to pick up Betsy's check." (Mark's wife, Betsy, is a nurse.)

TEAR OFFS

SUZUKI DS80

LITTLE BIG MAN

Off-road riding is a great personal and family sport. But for beginning riders, children especially, education and proper machine size are two major requirements. Suzuki meets those needs with their midsize mini, the DS80—a good choice for seven- to 10-year-olds with just a little experience under their kidney belts. Like the radder RM, the DS80 is a real motorcycle, from the fully laced spoke wheels to the five-speed transmission. This is not a beginner's bike.

Suspension chores are handled by an oil-damped telescopic fork mated to a Full-Floater rear end, the result of which is rather confused suspension. The fork is soft and lacks sufficient rebound damping; the shock is stiff and overdamped. Adjustment of the fork action is limited to oil

weights and levels, and the sole shock adjustment is the stepped preload collar. But, even though the suspension is weak compared to the RM80's, it's still light years ahead of the boingers found among the YZinger crowd.

MADE FOR PLAY

First-time riders will have to adjust to the healthy hit of the 80cc air-cooled motor which does not have a reed valve. For riders who have spent their formative years aboard a four-stroke, this adjustment might take some time. The DS tends to bog a bit, then blast, though this puppy is mellow compared to the RM. A smooth clutch and trans make learning rather easy, and, even with the passage of time, the DS will remain fast enough for the young Johnny O'.

Good news for parents! The DS is equipped with

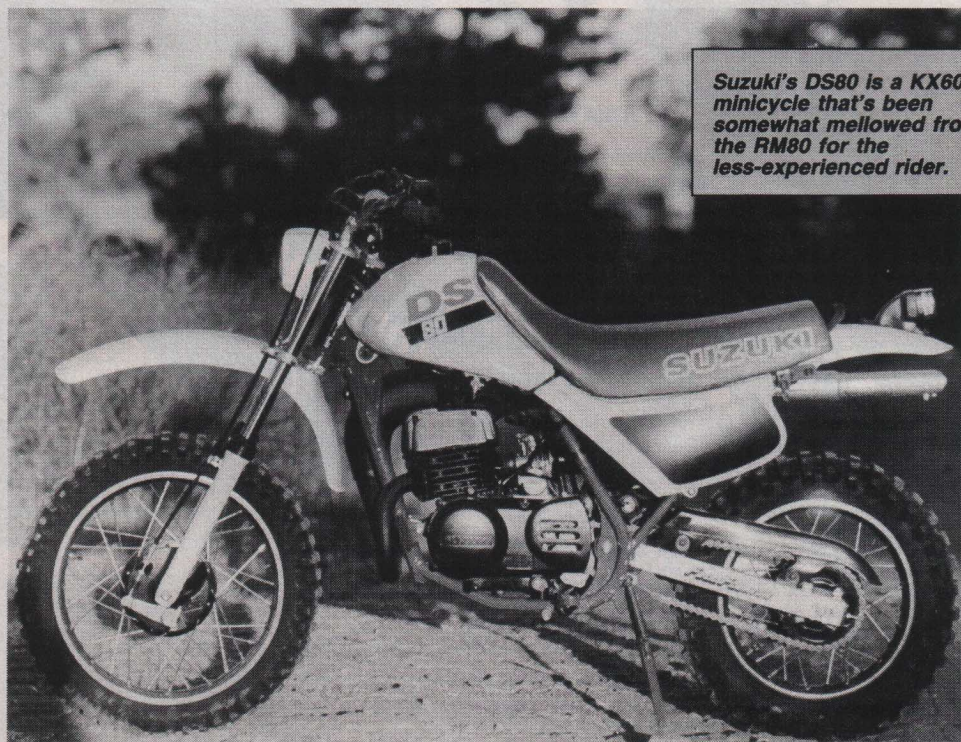
QUIP OF THE MONTH

Bevo Forti, on his days as a factory MX mechanic: "Yup, I used to tune those works bikes to a standstill."

CCI, or automatic oil injection—no messy oil mixing here. A U.S. Forest Service-approved spark arrester is a standard feature, and, for the young enduro enthusiast, full enduro lighting is also on board. Suzuki's little 80 is a smartly laid out package, combining competitive off-road roots with reliable and simple features.

So, if you're too big for the Pee Wee crowd, but still shy away from joining the racing set, the DS80 from Suzuki is a hard package to fault.

—Mike Webb



Suzuki's DS80 is a KX60-size minicycle that's been somewhat mellowed from the RM80 for the less-experienced rider.