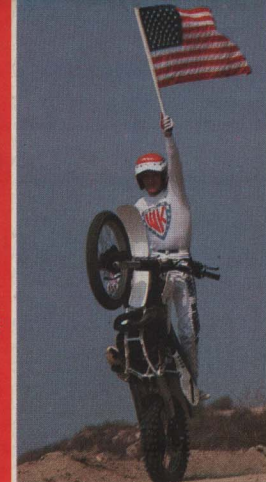


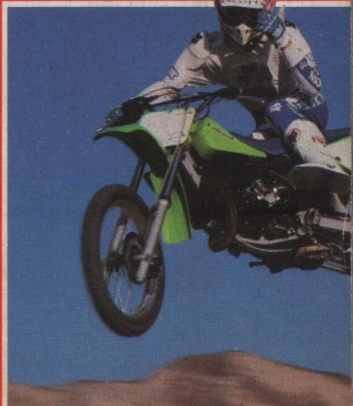
We Test It! You Win It!
WIN A HUSKY
400 CROSS COUNTRY!

DIRT RIDER



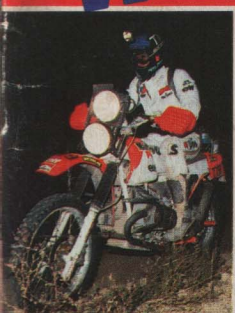
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**Kawasaki
KX80-G1:
STILL THE
KING?**



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**Baja
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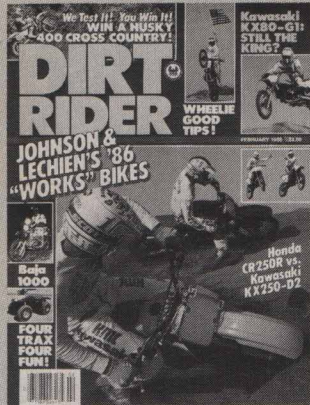


**Honda
CR250R vs.
Kawasaki
KX250-D2**



DIRT RIDER

FEBRUARY 1986,
ISSUE 39

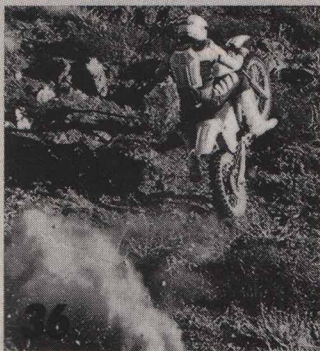


ON THE COVER

Karel Kramer's camera gets caught in the crossfire of Rick Johnson and Ron Lechien on the new Honda and Kawasaki 250 MXers. Which bike wins Miss Kitty? See page 50. We also test the Kawasaki KX80-G1 and the Husqvarna 400 Cross Country in this issue.

P.S. Kay and Sigrid wish Rick and Ron a happy Valentines Day.

BEST TEST



HUSQVARNA 400 CROSS COUNTRY

Midsized convenience and civility with Open class performance.



HONDA CR250R vs. KAWASAKI KX250-D2

Ricky and Ronnie duel these '86 "factory" racers to the death.



KAWASAKI KX80-G1

An all-new mini likely to be the same old class leader.

COMPETITION



SCORE BAJA 1000

A tarnished clash of titans.

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Hulk Hogan would've loved it.

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Nearly a decade between titles for Mr. Simons.

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Hertfelder comes face-to-face with Michigan soil.



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Honda's new FourTrax 200SX gets all four wheels ridden off it.

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Pro-Tec and Yamaha performance mods for the IT200.



'86 CAGIVAS

The Italian manufacturer is gunning for wins this year.

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Find new ground from your kitchen table with topo maps.



WHEELIE TIPS II

Doug Domokos' own practice tips and tricks.

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Wheelie it right into your garage!

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SCOTT HEAD

America's undefeated National trials champ.

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Our "Details" page gets a makeover.

Terry Swanson wrung out our KX80-G1 for the test and for this photo by Karel Kramer. Terry liked the bike and felt in control—even if he doesn't look in control to us!



A look at the KX80-G1 in the Petersen photo studio shows a radically new and different profile from past KX80s. Jim Brown recorded the shot.



Kawasaki KX80-G1

Mighty mean and green, but still king?



We persuaded Terry (without much trouble) to do some high-flying jumps and roosting turns while Mike Gaspar grabbed these photos.

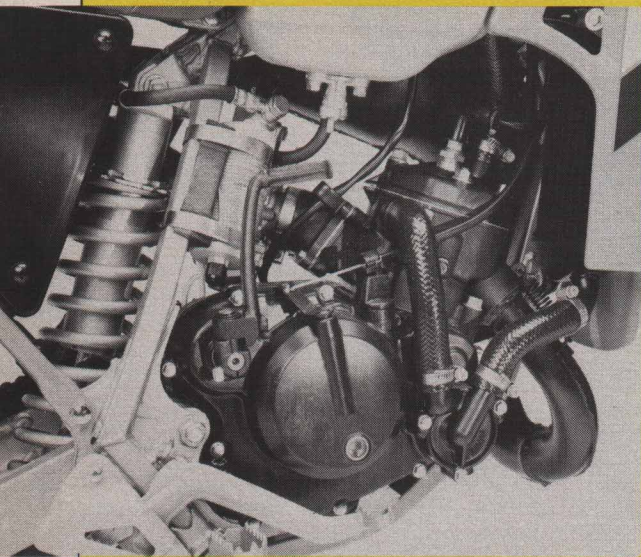
Can lots of changes add up to the same winning equation for the KX80?

Few off-road motorcycles can boast the class-dominating success that the Kawasaki KX80 has enjoyed. Since 1982, this little green racer has ruled the 80cc class in both sheer numbers and race wins. Kawasaki gambled with their proven design when they released a completely redesigned mini in 1983, and ended up raking in a three-year jackpot

with that toss of the marketing dice.

The '83 KX80 was a blockbuster on the race track and in the showroom. Updated variations of the design continued to dominate through 1985, although by then the other minis were coming closer to covering Kawasaki's bet.

This year, Kawasaki has laid its cards down again,

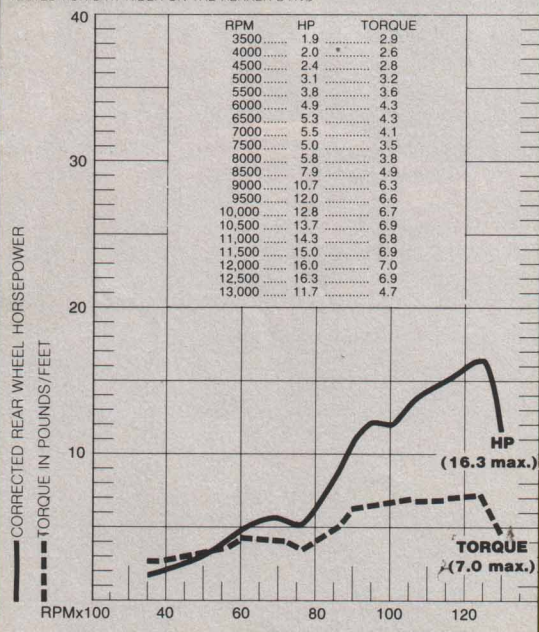


The engine is redesigned, but it still puts out competitive power like before.

Make/modelKawasaki KX80-G1 Displacement82cc
 Serial numberFrame: Bore x stroke48 x 45.5mm
 JKAKXWG11GA000450 Engine: D104-100387 Compression ratio8.9:1
 Price\$1099 Horsepower/rpm
 Number of dealers (U.S.)1400 (measured)16.3 @ 12,500 rpm
 WarrantyNone Torque/rpm
 Customer serviceKawasaki (measured)7.0 @ 12,000 rpm
 Motor Corp. CarburetionMikuni VM29SS
 P.O. Box 11447 ExhaustSteel expansion chamber
 Santa Ana, CA 92711 into rebuildable silencer
 714/540-1600 IgnitionCDI
 LubricationPremix
 (32:1 recommended) TypeLiquid-cooled, two-
 stroke single with reed valve Air filtrationOiled polyurethane
 foam element

ENGINE HORSEPOWER/TORQUE

TESTED FOR DIRT RIDER ON THE KERKER DYNO



DRIVE TRAIN

TransmissionSix-speed
 Primary drive3.400:1 (gear)
 Final drive3.769:1 (13/49)
 Gear ratios (internal).....1st 2.538:1
 2nd 1.875:1
 3rd 1.500:1
 4th 1.250:1
 5th 1.090:1
 6th 0.956:1

CHASSIS

FrameSquare-tube with
 single downtube
 Rake/trail28°/3.5 in.
 Front suspensionKYB
 leading-axle air/spring fork,
 35mm stanchion tubes,
 10.8 in. travel (claimed)
 Rear suspensionBottom-link
 Uni-Trak with KYB remote
 reservoir gas/oil shock,
 four-position adjustable
 compression and rebound damping,
 infinitely variable preload,
 10.8 in. travel (claimed)
 BrakesFront—Single-
 piston caliper disc
 Rear—Single-leading
 shoe drum
 WheelsFront—1.40-17
 Rear—1.60-14
 TiresFront—70/100-17
 40M Dunlop K490
 Rear—90/100-14
 49M Dunlop K490

MEASUREMENTS

Weight (wet, no fuel)146 lb.
 Weight (wet, tank full)153.5 lb.
 Weight distribution72/74 lb.
 (49/51%)(Fr/r, wet, no fuel)
 Weight distribution76.5/77 lb.
 (50/50%)(Fr/r, wet, tank full)
 Wheelbase49.4 in.
 Fuel capacity1.1 gal.
 Reserve capacityNo reserve
 Sound test102 dbA
 Ground clearance10.8 in.
 Seat height31.8 in.
 Swingarm length20.3 in.
 Swingarm pivot to
 center of countershaft2.3 in.

PARTS/COST

Maintenance manual\$6.95
 Carburetor jetsMain jet—\$3.27
 Pilot jet—\$3.55
 Needle jet—\$10.16
 Needle—\$6.12
 SprocketsFront—\$8.80
 Rear—\$22.22
 Handlebar levers\$7.06 ea.
 Shift lever\$16.42
 Piston kit (complete)\$32.54
 Rings only\$9.42
 Cylinder\$120.75
 Head\$42.15
 Clutch platesNA
 Air filter\$24.26
 Brake shoesFront (pads)—
 \$2.73 ea.
 Rear—\$4.70 ea.
 Chain\$20.58
 Seat\$64.98
 FendersFront—\$16.96
 Rear—\$16.18
 Fuel tank\$96.60
 CablesThrottle—\$7.08
 Clutch—\$7.28
 Brake (hose)—\$58.84

OPTIONS

Fork springs (stiffer
 or softer)\$10.28 ea.
 Shock spring (stiffer
 or softer)\$42.00



and we would bet there's some nervousness under the corporate poker face as it meets the race year with an all-new design. Kawasaki is hitting the track with a new look, including a changed engine and a new bottom-link Uni-Trak, as part of an updated suspension package. It will take a shootout to determine whether the KX80-G1 can pull off the coup the '83 model did, but the ante for the mini class has definitely gone up a couple of chips.

When we hit the track with the KX80, we got very mixed opinions from testers. Mini riders are notorious for revving the guts out of an engine; throttle control is just not in their realm of understanding. But Kawasaki hasn't built a normal mini-class powerplant this year: They claim the power is more suited to expert riders than in the past, when KX80s had the best powerband on the track. In fact, the KX won our '85 mini shootout by the width of its power curve.

The powerband is narrower for '86, but unlike the '86 Suzuki RM80, it is not concentrated at the very top of the rpm range. Instead, the KX needs to be shifted a bit below the rpm peak for best acceleration. In addition, it has a more subdued exhaust note compared to the Suzuki or Yamaha. This combination of traits caused our testers to

REDLINE REPORT

For an 80, the KX puts out a lot of horsepower—the most of any mini we've tested. At 16.3 peak horsepower, the KX ekes out 0.3 ponies more than the YZ80N (which made 16.0 in 1985). The only '86 model we've had on the dyno was the KTM 80 MX, which made 14.0 horsepower, so the Kawasaki performance is indeed impressive. Moreover, the Kawasaki holds its power curve well for an 80. Power starts to build at 8500 and continues smoothly to 12,500 rpm. Testers thought the engine was fast but felt slow, and it appears they were right. The KX does have the horsepower.



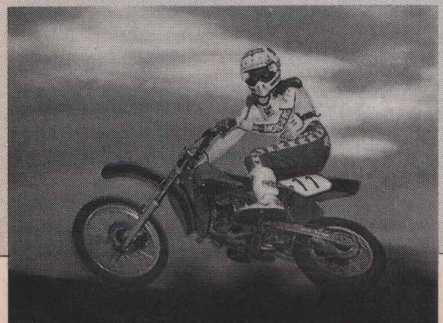
*(Top) Find good traction and footplant turns become a lot of fun for a talented rider.
(Below) The KX is a ready, willing and stable jumper for tester Terry Swanson.*

comment after their initial rides that the KX was slow.

But riders with experience on bigger bikes weren't as likely to feel the bike was slow as were riders with only mini experience. Races with the KTM 80MX and the Suzuki RM80G proved that the KX was at least as fast as those two. Rider mistakes won and lost drag races against the Suzuki, but since it was easier for a rider on the Suzuki to make a mistake, the Kawasaki was consistently in front. Riders who don't like the power of the KX80 engine just haven't gotten used to it yet.

The tiny engine starts easily and carburets crisply. All our riders thought the transmission worked nicely, even though some felt the clutch engaged too suddenly. However, we didn't experience any of the grabbiness or squeaking that Kawasaki's 250s have demonstrated in recent years.

When it came to getting the KX



TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

A technical description of some so-called new models could be summed up effectively by "they changed the stickers." Such is certainly not the case with the all-new KX80-G1.

New plastic work provides the most obvious visual clues of changes. The bike's profile is changed, with a slightly smaller, differently shaped fuel tank. A narrower radiator is covered by a new radiator shroud that fastens to the tank better for a stronger radiator mount. It also makes the radiator less obtrusive and provides a better plane for a rider's knee to slide along. New side panels, a seat with a flatter profile and the rear fender attach to a removable rear frame section made of round steel tubing.

This section is the side effect of a new, bottom-link Uni-Trak. The steel, square-tube frame carries only the upper shock mount rather than the mid-frame rocker arm formerly used by Kawasaki. Now all the moving parts of the shock linkage are at swingarm level or below. Less weight, less complexity and a lower center of gravity result.

Kawasaki didn't count on the linkage alone for better rear suspension. There is a new, rebuildable KYB remote reservoir shock—a far more sophisticated shock than any Japanese mini has featured before. The new shock has a threaded preload adjustment and adjustable compression damping (just like the big bikes), where last year's machine had a five-position preload and adjustable rebound damping only. There are four compression settings and four rebound damping settings on the shock. Additionally, the stroke of the shock is longer, resulting in nearly 11 inches of claimed rear-wheel travel.

The new frame, larger than that of previous KX80s, allows more room for taller riders. Maximum wheelbase is

set by the National Motorsport Association, however, so that remains the same.

A new fork features longer travel (roughly 11 inches claimed, like the rear) and larger inner fork tubes. The stanchions are now 35mm in diameter compared to the 33s used last year. Tapered roller bearings in the steering head keep the fork turning longer and more easily than the ball bearings of '85. The front axle is larger and stronger; otherwise, the front wheel and disc brake are unchanged.

The rear wheel now has the same straight-pull spokes that were introduced on the front of the KX80 in 1985.

Major changes were the order of the day in the engine bay as well. The whole top end of the engine was turned 10 degrees on the cases to let the intake port line up exactly with the angled exhaust port. Kawasaki didn't simply relocate last year's cylinder: The intake port size, shape and layout are different, as are the shape of the transfer ports and the exhaust port. A larger four-petal reed valve is used in place of the former two-petal design.

The transmission is lightened by the use of a lighter shift drum, where two grooves handle the same shifting chores that three grooves used to do. An indirect-drive coolant pump replaces the direct one used previously. It features a smaller impeller with a different shape to reduce coolant pressure and prevent coolant from leaking past the pump shaft's oil seal at high rpm. There is also a different primary ratio.

Kawasaki press information gave no reason for the ratio change from 3.083:1 to 3.400:1. We suspect that weight was a factor. The smaller 68/20 gear combination should be lighter than the 74/24 gears previously used.



Bermed or flat turns were a piece of cake.

around a track, riders with big-bike experience got used to the bike more quickly than those with mini experience alone. Taller riders in particular felt right at home with the 80's roomy seating position, and the relationship between the well-padded seat, footpegs and handlebar was good. The only request riders had was for Kawasaki to smooth the transition from seat to tank.

Although the KX's ergonomics don't interfere on the track, its suspension does. Right out of the box, the fork is too soft and the shock spring too stiff for mini-class riders. In fact, the rear spring is stiff enough for a 180-pound rider to attack desert whoops without losing control. Even with our expert riders, we ran the spring with minimum preload.

We would love to report a fix for the

suspension, but Kawasaki didn't have the shock or fork springs in stock at the time of the test. ATK didn't have their springs for the new 35mm KYB fork yet, either. Stiffer springs for the fork and a softer spring for the shock should put the suspension right.

Our more aggressive testers babied the bike a little in supercross jumps and stadium whoop-type sections, but used the fork's tendency to settle in a turn to carve a tighter line through corners. Despite the fork springs, the 80's fork action is smooth, and riders noticed extra rigidity from the larger fork tubes.

The rear suspension handled big whoops and jump landings well, though it didn't handle smaller bumps as well as the RM80. Surprisingly, even with the stiff rear spring, the KX didn't kick up going into turns or over small, sharp jumps.

All our testers said the KX took less time than the RM to recover from engine-related rider errors but took longer to get going after a missed line or botched corner. Riders thought the bike steered particularly well on damp ground. Steering was not as good on blue-groove tracks, but the KX's Dunlop K490 tires are not designed for that type of terrain.

The rear end tended to overslide on slick surfaces, but that may be an ef-

fect of the unbalanced suspension. With any traction the bike turned well; it was stable and predictable in sweepers and handled powder berms controllably, too. Even riders who did not prefer the powerband felt that its good midrange burst pulled the bike through corners well.

The KX is a stable bike. There was no hint of headshake and no tendency to kick sideways off a jump.

Kawasaki will collect on this redesign gamble, but not to the extent the '83 model did because the other mini-class entries are too good. Although Kawasaki has an excellent bike by design, the details don't add up as well as they should. The KX was faster than the Suzuki on tight tracks with lots of traction, but the Suzuki will be a threat on faster tracks, and its suspension is better out of the box for most riders.

Our Kawasaki did hold up well in general, and the frame and suspension will work for the increasing number of taller riders who postpone jumping to the 125cc class. Without a shootout, we can't say whether riding any of the other 80s will be a risky bet, but we don't think so.

If you're a fairly big rider, we're certain that being on a Kawasaki will leave you with a strong hand in this game. **DR**

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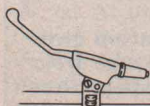
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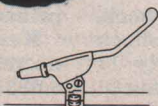
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OPINIONS

Overall, the KX80 is a good bike. The powerband is fine, and there is plenty of power. The bike hits its line well in turns and doesn't want to climb out of berms. Its braking is about all a rider could ask for, though now that I'm used to the rear disc on my 125, I missed it. Stability is good, and the KX is comfortable for a big rider, though both Terry and I would like to see less rise where the seat meets the tank.

The fork was too soft for me, but the action was smooth. Also, it seemed to flex less than a 33mm fork when landing off big jumps or on the face of the next jump. I wish it were legal for me to race minis!

—Mercedes Gonzales

Age/Ht./Wt.: 22/5'4"/120 lb.

Motorcycle(s) currently raced/ridden:

Kawasaki KX125, KX250

Riding ability: Intermediate motocrosser

The mini-class competition will be closer than ever this year, but the KX80 is still a good contender. Its chassis is tall, stable and roomy, so the bike should appeal to expert and



It takes a hard landing to bottom the suspension at both ends.

taller riders. Riders who think the bike is slow haven't learned to use its power. I think they'll like the KX once they get used to riding it. I tested the bike against '85 and '86 minis, and it does have the power, though I wish it hit harder.

Kawasaki should have paid more attention to the suspension—even an expert needs a softer rear spring and stiffer fork springs. Don't worry, though, the KX will be right there on the track.

—Terry Swanson

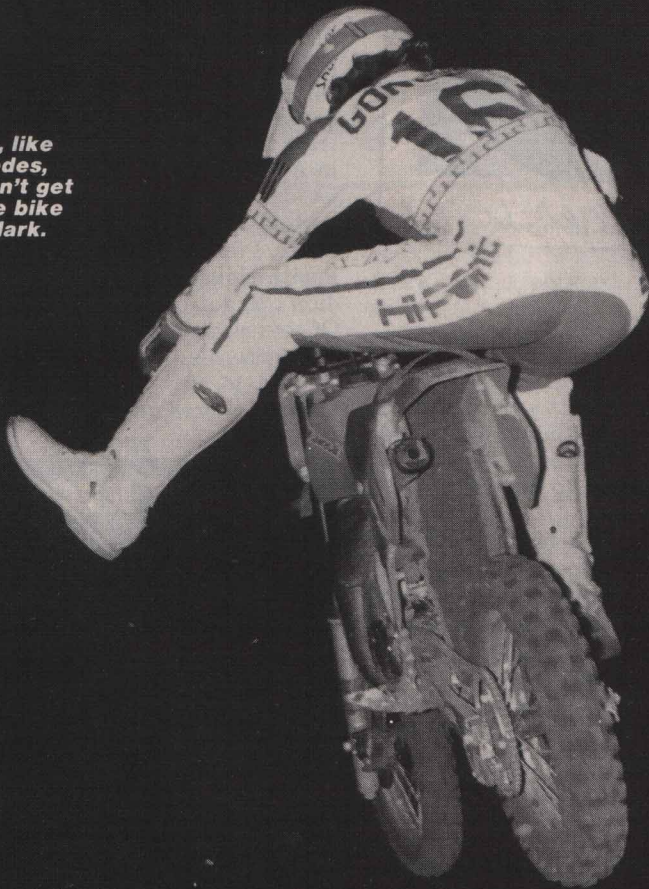
Age/Ht./Wt.: 15/5'5"/115 lb.

Motorcycle(s) currently raced/ridden:

Yamaha YZ80N, Suzuki RM80G

Riding ability: Mini expert motocrosser

Some riders, like Mercedes, wouldn't get off the bike until dark.



DIRT RIDER BEST TEST INDEX

ATK 560	Nov. '84/Oct. '85
Beta TR32	July '85
BMW R80 G/S	March '85
Cagiva WRX125	Aug. '83
Can-Am 175 ASE	May '84
Can-Am 250 L/C ASE	Oct. '84
Can-Am 500ASE	Oct. '84/May '85
Can-Am 320 Trials	June '84
Fantic 300 Trials	Aug. '84
Honda CR125R	March '83/Jan. '86
Honda CR250R	Dec. '84
Honda CR480R	Sept. '83
Honda CR500R	Dec. '84/Dec. '85
Honda RT250S	Nov. '85
Honda XL200R	Jan. '83
Honda XL350R	Oct. '84/May '85
Honda XR200R	Oct. '83/June '84
Honda XR250R	March '84/March '85
Honda XR350R	July '85
Honda XR500R	June '83/Aug. '84
Husqvarna 500AE	Feb. '85
Husqvarna 430AE	Nov. '85
Husqvarna 250CR	Jan. '83/Jan. '84/May '85
Husqvarna 500CR	Dec. '82
Husqvarna 510TE	Nov. '84
Husqvarna 510TX	Sept. '85
Husqvarna 250WR	July '83/Jan. '85
Husqvarna 400WR	July '84
Husqvarna 400WRX	July '85
Husqvarna 175XC	Oct. '83
Husqvarna 250XC	July '83
Husqvarna 500XC	March '84
Kawasaki KDX200A1	June '83
Kawasaki KDX200A2	Feb. '85
Kawasaki KE100B2	March '83
Kawasaki KL600B1	Oct. '85
Kawasaki KX250C1	April '83
Kawasaki KX250C2	March '84
Kawasaki KX250D1	July '85
Kawasaki KX500B1	Feb. '85
KTM 504GS	April '83
KTM 125L/C MXC	Jan. '83
KTM 80 MX	Dec. '85
KTM 125 MX	Aug. '84/June '85
KTM 350MXC	Dec. '84
KTM 420 MXC	Nov. '83
KTM 495 MXC	April '84
M-Star 250 L/C SC	Oct. '84
M-Star 500	Oct. '84/Sept. '85/Jan. '86
Maico 490 E	Feb. '83
Suzuki DR250D	Sept. '83
Suzuki PE175D	July '83
Suzuki RM80	Jan. '86
Suzuki RM125	May '84
Suzuki RM125D	June '83
Suzuki RM125F	Aug. '85
Suzuki RM250D	Feb. '83
Suzuki RM250E	Jan. '84
Suzuki RM250F	March '85
Suzuki RM500D	Oct. '83
Suzuki RM500E	Sept. '84
Suzuki RS175Z	Dec. '82
Suzuki SP500D	April '83
Suzuki SP600F	Feb. '85
Yamaha IT200L	June '84
Yamaha IT490K	April '83
Yamaha IT490L	Sept. '84
Yamaha TT600K	July '83
Yamaha TY350N	Aug. '85
Yamaha YZ250L	Feb. '84
Yamaha YZ490L	July '84
Yamaha XT200K	Feb. '83
Yamaha XT350N	Aug. '85

SHOOTOUTS:	
Honda CR80R vs. Kawasaki KX80E1 vs.	Suzuki SP250F vs. Yamaha XT250N
Suzuki RM80D vs. Yamaha YZ80K	Husky 500XC vs. KTM 500MXC
Honda CR80R vs. Kawasaki KX80E3 vs. Yamaha YZ80N	Honda XR600R vs. Yamaha TT600N
Honda CR125R vs. Kawasaki KX125C1	Kawasaki KDX250B3 vs. Yamaha IT250K
Can-Am 200ASE vs. Honda IT200N	Yamaha YZ490J vs. Yamaha YZ490K
Kawasaki KDX200A3 vs. Yamaha IT200N	Honda XL600 vs. Kawasaki KL600
Honda CR250R vs. Yamaha YZ250N	Kawasaki KL600 vs. Yamaha XT600
Honda XL250R vs. Kawasaki Z 250	Honda ATC250R vs. Yamaha Tri-Z 250

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