

AUGUST 1978

Motor cycling

MONTHLY

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THE TOUGHEST TEST: HONDA CX500

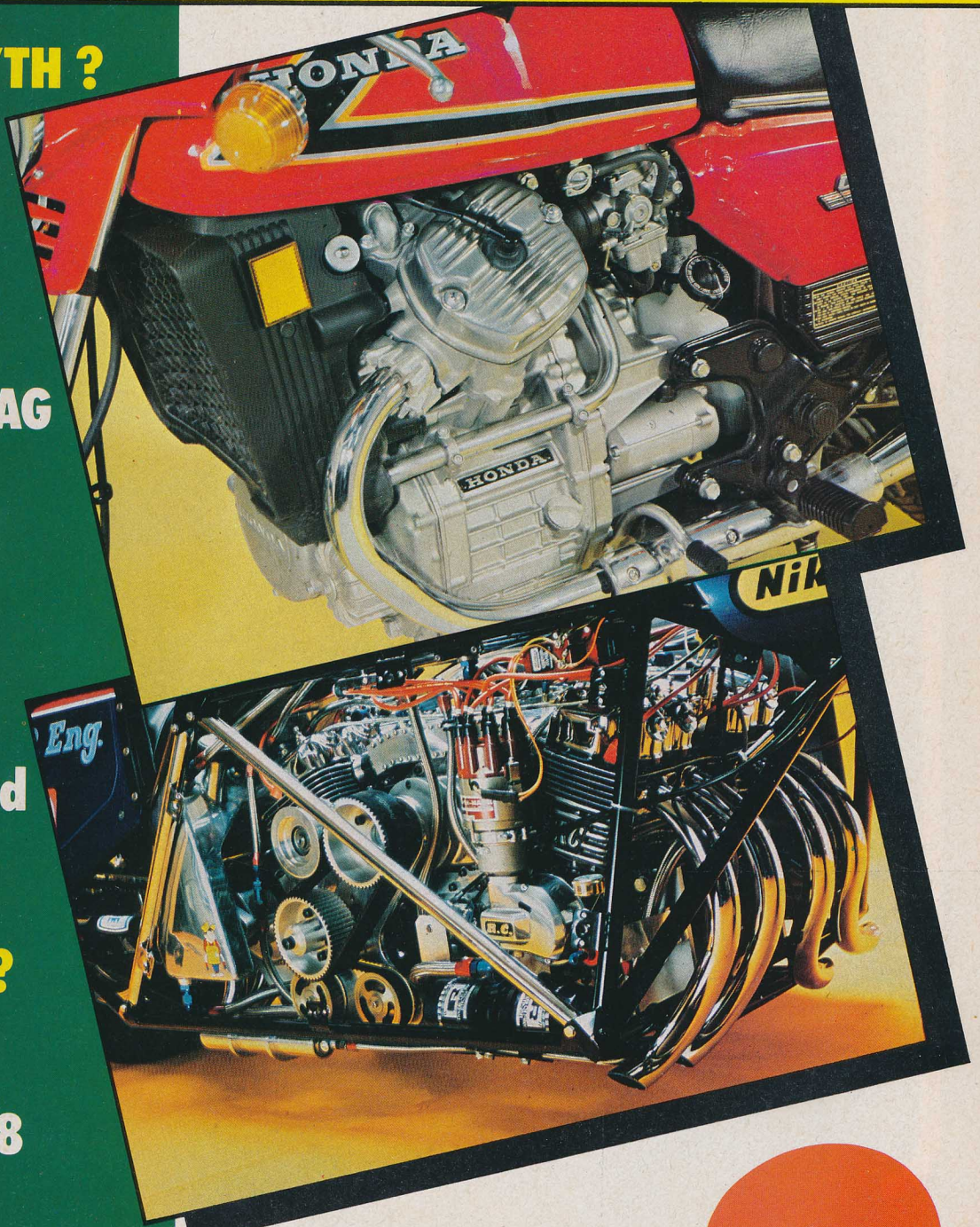
LEGEND or MYTH ?

We rode it
8000 miles
to find the
answer!

IN THE SOFT BAG
Easy
gear carrying

YAMAHA'S
LATEST 50s
Road & Trail
versions tested

200mph
in 400 yards ?
Russ Collins'
fabulous
2000cc Vee-8



Special 6 page **FEATURE** on **HELMETS**

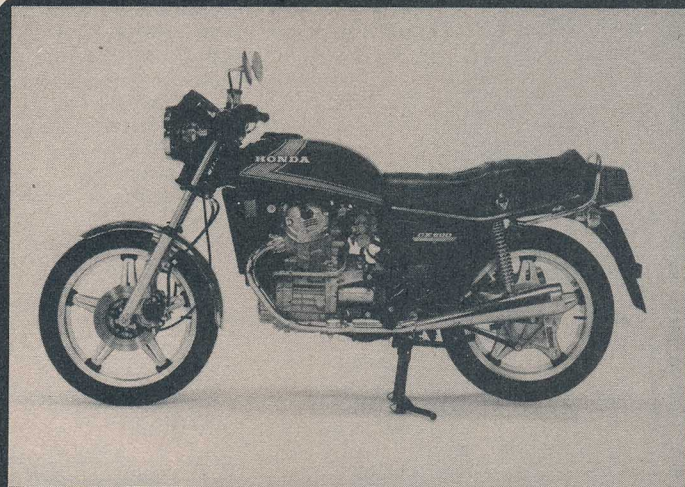


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BIKES ON TEST

9 HONDA CX500

Legend — or myth? We bring you the first real test of Honda's new V-twin. We rode ours over 8,000 miles to find out how good it is — or isn't.

28 HONDA GL 1000 'GOLD WING'

Twenty-five thousand miles — that's right! 25,000 miles — ownership of the big flat four. We check it out against its abilities when new.

37 YAMAHA RD 50 v DT 50

Road or trail? Read our assessment of the two new Yam 'mopeds'.

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TECHNICAL

- 23 SUZUKI GS 550** — our Superservice shows you how to get quids in by doing it yourself.
- 51 ELECTRONIC IGNITION** — how good? We test it out against conventional electrics on a rolling road.

FEATURES

- 16 BRIEF ENCOUNTER** — in which John Thorpe, Charlie Deane, and Merril Boulton, ride forty bikes in a day.
- 20 HOME AND DRY** — a survey of showerproof gear for summer riding
- 33 DRAGGING FOR 200mph** — a profile of American sprint star Russ Collins, and his mighty Hondas.
- 45 THANKS A MILLION** — in which we look at the John Player contribution to bike sport.
- 67 GOING SOFT** — an introduction to luggage carrying the easy way.

REGULARS

- 4 Arena**
5 The Way It Is
Shop Window
18 Sammy Says
43 Dave Taylor Page
48 Superseries
62 Bikerama
64 The Right Angle

SPECIAL

- 55 HELMETS** — how they are designed with safety in mind; what are available; and how to keep a check on your own best insurance against injury...

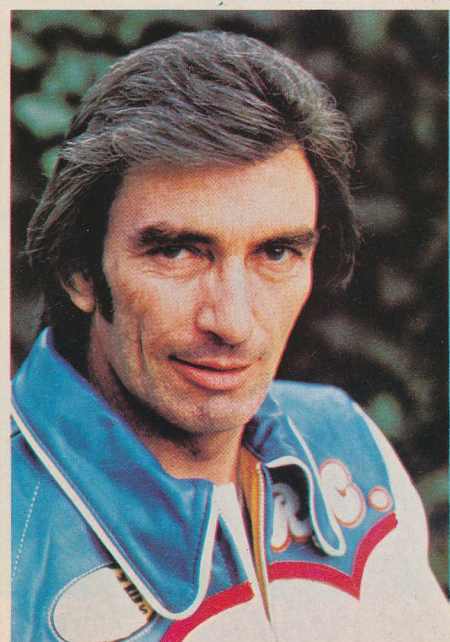
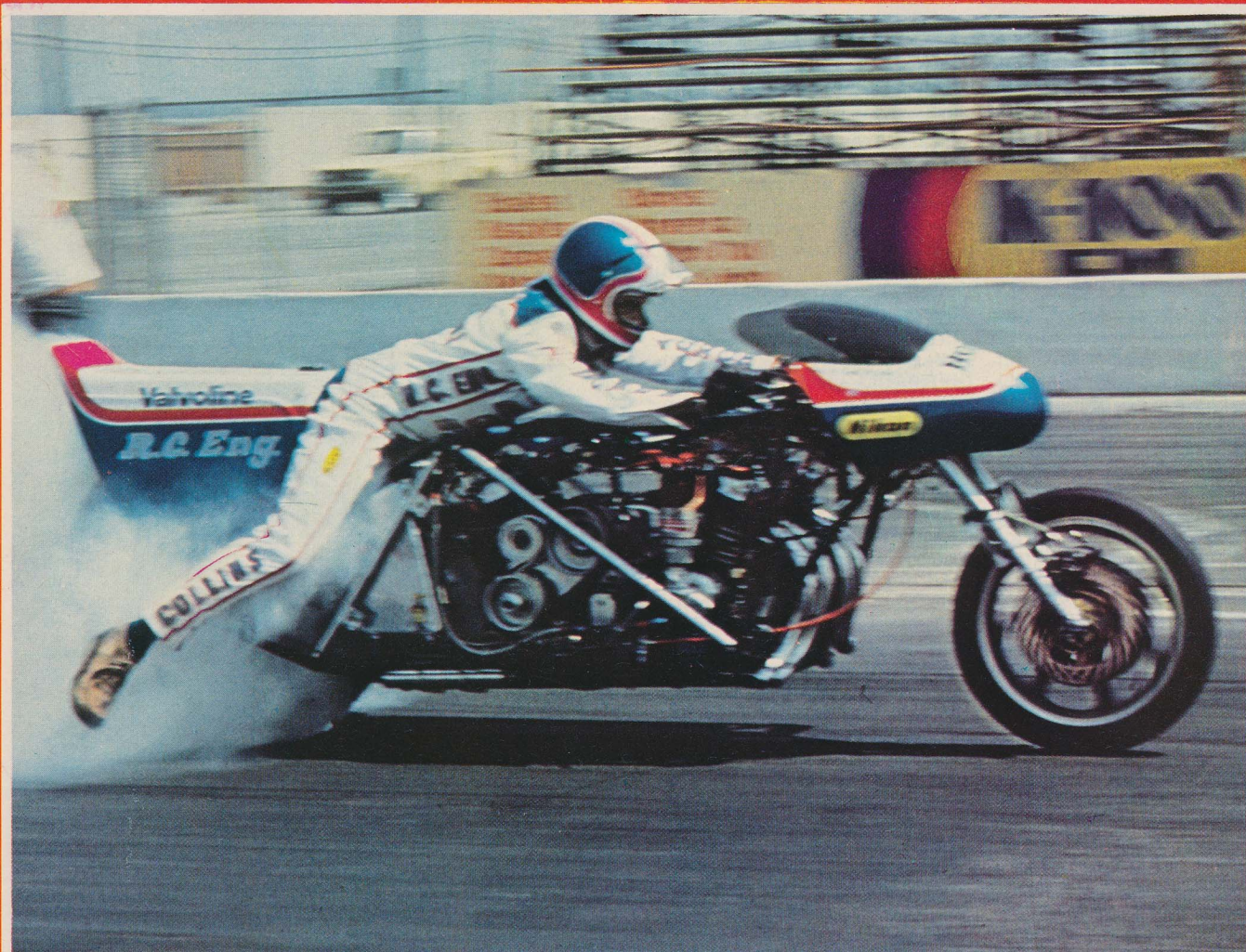
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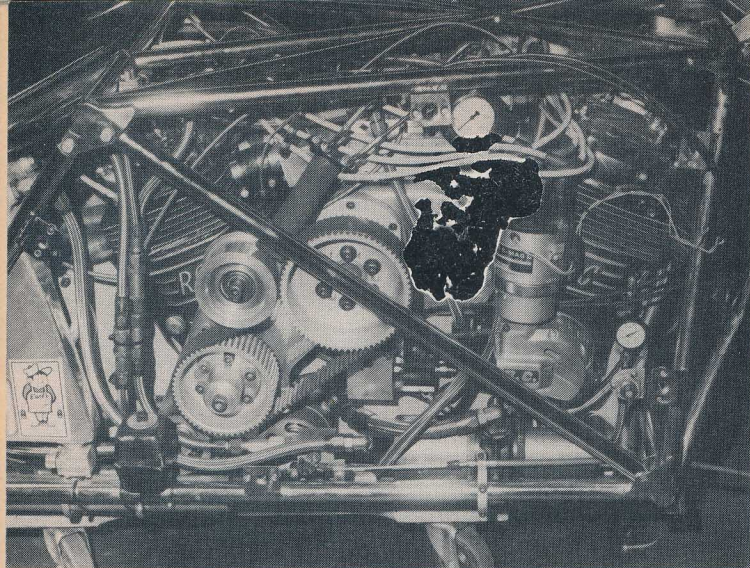
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THE 200mph DRAG!

DEREK PICKARD talks to top drag racer **RUSS COLLINS**, who plans to crack the magic 6-second barrier with a fantastic Honda V-8





The Might Eight. Two bored-out Honda 'fours' combine with a turbo-charger to form a vee-eight (above). And here (right) is the plot in action — Russ Collins smoking away from the line towards 187mph.

WITH three 1100cc Honda fours screaming, the bike flashed through the lights at over 180mph. Russ Collins lost control and the drag racer's biggest fear suddenly became reality. A bumpy track made matters worse and as soon as the machine became airborne, he was thrown off a split second before the bike went into a seemingly endless series of endos. Miraculously, Russ lived.

He took that bike to many world records. It took him to an unofficial record: he is the only man to have fallen off at the highest speed and survived.

Recovery lasted over a year. And on a new bike Russ returned to the sport that nearly claimed his life. He did so with a vengeance; and set an even faster record. American drag racing has a rare breed of man at the top, and Honda have an excellent publiciser who will

take their forthcoming six to the limit.

Although Russ has been a drag racing fan for many years, he didn't start his own business until 1971. The Honda 750 four had been on the market for over a year and he realised the enormous potential of the top selling bike. R. C. Engineering in Gardena, California, was formed to build performance parts for the one machine.

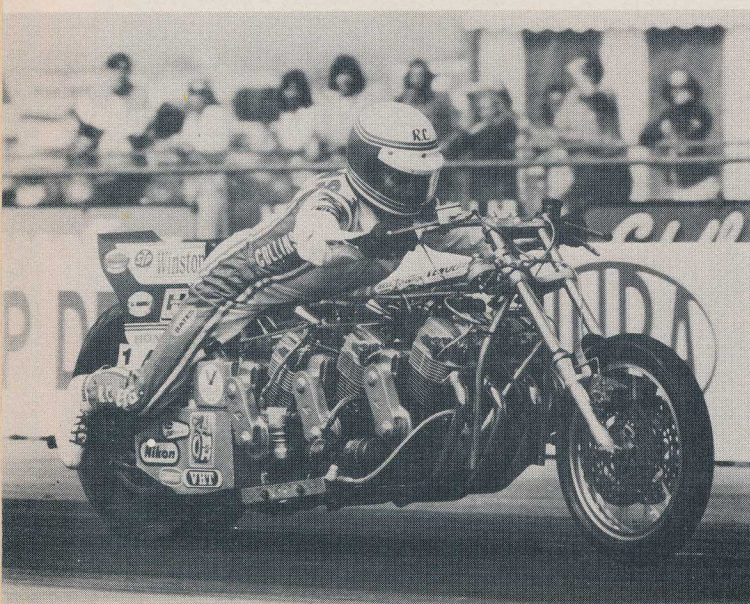
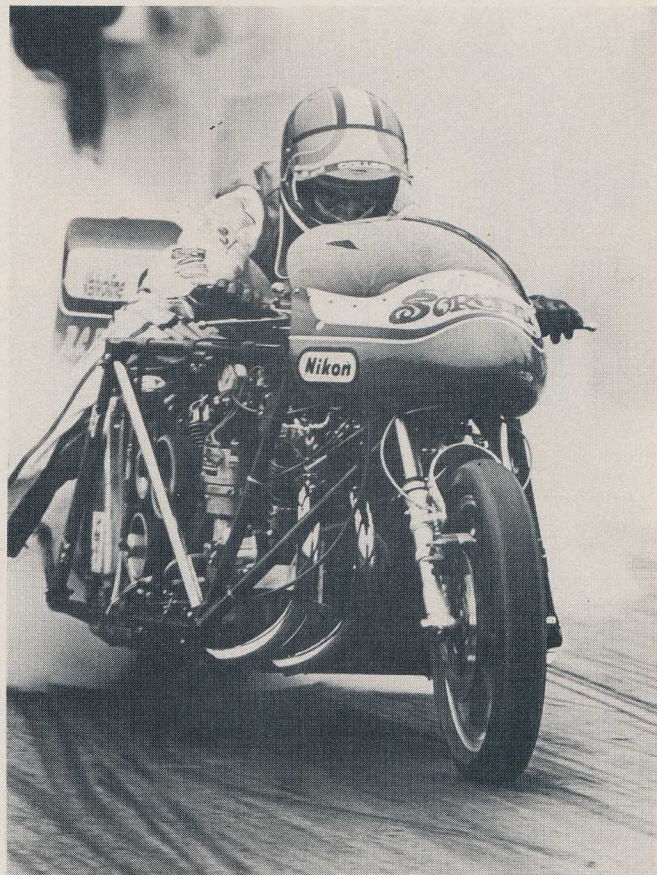
After experimenting with single and dual engine 750 powered dragsters, work on the ultimate racer of the period began in 1973. Three Honda engines bored out to 1080cc were linked together in a long frame. Supercharging all twelve cylinders was impractical so the incredible plot ran on nitro methane through Hilborn fuel injectors. Gradual developments brought the output to 450bhp in early 1975.

Russ took an entire season perfecting the correct riding technique. October 1975 saw everything put together; the bike rewrote the record books and became the first two-wheeler to crack the seven second barrier. The 3.3 litre projectile clocked 7.86 seconds and 180mph. That year also saw another breakthrough, when the bike became the first motorcycle to be awarded the NHRA (National Hot Rod Association) Best Engineered Vehicle Award. Russ and R. C. Engineering had hit the top. His performances and

He knew that two supercharged engines could produce as much power as three with atmospheric breathing. A twin and blower would also be lighter.

Two 1000cc motors would be mounted back to back with a supercharger in the middle. Although both cranks had to be used the entire unit would take on the conception of a V8 with one magneto, one oil pump and the single blower.

Compressing the nitro to 26psi inlet boost, the 2001cc demanded a completely different approach; he had to



products were in worldwide demand.

But success has a cruel way of claiming repayment. Eight months after making the headlines came the big crash. Again Russ made the front pages, but this time the media wrote him off. They were wrong.

The bike had been smashed beyond repair. Only the power plant was salvaged and kept as a memento.

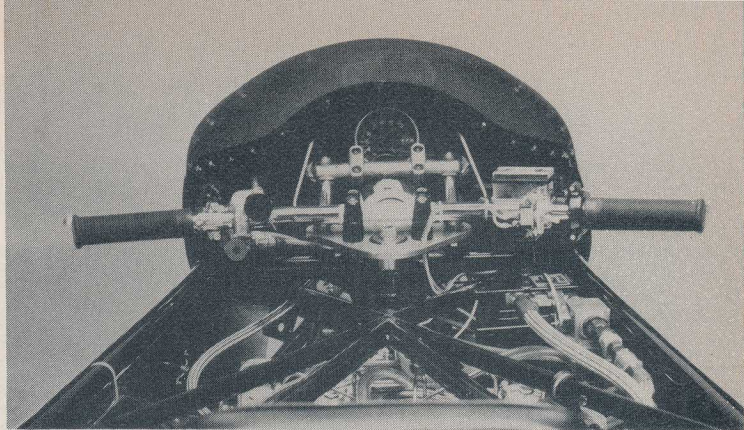
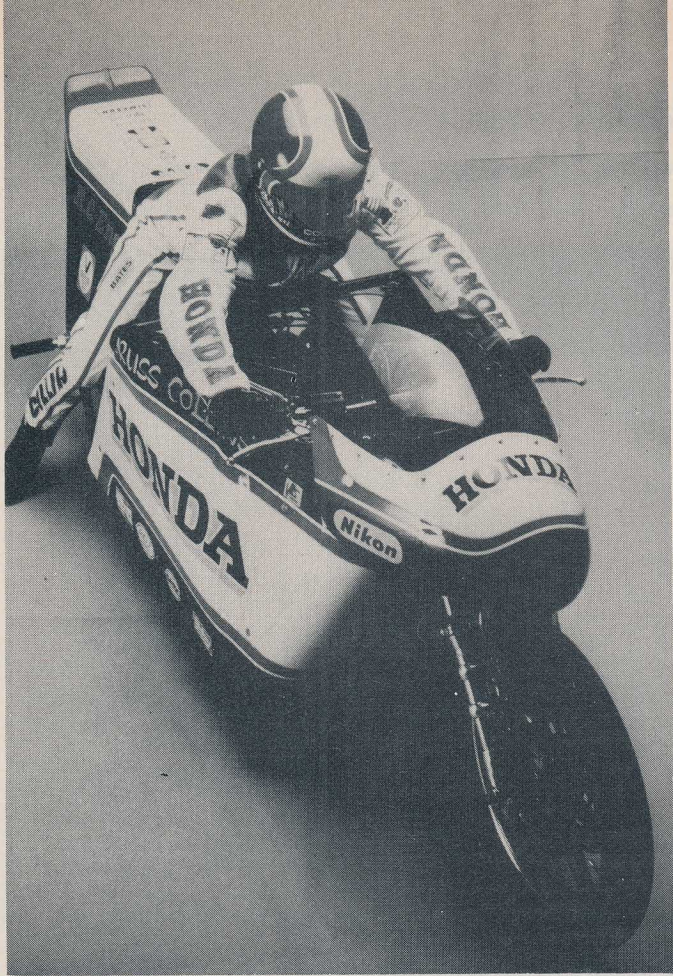
As soon as he could sit up in his hospital bed, the amazing Mr Collins began conceiving a replacement.

learn to drag race all over again. The local strips gained many long tyre burns before the technique was acquired.

The comeback to top level competition was a sensation. At Ontario Raceway the Honda sent the spectators wild with no less than 187mph. Russ Collins had returned with another record. And again the NHRA paid respect to his creation by awarding this new bike the Best Engineered Vehicle of the year.

R. C. Engineering also sponsor another drag racer, Ron Teson, with an engine that can claim to be exactly "half" of Russ's. The 1000cc four has shown nearly 350bhp on the dyno and Ron currently holds the standing

No slouch either. The earlier triple-engined bike clocked 180mph.



Pilot's-eye-view. She sure is low, wide and handsome! Just imagine the blur ahead. That's the track...!

quarter time record at 7.65 seconds.

Russ is quick to point out that his twin should go a lot quicker. Although it is the fastest bike through the lights, he has never been able to ride it flat out in the year he has been trying. Every run sees the back end become too wild, on at least one occasion forcing the throttle to be momentarily closed. If a good run on full power could be achieved then he's positive the machine will hit 200mph.

Every motorcycle enthusiast knows that Russ Collins has been sponsored

by Honda for years. He has done much to promote 750 sales. When the CBX six has arrived in dealer's showrooms, so R. C. Engineering will be out to establish new records for the sensational new motor on the drag strip.

Early development on prototype engines has been very favourable. These pre-production units use cranks that have been machined from solid billet and so are stronger than forged versions. Bearing sizes are iden-

tical to the 750 but they have the advantages of a shorter stroke, lighter webs and larger diameter big end bolts.

The bore centres are wide and 1350cc can be obtained with larger pistons and sleeves. Stroking the crank out to its maximum results in a total capacity of 1500cc!

Playing around with the standard bike has already given excellent results. Whereas a stock GS1000 can only record a quarter mile time of 12 seconds, the six has no trouble in beating that with 11.4 seconds.

Fitting bigger carbs, cleaning up the ports and using a racing exhaust system amazed everyone at R. C. when the modified big bore motor pulled over 140bhp at the dyno. R. C. are confident they can promise the same output for a sportster once better cams have been developed.

But those pre-production engines from Honda are not really for staff playthings. The Japanese giant is backing Russ Collins as big as ever. They want him to bust the drag racing records more than their fours ever did.

Much radical rethinking within R. C. Engineering and from outside consultants is going to result in an all-new quarter mile blaster. Russ is convinced that a supercharged 1500 six at maximum development and running on nitro can exceed 400bhp. Calculations have indicated nearly 450 should be possible.

This means the new bike need only use one engine. To overcome the problems of controlling such an output the design could be like nothing else on the strips.

Russ's new bike will have a 14-inch rear slick. He will sit low between the wheels and the engine will hang behind the back. It should be ready for mid-1979 to aim at breaking the 6 second barrier clocking 200mph.

Experimental runs will be helped by the fact that the resited engine not only helps weight distribution but hanging it out the back enables it to be swapped for a replacement within half an hour. And that factor will prove a valuable asset as extreme power and durability are two things that don't mix.

Maybe all our statements on maximum outputs from drag engines should have been accompanied by a life expectancy figure ... in minutes!

