

## PE175

# FULL FLOATER FULL FLOATER FULL FLOATER

### INTRODUCTION

1982 has brought with it a complete restructuring of the 'Big Four's' approach to their Enduro line-up. The 175 Enduro bike has been the last mower of the 80's, out-selling all other types of bike with the exception of the 250cc commutars.

So with Americans, European and Australian dollars staring them in the face, the development teams at Yamaha, Suzuki, Kawasaki and Honda have developed the best enduro bikes ever from Japan for 1982.

Honda, who never really got into the two-stroke swing of things, have finally built a competitive machine. Their four-strokes have always had the motor and now they score well on the suspension and handling charts. Although still not outright enduro winners, the XR 200, 250 and 500 will achieve strong appeal among trail riders.

Yamaha, the people who invented the no-fuss enduro bike, have centred their market attack on the IT 175, leaving the two bigger bikes as mere back-ups. Changes on the IT 250 and 465 are minimal but the IT 175 is equipped with a full Power valve engine and Mono-Link suspension. Yamaha have realised what the number one enduro seller is, but they still cater for the big-bore freaks.

Meanwhile Kawasaki continue to place all their eggs in one basket.

The KDX 175 has led the pack for two years now, but is under heavy attack. Single shock suspension is the rule not the exception. So although still a good bike, it must cope with more serious trails. And before we receive any letters on the subject, it should be made clear that the limited number of KDX 250s and 450s brought into Australia are for promotional purposes only!

Finally we get to Suzuki who have dropped the PE 250 and 400 in favour of an all out assault with



the Full Floater PE 175. The smallest PE has always been the biggest seller so I suppose that Suzuki believe they can get big bore PE riders to change down while winning over new customers with their solo effort.

With competition from three other large companies not accustomed to taking second place, the PE 175 will have to be good; very good!

As with a 125 motocrosser you have to learn how to use the power available because there is not a lot there. At least when you compare it against something like a WR 430 or KTM 250. For a trail rider who wants durability and reliability, the little PE is great. Power starts picking up early and rolls on smoothly right up to about 9000 rpm. Fast enough to get you wherever you're going, yet with enough torque to chug through a musty swamp. The engine doesn't feel very powerful when first used, especially if you're used to a bigger bike. At 5000-6000 rpm, the bike glides along effortlessly. Open the throttle to about 9000 rpm and the bike really begins to move. If you're in a hurry the throttle is left pegged wide open, the gears are changed and the clutch is fanned to maintain velocity. Shifting the gears cleanly and quickly is simple if you understand the machine. On almost every bike we ride these days the clutch is used mainly to start off to to keep the revs up. Gear changing rarely requires the clutch to be pulled in. Ride the PE though and you are going to have to use the clutch when changing up or be prepared to miss a lot of gears. More of a quirk than a fault.

Some noise restrictors have to be removed from the PE before riding it. First there is the copper head gasket, then a metal plate mounted between the pipe and the barrel. Finally, there is a rubber ridge moulded within the inlet manifold; this has to be cut out with a razor blade. Even after these



Full floater handles all types of terrain

modifications the PE is still the quietest two-stroke enduro bike I've ridden. The cylindrical silencer emits a barely audible patter that shames the noisy IT 250 and XR 250.

If a competitive life is planned for the PE a few changes might help to improve the midrange power. Stock standard, it doesn't quite have the punch a racer needs. Riding up a fair incline can have the PE screaming in second or lagging in third. Trevor Flood tried an aluminum muffler which would have to be an improvement although it is a pity to lose the low-decibel effectiveness of the stocker. Increasing the airbox intake area will also free up the power although water proofing cannot be ignored.

Beysen reeds usually help performance and a boost bottle might do something as well — although I don't know what. Properly modified porting should also help some.

I suggest these changes not because the PE has any really major fault, but because with the smooth bottom end and a high revving top end, a stronger midrange could turn the 175 into a giant killer.

#### FRAME AND SUSPENSION

Enduro riders may not approach machine "brickness" and one-upmanship with the frenzy of a 14-year-old would-be motocross hero but they still don't like to be handed a collection of last year's parts! That's what happened to PE riders in 1981 but this year is different. The Full Floater system graces the rear end and it really works. You get the suppleness of an enduro bike and the high speed stability of a motocrosser.

Slowly cruising through the bush is comfortable although not the PE's forte. Start powering down raked out hills, sliding around rocky corners or tackling some sandy whoops and the rear suspension comes into its own. Like its brothers, the RM motocrossers, the PE rear wheel pushes down

into the earth, searching for traction.

Flying feet up round a sweeping corner sees the tyre bite into the dirt rather than slide out. And this is with el-cheapo IRC tyres! Over rocks that would kick the rear wheel right out on an older PE, the bike stays reasonably straight as the impact is absorbed. After riding up and down a few rock-studded hill sides, you will notice how important this is.

Over fast motocross type terrain the PE can also hold its own against just about any fully-fledged motocross bike. With the extra linkages and bearings, maintenance times will increase; but after chucking a big cross up over a crest with rock and ruts covering the downhill side, AND SURVIVING, you won't mind so much!

Unfortunately the forks are not up to the fine standard set by the single shock rear end. They're OK but nothing to rave about. Over normal laid-back smooth trails the forks are plush and efficient. When deep ruts begin to appear across the track, they start to shudder and shake. They don't flex too badly, but can knock from side to side if a hole or something is hit with too much front end bias. And bottoming out is a problem. They don't really feel quite as safe as say a Husky front end. Better than the IT 250 tested last month because of the bike's light weight, however. Fitting a set of Simons forks (\$375) may be a little unrealistic for the average (i.e. poor!) enduro rider but a fork kit from Pro-Line Racing, Trevor Flood Imports or Porterpower Imports would work wonders.

The PE basically rides like an RM 125 with the enduro motor. It is particularly light and loves being thrown around.

If you have to get off and push the PE up a hill (which won't be very often) don't worry. Weight is absolutely minimal and after removing the blinkers,

speed, large tail light and its heavy support bracket you have saved even more kilograms. The lack of weight also contributes to the way the bike is ridden. Like a 175 motocrosser, it is dominated by the rider who chucks the bike around. Travel at a million miles an hour everywhere, bouncing off rocks and drifting through corners; this is where the PE shows its yellow isn't a cowardly streak. It wants to be ridden to the max and put under pressure.

With a stock IRC front tyre the PE sometimes washed out and tried to climb out of a few loose berms, but not seriously. If the front end doesn't get knocked around too much and the power is dialled on the 175 Suzuki is as fast as any other.

Seat height is relatively high but settles down a bit with your weight depressing the suspension. The trick when riding up steep inclines is to keep the engine revving and push against the footpegs with your boots so you don't slip back.

Hitting logs that suddenly appear across the track is no major concern. Usually the PE jumps sideways, then straightens out when landing.

Jumping the 175 is a pleasure; it moves through the air easily and lands gently. All too often enduro bikes feel like beached whales when in the air.

#### DETAILS

As I have said the tyres aren't too great but every thing else is pretty good. The sideplates are a half way imitation of the diamond shaped IT ones and tend to lock better when trimmed down as on the BTX Suzuki.

Although bulbous looking, the tank is not overly wide for the rider. At the seat junction however it sits a few inches high and can be the cause of some physical grief. A safety seat is the obvious answer if you're into prevention of possible problems caused by pressure on personal parts (try saying that quick!)



MARK  
TYLER



**PE175 FULL FLOATER**

Clutch and brake levers may tend to be a little brittle but the throttle is a good straight pull item and the handlebars feel comfortable. High quality switch-gear is used which is good I suppose if horns, blinkers and high-low beam switches have to be endured. The front light is the same as before except for a black painted, rather than chromed, protection grill (big deal). And that trick little all-purpose tool is still there. Before it could be damaged Trevor Flood replaced the oversized tail light with a small accessory one.

With the rear brake and sprocket on the left hand side of the wheel Suzuki had to build a cross over linkage for the right side mounted brake pedal. So instead of just haphazardly guiding a cable with one or two zip ties, a linkage system that is mounted on either side of the swing arm was devised. Very neat indeed! And it works too. Although the brake chatters a bit it doesn't readily lock up the rear wheel. Up front the anchor also feels progressive and has enough strength to stop the bike in a hurry. And unlike a KTM or a Husky you only need two fingers to stop dead. Disc brakes on an enduro bike could be interesting but imagine the possibilities of bending the disc on some large rock.

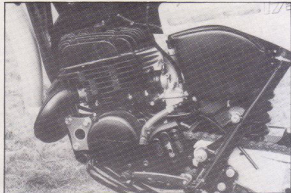
#### CONCLUSION

Since the first PE 175C arrived in Australia the smallest Suzuki enduro bike has been popular. With its good power, reasonable suspension and predictable handling, it has also established the 175cc enduro bike as the most versatile for trail riding and enduro racing. A few years ago Suzuki published an advert with a mad speckled Anthony Garter and bike, proclaiming that by riding the little PE you could enter the less crowded 175 class. This 'less crowded' class is now the most popular. Each of the Japanese factories realise this and want to secure a strong foothold.

The PE 175 is good, but whether it can beat off the IT MonoLink, KDX 175 and four-stroke XR 200 is yet to be seen. This may just be the year to hold a four way 175 enduro saper shoot out.

—Mark Tyler

Motorcycle supplied by Suzuki Australia and Trevor Flood, Gasit Motorcycles, Soesby.



Engine revs well once restrictors are discarded



Blinkers and taillight will need to be removed for serious competition



PE proved very waterproof