

HONDA'S OUTRAGEOUS XR250: WILL IT MAKE THE 2-STROKE OBSOLETE?!

DIRT BIKE

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WPS 34355

JUNE 1986

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HOW TO DO WHEELIES & WHY THEY'RE SO IMPORTANT!

SUZUKI'S NEW 125: WILL IT ESCALATE THE RMs RACE?!

KDX HOP-UP!!

DAYTONA RACE ACTION & SMASH-UPS!

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ALL-NEW 1986 HONDA XR250

KX500:

GUT-WRENCHING POWER MONSTER!

BIG-WHEEL SHOWDOWN: HONDA'S FAT CAT vs. YAMAHA'S BW!

BARK-BUSTER SHOOTOUT: 10 WAYS TO LOSE YOUR FEAR OF TREES!

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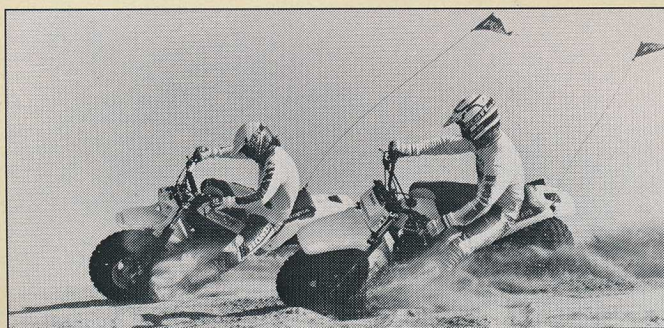
DAYTONA



HONDA XR250



WHEELIES



FAT CAT vs. BW200



KDX HOP-UP



SUZUKI RM125

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ON THE COVER:—are a bunch of tiny colored dots that started out as a piece of film in a camera. We took the piece of film, Honda's 1986 XR250, and test rider Steve Schmitz to a place with lots of green grass and trees. Mike and Tom found the place along with the KX500 and BW200/Fat Cat action, and Fran snapped the photo. What a life. Anyway, the piece of film went through the washer at Webb's and came out looking remarkably good, so the Boss put it on the cover. DeWest graciously DeSigned the whole thing, and there you have it—yet another issue of *Dirt Bike!*

WARNING: Much of the action depicted in this magazine is potentially dangerous. Virtually all of the riders seen in our photos are experienced experts or professionals. Do not attempt to duplicate any stunts that are beyond your own capabilities. Always wear the appropriate safety gear.

SUZUKI RM125G

“The Kawasaki has the strongest rear brake, good forks, and a potent mid-to-upper-hit engine.”

“What about the Suzuki?”

“There’s no doubt that the YZ features awesome trackside manners and has a killer rear shock.”

“What about the RM?”

“Anyone can win on the Honda. The engine is mondo, and it handles like a megabuck works machine.”

WHAT ABOUT THE SUZUKI?!

Over the last few years the Suzuki RM125 bristled with above-average suspension, a fair-to-middling handling package, and a motor that hummed rather than barked. RM125 owners have always had to spend major-league bucks to make their bikes competitive. For 1986, Suzuki did more than squirt a blue paint job on the engine; they have focused on injecting a competitive snort into the RM and upgrading the handling traits from good to great.

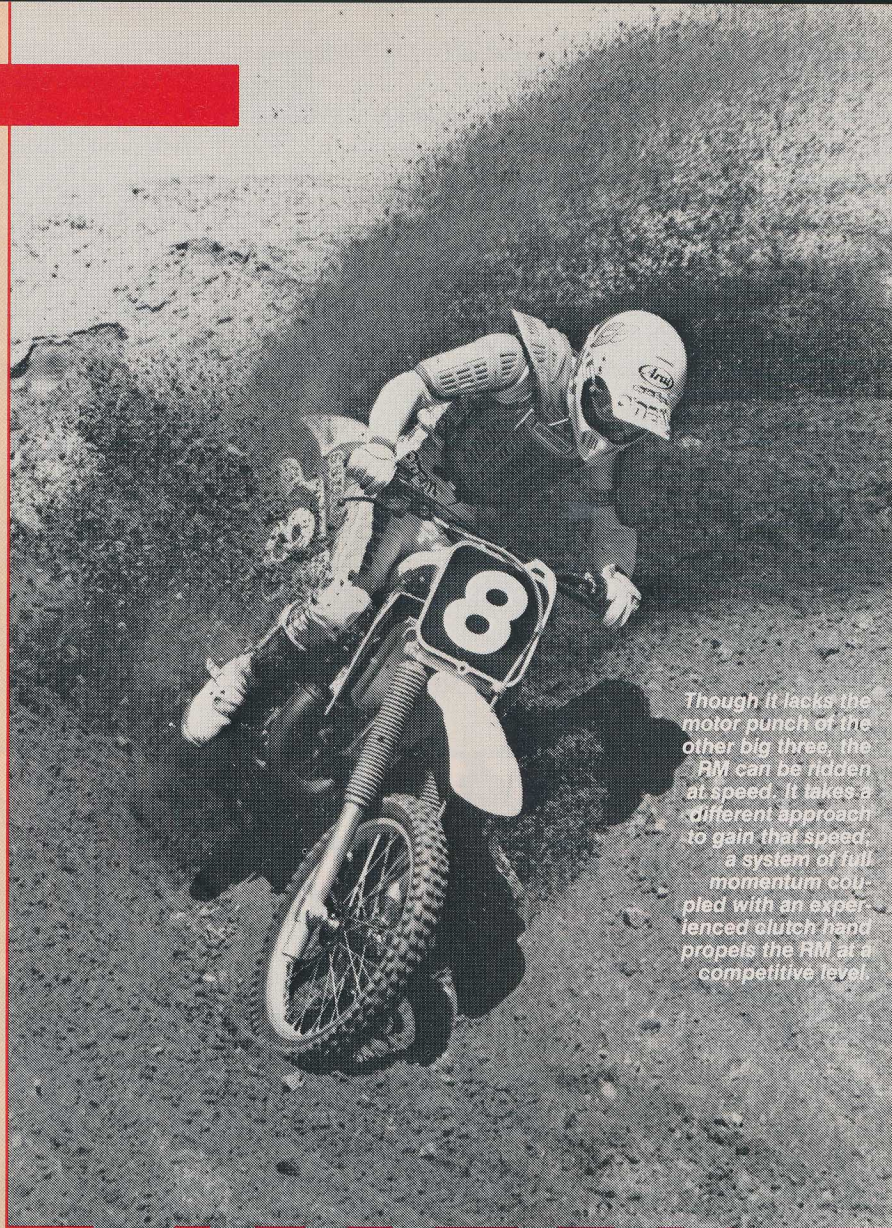
WHAT'S NEW, SOLDIER BLUE?

The major change in the engine department comes with the ATAC-like exhaust mechanism. It’s aimed at juicing up the powerband with a valve that opens a passage-way to a chamber located in the cylinder head. Driven by a centrifugal mechanism directly off the primary drive, the chamber opens at low-to-mid rpms and changes the volume of the headpipe. This is aimed at increasing the low and middle boost of the engine without restricting the exhaust system which was designed for a warpish top-end snap.

Suzuki made other changes to slim down the engine package. The cogs have been shaved of a few teeth in the tranny, and an all-new clutch, a rack and pinion design, has been provided in an effort to make the action both smoother and easier. The actual porting has seen few updates other than revised transfer ports, and the exhaust pipe is a bit bigger to work with the AEC exhaust amplification chamber.

Suzuki cut down the chassis width by using oval tubing on the framework near the rider’s legs and hacked the footpeg location and width. The big news comes in a completely redesigned rear Floater system which uses a bell crank to achieve its rising rate, rather than the perennial strut design. This lowers the center of gravity, and Suzuki once again uses a KYB multi-adjustable damper. The forks are also KYB telescopic that have revamped damping in both the compression and rebound operation. They’ve dropped the normal straight-wound spring and now use an unconventional (for MX work) progressive spring.

Finally, the pancake-thin saddle butts up nicely against the tank, and the seat height is super-low. The handlebar/seat/tank relationship is more in the realm of normal, when compared with the alien feel of the RM250.



Though it lacks the motor punch of the other big three, the RM can be ridden at speed. It takes a different approach to gain that speed: a system of full momentum coupled with an experienced clutch hand propels the RM at a competitive level.

FALLOUT

*It handles better & it's slimmer,
but is it fast enough?*

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

TAKING IT TO THE TRACK

The first thing you notice about the RM125 is the layout. Smaller riders will fit the package nicely; larger 125 pilots will feel cramped with the low saddle and arms-up-in-the-air handlebar position. Ergonomically, it’s a shade bizarre.

The second revelation is the power, or the lack of whack in the juice department. Yes, the output flows out smoothly; yes, it pulls to a fairly inspired upper hit; but the entire blast of usable adrenaline is soft. With a complete lack of low end coupled with a weak mid-range, keeping the RM steamed on top is the only way to get around a track quickly.

Expert pilots can make the RM turn impressive lap times, but a frenzied clutch hand and a wide-eyed, pin-it-to-the-stops attitude are critical. You’re forced to carry your speed into the corners and rail out with a perfectly timed exit, all the while fanning the clutch to keep the R’s in a workable range. Any attempt at short-shifting or lugging through a turn will have the RM falling off the powerband and bogging.

In talking with the works Suzuki riders, we found that they can’t seem to locate more low end and prefer to port and pipe the machine for more moon drive. Both Pro-Circuit and Krause Kannon pipes were suggested for immediate improvement.



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1985	500 cc World Championship
1984	125 cc World Championship
1984	500 cc World Championship
1983	125 cc World Championship
1983	500 cc World Championship
1982	125 cc World Championship
1982	250 cc World Championship
1981	125 cc World Championship
1981	250 cc World Championship
1981	500 cc World Championship
1980	125 cc World Championship
1980	250 cc World Championship
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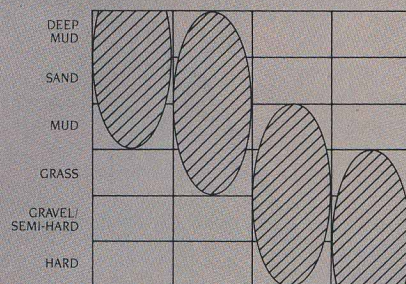
And if there's an ideal "all-around" MX tire, our MT 27 Deltacross is it. Thanks to an impressive versatility that extends from mud and grass to gravel and adobe.

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So stop by your Pirelli dealer soon. And check out the most successful family of motorcycle tires.

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SUZUKI RM125G FALLOUT

BUMP AND GRIND

Good news comes in the chassis and handling traits of the yellow bomber. The Suzuki is an excellent cornering machine and features good high-speed manners. It takes very little effort to nail the inside line or wick it to the stratosphere and freight-train the big berm. Rough, gnarly straights are taken in stride. A small amount of headshake surfaces, but that's only when you've backed off the throttle.

Up front the KYBs do a dandy job of sucking up volatile terrain. While the action is a tad harsh on killer jumps, the progressive feel on stutter bumps is excellent and rather plush. Had the forks been equipped with a little better damping, they'd be nearly perfect. We have it on good authority that Paul Thede's Race Tech can revalve the plungers and get them working much better.

The tail end proved to be a little mysterious. It's definitely a beater at slower speeds but seems to crave an aggressive riding style and at speed sponges up abuse well. There's a lot of drag on the new linkage system, and the more time put on the RM, the better it worked. We can't rate the system as being great, but it doesn't hamper the rider with any weird tendencies. It keeps its fanny

We borrowed Team Suzuki member Erik Kehoe for our photo session and Erik promptly displayed the flingability of the RM. ▶



Although the KYB forks are a little harsh on the stutter bumps, they will take the killer hits just fine. They're compression adjustable and overall do a good job of keeping things in line.



Suzuki's exhaust port device, AEC, looks like a massive tumor on the top of the cylinder head. In the lower and middle rpm range, a rotary valve opens and allows gases to enter the chamber on top of the head. Basically, it changes the headpipe volume.



Yessirree, the old Full Floater has been replaced with a new non-floating Full Floater. A large eccentric cam alters the spring-load-to-axle ratio. The system works well, but has too much drag and loosens up as more time is put on the machine.



SUZUKI RM125G FALLOUT

straight in the rough and won't cringe on monster landings.

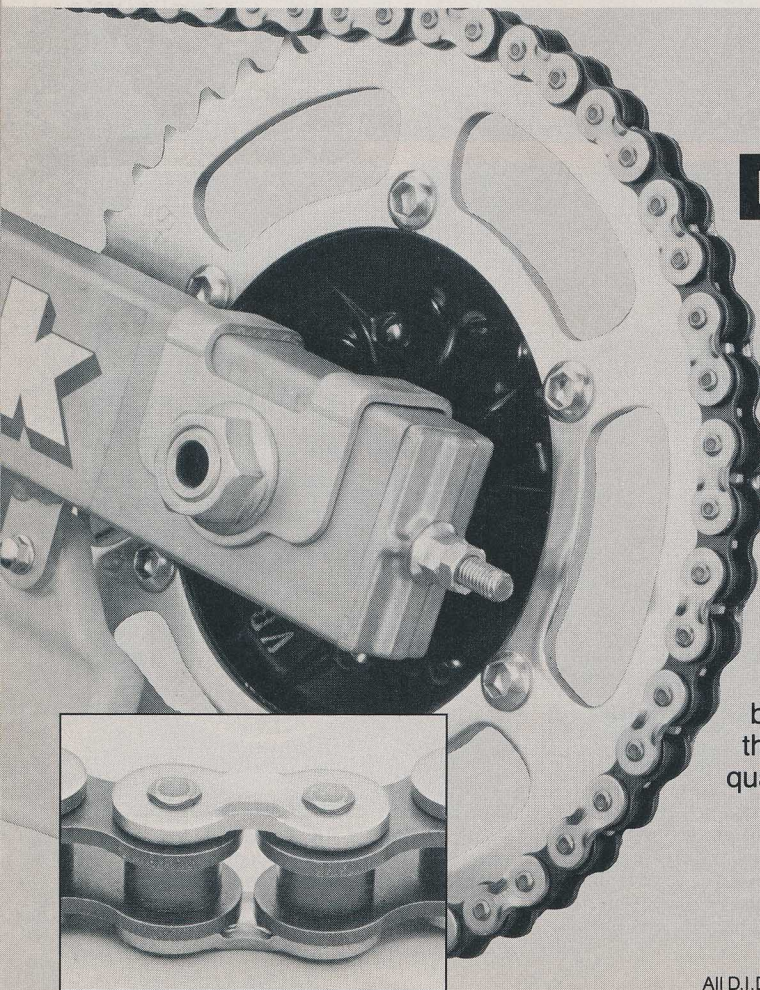
Everyone felt that the clutch action was mediocre at best. The pull is too hard, and considering the hyper powerband, an easier trigger would have been handy. Suzuki's front disc gets the job done, but not with the same authority as the other machines in its class. The rear stopper is average. Plan on regearing, as the standard 12/51 is too high. We popped on a 53-tooth SideWinder sprocket, and it tightened things up and made for quicker track speeds.

GIMME A TRIPLE SHOT OF THAT JUICE

Here's the bottom line: The Suzuki RM125 is a greatly improved motorcycle. They've slimmed it, it hunts for the inside lip, and it can speed-skate around a fifth-gear berm and track like a Trident missile. But the void bottom end and mild mid-range assault that flows into a spirited upper hit makes the RM a pro-rider-type machine. If you can keep it smoking in the narrow upper blast of the powerband, you'll be happy. Fall out of it, and the competition will eat you alive. □

1986 SUZUKI RM125G

Engine type	Liquid-cooled, Power Reed, single-cylinder, 2-stroke	Ignition	PEI
Bore and stroke	54mm x 54mm	Recommended spark plug	NGK B9EGV
Displacement	123cc	Silencer/spark arrester	Yes/no
Carburetion	Mikuni VM34SS flat-side	Wheelbase	1445mm (56.9 in.)
Factory recommended jetting:		Ground clearance	340mm (13.4 in.)
Main jet	280	Seat height	925mm (36.4 in.)
Needle jet	R-O	Rake/trail	29°/109mm
Jet needle	6FP55—2nd	Wet weight, no fuel	192 lbs.
Pilot jet	55	Tire size and type:	
Slide number	4.0	Front	80/100-21 195 Dunlop
Fuel tank capacity	7.0L (1.8 gals.)	Rear	100/100-18 195 Dunlop
Lubrication	Pre-mix at 32:1	Suspension, type and travel:	
Gearbox ratios:		Front	Kayaba adj. comp., 300mm (11.8 in.)
1	2.000:1	Rear	Full Floater adj. comp./reb., 315mm (12.4 in.)
2	1.692:1	Intended use	Motocross
3	1.437:1	Country of origin	Japan
4	1.200:1	Retail price, approx.	\$2099
5	1.052:1	Distributor/Manufacturer:	
6	0.950:1	Suzuki Motor,	
Gearing, front/rear	12/51	3251 E. Imperial	
		Hwy., Brea, CA 92621	



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