



KDX, IT, PE, & XR

200cc ENDURO SHOOTOUT

**The Big Four take the test—
which one is tops?**

By the Staff of DIRT BIKE

A new year and a new group of light-weight enduro bikes to test... what fun! Out of all the enduro bikes we test each year, the 200s are the ones that wind up with the most mileage before we have to give them back. Why? Because they're light, snappy, and fun to ride—the same reasons they make up the most popular class of enduros across the country.

The last time we had a shootout of this class (*1982 Dirt Bike Shootout Super Special*), we left out the Honda XR200. Being a four-stroke, we figured it wasn't able to compete on the same level as the two-strokes, and we still feel the same



way about it. If you're interested in just riding enduros or strictly racing the four-stroke class, the XR is a fine bike. But if your goal is to win overall, or to beat every two-stroke in your class, you've got a lot of work ahead of you on the four-stroke XR. Much as everyone likes to play down the fact, brute acceleration is one of the key things needed to be super-competitive in any enduro, and that is something the XR is lacking.

Things are looking up for four-strokes, however. The class is growing by leaps and bounds, and in many Eastern enduros, four-strokes have been approaching half

of the total entries. Because of this, we are finally including the XR in this shoot-out, but please understand that a four-stroke is a different breed of animal, only to be compared to its own kind.

For 1983, the PE175 has received few major changes. The main difference is a whole new set of gear ratios, which has changed the entire manner of the bike. Last year's PE was a very peaky, very powerful machine—hard to ride for all but the most aggressive. With the new gearbox, the ballgame has changed completely. The new PE is very mellow on the trails. Maybe just a bit too mellow, as

we'll soon see.

The Yamaha IT features mostly decal redesign. The wheelbase is a little longer, ground clearance and seat height are a little higher, and the rest of the numbers remain the same. The lack of change is not too hard to accept, as we voted the IT the best 200 class bike last year. The IT was easy and responsive to ride; although it had a few problems, it was the king of the heap. It's still a good bike in '83, but some heavy competition has come in from left field.

Competition in the form of one green bike from Kawasaki. This year, the KDX

KDX, IT, PE, & XR

make power all the way to the top. Amazing!

Running second to the KDX is last year's winner, the IT175. The IT still has a good, usable powerband, but suddenly it's giving away 27cc's to the KDX. In an Open class bike 27cc's may not make much difference, but on a 175 it's a whole new world. For the most part, the IT will run right with the KDX through the rocks and trees, but if a hill comes up, the KDX will disappear while the IT rider is still searching for the right gear. This is not bad—175 riders will always have to work harder than folks on bigger bikes—but the new KDX engine has rewritten the book on what is best.

The PE comes in third. Changing the gear ratios did much to help spread out the power on the Suzuki, but it also turned the bike into a slow-revving cruiser in comparison with the other two. Cracking the throttle open will result in a very predictable buildup in speed right up to redline. Good power all the way through the range, but nothing exciting, and no burst of power to get you out of trouble if you need it.

Which puts the XR200 down at the bottom. The XR is never in a hurry. Open the throttle and it accelerates like an electric motor; go through the gears and it will do it all the way to the top. The only problem is, the other three bikes will be so far in the distance, you won't even see a dust cloud anymore.

But there are places where this type of four-stroke power is the best thing to have under you: tight woods. When the trees get really close together, the XR will give absolutely nothing away to a two-stroke. A good four-stroke rider can get a rhythm going that will send two-strokes into the trees as they try to keep up. In a wide-open enduro, however, the story will be completely different; the XR just doesn't have the punch to keep the rider at the top of his minute.

FORKS

Right up front, let us say one thing: All four of these bikes are set up too soft for hard running right out of the crate. No matter what you buy, a certain amount of set-up time will be needed before any of the 200s are capable of blitzing over rough ground.

Aside from said softness, the PE and IT have the best action right out of the box. They go about the business of soaking up terrain with no nasty habits and not a bit of flex.

The KDX forks were the softest of the lot, and difficult to evaluate because of it. The front end alternately bounces and wallows, but they can be cured by a change to 10-weight oil run six inches from the tops of the tubes, with the forks collapsed. Once this little ritual is performed, they will work as smoothly as any.

The XR forks suffer from a different problem. To keep the weight down, Honda

Even though the PE is much mellower, it's still possible to leap it out of a berm. Mike Webb lofts it.

The Kawa forks come set up way too soft. We suggest adding more oil to the forks.

is a whole new motorcycle. The most striking change is the new 198cc bore job, but comparing this year's spec sheet with last year's will find very few similarities. Big differences from one end to the other, and yeah, it's really fast!

POWER

So it shouldn't come as a surprise to anyone that the KDX200 is the horsepower king for 1983. This new Kawasaki engine is awesome! There is more low-end power than any of the rest of the bikes, and good acceleration through the first part of the power curve. Most people could live with just what this bike puts out up to 6000 rpm and be perfectly happy. But once the ports really start to breathe at upper rpm, the KDX is a stunner. The best word is *violent*. The power comes on so hard and fast that if the rider isn't paying attention, the KDX will leap right out from under. When the front end comes back down, the bike will rev out until it sounds as if it's ready to explode, and will



The IT175 is still one of the most liked bikes by our testers. Jim Holley winches up the front end.



All of the testers agreed that the XR fits a rider well, although a big person might feel slightly cramped on this small 200.

has seen fit to use 35mm fork tubes on its Showa forks (all the rest use 38mm tubes), and they do have a tendency to flex. The flex only shows up when the XR is pushed to its limit, but once there the front end is vague and not very confidence-inspiring. Honda should go for the bigger forks.

REAR SUSPENSION

There's a clear winner here. For the second year in a row, the PE takes the laurels. The Full Floater system makes 10.6 inches feel like much more, and all we needed was a few turns on the preload ring to make the bike work like a dream. Kawasaki takes the second spot in this competition with the new Uni-Trak setup on the KDX. The new system is straight off the motocross bikes and it is an excellent working unit. The only reason it's in second is because the feel is just slightly more harsh than the Suzuki action; aside from the slight harshness, we had no complaints—after a couple hundred miles of break-in, it should soften up nicely.

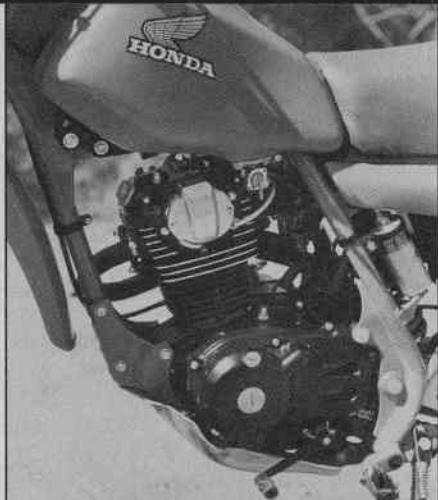
KDX, IT, PE, & XR



Plenty of clutch action is necessary if you plan to ride the new PE aggressively.



Gobs of horsepower are waiting for anyone brave enough to twist the KDX's throttle. Jon Miller demonstrates.



Honda engine is compact and easy to work on, but a few pounds heavier than the two-stroke engines. Brute horsepower is not one of the Honda's stock features.

The IT rear end works well just as long as you want to go slow. For fast riding, a very lightweight rider will want to bump up the preload, and anyone over 150 pounds would be well advised to install the stiffer accessory spring before trying to set a land-speed record. The 25-position rebound damping is very sensitive to changes, but it is a feature that will allow the rider to dial in just what he needs.

The same can be said for the XR. The action is good, but it's far too soft with the stock spring to allow for any fancy riding.

The shocks on every one of these bikes, by the way, are very high quality units. They all make extensive use of aluminum to keep the weight down, have adjustable damping controls and are rebuildable if you wear them out. To be totally honest, there's not a barker in the lot, and all but the most competitive riders will be happy with the stockers after a little bit of adjusting time.

HANDLING

Every one of the bikes suffer somewhat because of the soft stock suspension settings. This is how they came delivered to us: The Kawasaki front end was much softer than the rear (not enough oil), and the front end had a tendency to tuck under. The PE and IT were softer in the rear (not enough preload or spring), so the front end wanted to wash out. The XR was too soft at each end; in the slow stuff it was cushy and fine, at anything over moderate speeds it was a wallowing handful.

The point is, in order to get the most benefit out of the handling your bike is capable of, you must have the suspension in the ballpark. After a quick dialing job, this is the way they came out: The XR will turn under everybody, by virtue of its short wheelbase and overall small size. This can be handy in tight woods. The KDX is not necessarily a tight turner, but we like it because it was precise. When you point the Kawa's front wheel in a certain direction, it goes that way with nary a struggle. The IT can cut under the Kawasaki, but it has a more imprecise feel—we



Kawasaki is the first manufacturer to go a full 200cc's on a 200 class two-stroke. Horsepower is awesome. New head steady has eliminated vibration problem.

never really got the feeling that the front tire was biting, although it didn't do anything scary. The PE took the most attention to ride, as the front end wanted to hunt around more than any of the rest of the bikes.

Obviously, this has a lot to do with the different tires on each bike. We don't have to tell you that mounting a Metzeler will improve every one of them.

HIGH-SPEED STABILITY

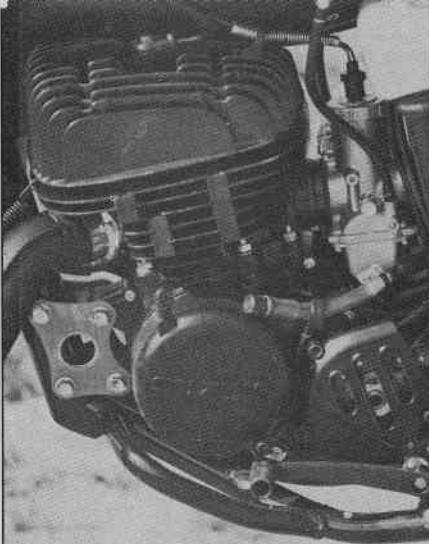
Tied for this are the Suzuki and Kawasaki. The PE has the longest wheelbase, and along with the excellent suspension action, it will hold its own over the roughest sections. Kawasaki has always made a stable bike, and this year's KDX is no exception. Gung-ho riders have nothing to fear from either bike.

The IT and XR had a problem with suspension bottoming, just as we've been talking about for the last umpteen paragraphs. They would bang around through the bumps, forcing the rider to make direction corrections all through the section. The good spread of power on the IT really helps in this area, giving the rider a chance to power out of a situation if need be. The XR rider, on the other hand, would find nothing more there when he reached for a little more throttle, forcing him to slow down.

BRAKES

Once again, there is more than enough braking power on each of these bikes to get the job done. We had no complaints with the front stoppers. The rears were all slightly different. The Yamaha was touchy on downhills, but very strong when we needed it. The Kawasaki rear did the job with no complaints, while the Honda had a tendency to heat up and become very sensitive to pressure. Our PE wore rather quickly and needed adjustment more often than the rest, but overall the action was good. All minor snivels, to be sure.

We should mention in passing, though, that in order to keep the wheel weight down, all four of the manufacturers have gone to the smallest hubs necessary to



The Suzuki top end is essentially the same; powerband has been smoothed out by a change in gear ratios.



Yamaha left the IT engine alone this year, but the bike still puts out excellent horsepower for a 175. There is no shortage of reservoirs, bottles and tubes on board.

get the job done, and because of this you need to take care of them to get the best results. Keep the shoes and drums free of mud and crud—don't spare the contact cleaner—and they'll keep working fine for a good long while.

COMFORT AND LAYOUT

Switching back and forth between the bikes, not one of our testers could agree on which was the proper bar shape and position, so keep in mind that whatever we say about handlebars here, you may feel the opposite.

The two most comfortable bikes (nearly a dead heat, even though the two are so radically different) are the XR and KDX. Minor gripes would include the shape of the XR bars; they're pulled back too far for a good forward-on-the-tank position, which is also the KDX's problem. The Kawasaki's pegs are slightly more forward than the other bike's, and when the stock bars hang back too far it makes the whole package feel as if your feet are farther forward than your hands. Raising the bars as high as you can without hurting your wrists seems to help a lot.

The PE lost points because of the width of the bike. Even though it uses a single-shock system, the Suzuki is still rather wide at the seat/tank junction. The IT comes in last, by virtue of the wide tank and protruding exhaust pipe. The tank forces your legs apart when you slide up, and even if the pipe doesn't get in your way, we guarantee you'll wind up denting it sooner or later.

EASE OF RIDING

For high-speed, late-all-day-long enduros, the suitability of these bikes would be in this order: KDX, IT, PE, XR. The KDX is very stable and powerful for high-speed work. The IT is powerful, but not quite as confidence-inspiring. The PE revs too slowly and would be more work to spur along, and the XR rider would find himself dropping more and more points at each succeeding checkpoint.

Turn it around, though, and let's see how it would work in a real tight, slow-speed survivor's run. The order would be

reversed completely, although individual performance would depend more on the rider. The XR would be first, because of its ability to chug through tight woods like a snake. The PE would come up a few notches because the powerband would be easier to control than the other two faster bikes. The IT and KDX riders would probably be the most unhappy, after spending all day trying to hold back the horsepower. Of course, tight enduros all depend on the rider—a really fast tree man might love the KDX.

BUGS

The Suzuki PE still needs lots of Loc-tite to stay in one piece. We lost more bolts out of the left-side panel than we can even remember. One thing you don't need to worry about is the grips. They are bonded onto the bars, and will never come off. Good luck changing to a different type. The throttle adjustment on said bike is critical. If you have too much slack on the cable, the cable end will rub on the inside of the throttle housing and wear it out. The PE clutch is also sensitive to abuse. Slip it a little and it will drag until it's allowed to cool. Last, but not least, the chain (a DID 520 UB) seems to be something new. We spent one day searching for an extra master link for the bike, and not one bike shop had one that would match up.

The IT still drew very few complaints. The tank is too wide, and the pipe sticks out too far. The kickstarter is very short and small, and only travels a short distance before it bottoms out on the footpeg.

We had a few complaints that the Honda's forks are too small, and we agree. They should be using 38mm tubes, like the rest of the bikes. The XR's speedometer is far too big for the job it needs to do; Honda makes an excellent optional odometer unit that would be a perfect fit on this bike. We also had complaints that the four-stroke was too loud, but Honda supplies a bolt-in accessory silencer to knock off a few db.

Last year we complained about the excessive vibration of the Kawasaki KDX. This year, we're happy to tell you it is no



Roosting through the woods is made slightly less painful with the stock IT handguards.



The XR200 felt most comfortable in the tight stuff, although everyone agreed it was too softly suspended. Tip Webb at the controls.

KDX, IT, PE, & XR



SUZUKI PE175Z

ENGINE TYPE	2-stroke
BORE AND STROKE	62.0mm x 57.0mm
DISPLACEMENT	172cc
CARBURETION	34mm Mikuni
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	250
NEEDLE JET	R-3
JET NEEDLE	6DP17-4
PILOT JET	25
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	10.6 L (2.8 gal)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
RECOMMENDED OIL	Suzuki oil at 20:1
OIL CAPACITY, TRANS.	800cc
AIR FILTRATION	Oiled foam
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	6-speed
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	3.00:1
2	2.142:1
3	1.647:1
4	1.300:1
5	1.045:1
6	0.875:1
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	12/48
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK B10EGV
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTER	Yes/yes
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Up-pipe, right side
FRAME, TYPE	Single downtube
WHEELBASE	1490mm (57.1 in)
GROUND CLEARANCE	305mm (12.0 in)
SEAT HEIGHT	910mm (36.8 in)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE)	28°
TRAIL	113mm (4.45 in)
WET WEIGHT, NO FUEL	229 lbs
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:	
FRONT	3.00 x 21 IRC
REAR	4.10 x 18 IRC
SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:	
FRONT	38mm Kayaba forks, 270mm (10.6 in)
REAR	Full Floater, adj. rebound damping, 270mm (10.6 in)
INTENDED USE	Off-road, enduro
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
RETAIL PRICE, APPROX.	\$1620
DISTRIBUTOR:	
U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp.	
3251 E. Imperial Hwy.	
Brea, CA 92621	
PARTS PRICES, HIGH WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$49.50
RINGS ONLY	16.17
CYLINDER	151.95
SHIFT LEVER	12.83
BRAKE PEDAL	20.63
FRONT SPROCKET	10.04



YAMAHA IT175K

ENGINE TYPE	2-stroke
BORE AND STROKE	66.0mm x 50.0mm
DISPLACEMENT	171cc
CARBURETION	34mm Mikuni
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	320
NEEDLE JET	P-4
JET NEEDLE	6F21-4
PILOT JET	70
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	11.0 L (3.3 gal)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
RECOMMENDED OIL	Yamalube a124:1
OIL CAPACITY, TRANS.	700cc (24 oz)
AIR FILTRATION	Oiled foam
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	6-speed
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.750:1
2	1.857:1
3	1.500:1
4	1.250:1
5	1.105:1
6	0.904:1
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	12/44
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	Champion N-86
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTER	Yes/yes
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Up-pipe, right side
FRAME, TYPE	Semi double cradle
WHEELBASE	1445mm (56.8 in)
GROUND CLEARANCE	340mm (13.4 in)
SEAT HEIGHT	915mm (36.0 in)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE)	28.5°
TRAIL	125mm (4.92 in)
WET WEIGHT, NO FUEL	216 lbs
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum
TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:	
FRONT	3.00 x 21 Bridgestone
REAR	110/90 x 18 Bridgestone
SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:	
FRONT	38mm Kayaba forks, 270mm (10.6 in)
REAR	Monocross, adj. rebound damping, 270mm (10.6 in)
INTENDED USE	Off-road, enduro
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
RETAIL PRICE, APPROX.	\$1659
DISTRIBUTOR:	
Yamaha Motor Corp., USA	
6555 Katella Ave.	
Cypress, CA 90630	
PARTS PRICES, HIGH WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$33.40
RINGS ONLY	11.50
CYLINDER	151.20
SHIFT LEVER	15.60
BRAKE PEDAL	9.70
FRONT SPROCKET	6.80



KAWASAKI KDX200A1

ENGINE TYPE	2-stroke
BORE AND STROKE	66.0mm x 58.0mm
DISPLACEMENT	198cc
CARBURETION	32mm Mikuni
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	135
NEEDLE JET	R-6
JET NEEDLE	5FJ57-3
PILOT JET	40
SLIDE NUMBER	3.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	11.0 L (3.3 gal)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
RECOMMENDED OIL	Kawasaki lube at 20:1
OIL CAPACITY, TRANS.	0.6 L (0.63 qt)
AIR FILTRATION	Oiled foam
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	6-speed
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.769:1
2	2.000:1
3	1.533:1
4	1.235:1
5	1.041:1
6	0.869:1
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	13/48
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK B9ES
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTER	Yes/yes
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Up-pipe, right side
FRAME, TYPE	Single downtube
WHEELBASE	1430mm (56.3 in)
GROUND CLEARANCE	340mm (13.4 in)
SEAT HEIGHT	914mm (36.0 in)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE)	28°
TRAIL	121mm (4.76 in)
WET WEIGHT, NO FUEL	215 lbs
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum
TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:	
FRONT	3.00 x 21 Dunlop K490
REAR	4.00 x 18 Dunlop K490
SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:	
FRONT	38mm Kayaba forks, 280mm (10.24 in)
REAR	Uni-Trak, adj. rebound damping, 280mm (11.02 in)
INTENDED USE	Off-road, enduro
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
RETAIL PRICE, APPROX.	\$1649
DISTRIBUTOR:	
Kawasaki Motors Corp.	
2009 E. Edinger Ave.	
Santa Ana, CA 92705	
PARTS PRICES, HIGH WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$45.07
RINGS ONLY	13.26
CYLINDER	153.30
SHIFT LEVER	19.32
BRAKE PEDAL	21.16
FRONT SPROCKET	11.96



HONDA XR200R

ENGINE TYPE	4-stroke
BORE AND STROKE	65.5mm x 57.8mm
DISPLACEMENT	195cc
CARBURETION	26mm Keihin
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	138
NEEDLE JET	N/A
JET NEEDLE	F2351F4
PILOT JET	35
SLIDE NUMBER	3CA
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	8.0 L (2.1 gal)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
LUBRICATION	Wet sump
RECOMMENDED OIL	10W30 motor oil
OIL CAPACITY	1.1 L (1.2 qt)
AIR FILTRATION	Oiled foam
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	6-speed
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	2.769:1
2	1.941:1
3	1.450:1
4	1.130:1
5	0.923:1
6	0.785:1
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	13/50
IGNITION	CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK DR8ES-L
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTER	Yes/yes
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Through frame, right side
FRAME, TYPE	
WHEELBASE	1355mm (53.3 in)
GROUND CLEARANCE	340mm (13.4 in)
SEAT HEIGHT	890mm (35.0 in)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE)	28°40 min.
TRAIL	125mm (4.9 in)
WET WEIGHT, NO FUEL	230 lbs
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum
TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:	
FRONT	3.00 x 21 IRC VE-31
REAR	4.10 x 18 IRC VE-31
SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:	
FRONT	35mm Showa forks, 249mm (9.8 in)
REAR	Pro-Link, adj. rebound damping, 247mm (9.7 in)
INTENDED USE	Off-road, enduro
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
RETAIL PRICE, APPROX.	\$1575
DISTRIBUTOR:	
American Honda Motor Corp.	
100 W. Alondra Blvd.	
Gardena, CA 90247	
PARTS PRICES, HIGH WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$32.70
RINGS ONLY	8.43
CYLINDER	76.60
SHIFT LEVER	15.10
BRAKE PEDAL	24.00
FRONT SPROCKET	11.13

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DANNY CHANDLER

I've worn Hi-Point's for a whole lot of years and intend to wear 'em for a whole lot more. Why?

There is not a better boot and I should know. It wasn't so long ago that I spent as much time under my bike as I did on top. To say I crashed a lot would be an understatement. Naturally when the bike's trying to ride you, your equipment takes a lot of abuse. Last year things really clicked for me winning the U.S. 500 G.P., all the motos in the Trophie and Motocross des Nations and victory in the Superbikers. Through it all, my Hi-Point's held up and gave me more protection than I ever expected.

When you're talkin' boots... You're talkin'

I really appreciate all the features of the Hi-Point's. For example, the padding for the ankle bone that contains a fiber disc. Or the protective padding on the inside legs of the boot. They really work when your foot and leg is banged against the frame. Hi-Point's offer extra padding in addition to trick pieces of shock absorbent fiber built into the boot in key stress areas. The toe, the heel, the arch and even the shift lever area.

I could go on and on about the trick buckles and sole and colors, etc. I'll take Hi-Point's protection and advantages any day of the week.

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more. The addition of a head steady on the engine seems to have cured the problem. Our only complaints are that the odometer is a little difficult to read, the quick throttle action may be too fast for some people, and the new grab handles in the rear have made the bike quite a bit wider.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Of course, the perennial special feature is the Suzuki quick-change rear wheel. Nothing is as fast or as easy. The other three bikes now share the loosen-the-axle-and-slip-the-whole-wheel-assembly-out-the-back-of-the-swingarm quick-change setup, but it isn't nearly as easy as the Suzuki system. If we can make one broad snivel, however, keep in mind that every one of these systems is made to work with the bike up on a stand or box or something, and none is equipped with a center-stand. It sure is handy, but you have to get the rear end up in the air before it works.

TECHNOID ENDURO

• A few years back, most of the manufacturers figured out that a simple odometer mounted near the bars was much cheaper than a speedo, and made us much happier. This is when "enduro awareness" began, a revolution that gave us quick-change wheels, tiny headlights, and fewer frills in a more serious package.

We thought the technoid wars were over, though, so you can imagine our surprise when the KDX was introduced with an electronic odometer and clock mounted behind the numberplate.

It is actually a nifty machine. Pushing the on/off button brings up the display, and hitting the start/stop button starts the clock and odometer. As you roll along, the odometer accumulates miles by the hundredths, and the clock adds the minutes a second at a time.

Problem is, you can't see both functions at once. You can switch between the clock and odometer by hitting a mode button under your right thumb as often as you want without messing up the display. It's not all that convenient, but a person could get used to it.

The reset button is a little strange. Used to add or subtract mileage, it does one or the other with each alternate push of the button. Hit it once and you're adding miles, again and you're subtracting, once more and it adds, one more time and it subtracts. It takes a little getting used to. The first few times you find yourself "zeroing in" on the mileage you want to display, but after a while the operation becomes pretty simple. The only button that could be hazardous during an enduro, aside from the on/off button, is the start/stop button. If you accidentally hit this and then try to reset mileage, the clock will go back to zero. Fair warning to watch

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Before the abuse. You can bet that right about now they look completely different. The tank stickers are spread all over Southern California.

parts—a four-stroke has many more objects in the top end than just a piston kit. You would be well advised to consider the price of valves, cams and timing chain as well.

The Yamaha had the next cheapest set of parts, followed by a close finish by both the Suzuki and Kawasaki.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Fourth in the competition, but still high on the likability scale, is the Honda XR. The XR will work great if you just ride tight Eastern enduros or trailride in the same type of terrain with friends who ride four-strokes. Pitted against a two-stroke, the XR is much slower, and occasionally frustrating to ride. Even so, to use all the power available the rider will have to stiffen the suspension to be completely happy. A nice bike, but not entirely competitive.

The PE would be the next step up. This year Suzuki went from a very peaky engine to a very, very mellow engine, and they went just a little too far. The suspension is excellent, the handling is good and there's enough power, but it just doesn't happen fast enough to keep the PE in front of the pack.

The IT engine is exactly what the PE needs: good power spread over a good range, quick revving, but not explosive. The IT is way too soft in the rear, and you'll probably need a stiffer spring to be completely happy, but the winner of last year's shootout is still a good bike, and well worth the minor hassles.

Top of the heap is the KDX. Stiffen the forks, and the suspension will rival the PE's; you need do nothing to the engine to ensure having the fastest 200 class bike made. We'll even go so far as to caution prospective KDX buyers about the power. It is a very fast, occasionally violent motorcycle that will demand a certain amount of attention from the rider. It isn't a 250—it doesn't have enough torque to be on the same scale as a 250, but it has all the power you could reasonably ask for in a 200. This is a seriously good bike—the best you can buy in '83. □