

BLUE BOLT

Dirt ready—for most anything

By the Staff of *Dirt Bike*

Nineteen eighty-three has been a fantastic year for 250 enduro bikes. Witness the six-speed KTM 250MXC, with enough power to give MXers fits—and plenty of low-end torque to keep it rideable. Then, of course, there are the highly refined Husky XCs, with their traditional supple suspension and brilliant power curves.

Kawasaki has a KDX250, which we've sampled, and can tell you that it's a missile—and a six-speeder. Prices on the cream of the 250 enduro crop vary greatly and they all have wildly different personalities. This, quite naturally, will lead to a 250 enduro shootout in a once-a-year *Shootout Special*.

Which, in the most roundabout way possible, brings us to the Yamaha IT250K. This year, the IT250 is blue again, has a six-speed gearbox and is faster than any 250 enduro bike has the right to be.

THE FIRST TIME EVER

I SAW HER...

The first time we saw an IT250 in action was at the Viewfinders Grand Prix. Here, Mike Sixberry, a local desert crazy, was running with the leaders in the Expert



With a full tank of gas, the IT tips the scales at a rotund 261 pounds. At maximum weight, jumping is a real thrill.

class... on a bone-stock IT250. Mike even had the lead at one time or another, until a lurid flip put him into the Twilight Zone. Nevertheless, we were suitably impressed.

PERSONALITY PLUS

We received our test bike some time later and put in the mandatory shooting/riding session at Indian Dunes. Here, we were once again impressed with the speed of the bike. On the Dunes MX track, the IT could run with many of the racers. In the sand

wash, we were able to get scared almost senseless in the upper gears.

The bike is definitely not just a YZ with enduro gear tacked on. Nope. It's a totally separate entity and has its own very strong personality. In the pits, some testers were commenting that they liked the bike better than the YZ.

Still, this is an enduro bike, not an MXer, so we entered the IT250K in an enduro just to see how it would fare under trail conditions. The selected enduro was a CRC State Championship run, about 125 miles total length. This promised to be more demanding than the typical family CRC enduro, and it would give the IT a chance to perform in its element.

ENDURO PREPPING THE IT250K

Very little was done to the IT to get it ready for the long enduro. We jacked up the air pressure in the tires to about 16 psi to prevent flats in the rocky terrain. Handling suffers when you do this, but handling suffers even more with two flats. It's a trade-off that you have to pay in Western enduros.

After experimentation, we found that the preload had to be cranked up on the shock to keep the rear end from wallowing. Warming up showed some bottoming in the whoops. The forks were left untouched. No air was used and the standard oil level was maintained.

A Countdown combo clock was clamped into place as per our usual practice, as well as one of the new Programmable enduro



The newest IT is blue once again. Improvements run deeper than colored plastic.





Wolfman Webb muscled the IT down a trailless Gorman hillside.

instruments. The dash of the IT250K quickly started looking like a video game. A few basic tools were stuffed into the handy Yamaha tool bag. One inch was cut off each side of the bars and the stock grips had some of the ribs trimmed with a razor blade. We filled the tank with 32:1 Yamalube and good gas and reported to the starting line.

FAIRY TALES CAN COME TRUE, IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU...

Well, we must smugly report that the IT went out and won its class handily. And without missing a beat. It was running as well at the end of the 125 miles as it was at the beginning. The spokes were a bit loose and the chain needed adjustment, but that was it.

One does not just jump on the IT250 and go like stink immediately. You have to get

used to the bike. Right away, we found out that the IT did not like to turn sharply. We attribute some of this to a too soft rear shock spring. Increasing the preload any more than we already had would not be the answer. This would merely make the ride over the small bumps and rocks deteriorate.

After missing more than a few turns on the trail, we tried the time-honored clutch-it-burst-of-throttle technique used so successfully over the years by YZ riders.

It worked! The trick is to be a gear higher than you think will work under the situation and brutalize the clutch. The IT will then snap around to the new intended direction. Done right, you can whip around obstacles and through tight trails very efficiently. Done wrong, you miss turns and shoot through bushes like a startled cow.

It took us the first 20 miles of the enduro



Air-cooled engine has a boost bottle to improve low-rpm response.

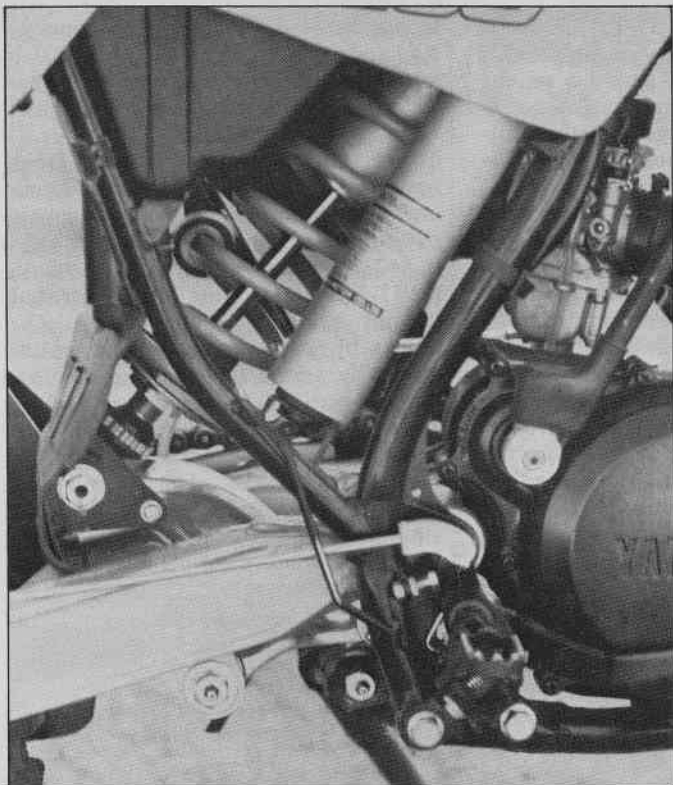
to get used to how to turn the bike. From 20 miles to 75 miles, we rode like a demon on the IT. At the 75-mile mark, a certain measure of fatigue—both mental and physical—set in. The IT responded to lack of aggressive input by lurching down the trail in an unseemly manner, with the rider creating a poor reputation for the magazine in the process.

A second wind of sorts set in at the 100-mile mark, along with extreme hunger and the knowledge of a full cooler of food and drink waiting back at the truck and the aggressive pace was restored. With the aggressiveness, the handling of the Yamaha was restored and the enduro was completed in a thoroughly satisfactory manner.

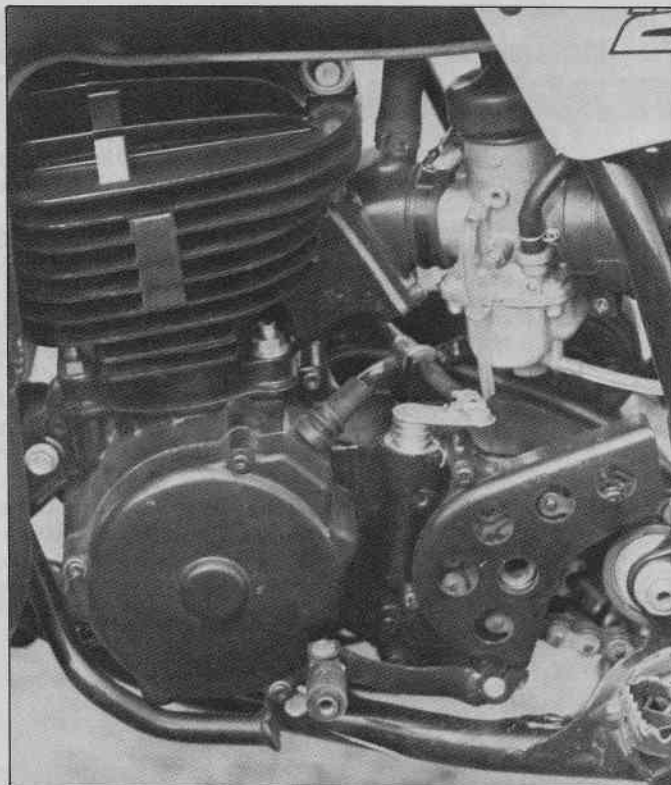
LOOKING BACK THROUGH MISTY GOGGLES

During the enduro, mental notes were taken. They're recorded here in a semi-accurate fashion:

- The rear end bottomed badly from the one-third mark onward. The rider compensated for the G-outs by riding in an extremely forward position and unloading the rear end whenever possible.
- Over the small and medium bumps, the suspension was just fine. For woods riding, most riders would probably be quite happy with the stock spring and bottoming would not be a problem.
- The IT proved to be very quick and had plenty of power for hills or deep sand washes.
- The IT will not get right down low in the rpm range and lug, but a quick fan



It's easy to get to both the preload and the rebound adjuster knob. Aggressive riders will want a heavier rear shock spring.



Left side of engine shows compact and filled area, yet servicing is still no hassle.

of the clutch will get the engine into the working part of the power easily. The IT is strong from an early mid-range on up and revs out well, too, if needed. Under a light load, the IT can be short-shifted and the engine will not protest. No blubbery can be detected when the IT is forced to pull down low. It's just too flat to be effective under a heavy-load situation.

- When bombing along at speed, the IT tracks fairly straight. Even when big whoops are whacked hard, the bike still retains its basic direction with little more than a wagging of the rear end. No headshake was experienced when coming down from speed.
- In deep sand at lower speeds, the IT is miserable to ride, as are most other bikes.
- In a straight-ahead situation, the IT performed exceptionally well over rocks.

The excellent forks were not easily deflected off the line and as long as the rider stood centered properly, the IT would turn well in the rocks, too.

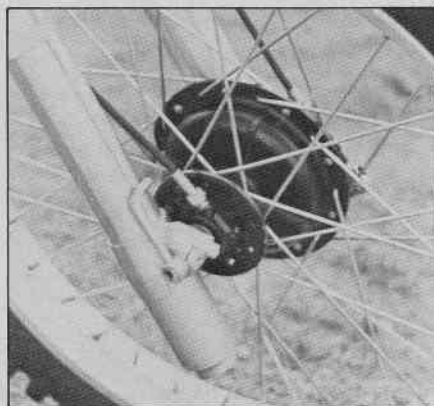
- The IT was less happy on hard-packed fire roads. Here, the rear end of the bike moved around too much when accelerating hard. By comparison, the Husky's rear end moves in a slow-motion, very predictable fashion.
- Rider comfort on the IT250K is excellent. The seating position is low enough to let the rider paddle in the truly rough stuff and the safety saddle is tucked in neatly around a large-capacity tank. The shape of the tank spreads the legs a bit, but all big tanks tend to do that.
- The front brake is stunning. That sucker will haul the IT down from speed fiercely, but is still predictable enough to

not get you into trouble on a snaky downhill. The rear brake chattered a taste under heavy braking, but was still inoffensive to us.

- It always took three kicks to start the IT250. Not one. Not two. But three. Don't ask us why. Those kicks were not particularly difficult, either. Once, the bike started on the first kick and it nearly startled the rider into the next county. Funny things, dirt bikes.
- It took quite a while to warm up the IT and it wouldn't run clean until it had run a few minutes. Once properly warmed up, the engine pulled clean and hard, without detonation or burbling.
- Shifting was notchy in the lower three gears and very smooth in the upper three. We never missed any shifts, but could not rush things or power-shift in first, second or third.



No, the Countdown Combo is not standard. However, it's just about all you need to add to the IT250 to be competitive in any enduro.



Tommy bar on the axle makes for quicker front-wheel removal. Speedo cable is tucked in properly and well protected.



Double-leading shoe front brake is an excellent stopper. After a brief adjustment, you learn to love it.

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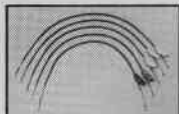


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TERRYCABLE

YAMAHA IT250K

- Everything was well laid out on the IT, with no awkward motions needed to get the controls actuated. And those nifty plastic hand protectors were much appreciated against the brush and when it rained during the last part of the loop.

READY TO ROCK AND ROLL

As delivered, the bike is a very complete package. The tank is large enough to give a 70-mile range under competition conditions. Bash bars are built into the frame. Folding tips on the brake and shifter help. The odometer is first-rate and enduro essentials (headlight, taillight, spark arrester, muffler) are well thought out. Too, the sound emitted from the Forest-Service-legal exhaust is not offensive to the ear.

You won't have to spend any money on fork kits or accessory shocks. The mono

is completely adjustable on both compression and rebound damping, so once you settle on the spring of your choice, the rear end can be dialed in without much hassle.

BITS AND PIECES

There's plenty of travel at both ends. Forks have 11.8 inches and are sturdy 43mm units. The rear end also gives 11.8 inches of good travel.

At 237.6 pounds with no gas in the tank, the IT is not the feather of the class, but it most certainly is not a porker. The weight, by the way, was taken on the unbelievably accurate, recently calibrated, bonded, certified, balanced, trustworthy, exact, authoritative, dependable, conclusive, precise and—lamentably—slightly rusty *Dirt Bike* scales, which are known to be accurate to plus or minus .0001674 kilowatts per spanada, with any reasonable sort of tail wind.



YAMAHA IT250K ENDURO

ENGINE TYPE	2-stroke, air-cooled, reed valve, single	SEAT HEIGHT	921mm (36.3 in.)
BORE AND STROKE	68mm x 68mm	STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE)	28°
DISPLACEMENT	248cc	TRAIL	118mm (4.65 in.)
CARBURETION	38mm Mikuni	WEIGHT WITH NO GAS	237.6 lbs.
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:		RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum alloy
MAIN JET	380	TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:	
NEEDLE JET	N-8	FRONT	3.00 x 21 IRC Z Mark III knobby
JET NEEDLE	6F34-4	REAR	140/90 x 18 IRC Z Mark III knobby
PILOT JET	40	SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:	
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0	FRONT	Telescopic, 43mm tubes, air/oil, 299.7mm (11.8 in.) travel
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	92-plus octane	REAR	Monocross, single KBY shock, adj. comp. & reb. damping, 299.7mm (11.8 in.) travel
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	13.5 L (3.6 gals.)	INTENDED USE	Enduro/off-road competition
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
LUBRICATION	Oil in gas, pre-mix	RETAIL PRICE, APPROX.	\$2049
RECOMMENDED OIL	Yamalube R		
OIL CAPACITY, GEARBOX	750cc		
AIR FILTRATION	Oiled foam		
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate		
TRANSMISSION	6-speed		
GEARBOX RATIOS:			
1	32:12 (2.666)		
2	30:15 (2.000)		
3	25:16 (1.563)		
4	25:20 (1.250)		
5	23:22 (1.045)		
6	21:24 (0.875)		
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	14/44		
IGNITION	Magneto CDI		
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes		
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	Champion N86		
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTER/QUALITY	Yes/yes/good		
EXHAUST SYSTEM	High-pipe, left side		
FRAME, TYPE	Single downtube, split cradle		
WHEELBASE	1485mm (58.5 in.)		
GROUND CLEARANCE	305mm (12.0 in.)		

PARTS PRICES, HIGH-WEAR ITEMS:

PISTON ASSEMBLY, COMPLETE	\$52.70
RINGS ONLY	13.40
CYLINDER	156.60
SHIFT LEVER	10.30
BRAKE PEDAL	5.60
FRONT SPROCKET	10.20
OVERALL RATING, VARIOUS CATEGORIES, KEEPING INTENDED USE OF MACHINE IN MIND:	
HANDLING	Good
SUSPENSION	Front—excellent, rear—good
POWER	Very good
COST	Very good
ATTENTION TO DETAIL	Excellent
EFFECTIVENESS, STONE STOCK	Very good

The quick-change rear wheel, while not quite as sano as the PE's, is quite nicely done.

Clutch pull is light, which helps in the tight going where a lot of clutch use is the norm.

Getting to the preload and rebound damping adjustment is easy. If the shock starts to fade a bit, it only takes a few seconds to crank up the rebound damping while on the trail.

Excellent guides, guards and brackets of all sorts decorate the Yamaha. For the most part, the detailing is excellent.

Oddly enough, the headlight and taillight stayed functioning the entire time we rode the bike, which is amazing, considering the amount of abuse the machine took.

Our test IT proved utterly reliable and nothing—absolutely nothing—broke or wore out prematurely.

The side stand had to be heated and bent in, or it was an ankle-snagger.

Brakes at both ends seemed unaffected by water. After a whole bunch of riding, the rear brake developed an annoying squeal. Cleaning and sanding the shoes partially reduced the squeal.



With a heavy rider aboard, the soft rear suspension causes a lot of front-end washout. The heavier, optional spring is the best cure.

HOW GOOD IS IT?

Well, quite frankly, if you're considering a YZ, you ought to stop and think for a moment and consider the IT instead—if you can find one. They're going fast, in the dealers' showrooms, as well as out on the tracks and trails.

You can compete in just about any sort of off-road racing on the IT without so much as a change of gearing and it isn't too shabby on an MX track at anything below winning Intermediate or Expert level.

It makes a great desert bike, a handy hare scrambles weapon, a superb GP machine and a competitive enduro mount. The price is right and it's as reliable as a fence post. All things considered, it's probably the best Yamaha off-road bike made in the last two years and one of the finest all-around dirt bikes you can consider. □

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3.50 x 18	24.95	4.10 x 18	33.95	3.75 x 18	29.95
4.00 x 18	32.95	4.60 x 18	39.95	4.10 x 18	33.95
4.50 x 18	37.95	C 703		4.60 x 18	39.95
3.00 x 21	22.95	4.50 x 18	41.95	5.30 x 18	44.95
		5.30 x 18	44.95	3.00 x 21	23.95

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YAMAHA PARTS

Piston Kits

(std. and oversize)

Model	Piston Kit	Model	Kit
YZ80J	\$31.90	YZ80J	\$37.00
YZ100J	26.40	YZ100J	44.00
YZ125J	31.60	YZ125J	47.70
YZ250J	45.70	YZ250J	48.50
YZ490J	57.20	YZ490J	46.00
IT175J	36.70	IT175J	48.30
IT250J	40.00	IT250J	48.50
IT465J	58.00	IT465J	43.60

Piston kit consists of piston, rings, wrist pin and circlips.

Rod Rebuild Kits

Model	Kit
YZ80J	\$37.00
YZ100J	44.00
YZ125J	47.70
YZ250J	48.50
YZ490J	46.00
IT175J	48.30
IT250J	48.50
IT465J	43.60

Rod kit consists of rod, lower bearing, lower pin and thrust washers.

Seals and Gaskets

Model	Seal Sets	Gasket Sets
YZ80J	\$ 9.20	\$ 7.75
YZ100J	8.80	7.45
YZ125J	13.10	9.40
YZ250J	20.18	9.90
YZ490J	16.28	11.30
IT175J	8.80	7.80
IT250J	16.28	9.80
IT465J	16.28	13.00

Prices may vary according to year of bike

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