

In 1989 the 250 high-performance class has settled down into a one-on-one competition between two machines. Although the Kawasaki Tecate-4 can still be bought as an '88, there is no official '89 version. It's now a battle between the Honda FourTrax 250R and the original racing four-wheeler, the Suzuki QuadRacer LT250.

Clear out! Let the showdown begin for one of the most important shootouts of the year!

PRIME POWER

One of the first questions anyone asks is "Which machine is faster?" In a straight-out drag race on a dry lake bed the Honda has a slight edge and pulls ahead by several bike lengths. But when it comes to getting off the line or blasting out of a corner, the Suzuki motor has the edge.

Suzuki's automatic exhaust control valve, along with their improved reed design, gives the QuadRacer engine a strong, torquey low-end power. When the rpms approach the midrange, a definite power surge is felt. On top-end the motor seems to flatten out a little but still pulls smoothly.

The powerband on the FourTrax is best described as smooth and consistent. We could not feel a change in power from low-end through the top-end. Although the powerband is very comfortable, there is no place where you can say it really takes charge and hits hard. This is partially due to the straightforward piston-port cylinder and the absence of a power valve.

So, we've really got a split decision in the motor department. Some testers liked the overall top speed and smooth "electric" powerband of the Honda, while others thought the strong midrange grunt of the Suzuki made it the best motor.

LT250 QUADRACER

High-performance machines



250R vs. FOURTRAX

meet head to head

By the Staff of 3&4 Wheel Action

CORNERING

There wasn't too much debate on the winner in the turning department. If you're looking for something to hug the inside line, turn on a dime to square off a turn and also be able to sweep around the outside without pushing, then search no further than the Honda FourTrax. Cornering the 250R actually feels like you're riding an ATV with power steering. The FourTrax's frame design, A-arms and short swingarm all play a part in developing the best-turning ATV on the market.

Since we're going up against the best, cornering the Suzuki QuadRacer feels like everything is happening in slow motion. Powering through a turn is very smooth and consistent, but it is not as quick as the FourTrax. After you spend some time in the saddle on the QuadRacer, you can learn how to get in and out of a turn quickly. However, the trick is to start your turn early to take full advantage of Suzuki's consistency and then power through the turns.

WILD WHOOPS

With the exception of the flattrack riders, all of you high-performance owners will be spending a fair amount of time riding on rough, whooped-out terrain. We had a lot of discussion and mixed emotions about which machine could consistently handle a whoop section. The final vote gave Honda a very slight edge, attributable mainly to their high-quality front shocks. If a rider concentrates on holding the front wheels in a straight line (required because of the quick FourTrax steering) the Honda will soak up any size bump with ease.

The Suzuki almost automatically tracks a straight line through the whoops but the front end pounds a little hard on the large



LT250 QUADRACER VS. 250R FOURTRAX



The 250 high-performance shootout has been narrowed down to a head-to-head battle between the Suzuki LT250 QuadRacer and the Honda 250R FourTrax. Both machines have proved to be winners in all different types of racing.

bumps. If you have a strong upper body that can help soak up the large whoops, than you can probably ride the Suzuki a little faster than the Honda on a rough trail. The only problem is you'll tire out faster.

AIR TIME

Comparing the two machines' jumping ability requires us to take into account the takeoff, air flight and landing. If you want to be the raddest jumper around, then your choice should be the Honda. When approaching a jump, the FourTrax seems to automatically launch you in level position, with the front end not too high and not too low. The 250R feels very light and nimble in the air and most of our test riders felt they could throw the machine wherever they wanted to. Landings were soft and stable with virtually no hard pounding.

The Suzuki is also a good jumper, but it feels a little bulky and heavy. Some of our test riders complained that the QuadRacer tends to launch you with the front end too high. A plus for the QuadRacer is it always seems to fly straight and stable. Landings are a little too harsh on the large jumps.

TREE SLICING

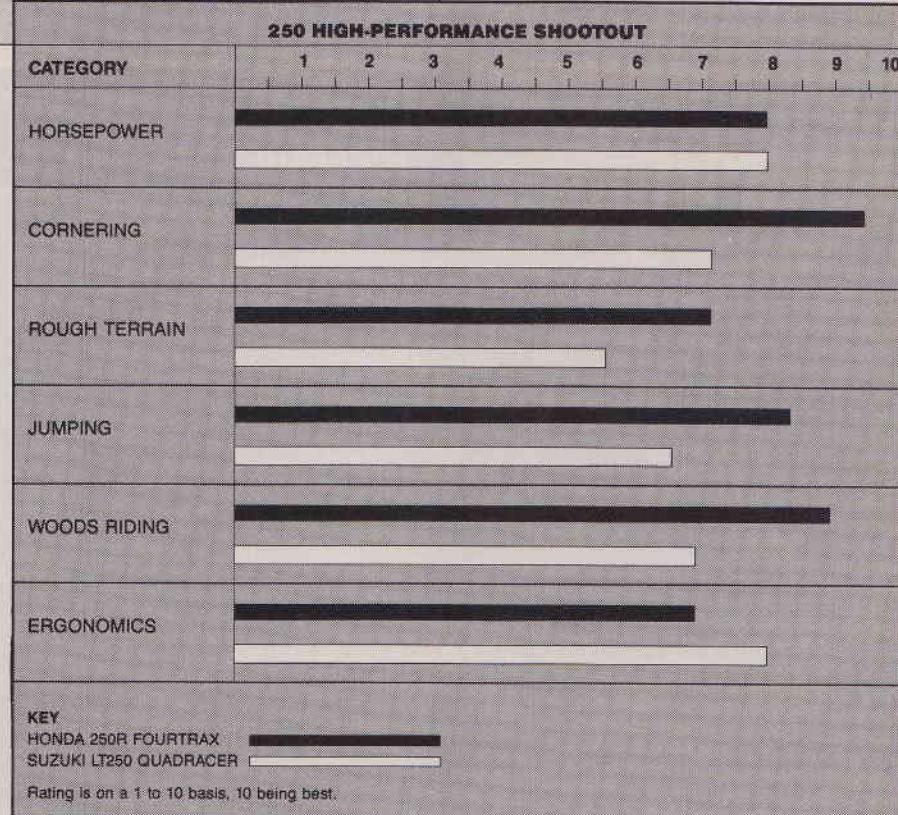
With the National Cross-Country series growing, riders are discovering how exciting it is to compete while slicing through the trees. When comparing these two high-performance machines, the Honda climbs to the top of the ladder. The first and most obvious reason is credited to the FourTrax's quick turning ability. Some of the other features which make the Honda a better woods machine are the powerband and tires. Our woods test riders raved about Honda's smooth powerband because it requires very little throttle control to keep the wheel-spin down to a minimum. This allows the

between two trees and being able to ride through.

IN THE WINDUP

To begin our summary of the FourTrax vs. QuadRacer head-to-head competition, we are going to elaborate on which machine our test riders felt more comfortable. Sitting on each of the two four-wheelers side by side, the majority of our test riders voted for the Suzuki in the ergonomics (how everything fits you) department. Some of our larger test riders felt a little cramped on the Honda. Once the wheels started to roll, many riders changed their minds. The FourTrax is virtually effortless to ride and took very little time to get used to. Actual on-the-trail riding comfort ended up a tie, but it seems like it took our test riders a little longer to get used to the Suzuki.

In the power category, the QuadRacer



rear end to track straight. Taking full advantage of the radial Ohtsu rear tires, you can run a low air pressure to get traction and not worry too much about getting a flat.

As we said before, the Suzuki turns well with the power on. In the woods, however, riders are faced with a lot of tight turns that require you to coast around, so there may be a problem with a pushing front end. The QuadRacer is capable of turning fast loops through the woods, but it takes a certain rider technique to learn. When it comes to a narrow trail, the Suzuki has a slight advantage over the Honda because its width is one inch less than the Honda's. That doesn't sound like much, but it can sometimes make the difference between having to get off your machine and pull it

is liked by all because of its low-end grunt and hard surge felt throughout the rpm range. We heard no complaints about the FourTrax's smooth-delivering powerband, but it doesn't seem to take control and hit hard.

Determining which machine corners the best was one of the easiest tasks we had. Turning the Honda is like riding an ATV with power steering. It turns quick, easy and precise. The Suzuki reacts consistently, but you have to start the turn early and power out.

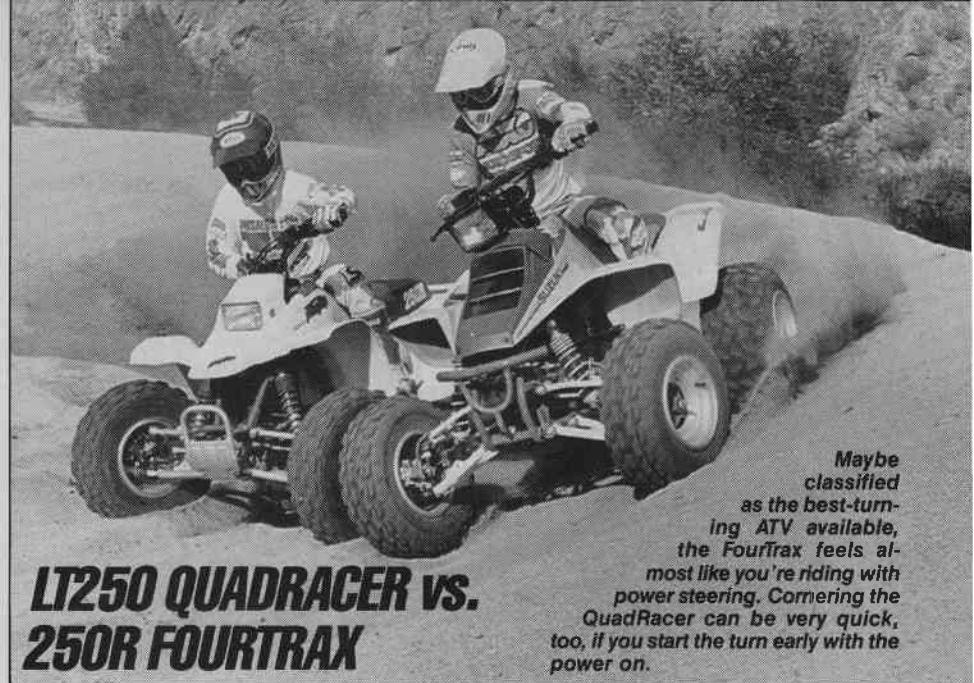
The Honda gets a slight edge on the whoop-de-doo trails because of its plush-feeling front shocks. The Suzuki tracks straighter but lost out due to the slight pounding felt on square-edged bumps.

We gave the jumping honors to the Four-

Trax because all of our test riders felt they could throw it around in the air and still have a plush landing. The QuadRacer still felt stable and controllable in the air, but the landings were a little harsh.

There you have it! The 250 high-performance showdown. After all of our testing was complete and we heard the pros and cons from each rider, the Honda 250R FourTrax is the winner. It's rider-friendly and handles great. The Suzuki 250 QuadRacer is not a bad machine and many riders have proven it's no slouch on the racetrack.

In fact, we are almost positive you'll be seeing a lot of QuadRacers giving the FourTrax's competition this year, because of the price difference. Comparing each factory's suggested retail price, the QuadRacer is almost \$600 cheaper than the FourTrax. It is almost guaranteed that you'll be happy with either one of these machines. They both are capable of making you a full-on four-wheeler addict.

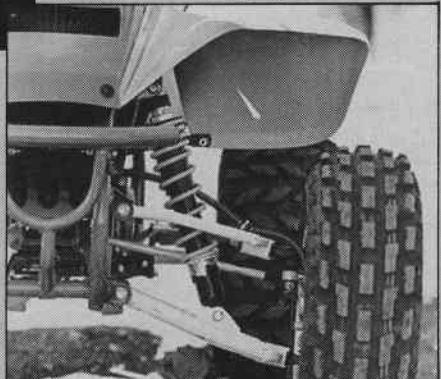
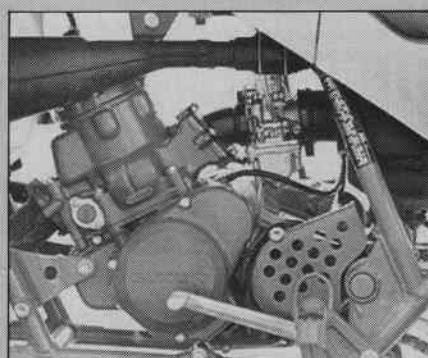


Maybe classified as the best-turning ATV available, the FourTrax feels almost like you're riding with power steering. Cornering the QuadRacer can be very quick, too, if you start the turn early with the power on.

LT250 QUADRACER VS. 250R FOURTRAX

SUZUKI LT250 QUADRACER

PREPARED TO BRAWL



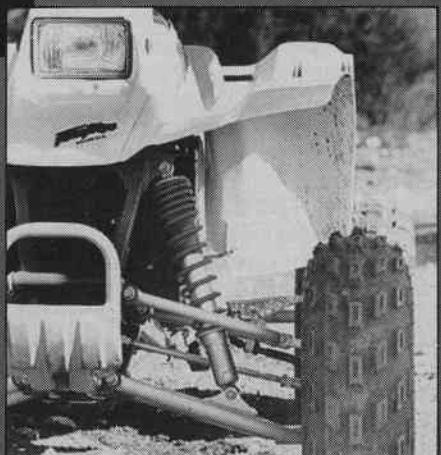
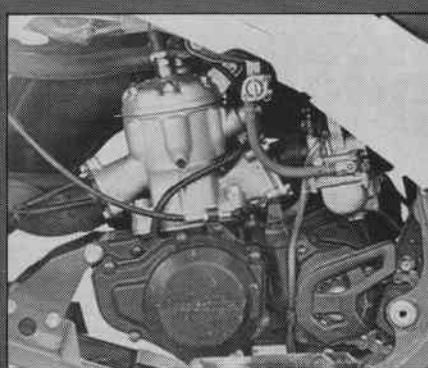
The Suzuki QuadRacer feels a little heavy in the air, but both tall and short test riders liked the overall ergonomics. Once our test riders spent some time on the QuadRacer, they could turn some fast lap times.

Low-end and midrange power on the Suzuki was liked by all of our test riders. The Automatic Exhaust Control Valve has a lot to do with the strong definite power surge felt at mid-rpm's.

Having a slight problem with pushing through the corners, the QuadRacer turns the best with the power on, as opposed to coasting around a corner. The front A-arms look different, but the only change is a new white color.

HONDA 250R FOURTRAX

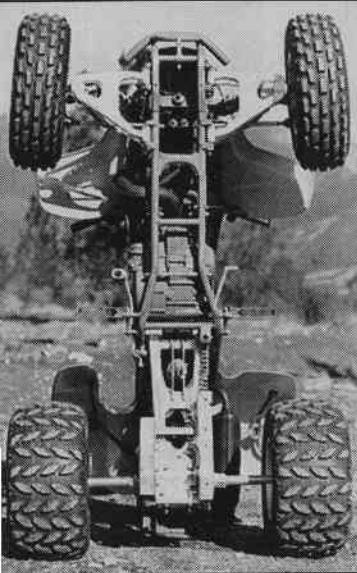
READY FOR BATTLE



Launching the FourTrax into the air makes you wonder if you're riding an ATV or flying an F-16. Air time feels very light and controllable and the landings are soft and precise.

With no real hard hit at any rpm, the powerband is smooth from bottom to top, giving the FourTrax engine an almost "electric" feel to it. Motor maintenance is easy and quick, making between-moto repairs possible.

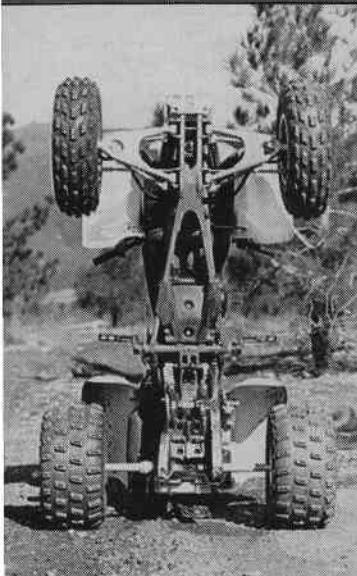
A combination of frame design, front shocks and rear swingarm make the FourTrax one of the best-turning ATVs on the market. Bump steer is virtually absent when powering through a set of whoops.



◀ Suzuki offers very little protection on the underside of the machine. If you plan on doing a lot of cross-country riding, we suggest you purchase an after-market skid plate package.



Rear travel on the Suzuki (left) is measured at 8.7" of travel and the Honda (right) is 7.9". As you can see, the QuadRacer is 1" narrower than the FourTrax, which plays a big role in woods riding. Chain maintenance is also easier on the FourTrax. □



◀ From under the Honda, you can see how narrow the frame really is where the A-arms connect. The rear swing arm, sprocket and disc brake are protected with a flat, fairly strong metal skid plate.

Engine type

SUZUKI LT250 QUADRACER

HONDA 250R FOURTRAX

Displacement	Single cylinder, liquid-cooled, two-stroke	Single cylinder, liquid-cooled, two-stroke
Bore and stroke	246cc	246cc
Starting	67mmx70mm	66mmx72mm
Transmission	Primary Kick	Primary Kick
Fuel tank capacity	Six-speed manual clutch	Six-speed manual clutch
Wheelbase	2.9 gal	2.6 gal
Overall length	51.2 in	49.8 in.
Width	72.2 in	72.4 in.
Seat height	44.7 in	45.7 in.
Ground clearance	29.7 in	31.1 in.
Suspension:	4.9 in	4.3 in.
Front	Dual A-arm, independent w/oil damped shocks, reb. adj., 5 preload, 8.7 in. travel	Dual A-arm, independent w/oil-damped shocks, 5-way preload, 7.9 in. travel
Rear	Single gas/oil shock, reb. adj., fully adj. spring, 8.7 in. travel	Single gas/oil shock, comp./reb. adj., fully adj. spring preload, 9.1 in. travel
Brakes:	Dual hydraulic discs	Dual hydraulic discs
Front	Single hydraulic disc	Single hydraulic disc
Rear	Chain	Chain
Final drive	325 lbs	339.6 lbs.
Intended use	Recreation/Sport/Race	Recreation/Sport/Race
Suggested retail price	\$3499	\$4098
Distributor/Manufacturer	American Suzuki Motor Corp. 3251 E. Imperial Hwy. Brea, CA 92621	American Honda Motor Corp. 100 W. Alondra Blvd. Gardena, CA 90247