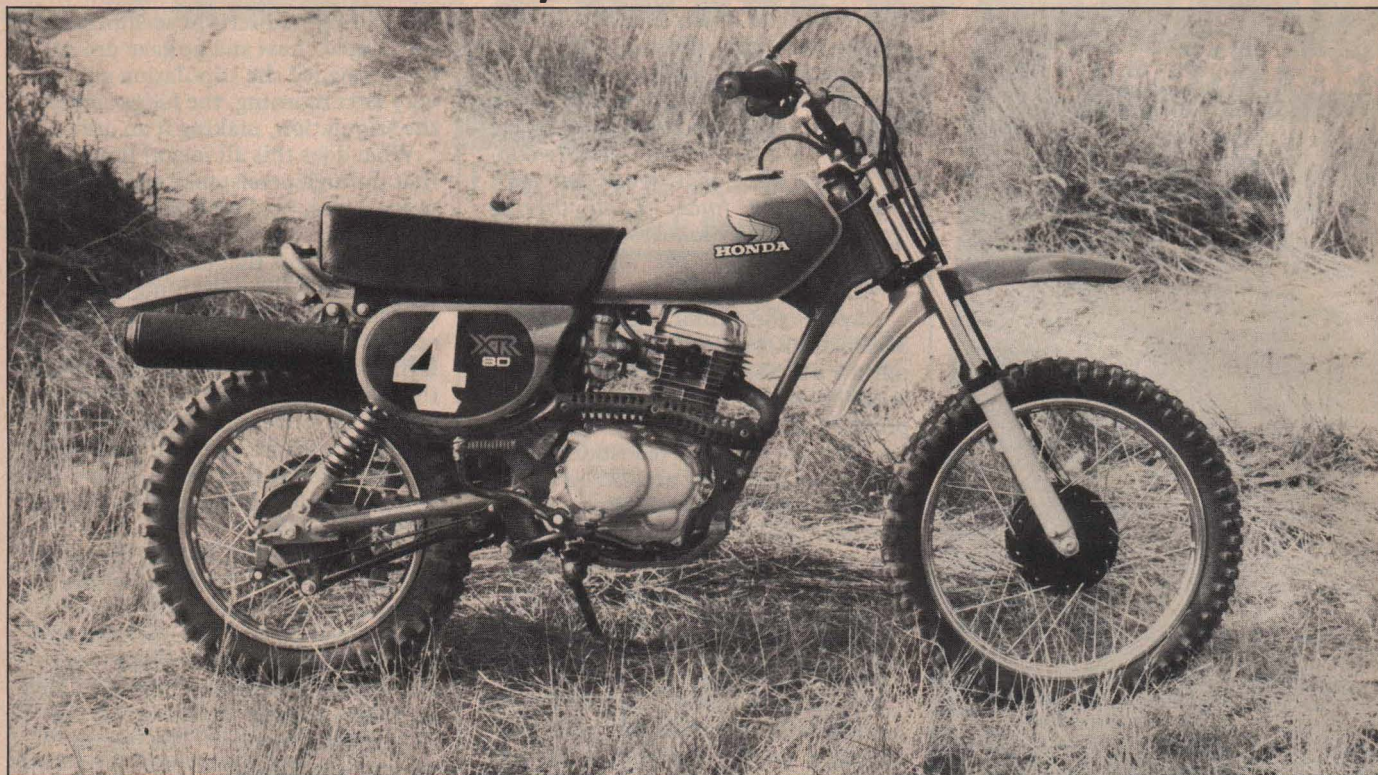


HONDA'S HOT LITTLE FOUR-STROKE

Tom Thump
By The Staff of Dirt Bike



HONDA XR80

In this day and age of screaming YZ80s and outrageously fast RM minis, it's hard for a kid to get a start in the motorcycling world without breaking his neck. Sure, there are the little JR, RM or YZ50s, but what if the guy is 10 years old and weighs 80-some-odd pounds? There's no way one of those would hold him. So, he goes out and foots the bill for one of the Honda XR80s.

When the XR75 was introduced some years back, there was a competition market for the little four-stroke, which could hold its own against the other brands of the day in a race. But today, there isn't a chance for the thumpers to match throttles against some of the rocketships that show up on the weekends to do battle. Yet, people still head for their local Honda dealer to get their hands on the XRs.

Why?

Because they work.

The new XR80 was designed in the precise manner for the beginning rider. The machine sits fairly low at the saddle, and gives confidence, instead of fear, while running. The four-stroke engine is quiet and won't scare the

neck out of a new prospect, which, along with the mild manner of the powerplant, makes up a fairly successful learning tool. Too, the reliability of the XR is quite pleasing in comparison to a full-blown racer.

Racing the XR is possible, although not very feasible. There are still a few hard-core XR freaks at local tracks who refuse to admit that their Honda isn't competitive anymore, but the money they've had to pump into that bike to make it fast is considerable.

In stock form, the Honda XR80 will suit a newcomer in other phases of motorcycling. More XRs are sold as playbikes than anything else, due to the fact that they are easy to throw around, and still run without a festival of wrenching during the week.

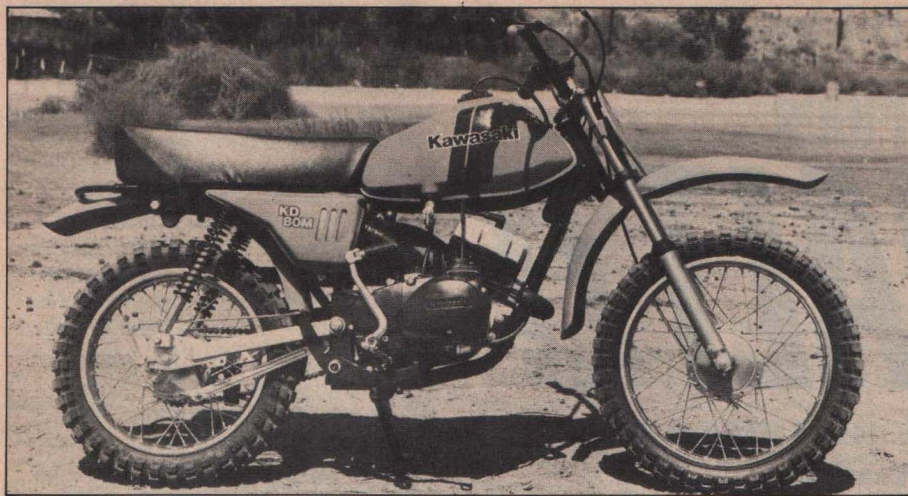
An XR can be run just about anywhere, from race tracks to empty lots down the street, and still give out a respectable amount of enjoyment to the operator.

For a mini, they have good torque on the bottom, and don't take off screaming when they hit powerband. That's important if you have a little tension during your first ride.

And no matter how much you advance in motorcycling, that little XR you have stuffed in the garage will always come in handy. No matter what size you are, that little four-stroke will give you a day's worth of fun, inexpensively and safely.

HONDA XR80

ENGINE TYPE	Air-cooled, single, four-stroke, OHC
BORE AND STROKE	47.5mm x 45.0mm
DISPLACEMENT	79.7cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED)	N/A
CARBURETOR	20mm Keihin
IGNITION	Flywheel magneto, points
TRANSMISSION	Five-speed, constant mesh
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	.95-gallon
WHEELBASE	44.9 inches
GROUND CLEARANCE	7.7 inches
SEAT HEIGHT	28.5 inches
WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	150 pounds
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT	Telescopic fork, five-inch travel
REAR	Swingarm/shock, 4.4-inch travel
TIRES:	
FRONT	2.50x16
REAR	3.00x14
INTENDED USE	Off-road, trail riding
APPROX RETAIL PRICE	\$615
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
DISTRIBUTOR:	
American Honda	
100 W. Alondra	
Gardena, California 90247	



KAWASAKI KD80

All-around mini

Don't be fooled by the number plate, folks, the KD80M isn't a racer. Not when the rest of the field is going to be tricked-out RMs, YZs and KXs; and they are worlds different from the low-priced KD.

The KD is more along the lines of a trailbike, and is best suited for the 9- to 12-year-old beginner. It has reasonably nice manners and a very mild motor that seems to be willing to pull practically anyone's weight right from idle on up to a decent amount of revs.

Aiding the revving capabilities of the motor, is the rotary valve intake design, and although it won't set your eyes back in their sockets when the bike comes on the pipe, the power comes on much earlier than most would expect. The only disadvantage to this is the amount of room the carb takes up on the right side of the motor. It manifests itself in a pronounced hump that will get in the way of any foot larger than average.

Our testers came across a number of good points, and a few bad, as follows:

The chassis, footpegs and brake pedal seem to be made from very soft stock, and we managed to bend both

footpegs on the bike. While each of these problems may have been brought about by abuse on our part, the message is: Don't drop the bike too hard, or you may find a peg or two pointing south.

The forks work OK for a less-than-aggressive rider, but the shocks will please no one but a beginner, and then not for very long. They aren't what you'd call performance-oriented units, and after a thorough trouncing, most owners would be wise to consider a step up in suspenders.

But not a set of real trick air shocks or anything like that. That's the last direction this bike should be taken in. The best plan for the KD would be for a learning rider, because it's easy to ride, reliable, and it's only going to set you back about \$500—quite a bit less than anything else in its class. Sand pits, backyards and easy trails will be home for the KD. We suspect that a lot of KDs will find a slot under Christmas trees this year.



YAMAHA YZ50G

KAWASAKI KD80

ENGINE TYPE	Two-stroke, rotary valve
BORE AND STROKE	47mm x 46mm
DISPLACEMENT	79cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED)	N/A
CARBURETION	Mikuni VM19SC
IGNITION	Flywheel magneto
TRANSMISSION	Five-speed, constant mesh
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	6.5 liters (1.7 gallons)
WHEELBASE	1100mm (43.3 inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE	180mm (7.1 inches)
SEAT HEIGHT	N/A
WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	69 kg (152 pounds)
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT	Kawasaki forks (travel N/A)
REAR	Swingarm, shocks (travel N/A)
TIRES:	
FRONT	2.50x16 knobby
REAR	2.75x14 knobby
INTENDED USE	Off-road
APPROX RETAIL PRICE	\$499
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
DISTRIBUTOR:	
Kawasaki Motors Corp. 2009 E. Edinger Ave. Santa Ana, California 92705	

Monoshock for the micro-minis

Hot off the assembly line is Yamaha's new winning prescription for the mini juniors. The YZ50G is a scaled-down version of the bikes that have changed the face of national mini motocross.

The new YZ50 features monoshock rear suspension and leading axle forks, and is said to be scaled to the same dimensions as the full-size YZs. The suspension travel is approximately 4½ inches, front and rear.

The YZ50G is expected to be very competitive in stock condition. As a matter of fact, one of them recently finished first in the Ponca City, Oklahoma, NMA National Championships August 8, underneath "Mouse" McCoy. And for the modified class, Yamaha will be offering a 60cc kit. □

YAMAHA YZ50G

ENGINE TYPE	Two-stroke, single
BORE AND STROKE	40mm x 39.7mm
DISPLACEMENT	49cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED)	9.0 BHP at 10,500 rpm
CARBURETION	Mikuni VM20SH
IGNITION	Flywheel magneto
TRANSMISSION	Five-speed, constant mesh
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	3 liters (¾-gallon)
WHEELBASE	1025mm (41 ¼ inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE	195mm (7 ½ inches)
SEAT HEIGHT	N/A
WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	50 kg (110 pounds)
SUSPENSION:	
FRONT	Yamaha forks, 110mm (4 ¼ inches)
REAR	Monoshock swingarm, 115mm (4 ½ inches)
TIRES:	
FRONT	2.50x14 knobby
REAR	3.00x12 knobby
INTENDED USE	Motocross
APPROX RETAIL PRICE	\$599
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
DISTRIBUTOR:	
Yamaha Motor Corp. 6620 Orangethorpe Buena Park, California 90620	