

STAYIN' ALIVE

Small changes add up to a better package

The Staff of DIRT BIKE

For some reason, enduro bikes are always the last in line when it comes to changes. Minor handouts are the norm, laissez faire is the policy. Leave it alone, don't wreck a good thing. Why change a good bike? Kawasaki used this theory with the KDX175 and it worked for two years. Then, in 1982, they got smoked by sitting on their "let alone" duffs.

Suzuki did a major remake of its PE175 in '82. The bike sparkled with innovative changes, mainly in the suspension department. Its motor fit into the mainstream of the small-bore enduro equipment; not a lot down low, a good punch in the mid-range and a decent kick on top. This is the same basic engine Suzuki's had for the last few years, just minor updates to keep it competitive. Now for the big news: The pattern continues dead on-line with the past. Small changes to the package, nothing outrageous, wild or berserk. Is this tradition or extinction?

SMOOTH REDO

By checking out the specs, a calculating eye can pick out almost nothing in the way of startling news. The bore and stroke is identical, carb the same, as is the jetting. It appears there are no updates here, but, check out the trans ratios. These are completely different from the '82 PE. Remember, our big snivel was in the gearing of the bike. We said first and second were too tall, and change the sprocket to a 48-tooth. This is an area where Suzuki listened.

All of the ratios have been altered. Overall gearing has been changed from 12/46 to 12/48. Internally, all of the ratios have been reworked to give the bike a lower pulling ability. This is just what we wanted. Now sixth may be somewhat slower, but first through fifth work for the trail-conscious rider. No more slipping the clutch in tight terrain. Now it pulls without requiring an overworked left hand and a smoking clutch.

The powerplant now works in harmony with the gearbox. This small change has broadened the entire plane of the engine. It pulls sooner, still has a good snap in the mid-range and revs out strong. A lot less thinking has to go into riding the PE fast. The motor works with the rider, is snappy *where* it should be and tractorlike *when* it has to be.

YELLOW SHANKS, BUOYANT TAIL

Except for the yellow paint on the fork legs, the forks have experienced no evolu-



Although relatively unchanged from the '82 PE, the Suzook is still a superb handler. Deluxe suspension and light weight make it a real threat.

tion. This isn't bad. We like their action; they are supple, yet take the hard hit with efficiency. For the faster riders, they are a tad soft. A raise in the oil level cures this. Raise the oil level to six inches from the top (springs out and forks collapsed), ten-weight oil. Don't use air.

With just under 11 inches of travel, they perform fine in all circumstances except for the hardest of Western enduros. The

West demands more travel, as the desert is faster than Eastern runs; the extra travel is mandatory.

Both John Fero and Jeff Fredette raced PEs during the '82 National enduro circuit. Neither changed the amount of travel. They instead dialed in the forks by playing with oil levels, nothing else. By the way, both finished in the top 20 in the nation. Not bad.







The headlight/numberplate pops off quickly and protects the speedo from abuse. Split levers and an in-line throttle are nice, as are the Six Days adjusters on the lever assemblies.



Once again, the Floater rear is remarkable. Its ability to take impacts, both large and small, cannot be topped. The crossover brake linkage is a little mushy, but not bad.

With the rear end, things are a little less complicated. Dialing in the preload is all that's necessary. Most of the staff liked the Floater stock, once the oil level was raised in the forks. You see, if the forks are too soft and the rear feels good, the front end will tuck under. With the added oil in the forks, it won't dive in the turns, yet still feels proper on the hard hits. Tuning the action to work together is critical.

Again, the 10.6 inches in the rear is plenty of travel to handle all but the toughest of terrain. The Floater action is unsurpassed in quality damping action. It takes the hard hit as well as any bike going, yet will still absorb the small ripple and stutter bumps in an uncompromising way—it's downright perfect. There is no other rear end on the market that absorbs the variety of impacts in such a flawless method as the Floater.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN

Terrain variations test an enduro bike mercilessly; this is even more demanding with the 175 class. With less power than its peers, outstanding handling becomes its asset. The Suzuki performs, as it did last year, like an upper classman. With a tight wheelbase (57½ inches) and a 28-degree rake, flicking the PE in and out of the woods requires no more than a shift of body weight and a blast of throttle.

Although the PE is short and has a tight rake, it is stable. There is no headshake once the suspension is dialed; stability ranks with any bike in the class.

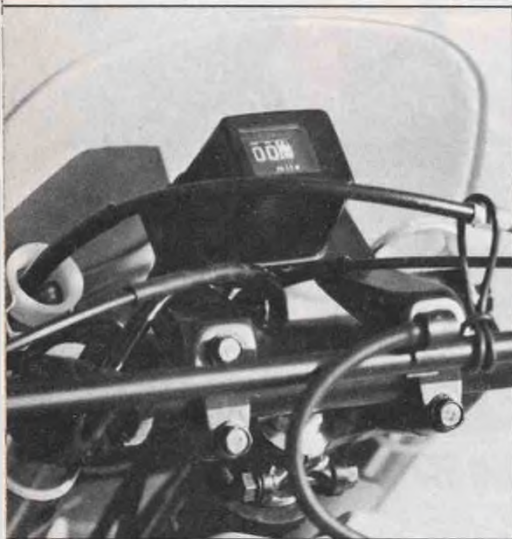
KNICKKNACKS

With the exception of the stickers and some added paint, all of the externals of the '83 PE are identical to last year's bike. We like the seating position. It's easy to slide forward and get up on the tank. Speaking of the seat, it's dark blue this year. Or maybe it's light black—it's hard to say.

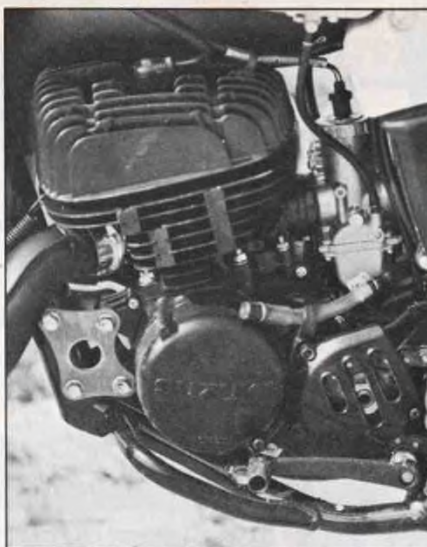
For really fast riders, the PE's suspension may be a tad soft. For Clipper, they're not.



SUZUKI PE175



The small Nippon-Seiki odometer is top of the line. Big numbers are easy to read and perfect for the enduro rider.



Bash bars protect the cases and a folding shift lever is a good enduro plus. Inside, the gear ratios have all been changed, making the PE much better for the trail rider. Tighter ratios work better for both tight and fast terrain.



SUZUKI PE175

ENGINE TYPE	Air-cooled, 2-stroke
BORE AND STROKE	62mm x 57mm
DISPLACEMENT	172cc
CARBURETION	VM34SS Mikuni
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	250
NEEDLE JET	R-3
JET NEEDLE	6DP17-4
PILOT JET	25
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium 92-plus octane
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-disc
TRANSMISSION	6-speed
GEARBOX RATIOS:	
1	3.000:1
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
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTER/QUALITY	Yes/yes/good

RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NGK B10EGV
EXHAUST SYSTEM	Up-pipe, right side
FRAME, TYPE	Single downtube, chromoly
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.)
WEIGHT, DRY	104 kg (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	Leading axle, 10.6 in.
REAR	Floater, 10.6 in.
INTENDED USE	Enduro
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
RETAIL PRICE, APPROX.	\$1620
DISTRIBUTOR:	
U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp.	
3251 East Imperial Hwy.	
Brea, CA 92621	
PARTS PRICES, HIGH WEAR ITEMS:	
PISTON ASSEMBLY	\$26.77
RINGS ONLY	16.17
CYLINDER	151.95
SHIFT LEVER	12.83
BRAKE PEDAL	20.63
FRONT SPROCKET	10.04

All of the needed enduro hardware is mounted neatly on the PE, with the exception of a clock. There is still the nifty odometer snuggled in against the handlebar mounts. Also, the ingenious Six-Day-type levers let you adjust the cable tension by merely turning the adjuster. No jam nuts. It's quick and easy.

Small lights make the PE enduro legal, and the front numberplate offers good protection for the speedo. Both fenders do a good job of keeping mud off the rider.

Folding tips are mated with both the shifter and the rear brake pedal. The rear wheel is again a quick-change item, and is very sano. All that linkage seen going through the swingarm and back to the rear brakes is needed for the quick-change wheel. This crossover brake linkage actually works well.

Shifting is still notchy. Make sure that you shift deliberately, especially under hard acceleration. Run some Kal-Gard 4-Plus in the trans; it smoothes it out somewhat.



Woods riders will love the PE. Short and strong, it handles the woods with a quick flick. Throttle response is good, although not overwhelming. There's a strong punch in the middle on up to the upper Rs.

Keep an eye on all nuts and bolts when you're breaking it in. They loosen a lot. Do the same with the spokes. The front brake is strong enough to do the job. Straight-pull hubs are lightweight and just plain cool.

BOTTOM LINE

Box stock, the bike works well. Both John Fero and Jeff Fredette ran stockers all year in the enduro wars and did quite nicely. Neither opted for more power; they felt the PE was strong enough. This year the package works better. The gearbox is tightened and the power spread better suits the rider.

Is it better than the IT175? Or how about the new KDX200? We will say it's going to give the Yamaha fits because of the broader powerband. It never gave anything away in the handling department. With light weight, a good punch and balanced suspension package, the PE is a strong contender for the top. You'll have to wait for the *Shootout Special* to see which bike wins. □

