



YAMAHA IT125H ENDURO



When the first IT125 hit the market, we raved about the excellent engine and all-around good manners of the bike. Just about the only thing we could gripe about was the suspension—or more accurately, the lack of. At seven inches travel, front and rear, the littlest IT just did not have enough legs for serious enduro work. For fun trail riding, OK. But to stand a chance at winning some gold in an enduro, you had to make some changes.

Gary Woodling did a low cost White Bros. modification to the mono rear end and slipped a set of forks from an IT175F on the front, then promptly went out and won the 125 A class at the Prospectors enduro.

This showed us rather clearly that, even though the IT125 had bargain box suspension, it still had a fine engine and chassis. In fact, later in the year, we tested the Yamaha IT175G and felt that the engine on the 125 was much more versatile than the 175 powerplant. We were able to climb hills with the 125 that stopped the 175 in its tracks. Places that demanded brutal clutch slipping on the 175 were a piece of cake for the 125.

So, it was with a great deal of interest that we rolled the new IT125H off the Yamaha delivery truck, and into the

WHITE POWER *Short Legs and Long Heels*

back of the semi-official Dirt Bike Toyota long bed.

Wonder of wonders! The thing was white! From tip of fender to tail, the new 1981 IT absolutely gleamed in the fetid California sunlight. All of the new ITs will come in white, but the YZs will be yellow. White YZs have been going to Europe, Australia and Central America for some time.

After the impact of the color change had worn off, we squatted down and looked for the expected changes. Much to our dismay, very little seemed to have been changed. The engine, chassis and pipe all appeared to be the same as last year. We weren't sure about the suspension and referred to the manual for guidance.

Here's the bottom line. Changes are:

- Bigger forks with more travel. The wimpy 32mm forks of the G model are

gone and have been replaced with 35mm forks. Sadly, the factory has seen fit to increase the travel by only about an inch. Not enough.

- The ignition timing has been altered. It now runs much closer to top dead center before spark occurs. We checked for increased compression ratios and such, but found no changes there.

- Nifty plastic hand guards found only on the TT250 and the TT175 now come on the IT125H.

- The right footpeg stem is slightly thicker and stronger.

- The engine produces a much bigger punch at mid range, while still retaining excellent torque (for a 125) down low. It's fast.

- It's white.

Disappointing to say the least. At this point, one might tend to write the new 125 IT off, if it were not for the excellent credentials at the heart of the matter, that great little motor.

The manual does not tell the entire story though, and we tend to feel that the manual for the H model was hashed together from the old G manual without much thought. For example, the wheelbase, rake and trail are all listed as identical in the 1979 and the 1980 bikes. Yet, one inch of travel has

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been added to the forks. We felt the difference in steering the IT125H, but the numbers on the paper indicate no difference.

Actually, the change to those very average 35 millimeter forks may be quite significant. It's not that they're all that much better in action than the older 32mm units, but rather that now they can be cheaply and easily modified to realize about nine inches of travel, while the 32s were hopeless.

This means that if you want to make an IT125H into a fairly serious enduro mount, you won't have to scrounge around and buy another set of forks. We had too little time on the bike to find out exactly which fork kit will do the job, but the 35s on the IT look to be very close to the older YZ100 and DT175 forks. We'll touch bases with White Bros. and hopefully find out more information on this within the next month.

The mono rear end will respond nicely to any number of modifications. We had good luck with the White Bros. changes last year and can think of no reason to change our enthusiasm this year, as the basic mono is unchanged, except for the nitrogen pressure.

Stock Impressions

Naturally, we rode the machine stock. What with Jim Holley pulling sky shots on the bike and Clipper roaming up in the hills at odd hours, the IT got more than a reasonable amount of time put on it. We found that the bike was very rugged. It took an amazing amount of abuse before the spokes even loosened.

One thing that did irritate us, though, was the way the front end flexed. Every time the IT landed from a jump and was not perfectly straight up and down, we'd find the front wheel twisted in the forks. To get things back in line took no more than a sharp tug at the bars with the offending wheel braced up against a handy tree. Still, that was just too much flex to have to live with. It appears at that at least 38mm fork tubes will be required to keep that front end straight and true.

The action of the stock suspension was decent. It just ran out of available travel too soon, resulting in a sharp thud. The rear end made a particularly loud 'clack' when bottomed out. At moderate speeds on most any trail, both ends did a fair job, as long as the rider prepared for the bumps, stood on the pegs and unloaded the suspension for the jolts. Riding seated, the IT was a



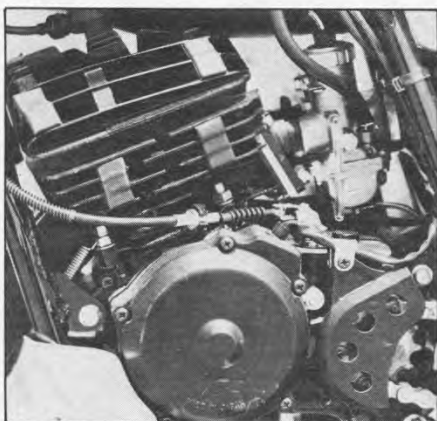
Spindly 32 mm forks have been replaced with heftier 35 mm units.



Combination head light/number plate is clean, but light shines mostly on the fender.



Lower edge of the pipe is vulnerable. Large belly is tucked in and will not make contact with riders leg.



Spiffy powerplant puts out amazing power for a 125. Combine that with a nicely spaced six-speed box and you get a bike that'll chug around trees and still top 65 on the straights.

pleasant bike, soaking up small ripples and chatter bumps without too much fuss.

As we stated earlier, the most impressive thing about the IT125 is the engine. It pulls remarkably well down low for such a small displacement machine, has a good kick at mid range and will rev out in a satisfactory manner. It's almost fast enough to ride in a Novice class MX and do well. At a Grand Prix or cross country race, the IT would probably have an advantage over a full blown 125MXer, at least in the power department. Top speed is almost 65 miles per hour on a hard packed road. When you consider that the average 125MX peaks out at somewhere between 52 and 55 mph with stock gearing, the power of the IT125H becomes even more impressive.

Directional Changes

We felt that the latest white IT did not have the steering accuracy of the blue bullet. Obviously, if nothing else was changed in the chassis and the forks were made longer, then the steering would be slower. This results in a trade off, rather than a handicap. Because the IT is so light and has such good manners, the slight increase in rake and trail can be easily compensated for by applying a bit more weight over the front wheel when sharp turning is required. Some gain in high speed stability is found with the longer forks. Still, the bike feels short, small and agile.

An alert rider can thread the IT through trees and snake around narrow trails almost effortlessly. To snub the IT in a tight arc less than the length of its wheelbase requires merely that the rider lean heavily on the outside peg and give the throttle a squirt. The IT125H will almost crawl up its own exhaust pipe. That's tight!

Bits and Pieces

At less than 54 inches, the wheelbase cannot be considered long enough for serious enduro racing. Surely, the IT would benefit from a longer swingarm more than anything else.

At 2.2 US gallons, the IT can go over 60 miles before panic sets in. For plain old trail riding, you can look forward to 70 plus, if the pace isn't too frantic.

Both brakes were typically Yamaha, that is, very strong. The rear chattered a bit too much under heavy braking. A slight bend in the brake rod will help that situation somewhat.

Even short riders will be able to reach the ground from the low slung saddle of the IT. At a fraction over 33 inches, this is a bike a youngster could

ride without problems.

Unlike the other ITs, no tool bag comes on the 125. There really should be some provision for carrying at least a few odds and ends.

A hefty 520 chain is standard on the small 125 and it should last a long time here.

Shifting was a bit notchy at first, but loosened up after the first oil change and a few hours. A six-speeder provides a gear for every situation. Low gear is very low and the rider can actually walk alongside the bike with the clutch out, if the terrain is nasty.

Servicing the air box was easy and waterproofing was superb, as evidenced by a few dozen blasts through a two foot deep river.

Air caps would be a good,

inexpensive addition to the stock (or modified) forks.

A good skid plate is standard. Folding shift and brake levers complete the picture.

Now Then ...

Confusion reigns. We like the IT125H and can't really find anything else around as good (for the price). On the other hand, we wish more had been done suspension-wise. Then, we get back to the truly great engine and we once more get enthused about the bike.

Look at it this way ... if you pop for a hundred bucks or so to shape the suspension, you won't have anything to gripe about. And, the 125 class is probably the least competitive around right now in enduros.

Trophy anyone? □



YAMAHA IT125H Specifications

NAME AND MODEL	Yamaha IT125H
ENGINE TYPE	Single cylinder, two-stroke, reed valve
BORE AND STROKE	56 x 50mm (2.2 inches x 1.97 inches)
DISPLACEMENT	123cc (7.51 cubic inches)
HORSEPOWER	N/A
CARBURETION30mm Mikuni - VM305S
FACTORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:	
MAIN JET	200
NEEDLE JET	P - 4
JET NEEDLE	6DP19-2
PILOT JET	35
SLIDE NUMBER	2.0
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE	Premium-leaded
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	8.5 liters (8.9 U.S. quarts)
FUEL TANK MATERIAL	Plastic
LUBRICATION	Pre-mix
RECOMMENDED OIL	Yamalube R
OIL CAPACITY	N/A
AIR FILTRATION	Oiled foam
CLUTCH TYPE	Wet, multi-plate
TRANSMISSION	six-speed, constant mesh
GEAR BOX RATIOS:	
1	34/11 (3.090)
2	31/15 (2.066)
3	27/18 (1.500)
4	25/21 (1.190)
5	23/23 (1.000)
6	21/25 (0.840)
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	12/46
IGNITION	C.D.I.
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM?	Yes
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG	NZ-G champion
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTOR/QUALITY	Silencer and Spark arrestor, good

EXHAUST SYSTEM	High pipe, through frame
FRAME, TYPE	Single down tube, split cradle
WHEELBASE	1365 mm (53.7 inches)
GROUND CLEARANCE	300 mm (11.8 inches)
SEAT HEIGHT	850 mm (33.5 inches)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE)	28 1/2 degrees
TRAIL	120 mm (4.72 inches)
WEIGHT WITH ONE GALLON GAS	210 pounds (202 dry)
RIM MATERIAL	Aluminum
TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:	
FRONT	30x21 knobby (Bridgestone)
REAR	4.10x18 knobby (Bridgestone)
SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:	
FRONT	Telescopic, oil damped. (200 mm) 7.87 inches travel
REAR	Monoshock, nitrogen assist (200 mm) 7.9 inches travel
INTENDED USE	Enduro, trail riding
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
RETAIL PRICE, APPROX	N/A
DISTRIBUTOR:	
Yamaha Motor Corporation	
6555 Katella Ave.	
Cypress, California 90630	
OVERALL RATING, 0 TO 100, VARIOUS CATEGORIES, KEEPING INTENDED USE OF MACHINE IN MIND:	
HANDLING	93
SUSPENSION	80
POWER	98
COST	N/A
ATTENTION TO DETAIL	92
EFFECTIVENESS, STONE STOCK	88