

SUZUKI

THE PLAY GETS SI

Half RM

The Staff of Dirt Bike

Over the years, the playbikes that we've ridden have all fallen into their own little class. Consider the Suzuki DS line, or the Yamaha MXers. They were built to offer the beginning motorcyclist something less expensive than a full-blown race bike, with average power, and an overall package that could last for years.

That concept was all right, but all of the bikes suffered from the same problems; they were like riding in the past. Suspension was way off, and the handling limited them to cruising along smooth fireroads, or very mild trails.

Somebody has finally done something about the ailing playbike, though, thanks to U.S. Suzuki. With the introduction of their RS175, Suzuki brought foo foo bikes out of the doghouse and back onto the right trail. Let us tell you straightforward, this machine is a "serious playbike." Just by looking at it, you can tell that it's worlds apart from the DX or MX, with its sleek styling, and lots of attention to detail. It resembles both a motocrosser and an enduro mount, and has that competitive air about it.

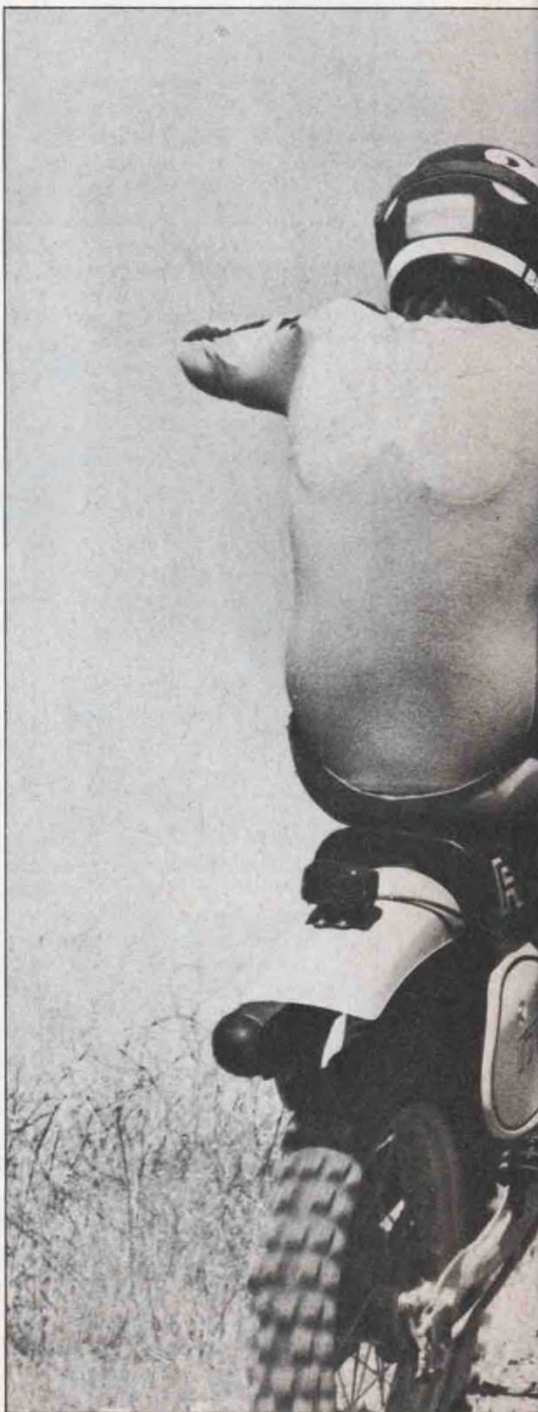
Just what is the Suzuki RS175, and where did it come from? Actually it's

a hybrid of old PE and RM technology and parts, with some new design added in for better performance. The frame was derived from last year's RM100 and 125, with bracketry changes to hold the 175cc motor. The powerplant is made up of a couple of different engines as well, the engine cases coming off the 1980 PE175, and the cylinder taken off the PE175N, with an exhaust port modification.

Suspension-wise, the RS has the swingarm of the RM100N, but the shocks are brand new, designed specifically for the RS. The forks are off the RM125N, sporting the long sliders. The RS's ignition is also from the RM125, as is the chain guide system. However, the airbox is almost an exact replica of the PE175's.

In the cosmetics department, the tank and fenders are from the RM-125, both 1979 and '80, while the lighting is the same as the DS's. The seat is a concoction of an RM saddle's base, with the foam padding and a seat cover all-new for the RS only. As for the side plates, they're FIM panels, the right side taken from the RM125, and the left a descendant of the PE175. So, as you can see, a lot of technology has been borrowed from

Suzuki's new RS175 playbike is a serious competitor. With its technology taken from the RMs and the PEs of last year, there's no way Suzuki could miss.



RS175

PLAYBIKE SERIOUS

Half PE

the RMs and PEs, then incorporated into the RS, along with some new designs and ideas.

Now, you're probably wondering, "What about the odometer, and the big gas tank; weren't they taken from an old PE?" The answer is no. The RS has no odometer, and the tank is going to be a major complaint to those who wish to take it on long rides. The 1.6-gallon RM tank is over a gallon smaller than the PE tanks.

However, we've been getting some word out of Suzuki that the PE tank will slip on to the RS, if not exactly, then close enough to require very minor changes.

If you really want to make it enduro-ready, an accessory manufacturer odometer will put you right there on your starting minute. Considering the fact that the RS is priced \$180 less than a new PE, you'll be able to make the changes without exceeding the PE price tag, and have the option of either a playbike, or a competitive enduro motorcycle, if the competition mood strikes you in the right way later on downstream.

Wait a minute. We just said that the RS can be a good enduro mount. And it's sold as a playbike. Why?

Because with all Suzuki put into this motorcycle, it is competitive. It's not your ordinary foo foo thrasher. Out on the trail, the handling of the RS makes it a pleasure to ride. Although the suspension travel is shorter than the PE's, the shorter overall height lets the RS turn easier. And with a shorter wheelbase, it can wind through rocks and trees easier, too. Despite the easier handling, the suspension of the RS is not up to the PE's yet. The RS is harsher over the bumps, and lacks the plushness of the PE front and rear.

The powerplant of the RS 175 is its strong point. It doesn't explode, and has some good low-end to it. The clutch doesn't have to be slipped to get up a snotty hill, and the top-end of the RS is fast enough for most riding conditions.

A beginner can handle the RS powerband, so it doesn't leave the ranks of the playbike in that respect, but if you wish to build it up, you might slap on some gearing to equal the PE's, and see how you like it.

The Suzuki RS175 also did something for us that other playbikes didn't, it felt good to ride it anywhere,

(Continued on page 70)





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SUZUKI RS175

(Continued from page 49)

just the way it was. Other bikes made our test riders feel "cramped," and uncomfortable. Everything was too short, too low. But the RS has the room we needed, the right height, and the proper level/pedal positioning. Nothing hung out too far, or tucked in to where it couldn't be reached. The bars were good, not too wide, and the levers were easy to operate with minimal effort.

You can still touch the ground with both feet while straddling the RS, but it didn't feel like you were riding just inches over rocks, waiting for one to rip your foot off of the peg and smash a few toes at random.

The Bottom Line

There are a few things wrong with the Suzuki RS, though. The new shocks Suzuki put on are harsh, but still the best of any playbike's. It would be nice to see some RM KYB reservoir shocks mounted instead, but that could take a while, since they haven't even made it to the PEs yet.

The forks are fine. Although they lack air caps, they are made with longer legs and sliders, with more overlap of the tubes. That means they're stronger than the PE175's, but the ends hang down below the axle lower on the RS than on the PE.

With their first effort, Suzuki has built the king of the playbikes. The RS175 is so versatile that it can be used to learn on, then to compete with later, when that same rider feels the urge to go for it.

It's priced right at \$1199, and should bring in a whole new market to motorcycling. Suzuki has made a daring move with the RS. What you have here is a bike with advanced technology all wrapped into something the public has needed for a long time: A serious play bike. □

SUZUKI RS175 Specifications

NAME AND MODEL	Suzuki RS175
ENGINE TYPE	Single-cylinder, two-stroke, reed valved
BORE AND STROKE	62mm x 57mm
DISPLACEMENT	172cc
HORSEPOWER (CLAIMED)	N/A
CARBURETION	30mm Mikuni
FUEL TANK CAPACITY	1.6 gallons (6.0 liters)
GAS/OIL RATIO	Pre-mix 20:1
TRANSMISSION	Six-speed constant mesh
GEARING, FRONT/REAR	12/46
IGNITION	Suzuki PEI
WHEELBASE	55.9 inches (1420 mm)
GROUND CLEARANCE	11.8 inches (300 mm)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE	30 degrees
WEIGHT (CLAIMED)	216 pounds (98 kg)
INTENDED USE, MFR.	Off-road
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	Japan
PRICE, APPROX.	\$1199
DISTRIBUTOR:	
	U.S. Suzuki Motor Corp.
	13767 Freeway Drive
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