



The first thing that you should know about the Husqvarna 250CR is that it is not a motorcycle for everyone. This is not to say that the Husqvarna is not a good motorcycle, but that most people aren't good enough to ride one properly. And the 250CR is a motorcycle which punishes improper use. It is a product of the Swedish school of motocross racing, part of the same racing ideology that produced Bengt Aberg, Ake Jonsson, Rolf Tibblin and the great Torsten Hallman. Heikki Mikkola became World Champion using Swedish training methods and a Husqvarna. Now, Brad Lackey is trying to do the same. In Lackey's characterization, the Husqvarna is a "go for it" motorcycle.

"In order to make it work, you've got to be on the gas all the time. You've really got to lay that model over to turn it. You can't poop out

"The secret to riding a Husky is that you have to be in shape. There's no way around that." — Brad Lackey

halfway through the race and expect the bike to carry you to the finish line. The secret to riding a Husky is that you have to be in shape. There's no way around that."

One need only look at Lackey's body to understand what he's talking about. A couple of years ago Brad would never have been considered muscular in the athletic world of professional motocross. He had the smooth contours of an active man pursuing a rugged sport, but not the distinctive musculature and broad chest that characterize the grand prix contenders. He had only his marvelous talent and a desire to excel, traits which made it possible for him to go exceedingly fast, but which couldn't sustain him through a grueling 45-minute grand prix moto.

Then Husqvarna signed Lackey and took him over. The change in two years has been remarkable. His shoulders thickened, and his legs took on the powerful appearance of those of a man who "goes for it" all the time. There was also an important change in his riding. Gone was the flamboyance of the "hippie on a CZ." In its place was the straightforward purity and

race test HUSQVARNA 250CR

The 1976 250CR is better than ever and better than most. But that doesn't necessarily make it the bike for you



Tricks are not part of the Husky's style. Smoothness and economy of movement are.

economy of movement that makes a Husqvarna work. The resulting overall change in Lackey's performance is reflected in the company he's running with at the end of a grand prix. Brad is now marching with the leaders.

Marching with the leaders is what the Husqvarna is built for. It is a simple design, with one purpose in mind: to move forward with stability and speed. And that is the reason that Husqvarnas have, for so long, been labeled as bikes that

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won't slide, bikes which require a whole different style and mind set to be ridden effectively. It is a question of what motocross is really about.

The Swedes have reasoned, quite rightly, that sliding is unnecessary in true motocross. Any sideways motion of a bike will cause it to slow down — which is what brakes are for — or to fail to deliver its full acceleration potential. Therefore, Husqvarnas are designed to follow a straight line, one wheel behind the other, delivering maximum forward thrust to the ground. Carrying this full-speed-ahead theme to its logical conclusion, the Swedes also reason that the straight line is the best line through a turn.

Consider the proper execution of a high-speed motocross turn. Find a piece of dirt substantial enough to affect the direction of the motorcycle (usually a berm or ridge at the apex of your chosen line), and guide your bike into the ridge, tipping it over so that the vertical line of the bike is

"It is a simple design with one purpose in mind: to move forward with stability and speed."

perpendicular to the face of the ridge. At this point, it is much like riding in a barrel. Since your bike is perpendicular to the surface with which it has contact, it is still technically going in a straight line. Your direction relative to the track, however, is rapidly changing, because you are using the ridge (or berm) to deflect the motorcycle. The course changes direction, or shape. The relationship of the bike to the course does not.

The Husqvarna 250CR is designed to perform this function (that of conforming to track changes) with precision and consistency. Those who say that you can't turn a Husky are simply not aware of *how* a Husky is turned. To effectively compete upon a Husqvarna, you not only have to be cognizant of how the bike is handled, but you must also possess the stamina and concentration to deal precisely with each turn in the prescribed manner throughout the course of a race.

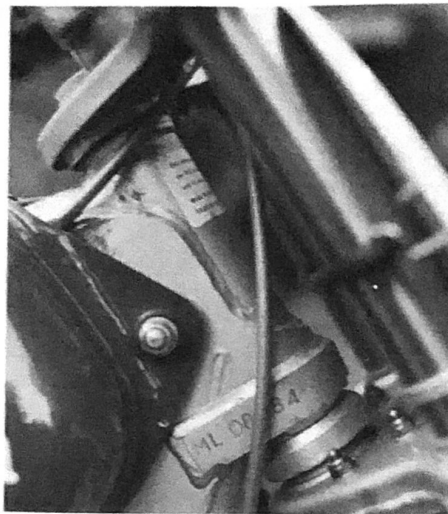
This straight line approach did not begin with the current grand prix frame configuration incorporating laid-down shock absorbers



New porting makes the 250 CR engine a real fire-breather. Web on reed block prevents air leaks, shifting mechanism is somewhat insensitive and the kickstarter is almost inoperable.



The Husqvarna demands the utmost from the rider. Keeping one wheel behind the other and staying on the gas is the secret.



Seven and a half inches of fork travel were gained this year by removing the top-out spring and reworking the damping rods.



Steering geometry and chassis design demands that the rider take the throttle initiative early in a sandy turn.

feeding into the backbone via a single crossbrace, but it (the GP frame) certainly improved the efficiency with which the motorcycle performs the function. The Husqvarna is the most deflection-free motorcycle we've tested. Wildly complicated terrain can be assaulted on a frontal basis by merely digging your heels in and gassing it. Wheel shock is absorbed into the long-lived Girling gas shocks, and soaked up by the fine Swedish steel frame, until only gentle thumps are left to update your brain as to what's going on down below. And Husqvarna's unique tapered damping rods provide a progressive fork action along their velvety seven and a half inches of travel that is duplicated by no other motorcycle. The Husky will hold a precise line under hard acceleration through chaotic turns that would send other bikes skittering to the outside. Long expanses of bike-eating whoops that would hammer many machines to their knees are met with a confident wheelie. It is the Husqvarna's performance on a really rough course that sets it apart from other motorcycles.

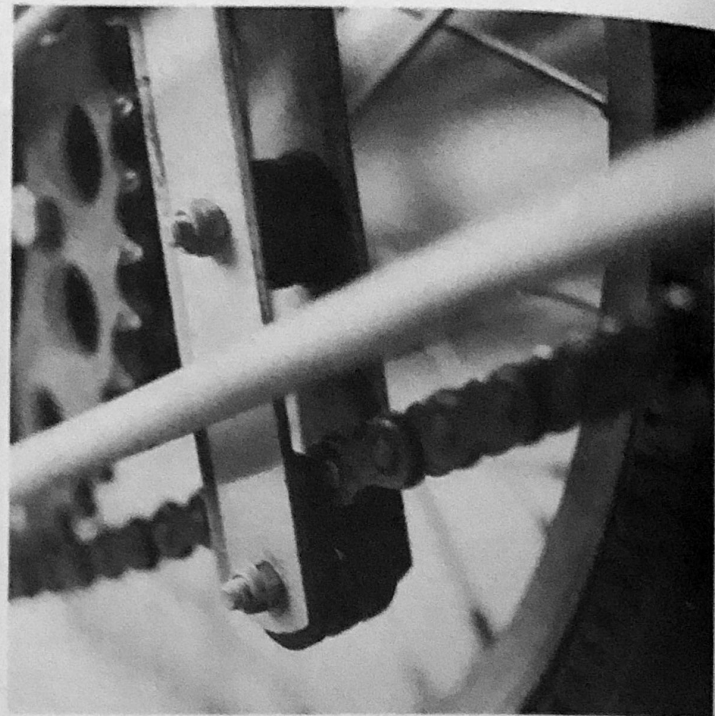
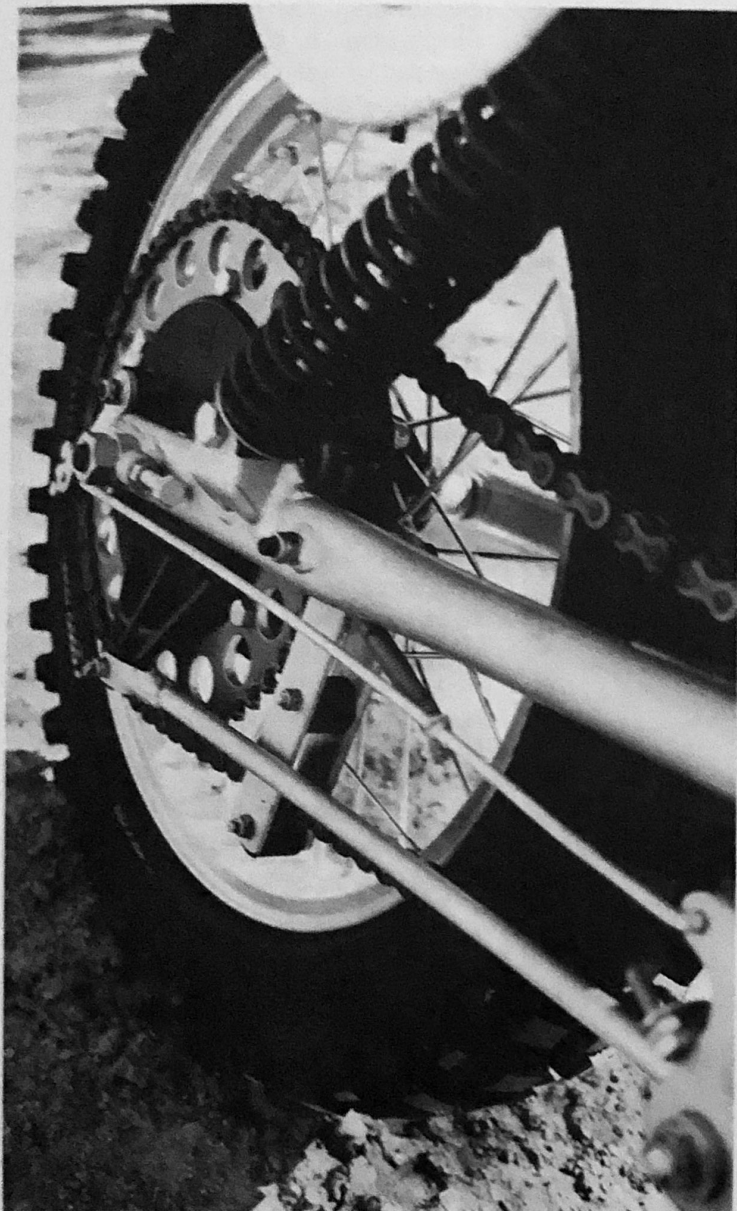
But Husqvarna riders already know this. They've gone through the initiation process that binds so many good riders firmly to the Husqvarna mystique. And, for them, the 1976 250CR is a bushel basket of improvements.

Fork travel has been increased to seven and a half inches. Extra gussets have been added at critical points on the frame, most notably at the juncture of the downtube and the engine cradle. Footpegs are now spring-loaded. GP porting in the cylinder provides more power. A web has been added to the reed valve housing to eliminate the distortion which caused nagging air leaks in last year's model. Larger steering head bearings have been added to help prevent the ball fracturing that occurred in the '75 models. The front fender is longer and wider, similar to those of the grand prix machines. A heavy-duty D.I.D chain, a popular item on the international race circuit, is now standard equipment. Plus, there is now a front brake cable guide and elastic front number plate strap, and the chain guide now has a second roller on top of the chain, in addition to the one below.

Continued

Rear suspension makes the Husky an able tracker across rough terrain. Gas Girlings and D.I.D chain are very reliable items.

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The only unfortunate change is the substitution of a conventional Magura throttle unit for the quick-change Magura assembly used in the past. (1975 Husky owners need not knock their noses too far out of joint, since these changes may be incorporated into their bikes relatively inexpensively.)

On the other side of the coin, some ill-famed Husqvarna features which have plagued owners seemingly forever can still be found on the new bike. Stamped and welded steel triple clamps still add their weight to the front end, although most manufacturers now use forged aluminum. The steering head nut and the flywheel nut have a slight tendency to come loose, and must be checked on a very regular basis. On the forward end of the swingarm, the chain rubs against steel, wearing



Wheelies are no major problem with the Husky's healthy rear weight bias and an instantly responsive six-speed engine.

it badly. Some sort of protection should be incorporated here.

It was necessary for Husqvarna to change the location of the shift lever slightly a few years ago, and a three-piece intermediary linkage was used to relocate the lever. We feel that this added linkage dulls the feel of the shifting mechanism somewhat, but it does serve as a practical alternative to redesigning the entire gearbox. And, considering the price of the package, that's a good thing.

Our two biggest complaints about the Husky are the kickstarter and the spoke nipples — unimportant in themselves, but galling nevertheless. Obviously designed by some Swedish Marquis de Sade, the kickstarter serves little function other than to get your blood circulating on a cold morning. Coming down full-hit on



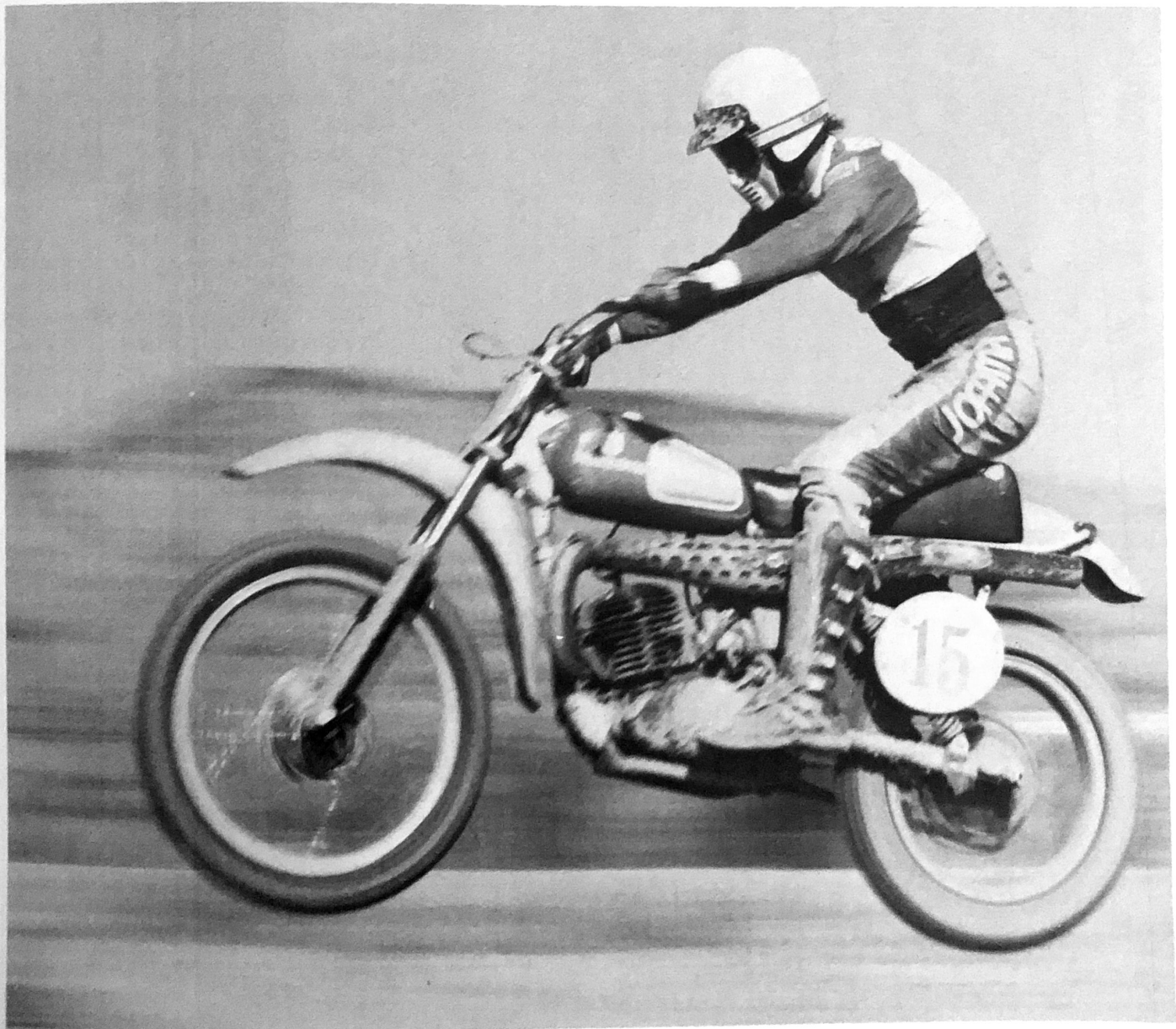
Meeting the berm properly is a must with the Husqvarna.

the lever spawns a meager "puh" from the engine, spinning it only a half-turn. Angered and indiscreet lunges at the lever often result in a painfully bruised instep, compliments of the footpeg. For the new Husky owner, push-starting, no

"It is the Husky's performance on a really rough course that sets it apart from other motorcycles."

matter how impractical it may seem, serves as a graceful alternative. However, just like Bultaco air filter springs and Penton gearboxes, the Husqvarna kickstarter eventually surrenders to the practiced owner.

Husqvarna spoke nipples, on the other hand, die fighting. Our complete set of spoke wrenches and small spanners, including metric, American and British Standard sizes,



Getting the Husky into high gear will produce some amazing top speed.

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was completely foiled by the sizing of the Husqvarna nipples. We finally contacted long-time Husky racer Jeff Little of Suzuki of Santa Barbara,

"A less than 100-percent racer will find the bike difficult to deal with."

figuring he would have the hot setup. He did. Jeff uses a small adjustable crescent wrench, the last resort of the frustrated mechanic. For \$1795 you'd think they'd use

standard sizes or throw in a spoke wrench.

Beaten, we too turned to an adjustable; but the second nipple we turned stripped away like whipped margarine, and many more went that way before our test was concluded. Since it was impossible to put effective tension on the spokes, the front wheel was a wobbling octagon within two races. If one were to pinpoint the weak link in the Husqvarna system, it would have to

Cont'd on page 63



SPECIFICATIONS

Make Husqvarna
 Model 250 CR
 Country of Manufacture Sweden
 Retail Price N/A

ENGINE

Type:
 Two-stroke, single-cylinder
 reed valve
 Bore & Stroke 69.5mm x 64.5mm
 Displacement 245cc
 Compression Ratio 12.3:1
 Cylinder Iron sleeve, 5-port
 Carburetion 36mm Bing
 Ignition Motoplat CDI
 Lubrication Pre-mix
 Air Filter Foam

TRANSMISSION

Type Six-speed, constant mesh
 Ratios:
 24.0, 18.1, 14.4, 12.1, 10.2, 9.0
 Primary Gear
 Ratio 2.41
 Drive Chain D.I.D 5/8x1/4

SUSPENSION

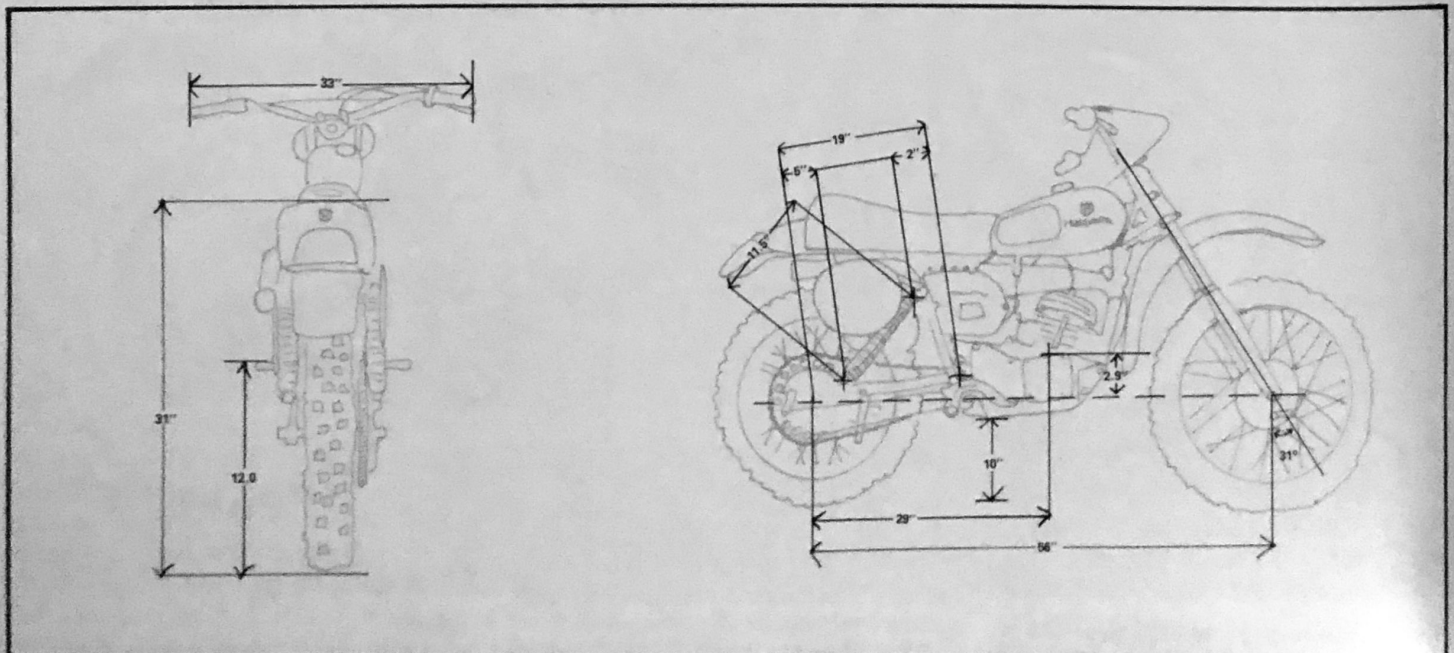
Front:
 Hydraulic forks, springs, inline axle
 Rear:
 Gas Girling shocks, springs,
 forward laydown
 Travel:
 Front 7.5 inches
 Rear 7.5 inches

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase 56 inches
 Ground Clearance 10 inches
 Seat Height 31 inches
 Track Weight 217 pounds
 Weight Bias:
 Front 46 percent
 Rear 54 percent

CAPACITIES

Fuel 2.1 gallons
 Transmission 1600cc
 Forks 220cc





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be these outrageously chintzy spoke nipples. Apparently, someone spent Husky's nipple allowance on the real thing.

But then, Husqvarnas aren't built to please mechanics or magazine editors. They are manufactured expressly to please the expert racer. The incredibly broad, silky powerband and perfectly spaced six-speed gearbox can only be appreciated in a crucial drag race across the whoops. The measure of its uncannily precise chassis and suspension is evident only to the artful master caught up in its rhythm. The Husqvarna demands the most from its rider. To give it only a half shot is to defeat the purpose of its creation. A less than 100-percent racer will find this bike difficult to deal with. It will not respond to an unfirm hand or an unfit body. It exists only to please you and to do your bidding, but it is not a forgiving motorcycle. Release your command for an instant and it

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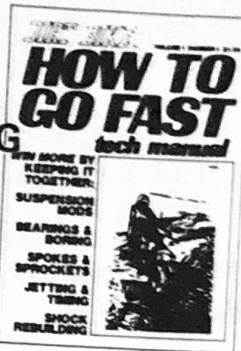
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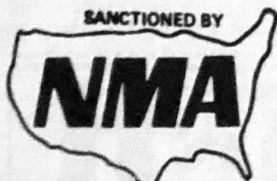
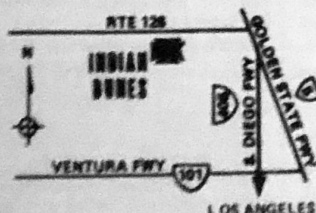
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HUSKY 250CR

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will return quickly to its single design parameter — a straight line course. In the heat of battle or a twisting course, this can be disastrous. He who hesitates gets crunched.

The Husqvarna 250CR for 1976 is a classic racing machine that can handle the full potential of any rider. But rather than be talked or written about, it must be experienced. Only then can you answer the question of, not whether the Husqvarna 250CR is good enough for you, but whether you're good enough for it.

(Ed. Note: Next month MXA will be offering you a comparison between the Husqvarna 250CR and the Honda CR250. We will go into greater detail about the Husky in order to bring it into perspective with the Honda, demonstrating that Sweden and Japan are a world apart in more than geography. If you're thinking of buying a new 250, you won't want to miss this provocative comparison of two machines and two manufacturing philosophies.)



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PUYALLUP

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DeCoster went over the jump with one hand tearing at his goggles and one on the bars, surviving somehow but allowing Semics to pull back into a lead that he held until the finish. The kid from Lisbon, Ohio, a miserable racing season finally behind him, pulled into the pits exhausted but smiling; exhilarated at having held off the World Champion despite a loose front motor mount bolt which had made the big Kawasaki vibrate as though it were about to break in half. It was his victory, he'd earned it.

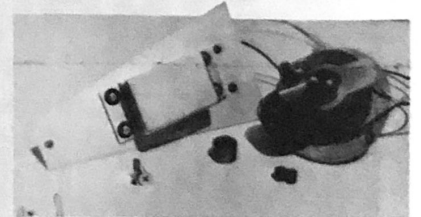
Jim Pomeroy was out with torn knee cartilage when the festivities resumed, leaving the partisan Washington crowd to cheer for anyone who spelled his name in American. Taking advantage of the good vibes, Tony DiStefano quickly took the lead and held it for almost half the moto before Lackey passed him and began building a lead. But Suzuki's Europeans weren't to be denied a second time. Wolsink, in third and fourth for most of the moto, moved past Semics and DiStefano and went after Lackey, while DeCoster began picking off riders a bit further back. With ten minutes to go, Wolsink took the lead after a tight duel with Lackey, and began to pull away. DeCoster quickly moved up to challenge Brad too, but Lackey, determined to beat his friend, picked up the pace and

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