

HUSQVARNA 250CR MOTOCROSSER

IF IT WORKS, DON'T MESS WITH IT

Progress, not change

By the Staff of Dirt Bike

At any given time, there are probably 35 to 40 motorcycles at the spacious and recently Pine Soled *Dirt Bike* garage. Some of these are ridden a great deal, and others tend to gather dust and dog hair from 2 giant German shepherds and a confused black mongrel named Buck.

When we received the Husky 250, it was duly photographed and tested, then took its place in the seemingly never-ending rows of bikes. Quite frankly, it was not ridden a lot at first. You see, we were in a motocross frenzy at the time, and while the Husky was a good all-around bike, it was definitely not the speedster of the 250 class. More often than not, the Suzuki or the Honda got the trip to the track.

This lack of attention changed radically when the Viewfinders Grand Prix loomed on the horizon. This once-a-year event draws close to 2,000 riders over a 2-day weekend of racing. It's held at Riverside Raceway and incorporates lots of pavement, fireroad and some motocross sections. Usually, it's a 10-mile loop that's repeated 10 times, for an honest 100-mile Grand Prix.

This sort of a race had the *Dirt Bike* staff kicking and beating each other to get to the Husky 250. Why?

Well, think about it for a bit. The Husky is a 6-speeder that can be geared to the moon. It'll also accept any one of several large gas tanks, giving the rider a lot of racing and few pit stops. It's also an easy bike to ride at high speeds, and the generous mid-range torque keeps the engine pulling in spite of astronomical gearing. One other thing: in a 3-hour-plus race, the



With an abundance of mid-range power, the Husky wasn't phased by deep, loose sand.

Husky will not beat the rider to death with vibration.

Our lack of enthusiasm for racing the bike under purely motocross conditions needs some explanation. On a roomy, technically demanding track, the Husky would work well. However, with the current trend toward making outdoor tracks like supercross tracks, the Husky is not as much at home as the present crop of explosive 250s.

HUSKY POWER

The power delivery on a 250 Husqvarna is typically European. While the bike will pull at low revs, those revs build slowly. There's a nice kick in the early mid-range, and the mid-range itself is healthy and long. The rush of power flattens out as peak revs are approached. This is both a good thing and a curse for the CR250. It lets the rider have maximum control on a tractionless, burnt-out track and it allows him the luxury of short-shifting and letting the engine pull through a wide mid-range. But the Husky simply will not rocket out of the bermed turns with the light fly-wheeled racers. Admittedly, the Husky is easier to ride, but it pays the price.

Where the Husky works well is at beginner, junior and early intermediate levels. Here, the correct delivery of power and ease of riding help, rather than hinder, the rider. Quite frankly, most riders simply cannot use the power a typical RM250 Suzuki delivers, and will turn better lap times on a bike that doesn't frighten them. As a long moto wears on, the Husky rider will usually be turning faster and faster lap times, while riders on explosive bikes will start to tire and make mistakes.

Husky does not stand alone in its approach to power in the 250 class. As a rule, all of the European middleweights offer the same type of power.

Husky, KTM and Maico 250s do not smoke the Japanese bikes to the first turn. Yet, they do quite well as the track unfolds. Expert level riders (and aggressive intermediates) will need more power to win. At this level, you can't give anything away.

Husky Products now has a kit available for the racer that changes the power characteristics into more of the hyperactive nature. It consists of a pipe and simple porting changes that can be done to any stock cylinder. With this kit in place, it takes away the "mellow" and puts in "snarl." As expected, most of the kick comes in from mid-range to higher revs. Low-end power is reduced, but at mid-range and above, the sturdy rush more than makes up for it. For more information on these speed goodies, here's the address: Husky Products, 4925 Mercury Street, San Diego, California 92111; (714)565-1414.

HANDLING: THAT HUSKY FEEL

If you merely look at the numbers, you might think that the Husky does not like to turn. After all, with a wheelbase of almost 60 inches, a 30.5-degree rake and 5.9 inches of trail, everything points to a ponderous sluggish machine in the turns.

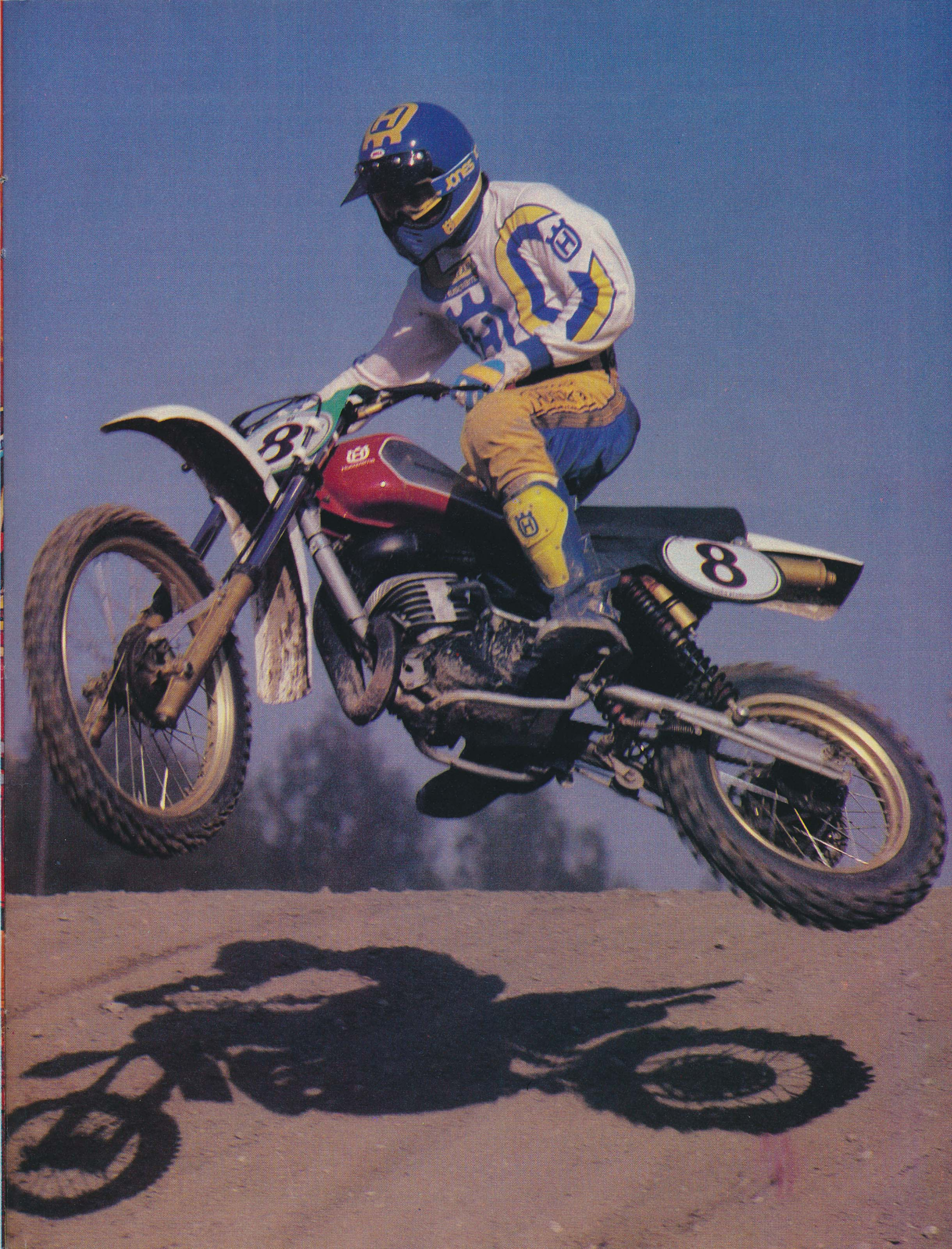
Far from it. Even though most other modern MXers have rake in the 28-degree neighborhood, the Husky engineers have learned how to make very effective use of weight transfer. A careful combination of front and rear spring selection, rider location and control layout makes for positive



Piggyback Ohlins shocks are mounted outboard of the swingarm, making for easy preload adjustments.



The Husky is a very complete package and offers versatility in an age of specialization.



HUSQVARNA 250CR

loading of the front end when cornering. A big plus, too, is the fact that at high speeds when the rider has his weight well back, the Husky is perhaps the most stable of all the 1982 bikes. Those Baja winners don't do anything weird to their chassis and absolutely dominate the high-speed events.

What you have, then, is a bike that has built-in high-speed stability *and* will turn sharply when hauled down from speed. Under most conditions, this works well. Still, stadium-type tracks are not the hunting ground for the Husky geometry. Here, things happen so suddenly and violently that the bike will not have sufficient time to settle in for proper weight transfer. Some modern stadium bikes literally 'bounce' from berm to berm, like a crazed pool ball. In fact, the factory Suzukis and Hondas have very short wheelbases and rarely work well on an outdoor, natural track. Like we said, everything is a trade-off.

SUSPENSION: THE HUSKY HOLDOUT

A casual glance is enough to reveal that Husky is one of the last remaining advocates of the dual-shock rear suspension system. The factory feels that the single-shock systems have (at this juncture) too many inherent *minus* features; it feels that the rear end not only works, but is simple to work on.

There's not much mystery about the Husky rear end. A slim, yet incredibly strong, chromoly swingarm nestles a pair of the excellent Ohlins piggyback shocks. Altering preload is a snap and very little is required in the way of servicing. In any single-shock system, the rider has to regularly take the thing apart and grease all

the pivoting parts. With the dual Ohlins, you dial in the preload, ride the bike and forget 'em.

Even though there are single-shock systems that work a bit better (notably, the RM Floater), a glance at the *Dirt Bike* rating chart shows a healthy 98 out of a possible 100—higher than most of the other mono units. Eventually Husky will change; but for right now, they're not giving much away to anyone.

Up front, a set of 40mm gold-anodized forks do the job. These units are extremely sensitive to minor changes in oil level and type. One example: We were using 475cc's of 12½-weight fork oil and still felt a slight bottoming over two G-out jumps. We added 10mm more to the fork oil level and the forks became very harsh-feeling through the range and even lost their plush feel over the small bumps.

Each rider will have to experiment with the forks. *Dirt Bike* likes to custom-blend a 12½-weight oil (half 10 and half 15) and run a fairly high level, with no air. The average rider might want to start out with 450cc's of 12½-weight in each leg, and slowly add small amounts until the action of the forks firms up to suit his particular riding style. Bear in mind that the fork seals, when new, have quite a bit of drag. At least 4 to 6 hours of riding will be needed before they loosen their death grip on the fork tubes. A small amount of seal leakage was noted at first, but after a few oil changes, it settled down to an occasional misting around the top of the wipers.

When setting up the suspension of any Husqvarna, keep in mind that changes at one end often have a profound effect on the other end. Therefore, if you get your forks dialed in just fine, the rear end might suddenly start feeling a bit harsh... and just the opposite with shock preload. Careful, sensible, step-at-a-time changes are the only way to go. It can mean the difference between a plush, pleasurable Husky and an uninspired one. Now you know.

BITS AND PIECES

Personal preferences aside, we slashed the stock grips off the bars and slipped on a decent set of Ourys. The overly wide bars were also cut to 31½ inches, which all of

Sherm Schneller works out on the 250 CR.



the *Dirt Bike* staffers seem to prefer.

Keep an eye on the left side panel; the pipe tends to melt it.

The kickstarter is left-side-mounted and horribly awkward to use at first, but becomes almost tolerable with time. It always takes 3 kicks to fire up the CR250 when warm, and a half dozen or more when cold.

One of the most important things you can do to improve the performance of this (and most other) Husky is remove the 2.0 carb slide and replace it with a 2.5. Also, the main jet is too rich for most areas in the United States. Also consider Boyeson reeds for more snap at lower rpm.

Our bike came stock with Pirelli tires. They worked fine on hard-packed ground and on slick-surface mud, but were not happy at all in any sort of sand. The deeper the sand, the more the front end *and* the

rear end tended to move around.

Getting to the air filter couldn't be simpler. Just pop open the left side panel and a wire rod can be moved and the filter taken out for service. For wet conditions, Husky Products offers a special plastic shroud.

Speaking of wet, don't get anything close to the Husky wheels wetter than a donut, or the brakes will simply vanish and never come back until the wheels are removed and the shoes serviced. When new, the front brake shoes on the Husky generally only make contact over a small part of the shoe. Then they glaze up and get mushy. For a few weeks, take the time to sand the shoes lightly on the high spots after each ride. The braking action will improve dramatically. They still will go away when wet, (continued on page 70)



The 4-gallon Malcolm Smith tank gave us the needed range.

We chose a big 4-gallon Malcolm Smith plastic gas tank. This slipped in place with no modifications needed and gave us the range to make only one pit stop. The 12-tooth countershaft sprocket was replaced with a 15-tooth item. You read right, buddy! This gave us a tremendous top speed and the 6-speed gearbox gave us the versatility needed to still work the tighter sections with no clutch slippage. Nothing on the track could pass the Husky on the straights.

We also fattened up the main jet, just to play it safe. The bike was able to put in 60 miles (6 loops) before we had to pit for gas, and there was not much fuel left. All told, the CR250 used slightly more than 7 gallons of mix during the race.

No special waterproofing was done, but the stock plug cap was discarded and a Gator Products plug cap used. The rear brake went away on the first lap in the first water crossing and never came back. Strangely, the front brake stayed fine. Husky really should do something about its wretched brake lining.



Here's our test CR250 in the pre-race impound area.

Looking back though, the Husky was an excellent mount and ran as strong at the end of the 3 hours as it did on lap one. The suspension was supple and compliant on the choppy, rutted track, and rider fatigue was minimal. We'd have to rate the Husky as excellent and would not hesitate to choose it again for the next Grand Prix. •

HUSQVARNA 250R

ENGINE TYPE Single-cylinder, reed-valve, two-stroke
BORE AND STROKE 69.5mm x 64.5mm
DISPLACEMENT 245cc
CARBURETION 38mm Mikuni
FACORY RECOMMENDED JETTING:
MAIN JET 410
NEEDLE JET R-4
JET NEEDLE 6DH20
PILOT JET 45
SLIDE NUMBER 2.0 (should use 2.5)
RECOMMENDED GASOLINE Premium; 92 octane +
FUEL TANK CAPACITY 2.7 gallons
FUEL TANK MATERIAL Aluminum alloy
LUBRICATION Oil in gas, premix, 50:1 ratio
RECOMMENDED OIL Bel-Ray MC-1 +
OIL CAPACITY, GEARBOX 1400cc
AIR FILTRATION Oiled foam in still airbox
CLUTCH TYPE 6-plate, wet
TRANSMISSION 6-speed
GEARBOX RATIOS:
 1 20.77:1
 2 15.65:1
 3 12.44:1
 4 10.43:1
 5 8.83:1
 6 7.38:1
GEARING, FRONT/REAR 12/53, optional 13, 14, 15, 16 C/S
IGNITION Motoplac CDI
PRIMARY KICK SYSTEM? Yes, finally
RECOMMENDED SPARK PLUG Champion N2, NGK B9EV
SILENCER/SPARK ARRESTER/QUALITY Silencer only, average noise
EXHAUST SYSTEM High-pipe, left side
FRAME, TYPE Single downtube, split cradle
WHEELBASE 59.3 inches (1505mm)

GROUND CLEARANCE 13.9 inches (345mm)
SEAT HEIGHT 38.2 inches (970mm)
STEERING HEAD ANGLE (RAKE): 30.5 degrees
TRAIL 5.9 inches (152mm)
WEIGHT, DRY 226 pounds
RIM MATERIAL Aluminum alloy
TIRE SIZE AND TYPE:
FRONT 3.00 x 21 Pirelli Pentacross
REAR 4.50 x 17 Pirelli Pentacross
SUSPENSION, TYPE AND TRAVEL:
FRONT 40mm Telescopic, air/oil, 11.8 inches (300mm) travel
REAR Dual Ohlins gas/oil shocks on swingarm, 12.2 inches (310mm)
INTENDED USE Motocross
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN Sweden
RETAIL PRICE, APPROX. \$2510

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 Husqvarna Motorcycles
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 San Diego, California 92111
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HUSKY 250CR

(continued from page 51)

but under normal conditions, they'll be acceptable.

Keep an eye on the mag holding-nut during the first few rides. If it comes loose, you're in for some big-time grief.

For the first time, the 250 Husky has a primary kickstart setup.

Shifting is considerably better on the 1982 bike than it was on the '81 version. In fact, we'd have to rate it as one of the best actions around. We've also been told that the gearbox in this, as well as all of the other models, has been considerably beefed up.

One nice item: Husky has a limited guarantee, even if you race the bike. To our knowledge, no one else offers this.

THE BIG PICTURE

Clearly, the CR250 is more than just a motocrosser. Like so many of the other Husky models, versatility seems to be the prime consideration. Experts will want and need more power, but 80 percent of the riders around will find the Husky more than enough for their needs.

It's also a bike that can be ridden in hare scrambles, cross-country events, on trails and raced in the desert. Here, at the magazine, we're lucky enough to have access to just about any sort of bike for any kind of riding/racing condition. However, if we only had access to one bike and wanted to be able to ride most anything, the Husky would be right at the top of the list.

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