

HODAKA DIRT SQUIRT AND SUPER COMBAT

A racer you can grow into
& what you can expect
from that "ultimate"
Hodaka.
(What *do* you get for nearly
twice the price?)

■ Hodakas are the all-time "kit" motorcycles. The legend is that you can take a chrome tank Hodie and, by bolting-on, filing and fiddling, convert it into a motocrosser that can beat the factory Elsinores.

That legend has basis in fact but much of the Hodaka mystique stems from a time before the other Japanese factories woke up to the trail bike market, let alone to the time when they discovered motocross.

Through all that, though, Hodaka has managed to update what is essentially a 13-year old motorcycle so the legend can live. There was a time when you could update the original Ace 90 to match the 1972 Hodaka but now only the tank remains the same and they've even

started to paint a few of those.

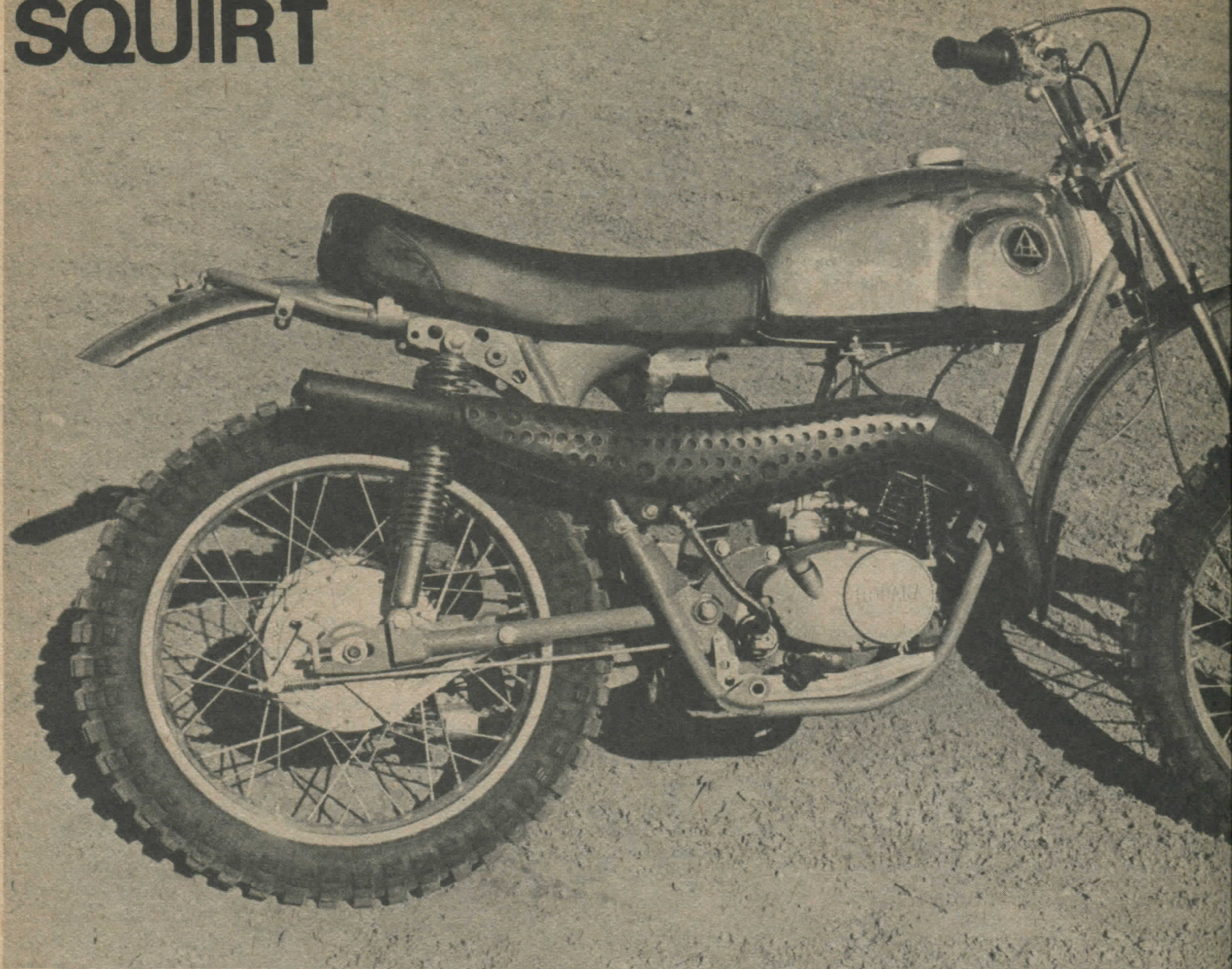
The Hodaka tradition lives in 1975 with a box stock model, the "Dirt Squirt" that sells for about the same price (if it weren't for inflation-puffed dollars) as the 1960-era Hodakas; in other words, a bargain.

There is another Hodaka, though, that represents what can be done, the "Super Combat," the fastest and best-handling Hodaka ever made and a challenger to the showroom Elsinores, if not the factory

DOUBLE TEST



SQUIRT



prototypes. That performance comes at a price, however, and we thought you might like to know if the Super Combat is also a bargain at twice the price of the Dirt Squirt; hence, a good ole fashioned comparison test.

These two Hodakas are *not* intended for the same purpose; in fact they don't even have the same displacement. The Dirt Squirt is about as small as a motorcycle can be and still be considered full-size. It's the kind of a bike that a teenager would covet as his or her first dirtster or a nice 'second' machine for a wife or gal friend. Super light, strong, easy to maneuver and low enough to inspire riding confidence. It looks like a motocrosser but it's really more of a trail bike with knobby tires and no lights to have to use as garage wall art.

The Super Combat is all racer from its reed valve 125cc engine to plastic fenders to long-travel shocks and forks. The two bikes share more than a gas tank, though; you could conceivably "build" a Super Combat by starting with the Dirt Squirt. The cost of "adding" all those components to the Dirt Squirt econo-racer would be

absurd; even the frames are different. The point of our comparison is to give you an idea of just how good the basic Squirt might be and to help you to pick the components from the Super Combat's parts book that you might want to use to help a Dirt Squirt grow into a "big" bike.

The Dirt Squirt has a lot going for it. For one thing, it's reliable and, even if something does break, Hodaka parts are as inexpensive as any. The engine will bog and stall if you don't keep the revs up so you'll find yourself using the shift lever more than the throttle; crank it on, leave it on and jam through the gears.

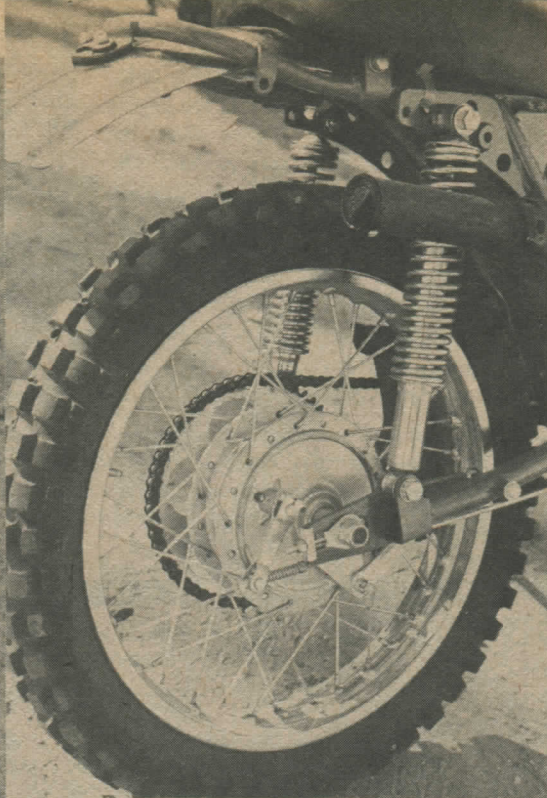
Fortunately, Hodaka gear boxes will take a lot of abuse and use. There is some power at low rpm but not enough to pull you up much of a hill, it takes revs to climb with this one just as it does with any 100cc engine. Stability is a relative word with a 51-inch wheelbase.

The Squirt doesn't tend to tank slappers but it'll make you think it does; the machine needs about a foot-wide trail and a rider with enough nerve to let the rear wheel bounce back and forth while the rest

of the machine heads more-or-less straight. It's a feeling like riding on ground covered with wet leaves even when the ground is dry; something you can master once you learn to let it pick its own path with the rear wheel. Try it this way; aim it rather than trying to steer it.

Long broadslides and/or tacky berms are not really the Squirt's thing; brake late, slide quick and short and crank the throttle back on to square-off any and every corner.

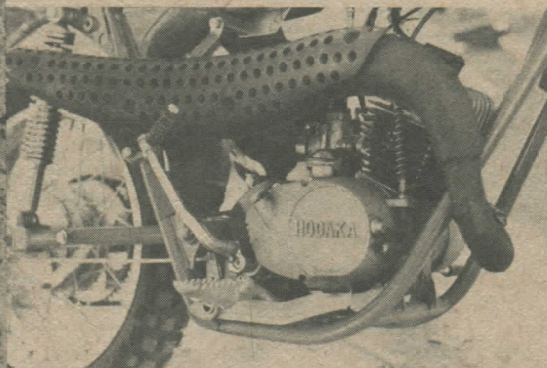
The Super Combat is a whole new concept for a Hodaka. This one doesn't need as wide a trail because it tracks straight with both wheels. The Squirt gets most of its stability (all-be-it a tail-happy one) from a shallow rake angle that lets the frame do the steering for you. The Super Combat has a much steeper rake angle so you have to steer it to get it where it wants to go but the longer wheelbase and different swing arm geometry help to keep it going where you steer it—far more 'conventional' and reassuring but not necessarily quicker over a given stretch of straight trail or track.



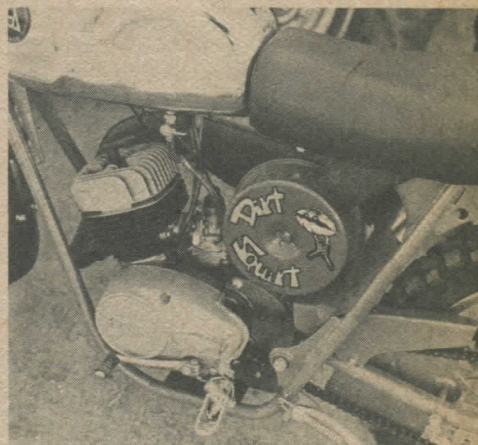
The rear shocks are just barely acceptable. There are two top-mounting holes so you can vary the shock angle and rate slightly.



Steel fenders from the days of old are still standard on the Dirt Squirt. "Trail" features like knobby tires and good footpegs are there with no "street" frills.



The Squirt just *looks* like a motocrosser. A trail-ready muffler and spark arrestor are standard but it lacks a skid plate.



Basic Hodaka, economy model. The Squirt has most of the really trick dirt fittings like a proper air cleaner, pegs, tire-to-rim clamps, etc., but no lighting equipment.

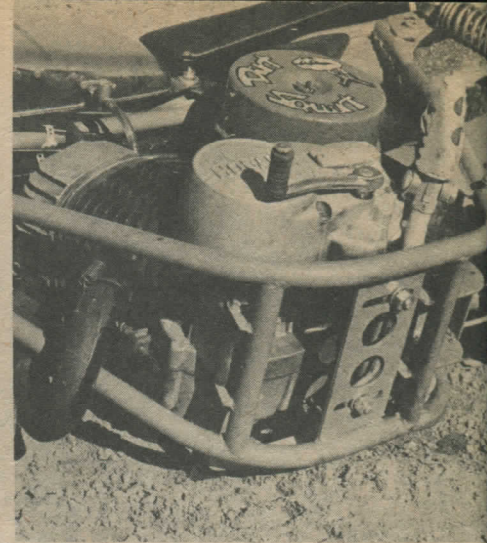
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SQUIRT

The Super Combat rider *can* cover any rough stretch of terrain quicker thanks to the machine's longer-travel forks and shocks and its larger wheels and tires. The steering and suspension geometry are good enough to give an experienced rider a choice of broadsliding a corner (that's when it's at its best) or of tracking on around a bermed or soft-surfaced corner (if you can keep your weight far enough forward without damaging yourself on the tank's rear bulge).

The engine's reed valve probably helps the mid-range power but the 125cc engine must be revved even higher than the hundred to find the extra power. The usable power band is a bit longer (higher, actually) so you don't have to shift quite as often, but forward motion is still mostly a matter of rowing up and down through the gears rather than twisting and waiting. The Super's quick clutch and nil low end would make it a poor choice for a trail machine in spite of its superior suspension.

The Squirt and Super Combat have similar frames but the steering head angle and the swing arm pivots are in different positions. The footpegs adjust, fore and aft, in those slots.



DIRT CYCLE TEST SUMMARY HODAKA DIRT SQUIRT TEST

BASIC SPECIFICATIONS

Price	\$595 f.o.b. West Coast
Engine:	
Type	two-stroke single
Bore	50mm
Stroke	50mm
Cubic centimeters displacement	98
Carburetor size & type	20mm Mikuni
Ignition system type	magneto & coil
Lighting system type	alternator/battery
Air filter size & type	oil-wetted foam

GEARBOX

Overall ratio, first	38.94:1
Overall ratio, second	26.49:1
Overall ratio, third	18.90:1
Overall ratio, fourth	13.81:1
Overall ratio, fifth	11.32:1
Overall ratio, sixth	NA
Shift pattern	one-down, neutral, four-up
Can be kick-started in any gear?	no

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	49½ inches
Weight	200 pounds
Front tire size & tread	275-19 knobby
Rear tire size & tread	325-17 knobby
Length	72½ inches
Handlebar width	32 inches
Ground clearance	8½ inches
Fuel capacity	2 gallons
Engine oil capacity	none (mixes with fuel)

DETAILS

Folding footpegs?	yes
Self-cleaning footpegs?	yes
Tire-to-rim clamps?	yes
Alloy rims front & rear?	no
Handlebar-mounted kill button?	yes
Speedometer?	no
Odometer?	no
Odometer read in tenths?	no
Odometer resettable backwards?	no
Tachometer?	no
Muffler?	yes
U.S. Forest Service-approved spark arrestor?	yes
Head & tail lights?	no
Brake light control-actuated switches?	no
Horn?	no
Fuel tank material?	steel
Front fender material?	steel

Rear fender material?	steel
Full-floating rear brake?	no

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING EVALUATION

Weight with 165 lb. rider and full tanks	365 pounds
Rated horsepower @ rpm.	NA
Pounds (with rider) per horsepower	NA
Pounds (with rider) per cubic centimeter	3.72
Number of speeds in transmission	5

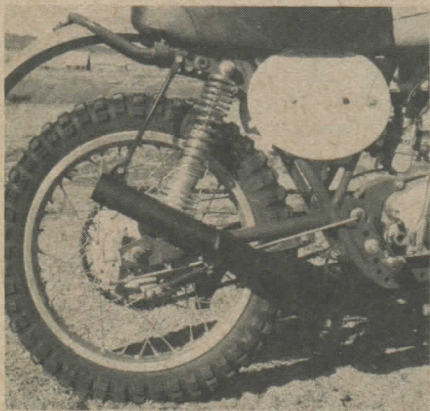
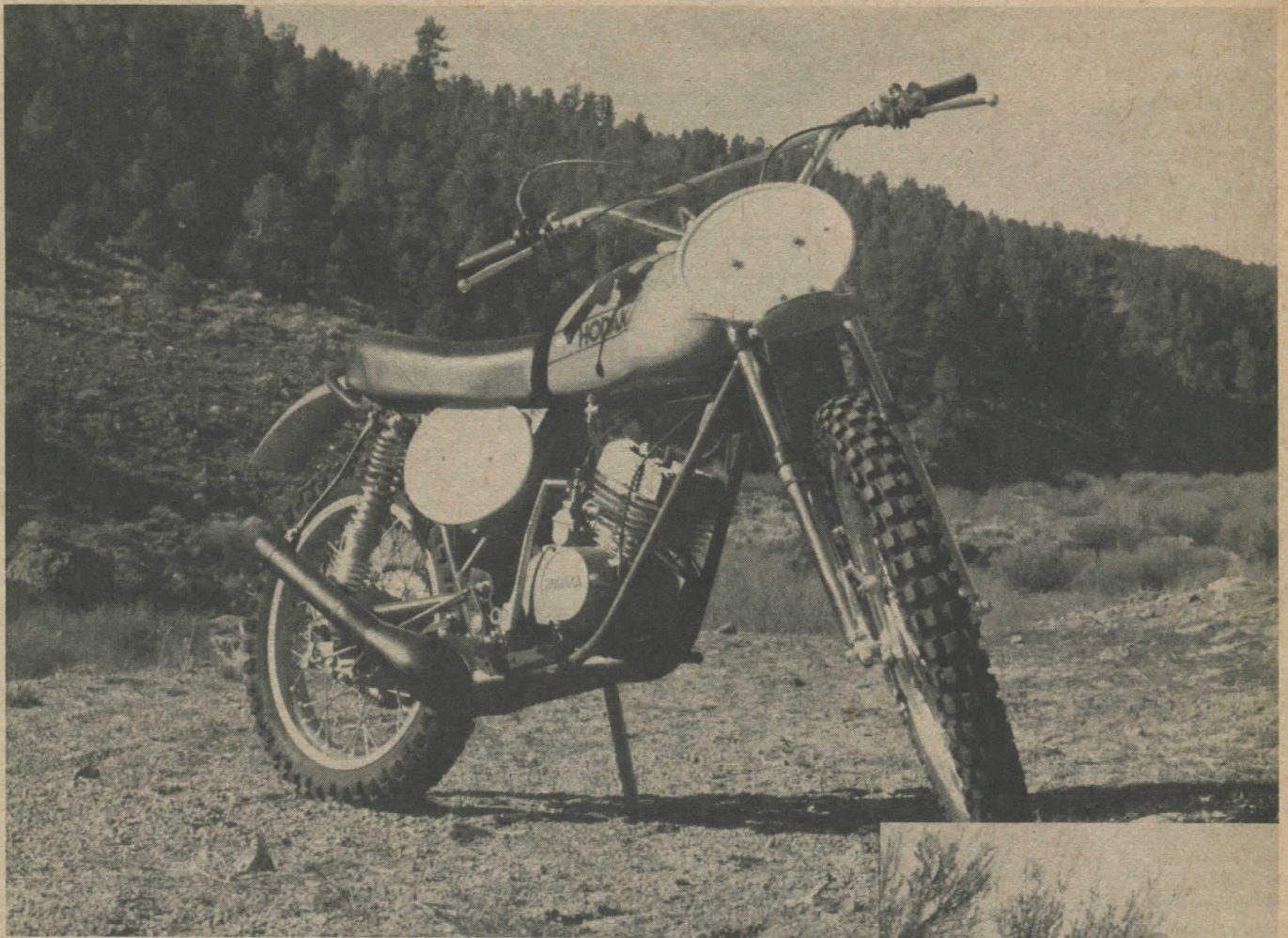
HANDLING SPECIFICATIONS

Weight distribution, % front / % rear	42 / 58
Center of gravity (approximate)	
Crankshaft center to ground	11½ inches
Crankshaft center to rear axle	24½ inches
Footpeg to rear axle	19 inches
Footpeg to ground	9½ inches
Front suspension	
Steering head angle (rake)	31.3 degrees
Trail (axle setback from steering axis)	4½ inches
Fork travel, compression	4 inches
Fork travel, rebound	1 inch
Rear suspension	
Swing arm length, pivot to axle	15¾ inches
Swing arm pivot to ground	11½ inches
Swing arm pivot to crankshaft	8¾ inches
Rear chain run (countershaft sprocket to rear axle)	20 inches
Shock travel, compression	2 inches
Shock travel, rebound	1 inch
Height of seat from ground	30 inches
Length of seat	19 inches

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING OPINION

(rated 1 to 10 on a scale of 10)	
Power (within displacement class)	7
Ability to maintain rear wheel traction	9
Vibration	8
Ease of starting	10
Ignition waterproofing	9
Air intake & carburetor waterproofing	6
Oil leakage	9
Fuel leakage	9
Front fork dampening	8
Tendency for front tire to skid in turns	9
Ease of lifting front wheel with handlebars	9
Steering response to effort at handlebars	9
Rear wheel tendency to lock up or hop when braking	7
Rear shock absorber dampening	7
Stability in deep sand or mud	6
Seat padding and comfort	8
Convenience and operation of controls	9

COMBAT



The Super has long-travel shocks that worked just fine. The longer swing arm makes it a bit more stable. Alloy rims are standard.

The Super is; we didn't find a *stock* Elsinore that would beat it and there are ways to find even more ponies than your dealer can find (so can you) from some serious inquiries to Pabatco in Athena, Oregon (the importers, of course).

The Super Combat is a for-real racer right down to no side-stand (a trick long-handled center stand comes with each box). The rims are aluminum, the fenders plastic, the ignition solid-state, the frame is super-gusseted and braced, the air box ample, and so forth. The rear shocks can be mounted in a choice of three top positions (ditto for the Squirt) but the Super's longer swing arm provides more of a lay-down position for longer travel. The Super still hops a bit at the rear, Hodaka style, but it's even less alarming than on the Squirt.

There aren't many parts on the two Hodakas engines (other than the side case covers) that will interchange; if you want to make a 125 racer from your Squirt you'd better plan on buying the entire engine. If you want to race in the 100cc class, then buy the Super *Rat* engine (the Super Combat and Super Rat for 1975 are virtually identical except for engine dis-



The brakes were excellent with a slight tendency for the rear wheel to hop. The Hodaka's proportions are small but a large rider can be comfortable.

COMBAT

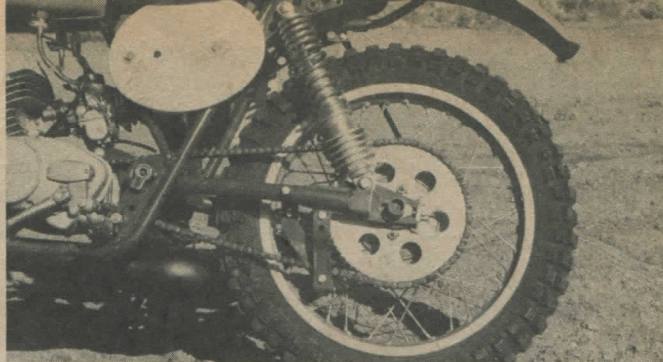
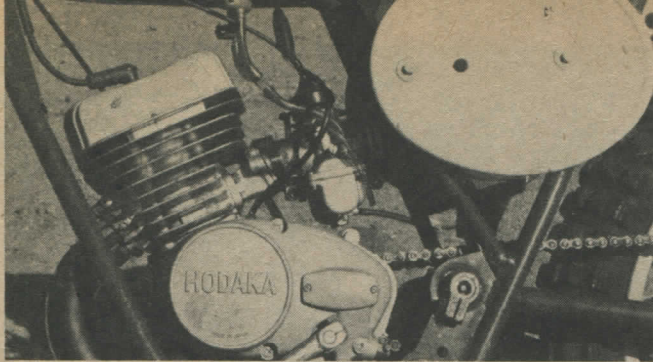
placement). You can probably find a way to fit just the barrel, head and piston from the Super onto the Squirt but we don't suggest you try. The Super's suspension, however, has some far more interesting possibilities for the Squirt.

The longer swing arm (have a welder lengthen the stock arm) and better shocks would make the Squirt even more stable than the Super, thanks to the Squirt's shallow rake angle. The larger wheels and tires (with or without the alloy rims) are a must if they don't raise the seat so high you can't touch the ground. The Super's forks should slide into Squirt's triple clamps to give a dirt (sorry) cheap way to better front end control. A Squirt engine in a Super frame should yield a dirt machine that would be a delight on the tight trails of New England. If you need street-legal lighting the components from the new Road Toad would do the job or you could opt for a "trail-legal" (no battery) system with parts from the Wombat engine.

To answer one of our earlier questions, the Super Combat *is* worth twice the price of the Dirt Squirt. Ride 'em both and you'll see what we mean. Elsinore power and handling have Elsinore prices. The real question might better be whether you really do want a racer or just a quick trail bike? The Squirt can be as quick a trail machine as you can afford to make it but, with a Hodaka, you can delay that decision until *you* are ready to make it and have a lot of inexpensive trail riding while you decide.



The Super is the first Hodaka that is NOT a trail bike. The engine just doesn't have enough low-end power and the clutch is too sudden for the control you need on the trails.



The ultimate Hodaka engine. The Super Combat is a 125cc engine but the same basic reed-valved engine is available as a 100 in the Super Rat model.

We tried the stock gearing and, for the longer SoCal tracks, a sprocket with two more teeth to provide enough top speed to out-distance (and out drag) stock Elsinores.

DIRT CYCLE TEST SUMMARY HODAKA SUPER COMBAT TEST

BASIC SPECIFICATIONS

Price	\$985 f.o.b. West Coast
Engine:	
Type	two-stroke, single, reed valve induction
Bore	56mm
Stroke	50mm
Cubic centimeters displacement	123
Carburetor size & type	32 mm Mikuni slide-type
Ignition system type	Kokusen Denki CDI solid-state
Lighting system type	none
Air filter size & type	oil-wetted foam
Gearbox	
Overall ratio, first	37.24: 1
Overall ratio, second	25.68: 1
Overall ratio, third	19.26: 1
Overall ratio, fourth	16.62: 1
Overall ratio, fifth	14.98: 1
Overall ratio, sixth	NA
Shift pattern	one-down, neutral, four-up
Can be kick-started in any gear?	no

DIMENSIONS

Wheelbase	52½ inches
Weight	208 pounds
Front tire size & tread	300-21 knobby
Rear tire size & tread	350-18 knobby
Length	79 inches
Handlebar width	32 inches
Ground clearance	8½ inches
Fuel capacity	2 gallons
Engine oil capacity	none (mixes with fuel)

DETAILS

Folding footpegs?	yes
Self-cleaning footpegs?	yes
Tire-to-rim clamps?	yes
Alloy rims front & rear?	yes
Handlebar-mounted kill button?	yes
Speedometer?	no
Odometer?	no
Odometer read in tenths?	no
Odometer resettable backwards?	no
Tachometer?	no
Muffler?	yes
U.S. Forest Service-approved spark arrestor?	no
Head & tail lights?	no
Brake light control-actuated switches?	no
Horn?	no
Fuel tank material	steel
Front fender material?	plastic
Rear fender material?	plastic

Full-floating rear brake?

no

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING EVALUATION

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICATIONS

Weight with 165 lb. rider and full tanks	373 pounds
Rated horsepower @ rpm	NA
Pounds (with rider) per horsepower	NA
Pounds (with rider) per cubic centimeter	3.0
Number of speeds in transmission	5

HANDLING SPECIFICATIONS

Weight distributions, % front / % rear	43 / 67
Center of gravity (approximate)	
Crankshaft center to ground	15 inches
Crankshaft center to rear axle	25½ inches
Footpeg to rear axle	19½ inches
Footpeg to ground	11½ inches
Front suspension	
Steering head angle (rake)	29.3 degrees
Trail (axle setback from steering axis)	5 inches
Fork travel, compression	4½ inches
Fork travel, rebound	1 inch
Rear suspension	
Swing arm length, pivot to axle	17½ inches
Swing arm pivot to ground	15 inches
Swing arm pivot to crankshaft	
Rear chain run (countershaft sprocket to rear axle)	21½
Shock travel, compression	2½ inches
Shock travel, rebound	1 inch
Height of seat from ground	31 inches
Length of seat	19 inches

PERFORMANCE & HANDLING OPINION

(rated 1 to 10 on a scale of 10)

Power (within displacement class)	8
Ability to maintain rear wheel traction	9
Vibration	7
Ease of starting	9
Ignition waterproofing	9
Air intake & carburetor waterproofing	7
Oil leakage	9
Fuel leakage	9
Front fork dampening	8
Tendency for front tire to skid in turns	9
Ease of lifting front wheel with handlebars	8
Steering response to effort at handlebars	9
Rear wheel tendency to lock up or hop when braking	8
Rear shock absorber dampening	8
Stability in deep sand or mud	7
Seat padding and comfort	8
Convenience and operation of controls	9