

NOGUCHI STAGE 2

The boss kit for the Yamaha MX125B: does it work? Nein.

By now it is pretty much understood that if you want to be seriously competitive in motocross, something has to be done to your stock, out-of-the-crate bike. There are very, very few machines that are ready for real motocross competition off the showroom floor. Most open class riders concentrate on smoothing the power delivery of their brute machines, while the 250 racer looks for light weight and handling, more or less. But in the 125 class the quest is for horsepower, mountains of horsepower, pursued at the magnitude of the East-West strategic arms race. There are, to be sure, many people making much money pumping the ponies into the punky pea-shooters.

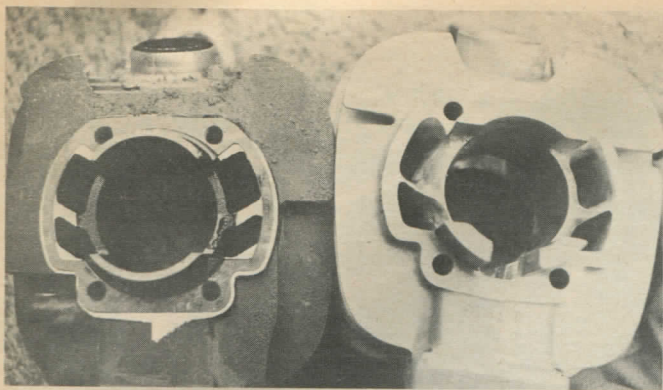
Horsepower comes to your 125 in two forms. Either you bring your machine to the local engine wizard, who grinds your ports and builds you a pipe, or you send away for a kit that includes at least a new cylinder and pipe and at the most a whole new upper end assembly. The engine wizards come in two varieties: those who know what they're doing and those who don't. The kits come in similar categories: those that work and those that don't. For our Yamaha MX125B tested last month, we chose a Noguchi Stage II kit from Noguchi Motors (U.S.A.), 3125 Marjan Drive, Atlanta, Georgia 30340.

Dear MOTOCROSS ACTION:

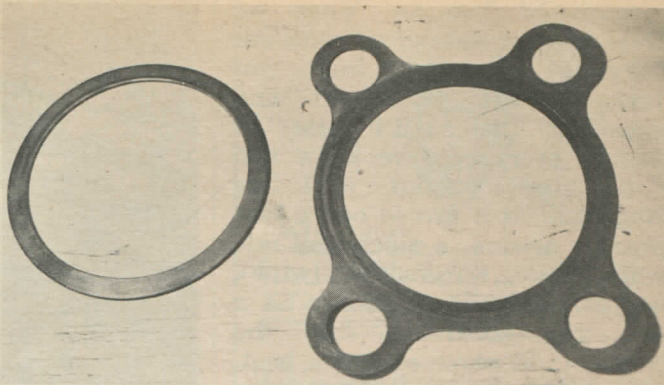
I am the owner of a 1974 Yamaha 100MX which I have changed into a Noguchi. When I received my kit, a Stage II (they refused to sell me a Stage I), I got a cylinder, a head that looks like a stock LT-2 or 3, a piston and ring that don't fit, a reed valve and



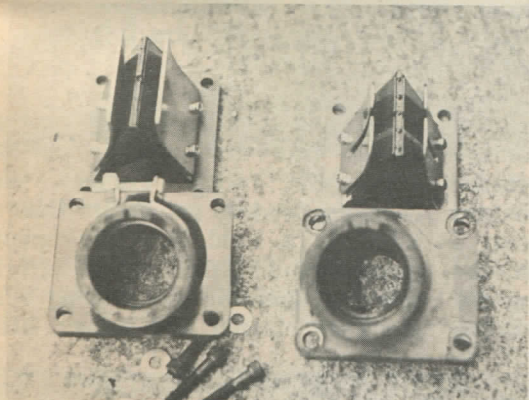
The boss stickies we got with our kit struck terror into the hearts of lowly competition . . . till the gate fell.



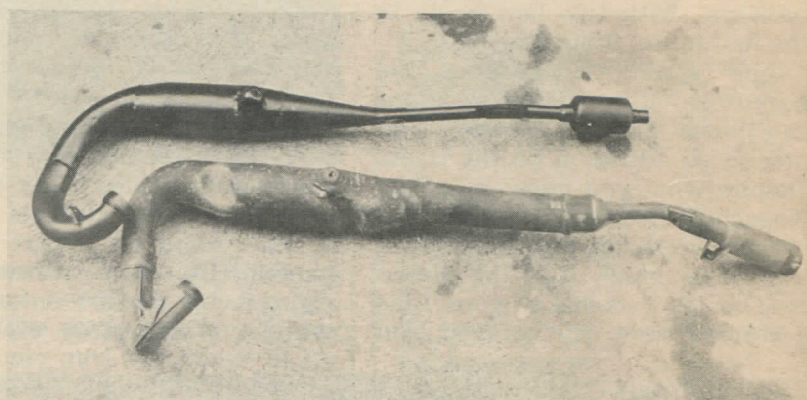
Noguchi cylinder (right) has smoothly ground, slightly larger transfers.



The Noguchi head gasket, left, was thicker and set into a machined recess in the head.



The stock Yamaha pipe, bottom, is burnt and anything is an improvement.



The Noguchi reed assembly, left, was larger and offered a more direct intake route.

carburetor that are the same as stock, gaskets, a back-ordered pipe and a can of Blendzall. No instructions or decals, the cheapskates. Was I ripped?

Steve Kadel

Terre Haute, Indiana

We think so. Our kit, a Stage II (they also discouraged us from getting a Stage I), came with a cylinder, head, a bitchen pipe, a set of gaskets and a larger, more efficient looking reed and manifold assembly. The piston was the same as stock and came with a wristpin and clips but without a new bearing. A special cast iron ring was included. The carburetor that came with the kit was identical to the stock one already on the bike. We also ordered, on the suggestion of the Noguchi guy, a special still air box and rear fender assembly which, after inspection (and since there were no directions telling us otherwise), we concluded would not work. There seemed to be no way of sealing the bottom of the air cleaner (a K&N element for a YZ250 was recommended but not

included) to the air box. We did get a set of boss stickies and the can of Blendzall, but no instructions whatsoever.

The no-instruction trick was really burnt. You find out the hard way that (1) a portion of the bottom cooling fin on the left side of the cylinder has to be ground away to clear the clutch cable butt mounted on the cases, and (2) the over-the-top kit pipe (looks a lot like the factory YZ125 pipe) won't clear the kit head unless a substantial amount of finning is cut from the right side of the head. Since, as you suspected, both heads measure out the same, we used the stock head which already had the fins cut.

Once all these niggling problems are ground out, the kit is installed quite easily, using regular tools and a free evening. The oil injection system must be removed, a simple process of taking off everything that has to do with the oil injection and covering the holes with a dollar kit from your Yamaha dealer. The throttle feel after removing the pump is a million times better than when

you were dragging a spring loaded oil pump with the carb slide. The stock throttle cable will not clear the area between the pipe and the kit carb unless the cap and angled cable guide from the stock carb are used. Or you can use the whole stock carb, since they're both the same. The cable still snakes around at a bizarre angle and conjures up visions of stuck WFO down Banzai Hill. Whatever, it sure sounds bitchen when you start it up.

Dear MOTOCROSS ACTION:

I put a Noguchi kit on my '74 Yamaha 125MX. Ever since, it has zip reliability. Zero. Zip, slant, squat. I have not gone riding once in the past six months without breaking something. Two rides and it needs a ring, two more rides and a new piston. Now my \$100 cylinder is ruined. I've been screwed.

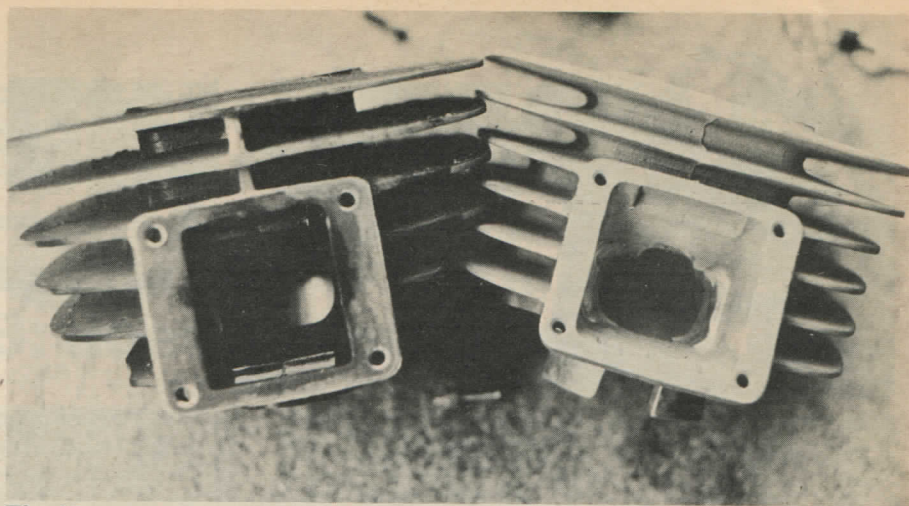
Brad Haak

Alexandria, Virginia

Perhaps. We got a few letters similar to yours complaining of burnt reliability with the

Noguchized Yamaha. When we showed up at Saddleback with our Noguchi, reaction from our friends was consistent and expected: "Betcha it'll seize." It seemed everybody we knew had four stories about exploding Noguchis. As it turned out, a long practice session, a quick trail ride with Pierre Karsmakers (wow), and two 40-minute motos on a hot day failed to stop the Noguchi. It never missed a beat. The surprise came the following day after we took off the Noguchi kit and put the stock components back on. With two laps to go in the first moto, it ate a piston.

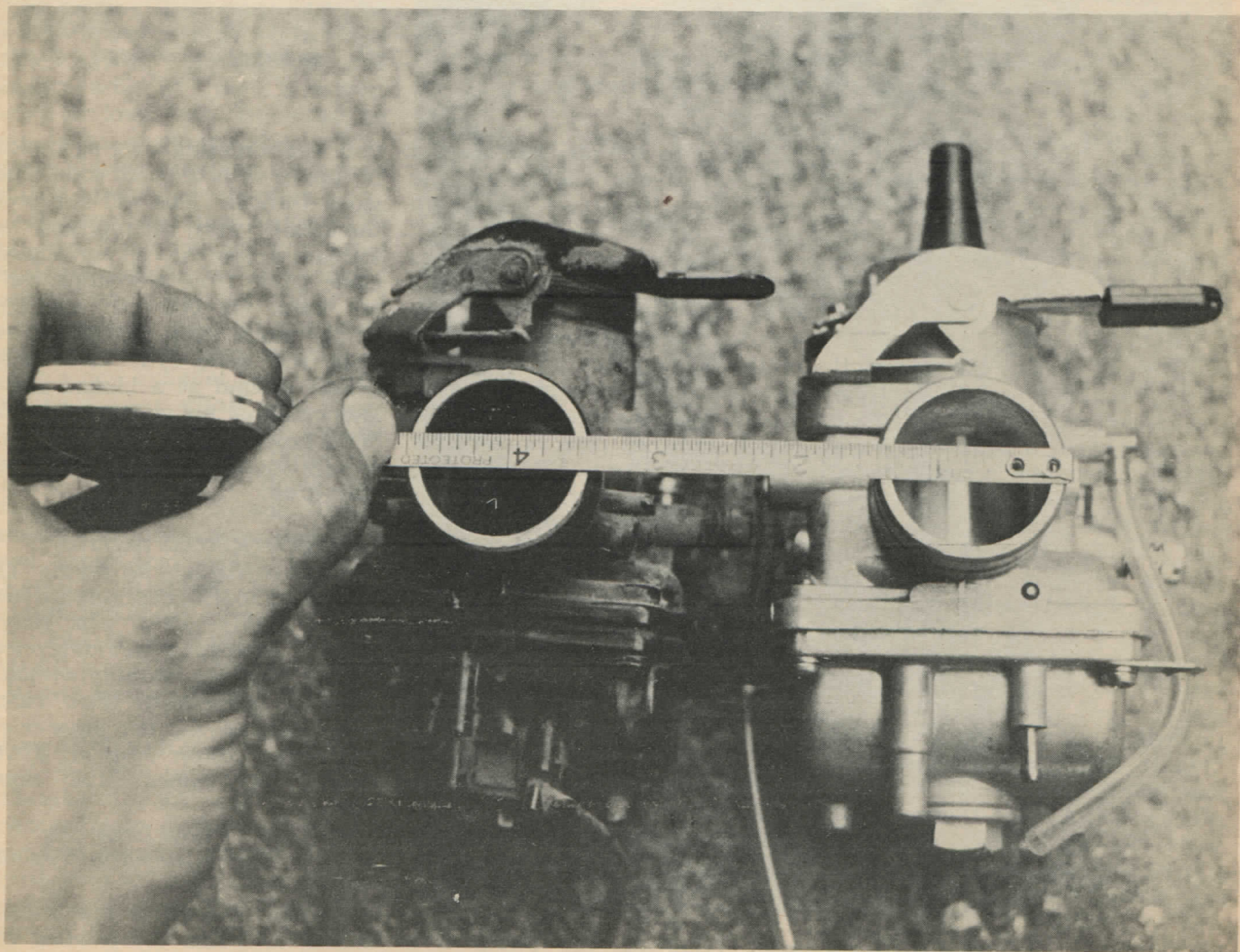
The secret to keeping the Noguchi alive is meticulous cleanliness during assembly and precise air filtration on the track. Despite what you might hear, the Noguchi barrel does not have a chrome bore, but rather a sprayed iron bore much like the Vesco road racing Yamahas of yore. Like a chrome bore, the sprayed iron



The Noguchi cylinder, right, offers a much larger intake track, but they give you the same size carb. Bush.

bore (a thin coat of atomized iron particles is actually sprayed on the precision-machined alloy cylinder wall) runs cooler, distorts less and is less prone to seizure than a standard iron bore. However, the slightest bit of dirt entering the cylinder will destroy everything.

Road racing engines stay pretty clean, but motocross engines, especially with Yamaha air cleaners, tend to get dirtier than a kitty in a coal bin. We spent considerable time and effort cleaning, greasing and sealing our stock air cleaner and it paid off.



Kit carburetor, right, is identical to the stock unit.

