

**MIGHTY MOTOCROSS ISSUE!**

**POPULAR**

# **CYCLING** IND

ARGUS

**MARCH 1974**

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**75¢**

**DIRT MX TESTS - MAICO 501!**

**PENTON'S 250 Performer!**

**HUSKY'S New Idea!**

**ROLF TIBBLIN:** Be a better Motorcrosser PT. 5

**RACE COVERAGE!**  
**TRANS-AMA CIRCUIT**  
**WRAP-UP!**

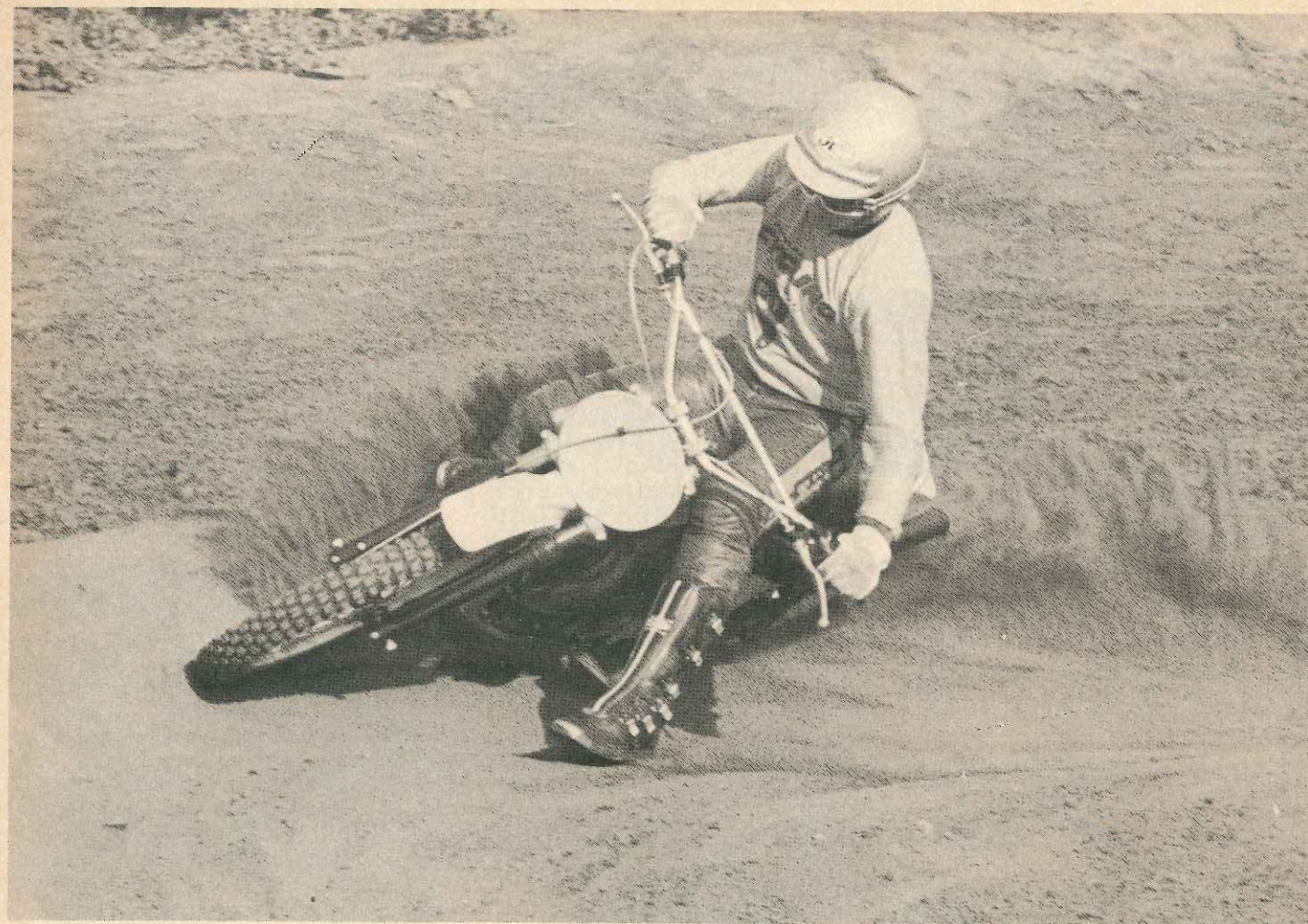
**HIGH SCHOOL'S ANSWER TO**  
**CLASSROOM BOREDOM!**

**and more...**





New for '74 are the fork's internals, brake linings and wider front fender.



# THE NEW HUSQVARNA

Ever since its introduction, POPULAR CYCLING has strived to bring you the newest motorcycles as soon as they hit the docks. We are claiming an exclusive again, as we were the first to get our hands on the bars and our leathers straddled over the new Husqvarna 400 CR, and what a test this was. Never has there been a Husky like this one!

Our first encounter with the machine was by way of Nils Arne Nilsson, who presented it to us at the Husqvarna International Training Center in Carlsbad, Calif. Nils explained that the machine is entirely new this year. Just looking at it we noticed quite a few delightful changes. Wider fenders were obvious as was their new composition of a more flexible plastic. Quite an improvement over the metal mud stoppers of the past.

The exhaust pipe is also a redesigned

feature, with a new and quieter silencer incorporated. We eyed this with a bit of apprehension as most upswept pipes manage to protrude enough to give your leathers a good hot workout.

The footpegs are also making their debut. The old Husky pegs were good, but didn't offer enough boot traction for the average rider, allowing his feet to slip when the going got wet. Now the pegs have holes drilled through from the bottom up, giving your boot a more secure bite.

The air filter assembly is all plastic and takes on a new shape too. It's ultra waterproof, proved by running the bike upstream for repeated half-mile runs. The filter element is also easier to get at and, as in the past, the filter is a paper element.

The new bent style Magura levers have

been adapted to the new Husky. They look as if someone fell down, rebent them awkwardly, and put them back on the bike. You'll appreciate these hand controls as they seem to be in the right spot to easily grip the controls without taking your hands off the handlebars.

The Swedish factory even saw fit to improve on the cables. Now Teflon cables are standard. These long-lasting control cables are what you would usually consider an extra expense to make your machine trick. All these goodies are now standard.

Frankly, after taking a good long look at the bike, we couldn't see anything you would need to replace. The only alteration would be handlebars (personal preference) as they might feel too wide for a motocrosser and possibly a Filtron air element. Everything else that mounts

# RNA 400 CR

to the bike should be left there.

With the basic photography out of the way, we started our riding of the bike. Turn on the gas, tickle the 36-mm Bing carb until it laughs so much it erupts through the overflow hose. Give the kick-starter a good healthy kick and if you caught on to the trick of starting any big-bore, to get it right up on the top of the compression stroke, she lights on the first kick. The 400 Husky doesn't just suggest this procedure, it demands it. If you attempt starting the machine any other way, it will reward you with the old kick into the bottom of your foot. During our entire testing period the engine always started in two kicks. The throttle response is vastly improved. It's somewhere between a CZ and a 400 Suzuki. Not the usual slow rpm climb that you would expect from a European rig, nor is

it the crisp bark of a Japanese machine's. A nice controllable throttle which makes for easier riding.

The first lap out on the Carlsbad grand prix course proved that our thoughts about the throttle/power were correct. You won't fall asleep waiting for the machine to build up revs, the Husky 400 comes on sure and smooth. The powerband has been widened, while at the same time, strengthened. This is accomplished by a new port design coupled with the improved Bing carb. The end result is precise power control, giving you a better opportunity to improve your riding.

Another one of the internal changes, this one in the front forks, becomes evident once you hit the rougher section of a course. At Carlsbad the entire course is rough, allowing you to test the bike's

At last — a Husky  
anybody can ride!



suspension (and your body condition) to the limits. The front forks have more dampening this year. Instead of leaving you with the impression that it's a desert machine transplanted to a motocross track, it's just the opposite. In the desert, you might feel like looking for berms just to relieve the boredom. On a motocross track, small bumps barely register through the bars. The large abrupt bumps are transformed into smooth mounds, possibly giving you a little too much confidence. If you were to take the Husky over bumps that you would normally avoid on your present mount, chances are the Husky would please you tenfold. The front suspension is so plush that taking the smoothest line on the course isn't necessary. If there's a faster but rougher line, the machine will work through it, too.

The five-speed gearbox is perfectly mated to the power. You can pull up a hill in fourth and there's no loading up, no flat spot in the acceleration. Just smooth, always available power. Coming out of a starting area is a real blast. Second gear starts are easy even though first is recommended; take your pick.

Either one will deliver more than enough power to get the bike launched first. When you hit third gear and add a little weight transfer, the front end becomes very easy to loft, making for an easy-to-control machine over the bumps.

After acceleration comes the stopping. This was where another new feature showed up. The 400 CR stops exceptionally well. The brake linings have been improved, allowing you to pitch yourself over the bars if your heart so desires, but for average riders, it means again, an improved riding style.

We had Bill Payne, one of the West Coast's better motocross riders, work with us on the Husky test and he gave his impressions. Being a Maico rider for years, he was surprised at what the Husky would do for him. It's been said in the past that Husky riders are a special breed. But this new one is different. It didn't have the feeling of being too tall, it stopped well and wasn't picky about where you planted it on the track. Our increased test team was very impressed. As a matter of fact, we had to fight for the bike all day. It finally ended in hiding the other test riders' helmets in order to

get a chance on the bike. The 400 CR never sat still for longer than it took to fill the gas tank.

After riding until the sun set, we had to pack it up until another day. The next stop was the Patracco dyno, where we really found out what the machine was delivering in the horsepower category. Once on the dyno, it delivered a maximum of 30.1 hp at 6000 rpm off the rear tire. Nils Nilsson didn't think that was good enough, and changed the jetting and needle position. By upping the jetting from a 170 to 180 and then dropping the needle one notch, we were able to obtain 31.6 hp at the same rpm reading. This meant that while running at Carlsbad, the machine was down almost two hp. With the new jetting and needle setting it would run even faster!

The next outing found us at Indian Dunes on a Saturday. With the new carburetion settings, eight gallons of fuel and plenty of people to race, it looked to be a real fun day. Out of all the machines we coaxed into racing down the starting area, only one kept up with us into the first corner, a tricked 450 Maico which was blueprinted. No other machine equalled that, nor did anyone show us the way through the first corner. All others were either a half bike-length behind or further towards the rear. The Husky definitely has the power to get you up in that first turn all alone.

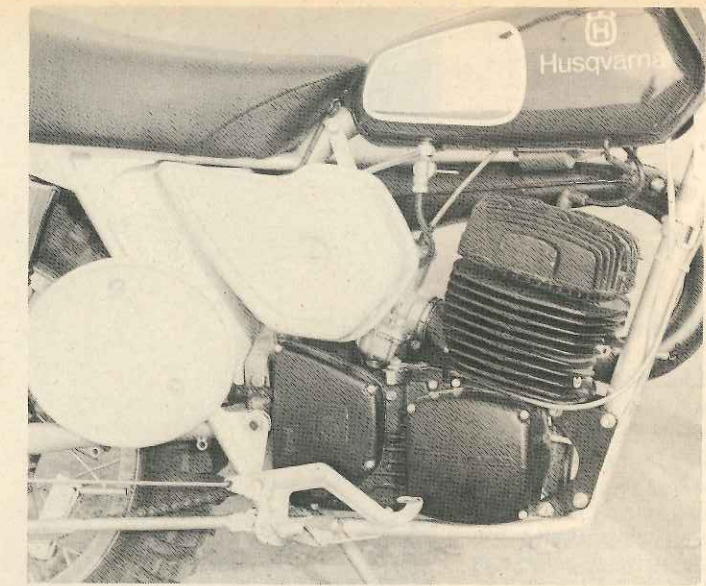
As we had already suspected, it doesn't take you down anywhere else on the course. Once you get used to a Husky's characteristics in the cornering department, it's just a matter of slamming into the berm, turning on the throttle and dusting it off the pursuers. The large 4.00x18 Metzler on the traction end would do everything but completely bury the competition. We even got quite a few complaints from riders who were following too closely, who exclaimed (usually in a high pitched voice) that they couldn't follow the big bore because of the shower of rocks they received when the power was turned on. If anyone is on your tail while riding this bike, give it a little blip of the throttle as a warning. They'll never be the same. When this machine is released, we predict a sharp uprise in sales of face masks and full coverage helmets.

Straightaways are a real blast. No matter how rough, Husky's reputation for its excellent tracking abilities are still maintained in the new '74 400. You can tackle any nasty section you choose. Just dial it on, drag the rear brake if necessary to hold the back end down over the chop and be on your way. It doesn't pitch or buck around.

Ah—now for the bad point. There was only one type of track that let us down. Hard braking on a long series of stutter bumps would start the rear end twitching about six inches in each direction. At

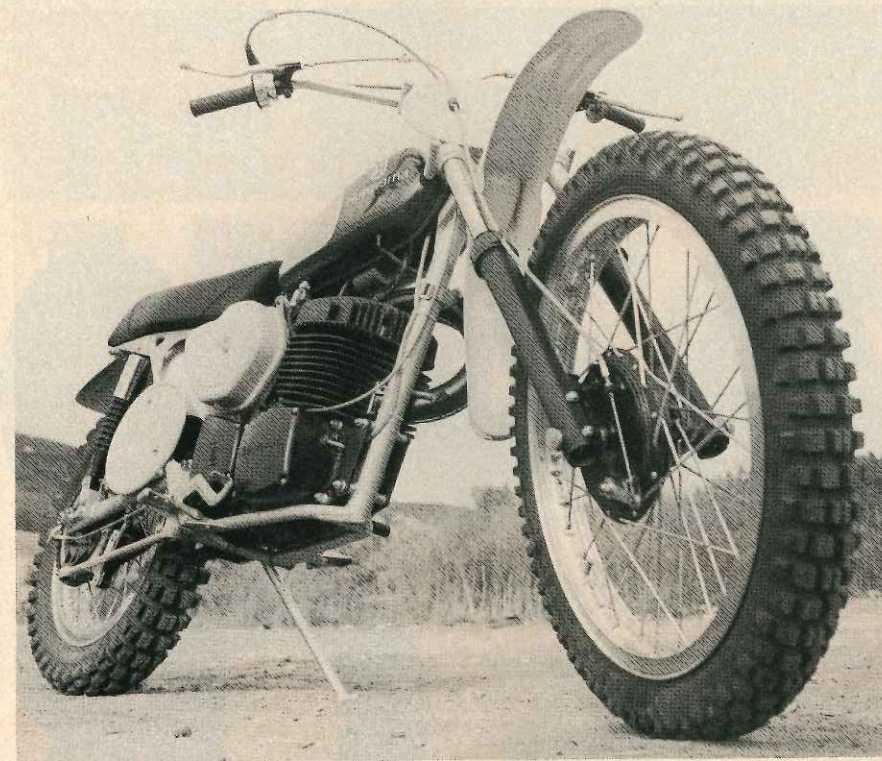
first it seemed that the bike was going to get out of control. But after that first jolt it did not get any worse. We experimented with this particular section of track and found that braking harder, approaching the corner faster or hitting bigger bumps in the same general area didn't change the situation. We felt this to be one of the negative points of the bike until observing other machinery going through the same section. Many mounts, even older Huskys, hopped through the same section, many even more drastically. We discovered that the problem lay in the Husky's ability to pamper you, actually meaning that the rear shocks aren't perfect!

After it was all over we conclude that the new 1974 Husqvarna 400 CR is the best offering from the Swedish factory yet. And, it's the most improved European machine to ever come to the U.S. in

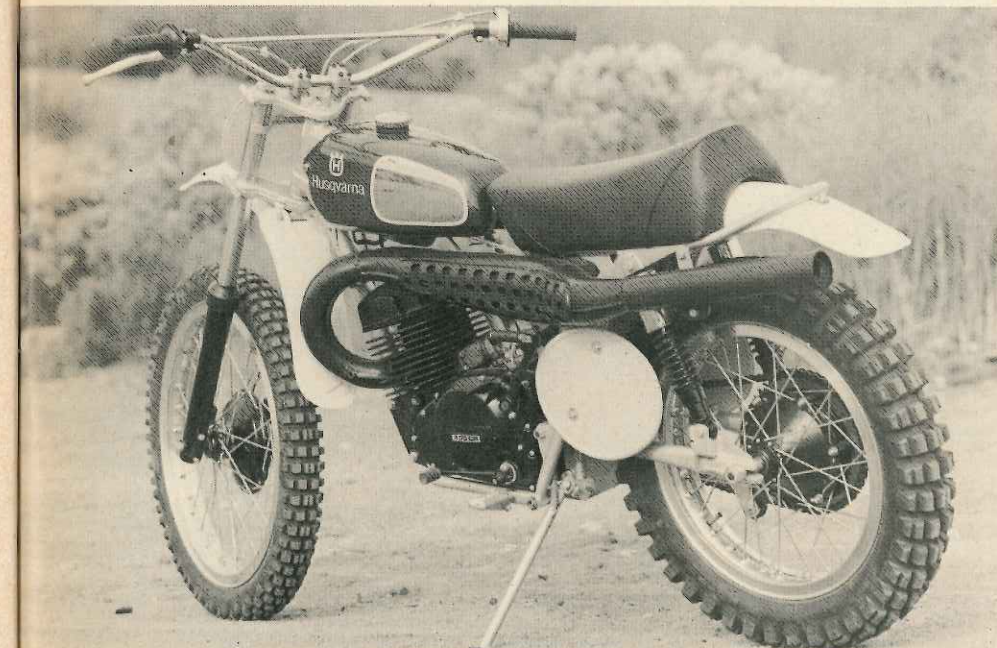


Behind the new air box lies a newer version of the 36mm Bing carb. Bike was easier to start, with only two prods to bring it to life.

BELOW—Footpegs, exhaust pipe and silencer, and the throw of the shift lever are all improved, giving you a more comfortable and enjoyable ride.



Magura levers, bent at a strange angle, make braking a pleasure. The pipe tucks well out of the way, and doesn't burn your leathers any more. Teflon cables enhance the bike, giving you more of the stock trickery.



1974. If the other manufacturers remain with the same models as 1973, this machine has them beat. We'll probably get a lot of letters about this, but after careful consideration, we feel that this point will hold water. Many of the riders who tested the machine were owners of other good race machines. Everyone agreed that this Husky was easier to ride than a Husky has ever been. Out of 17 riders who got a chance to try out this bike, none had a bad word about it. We base much of our opinion on this fact, plus what we discovered on our own. It's one of those machines that you read about in the colorful brochures, and after riding, lives up to all your expectations.

Max. Pts.	NUMERICAL EVALUATION	
10	Power	10
10	Powerband	10
10	Acceleration	10
	Transmission	
10	(5) Ratios	5
	(5) Operation	5
	Suspension	
10	(5) Front	5
	(5) Rear	4
	Brakes	
10	(5) Front	5
	(5) Rear	5
10	General Handling	9
30	Miscellaneous	
	(5) Starting	4
	(5) Rider Comfort	4
	(5) Quality of Craftsmanship	5
	(5) Riding Maneuverability	5
	(5) Tires	4
	(5) Noise Level	3
100 pts.	Overall rating	94 pts.

## HUSKY 400

Suggested Retail Price: N/A

### ENGINE

Engine type . . . . . 2-S, piston-port, sgl. cyl.  
Bore and stroke, mm . . . . . 81.5x76  
Displacement, cc . . . . . 395  
Horsepower/rpm (claimed) . . . . . n.a.  
Torque/rpm (claimed) . . . . . n.a.  
Compression ratio . . . . . 10.2:1  
Air filtration . . . . . paper element  
Carburetion . . . . . 36mm Bing  
Lubrication . . . . . in fuel  
Ignition . . . . . Motoplant

### DRIVE TRAIN

Transmission . . . . . 5 speed  
Clutch type . . . . . wet, multi-disc  
Primary drive . . . . . gears  
Final drive ratio . . . . . 13/48

### CHASSIS

Chassis type . . . . . single downtube  
Overall length, in. . . . . 81.5  
Seat height, in. . . . . 31.5  
Peg height, in. . . . . 9  
Ground clearance . . . . . 8.75  
Wheelbase, in. . . . . 54  
Tires, front . . . . . 3.00x21  
rear . . . . . 4.00x18