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VOLUME / NINE



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THE LS2 CHALLENGER

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of the top manufacturers and their top riders

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2019 TRIUMPH SPEED TWIN

Triumph delved deep into their long-reaching roots as a motorcycle manufacturer to draw the inspiration for the 2019 Triumph Speed Twin.

The factory went all the way back to 1938 and used the original Speed Twin roadster as a massive inspiration for what is reflected in the finished product of the new bike, reducing it to the essentials of a two-wheeled machine. It harbors an old-school, custom vibe that throws it back to the much simpler days while still retaining a contemporary twist to keep it relevant.

Triumph continues to

cash in on the desirable retro aesthetic that is an integral part of the current motorcycle market with this clean-looking classic.

The styling is prominent with a blackout effect that ranges from the wheels and spreads all around to nearly every aspect of the motorcycle, affecting everything from the front forks to the cyclops headlight can and dual analog clocks. One of the only things not touched by the blackout effect is the heavily bobbed front fender which is cut down to reduce weight and tinted with a light gray color. A 3.7-gallon teardrop tank is one of the main contributors to the bike's retro vibe and provides a place for the rider to hide their knees to help benefit aerodynamic drag. There's a grab strap on the seat to help separate the pillion seat, but in the absence of one it's nice to have the extra room to move around in the cockpit and it definitely adds to the comfort level. A minimalist subframe contributes to the clean look on the rear of the bike, conjoined with an LED taillight that does more than enough for visibility. The license plate serves as an extension to the fender which builds off of the short mudguard, further emboldening the tribute to the Triumph classics.





96HP AT 6,750RPM

The powerplant is derived from a "Thruxton-tuned," parallel-twin engine that bears quite the resemblance to its historic counterpart, apart from the 27-degree crank-journal offset which gives it a bit of an extra grunt that the old engines didn't have. It boasts a single over-head cam system and the bore and stroke measure out at 97.6 mm and 80 mm, respectively, for a total displacement of 1200cc and a moderately warm, 11-to-1 compression ratio. The engine inhales through Triumph's ride-by-wire, fuel-injected,

throttle body and produces a respectable amount of power -- 96hp at 6,750rpm and 82.6 lb-ft of torque that tops out at 4,950rpm. The electronics are limited to a total of three varied riding modes: Sport, Road, and Rain, in addition to switchable traction control which helps to manage all of that power. A slipper clutch works seamlessly in tandem with the six-speed transmission, contributing to a low-effort and relaxed pull of the lever as well as some anti-hop protection at the rear wheel.



The 2019 Triumph Speed Twin is available off the showroom floor starting as low as \$12,100 in traditional black or \$12,600 in silver or red.

2019 TRIUMPH SPEED TWIN

Steel tubes make up the majority of the frame in addition to an aluminum cradle that supports the engine and helps to keep the weight down to 432lbs, dry. The rake is an incredibly short 22.8-degree rake with 3.68 inches of trail over a 56.3-inch wheelbase, making it quite aggressively natured in the corners which matches the original performance-oriented machine.

The cast-aluminum wheels are symmetrical front and rear at 17 inches with a 120/70 Pirelli Diablo Rosso radial up front and a 160/60 on the back. Dual, four-piston Brembo calipers grip twin, 305mm discs and do the heavy lifting with a 220mm disc and twin-pot Nissin brake mounted on the rear to help keep it planted. ABS comes stock and there are no options in the way of modifying the electronic suite, but there's not much that can be done in those circumstances. An aluminum swingarm extends to the rear wheel with a pair of coil-over shocks taking care of the suspension. On the front, a pair of 41mm, cartridge-style forks do the job and both ends sport a total of 4.72 inches of travel, while the rear gets a suspension tweak in the form of an adjustable preload feature.





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SUZUKI





The original Suzuki Katana was an instant icon of the early 1980s, offering a package that produced outstanding performance and styling ahead of its time. There was a lull in the bike's popularity during the 1990s while it was offered as a slower 600cc model, but it's due to return in a form true to the original legendary bike in the coming years. Suzuki is reviving the Katana name and is aiming to match the same cult status that they previously achieved with the beloved motorcycle in decades past with the 2020 Suzuki Katana, set for early availability in 2019. >>

2020 SUZUKI KATANA

They have made some updates to the bike's design to fit modern expectations as it's not a direct replica of the original, but it still pays homage to the 1981 model that started it all. The fairing and frontal shape of the bike are an instant time warp back to the 1980s without going overboard while the rear section remains quite elegant with a compact rear fender that works in tandem with the hugely triangulated swingarm. The overall appearances of the new Katana is a gorgeously styled, spruced up, top-drawer roadster that finds the balance between a sporty profile while maintaining a touring riding position, mainly due to the 32.5 inch-high seat and aptly shaped touring handlebar.

The performance of the new Katana has been updated to modern standards and will undoubtedly appease the current market, offering a total of 150 hp at 10,000 rpm, and 79.6 pound-feet of torque at 9,500rpm. The 999cc liquid-cooled inline-four is derived from the same motor that powered the 2005-2008 GSX-R1000 superbike models, notably one of the most highly praised in-line fours of the recent era which pro-

**GORGEOUSLY STYLED,
SPRUCE UP, TOP-DRAWER
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TOURING RIDING POSITION**

duced power in spades. It features a 73.4 x 59.0mm bore and stroke, less oversquare than the current GSX-R1000/GSX-R1000 mill. The idea behind the longer stroke measurement was in order to produce a torquier engine which was capable of smooth throttle response from a low rpm. It boast a 12.2:1 compression ratio and the flatness of the combustion chamber and subsequent shape of the pistons assist in providing complete and clean combustion from low to high revs. The power is transmitted through 44mm throttle bodies alongside the Suzuki dual throttle valve which ensures smooth throttle response. A unique 4-into-2-into-1 exhaust with equalizer cross-pipes helps to reduce noise and looks quite stunning while doing so. A motorized butterfly valve located just ahead of the

catalyzer modulates backpressure according to rpm, selected gear, and throttle position.

The frame is a twin-spar aluminum design which has a hugely triangulated section that bolts to bosses on the cylinder block, whereas rear mounts pick up the back of the engine lower. A 57.5-inch wheelbase cooperates with sporty steering geometry in the form of a 25-degree rake and 3.9 inches of trail.





2020 SUZUKI KATANA

The claimed curb weight of the bike is 474 pounds and is fitted on Dunlop Roadsport tires in 120/70-17 front and 190/50-17 rear sizes.

Dual 310mm front brake discs are paired with Brembo radial-mount four-piston calipers, joined by Bosch ABS. The electronics package includes a three-level traction control system, providing modes as follows: Low, for standard roads in good condition; Medium, for less than ideal surfaces and riding around town; and High, for wet surfaces or poor conditions.

The 2020 Suzuki Katana will be available in the Metallic Mystic silver color scheme only, but it fits the essence of the bike well. A carbon-fiber clutch cover, red-painted Brembo calipers, and a colored seat fill out the optional items. It will be interesting to see how the handling and performance stack up to the legendary original, but it seems as though Suzuki is reviving the Katana for all the right reasons.





2020 SUZUKI KATANA

DARREN D. CARTE

R

Darren comes from a long lineage of motorcycle enthusiasts that he claims left him no other option other than being a motorcycle racer himself. As soon as he was capable of riding a bicycle without training wheels and kickstarting his PW50, it was off to the races and he discovered his passion for two-wheeled competition at just four years old. Carter made a name for himself as an amateur flat tracker and achieved a fourth place ranking in the AMA Amateur Grand National Championships, eventually securing his pro license on his sixteenth birthday, before he even had a driver's license. He got his Expert license at seventeen and contested the Grand National Championship for many years and had a moderately successful career while doing so. Some of his other career highlights are being ranked in the top fifteen in the AMA "Hot Shoe" Pro Series as well as a multitude of District 17 wins in short track, half-mile, and TT. In addition to his success on the dirt, Carter also proved to be a podium contender in the World Championship ICE Racing series as well as the Xtreme Indoor Ice Racing series, wrapping up a championship in the latter. These days his racing attention is focused on the Bultaco Astro Cup as he's focused much less on the professional side of racing and more on the recreational side of things, but he claims that it's been a refreshing change of pace. We had a quick chat with Darren to talk about some of his most memorable races, the glaring differences between dirt tracking and ice racing, as well as sharing his passion for motorcycles with his son.



>>

**What sparked an interest in motorcycles for you at a young age?**

Well, I don't really think I had much of an option. My grandpa rode and did a little bit of racing and my dad raced, so he got to the point where he was just getting ready to turn professional and then he had me and he lived vicariously through me, so I really didn't have a whole lot of options. As soon as I could walk, get 'em on something that moves with two wheels and we'll go from there -- that's kinda how it came about.

What was the first bike that you learned on back in the day?

My first bike was the tried and true Yamaha PW50. I had one rule: I had to be able to ride a bicycle with no training wheels

and I had to be able to start it by myself. So when that happened, it was go time.

What are some of your early memories of motorcycling?

Like I said I really didn't have an option...I was born in February and I was at the track with my dad in April, so I was basically born at the race track. Then I turned four and we went racin' and that's just what we did every weekend. I threw a couple of state championships down growing up as a kid and was fifth in the nation once -- that was cool -- all I've ever known was flat track racin' growing up. I have a son now that turned in four in July, so he's basically the same way I was. He didn't have a whole lot of options, I brainwashed him at a young age. The

only thing I'm doin' different with him than my dad did with me is that we're going to spend a lot of time flat trackin', trail riding, motocross -- I'm going to try and get him more diverse than I was and keep it fun, that way it doesn't ever become quite the job to him.

How involved was your dad in your racing career as an amateur and your early professional days?

Aww yeah, he was the best. What's funny is that he was always the dad that if I crashed or whatever, he'd come out and be like "You alright?" and if I said yes, then I had no other options than to get back up and get on the motorcycle. If I was layin' on the track and he asked "You alright?" and I said "Yeah, I'm alright," well

"I WAS BASICALLY BORN AT THE RACETRACK"

then it was "Get up, we don't got time for you to be layin' out on the track!" He would always fix everything and change stuff all the time. I was terrible at input and he'd ask me what I think we should change, and I'd say "We'll just figure it out." So he'd be changing stuff behind the scenes and that way I didn't even know about it. He did everything -- he worked two jobs all the time, ya know, we just went racing. That's all I know: workin' hard and racing motorcycles.

Could you talk a little bit about your early days as a professional?

Well, I actually had my pro license at sixteen before I even had my drivers license, so that was shipped off and in the mail prior to when I was sixteen, so on my birthday that was in the mail saying that I could race motorcycles professionally now. I did my whole career as an amateur without having any real serious injuries -- nothing broken -- I turned sixteen and that time flat track had the Pro Sport class which is kind of like the Pro Singles class, so we chased that around a bit and did that. I had some really good results, I podiumed at the Springfield short track and I got 4th at the Peoria TT. We followed the Harley Sportster series around on the Harley 883s and that was a good time, but we didn't have a lot of great results with those. We spent a lot of time pushing those bikes back to the pits, those are not what you'd consider the greatest of racebikes, but we did that for a while. I spent one year as a pro and then when I turned seventeen I got my Expert license and about a month before we left for Daytona, I broke my ankle. So that really set back my Expert debut so to speak, so I made it there but I wasn't 100% ready to be at Daytona. It's racing, you always push to be back on the track as quick as possible.





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KROME GLORY
THE GAME HAS CHANGED





What are some of your career highlights looking back on your motorcycle racing career?

Well, one of the highs and lows days is one of the ones that really sticks out to me -- we were at the Springfield for the Short Track National. We were there Saturday and I qualified top fifteen, so I knew it was gonna be a good day, well then it rained out so they pushed it back to Monday after the mile. We did the mile and were lookin' pretty good on that, but it started to mist on the racetrack and I figured I had a better shot at the short track than the mile, so I pulled off when the track started to get a little greasy. We went back for the short track on Monday and I was sitting in the transfer spot to make my very first Grand National main event and coming out of turn four on my way to the checkered flag, me and another rider connected handlebars, and I went over the high side and got my leg caught between the bikes and I broke my ankle. I mean, I could taste getting my national number that day and I was about fifteen feet short of getting it done, so its probably one of the biggest memories I have of racing. It's between that and my very first

win on a PW50, those are my two biggest memories. People are like "How can you remember that?!" I don't remember anything when I was a kid except for my very first win. We were at a indoor concrete race with monster trucks and I didn't do very well in my heat race, so my dad was like "What do you think you need to do?" and I said "Dad, I'm just gonna leave it wide open and whatever happens happens." He's like "We're on a really small track, you think that's a great idea?" and I'm like "I'm just gonna make it work." So he was trying to be supportive, but at the same time realized that wasn't

the best idea. But I held it wide open and went all the way around the outside of that track on the PW and I won it. You know, that was one of the coolest things because as a kid when you overcome a fear of something, it's just second nature for you. Those are probably my two biggest memories of racing: my first win and one of my biggest let downs.

In addition to your time as a dirt tracker, you've also had some success in the World Championship ICE Racing Series. Could you expand on that?

Oddly enough the ICE series came to Bloomington, Illinois where I live and the promoter called me up and was like "Hey man, we're looking for some riders if you're interested." So I said "I've never ridden on ice in my life, but I'll give it a shot." They had some tires on the truck that I could use and I just had to go get them in the morning and mount them up, well I come to find out that the tires on the truck were not the best tires for ice. You would think that they would've had some good tires, but they were just subpar and I got my ass handed to me in front of my





"IT'S LIKE TURNING OFF THE LIGHTS AND HAVING A BOXING MATCH IN A SMALL ROOM, YOU'RE JUST SWINGING BLINDLY AND HOPING YOU CAN CONNECT."



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hometown which really hurt my feelings quite a bit. After that, it almost became like a challenge to me and we got our own setup going. We did two different series: the ICE series and we did the XIIR series (Xtreme Indoor Ice Racing) and I was able to win a championship in the XIIR series, but I was never able to quite throw down a win in the ICE series. The best I did was a podium and oddly enough every time the series came to Bloomington, I spent a lot of time on the ice or doing not good things. I don't know what it was about the ice here in my hometown, but it never worked out well for me.

How big are the tracks that you're racing on in these series?

I mean, we're talkin' hockey rinks. So it's first gear, tight confines, and to make passes you have to be aggressive. It's like turning off the lights and having a boxing match in a small room, you're just swinging blindly and hoping you can connect. Everything about the ice racing is different, oddly enough it's nothing like outdoor ice. The consistency is a lot different so I would go out and try to practice on a frozen lake somewhere and mess with the setup, and then I'd go into the rink and be totally off. The only time you could try to pick up stuff is when you were on the hockey rink, so it was a lot of fun to do but it was chaos all the time.

What are some of the main differences in riding style and bike setup with ice racing and dirt track?

Well, I actually have a good buddy that is a really good motocrosser and we started doing the ice racing stuff at the same time. What was fun about that is that we would travel together and it was something different for both of us, but I thought I'd have a huge advantage being a flat track racer, but I came to find out that a lot of motocross techniques worked well on the ice. Using the clutch -- as a flat tracker, we're on fairly big tracks so once you drop the clutch off the light, you never have to touch it again until you're pulling off the track. He would run in the corners and grab a whole handful of clutch, slide it in like you're trying to do a skid on a bicycle, and just dump the clutch with a handful of throttle and it worked amazingly. I had to try and adopt a few things that I learned from him as a motocrosser that worked on the ice. You definitely had to make sure that you had really good ice tires, there's a lot to the tires themselves. It's like black magic trying to figure those things out. Each screw has to be turned a certain way -- you have certain screws for braking, certain screws for mid-corner, and for exiting. There was a lot of learning just in the ice screws themselves, apart from trying to figure out how to go around a hockey rink. It was a lot of fun though, we had a great time doing that series.

You've operated your own program and backed yourself since you started racing back as a teenager, how has that kind of evolved over time until now?

Well, my career as a racer has almost come full circle. You start out hauling everything in a van, pack the family in (me, mom, dad, and my sisters) and go to the races. Then it became where it was just me and my old man in the big sprinter van, just us two haulin' bikes and goin' to the races together. Then it got the point where he couldn't quite come to the races anymore, so it was just me going and as I started backing out of the pro stuff and doing less of that, now that I've got a couple boys of my own, it's coming back to where we're just a family hauling a trailer to the racetrack again. So it's come full circle and I'm actually looking forward to seeing where it's gonna go with my boys and its kind of an interesting roundabout look at the circle of life as far as racing goes.





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Yeah, I'm sure that gives you a whole new perspective on everything that your dad did for you when you were getting started out racing.

The worst part is the scare factor. When you're behind the handlebars, you're not afraid of anything but now as I watch my boy start doing things, I'm a nervous wreck all the time. One of my buddies has a nice little quarter-mile short track and we took my son out there for the first time to ride on it this summer, and I was ready to puke the whole time. He was like "I've never seen you this nervous all my life. I've seen you do a lot of dumb things on a motorcycle and not show one ounce of fear or anything, no nervousness in your eyes. You put the boy on a PW and you look like you've seen a ghost!" That's when I really gained a lot of appreciation for my old man -- I don't know how he stood on the edge of the track a lot of the times and made it through without having a heart attack standing there watching, 'cause it was rough on me just watching him go out by himself on a track.

Recently, you've been competing in the Bultaco Astro Cup racing series. How long have you been doing that and how has it been going?

Well, yeah I did the Expert stuff and I kind of pulled back -- after a while, racing becomes real taxing on you, especially doing the pro stuff. We had some good sponsors that helped out with a lot of things, but it's an expensive sport and when you're trying to keep up with the Jared Mees' and those guys, it becomes hard. So after I quit doing the Expert stuff I just started racing for fun, so one of my buddies calls me a couple of years ago and says "Hey, we're doing this Astro Cup deal, would you be interested?" and I said "I've never thrown my leg over one, but I'll give it a shot." We showed up and I did one race the first time I ever rode one and I got 3rd behind Chris Carr and Charlie Roberts -- they've both had a pretty good career, but I was actually kind of hurt that those older guys kicked my ass. I was on par with them but still being quite a bit younger, I thought I had more for them than what I did. So Steve Lambert -- from Lambert Vintage Racing -- my buddy had me ride his bike at the first Astro Cup I went to, he calls me up and says "I traded you for a pack of gum," and I said "Man, what does that even mean!?" He's like "I traded you for a pack of gum, you belong to Steve Lambert now." I'd only talked to Steve like once or twice and I didn't really know him too well at the time, and I said "I've never been traded for a pack of gum before, so I'm not sure



“WHEN YOU’RE BEHIND THE HANDLEBARS, YOU’RE NOT AFRAID OF ANYTHING BUT NOW AS I WATCH MY BOY START DOING THINGS, I’M A NERVOUS WRECK ALL THE TIME.”





how this works." So I call up Steve and he says "I'm building this Bultaco from the ground up, it's going to have the best of everything. I guess I owe Trevor a pack of gum, but he thinks you'd be a perfect fit for this ride." So we decided to go pretty all-out on this Bultaco deal and got the team shirts and the leathers and our first race was at the Mama Tried deal in Milwaukee. I was pretty anxious 'cause it was the first time Steve and I had worked together on anything, so we showed up and had the fast qualifying time. We were actually the second fastest time of the day behind Bronson Bauman on a 450, so I wasn't really mad about how our Bultaco was working when we were faster than all the pros except for one who were on 450s. The day was looking pretty good for us and I managed to get a little overly anxious and I jumped the light in my heat race and I had to go to the back row, so I had to go in through a semi. I won that and had to come from the back row in the main event and worked my way all the way up to second, but I was about one lap shy of getting the first win the first

race out of the gate. Me and Steve have done quite a few races together after that and we've had a lot of fun with them and that was basically our goal together: to go to the track and have as much fun as we could have. It's been super refreshing, it really brings a lot of the fun back when there's no pressure and you're just having a good time with your buddies again.

In addition to your involvement with racing, you've done a lot to give back to the motorcycle community. Could you talk about some of the different community outreach events that you've done as well?

Yeah, growing up I was fortunate enough to have a track in the back yard where I could ride. So when I was coming up on doing the pro stuff, everything I struggled at I would try to build in my own backyard. I sucked at Peoria TT -- I couldn't do that jump to save my life -- so we got dirt in and I built a miniature Peoria TT jump in my backyard. So we did a lot of stuff to make myself better, so as I was getting to the sixteen, seventeen, eighteen-year-old range we thought it'd be cool to start helping younger kids. We'd have XR100 days

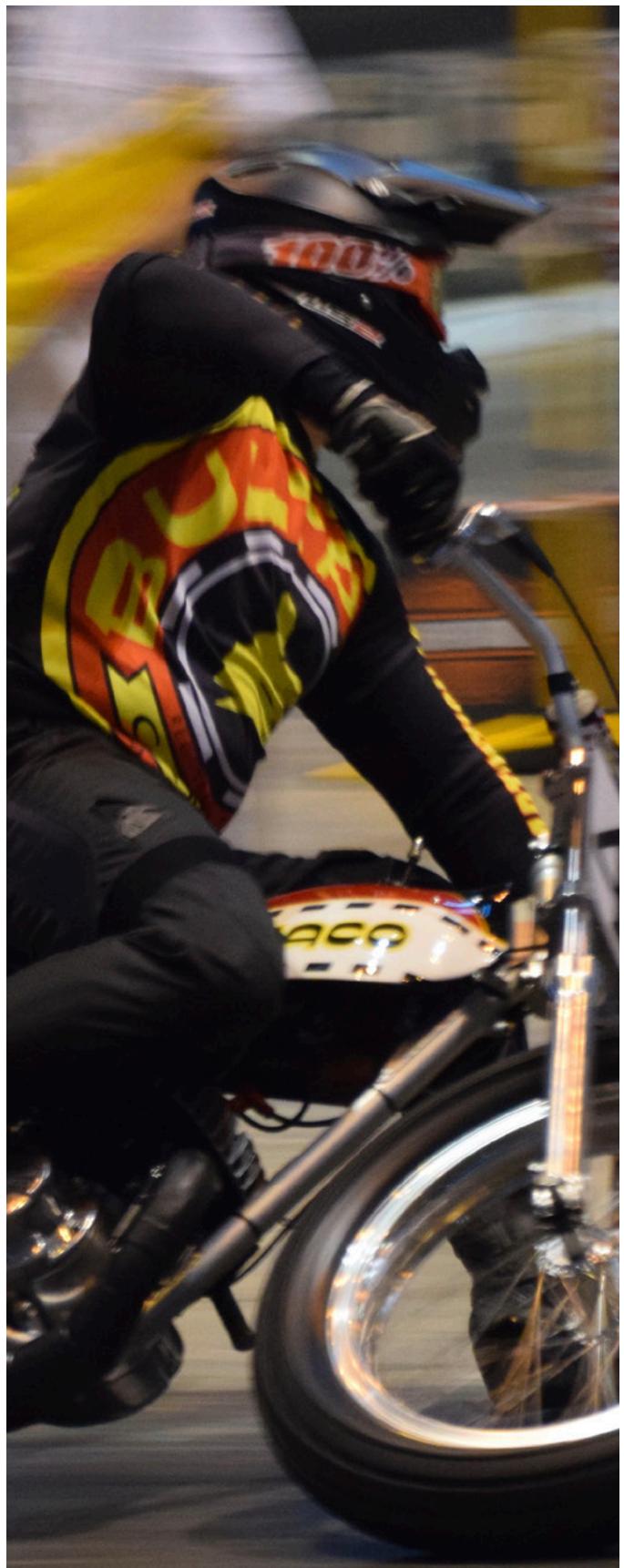
out at my parent's house where if you had a XR100, it didn't matter who you were, you could come over and ride. The awesome thing about that is that we'd bring in a lot of local pros like Robbie Pearson and Justin Hittle and then we'd get a lot of the local kids over there. It was a great experience for them to ride with some of their local heroes and then we'd work with them on things. They'd get a chance to try and jump the Peoria TT jump before they ever had to up against that mountain of a jump over there. I also did a polar plunge for the Special Olympics, I made a post on Facebook bein' funny that if I raised \$500 bucks in my girlfriend's Halloween costume. Well, that backfired on me 'cause I raised like \$1,500 dollars for the Special Olympics and I had to wear this hot chick leprechaun outfit. We also did a couple of transportation days where we'd take the bikes to a school and talk to kids about safety, wearing helmets, and getting some excitement from kids about motorcycles. We handed out some information to parents about how they could maybe get in contact with someone to

“EVERYTHING I STRUGGLED AT I WOULD TRY TO BUILD IN MY OWN BACKYARD.”

potentially get their kid to the racetrack. I was always trying to give back to kids, because growing up through the racing community, there was nothing cooler to me than being able to sit and listen to my local heroes growing up, just being able to hang out with them. Any chance I could give our local kids to hang out with the pros I would, just because it meant a lot to me growing up.

What sort of riding and racing have you been up to recently and what do you have planned for 2019?

Well, during the winter time we do an indoor barn series on mini bikes -- The Outlaw Ranch Winter Series -- I was the 2017 and 2018 champion and this year I wasn't able to quite do the whole series, but that was fun. It's just a fun little way to kick off the winter time with a bunch of buddies and we're still planning on having another full run at the Astros this year. Anytime I plan on going racing this year, me and my boy are gonna do it. I just ordered some matching motocross gear so we can be those people. I wasn't even allowed to choose my own gear, I just had to go with what he wanted and then I wasn't even allowed to choose my own color. I think I've only had red gear once in my entire life and that's what were doin' now. I'm really excited about that; we're planning a lot of trail riding and motocross practice days and that kind of stuff, so that if he ever does want to take a full swing as I did, he can have a more diverse background. I think that'll help him out a lot. I have a small short track at my house, so this summer we'll probably have a couple play nights where we have some kids come over. We're just trying to make it as fun as possible to keep everything fresh and fun.



2019 HONDA GOLDWING



The Honda Gold Wing has been the cream of the crop in the full-dress touring compartment for more than forty years, overpopulating busy highways and rural bypasses as one of the best options for hauling gear and passengers alike. Lighter weight, a new engine, and updated looks are helping to bring attention forth from a younger buyer as performance has been notched up a few levels in terms of priority. The engine is comprised of the typical flat-six configuration and sports a 1,833cc displacement which packs a 120hp punch, making massive improvements in terms of grunt over the

previous iterations of the 'Wing. Honda continued its efforts to attract a younger demographic of buyers with the overhauled design of the Gold Wing, employing reduced bulkiness and updated looks. It has always been one of the sportier models in the full-dress touring category, but the Japanese manufacturer has managed to improve on that statistic by shedding almost 100lbs from the overall weight while maintaining the same low center-of-gravity that makes it so agile for its size. The Gold Wing hasn't changed up much front and still displays an array of lights that form a wide V pattern at



the peak of the front fairing, but the bulbs have been updated to LEDs which allow for a smaller and more aesthetically pleasing light shape cast on the road. The size of the wind shield has been decreased and is electronically adjustable to fit the rider's preference, allowing for a comfortable ride for both the pilot and the pillion depending on the circumstance. The beefed-up Tour model comes with a full-length windscreens while the base model features a cut-down version, changing the character of the bike massively. The overall shape of the bike is very similar to its predecessors, but

the instrumentation under the windscreens has received a bit of an overhaul. There's a 7-inch, TFT LCD screen with a pair of analog clocks for both speed and tach. At the top of the dashboard there's a series of different lights and information on display, monitoring a number of varied pertinent information. The base model serves as more of a traditional bagger while the Tour model offers customary hard panniers and a top case that doubles as a passenger backrest -- although the base model lacks storage, it contributes to the aesthetic that is hoping to draw in younger buyers.

A photograph showing a motorcycle rider from behind, riding away on a two-lane asphalt road. The road has a solid yellow center line and white dashed lines on the sides. The rider is wearing a dark jacket and helmet. The background consists of tall evergreen trees lining the road, with large, misty mountains visible through the haze.

A twin-spar frame has been tweaked and tuned by Honda in order to find the right balance of stiffness and flex which facilitates the agile and nimble handling in the corners. The steering rake sits at 30.5 degrees with 4.3 inches of trail, allowing for straight line stability and iconic sportbike-esque handling in the corners. The front suspension is a newly added double-wishbone setup which utilizes a single Showa shock in place of a standard hydraulic fork. On the rear, a Pro Arm, single-side swingarm and Pro-Link shock are fitted to the rear with 4.1 inches of travel to accompany the 4.3 inches of travel on the front. One of the best parts about the suspension is the Electronic Preload Suspension, allowing for intuitive and ease-of-use adjustments depending on the passenger and luggage load onboard. The wet weight settles somewhere between 787 pounds and 842 pounds, so it's not easy to bring it to a halt. There are 320mm discs up front that collide with a pair of radial-mount, six-pot calipers and a 316mm disc cooperates with a three-piston caliper on the rear, combining with electronically controlled ABS.



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The engine has been redesigned in an effort to reduce its overall size, eliminating a total of 29mm from the overall length while shedding a total of 13lbs in the process. The weight saving is largely due to the unicam valvetrain that shares not just a cam, but also a single lobe for each of the two intake-exhaust valve pairs, and it partly comes from the aluminum cylinder sleeves. The engine has a square layout with a 73mm bore and stroke which contributes to a total displacement of 1,833cc and a 10.5-to-1 compression ratio which will require premium gas. A ride-by-wire throttle controls the induction through a 50mm throttle body, enabling some of the spiffy electronic additives such as cruise control, hill-start assist, and walking mode with reverse. The Dual-Clutch Transmission comes

with seven speeds to keep you in the usable powerband through automatic, clutchless shifts, and on the six-speed manual, a slipper clutch protects against unwanted movement from the rear of the bike. The total output produces 124.6hp and a total of 125lb-ft of torque, doing more than enough to bring it up to speed in a hurry from a standing start.

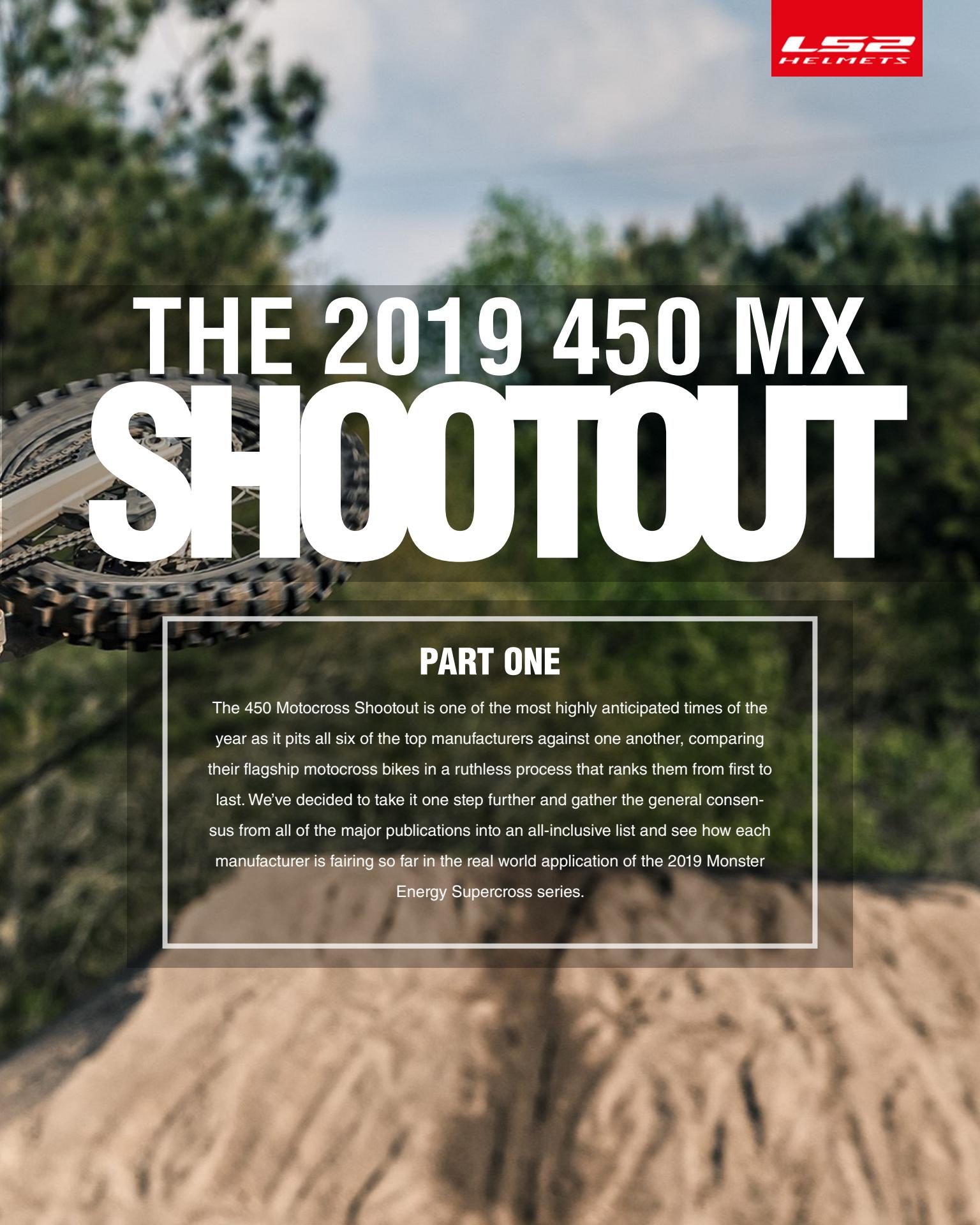
The base model Gold Wing starts at \$23,800 and advances to a total of \$25,000 while the Tour models range from \$27,000 to \$31,800, offering each model in the new Darkness Black Metallic paint.



2019 HONDA GOLDWING

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THE 2019 450 MX SHOOTOUT

PART ONE

The 450 Motocross Shootout is one of the most highly anticipated times of the year as it pits all six of the top manufacturers against one another, comparing their flagship motocross bikes in a ruthless process that ranks them from first to last. We've decided to take it one step further and gather the general consensus from all of the major publications into an all-inclusive list and see how each manufacturer is fairing so far in the real world application of the 2019 Monster Energy Supercross series.



1st **KAWASAKI KX450F**

The Kawasaki KX450 was the most sought after bike coming into 2019, considering that everything on the motorcycle, including the name, has been redesigned from the ground up. It features an all-new electric start-equipped engine, a Showa 49mm coil-spring fork, a new Showa shock, and a radically overhauled chassis. The 2019 KX450 is also the first Japanese motocross bike to come standard with a hydraulic clutch, proving that Team Green is pulling out all of the stops to solidify their place at the top of the motocross food chain.

The KX450

produces nearly 52hp at just over 9,000rpm and amounts approximately 32lb-ft of torque at 6,900rpm. Therefore, placing it as the second most powerful bike in terms of horsepower and the fifth-ranked bike in terms of torque production. The powerband is very intuitive and the free-revving engine has plenty of torque despite the low ranking compared to the other bikes. The bottom end is not too strong as to buck you off the rear fender, but it's more than enough to comfortably ride a gear higher without sacrificing grunt. The top-end and over-rev are likely the stars of the show in the KX450, allowing the rider to ride the same gear for longer than normal without having to shift. The engine mapping is able to be tweaked in order to match different track conditions and offers three different settings; ranging from aggressive, moderate, and manageable. The Nissin hydraulic clutch is a great addition as there's nothing more enjoyable as a rider than a light lever that is easy to modulate, promoting smooth shifting and the stock gearing is right on par.

The stock settings on the fork are solid and provide more of a comfort-oriented feel, mostly due to the soft spring rate. Aside from the occasional hard landing when over jumping something, the front end soaked up everything on the track from small braking bumps and large square-edges with relative ease. The shock is a fantastic accompaniment to the fork and helps the bike to feel balanced and planted in rough conditions, holding up well on heavy hits and impacts.





KAWASAKI KX450F

The chassis and handling find inspiration from previous models and still manages to feel like a Kawasaki, but they've taken it a few steps further. It feels more narrow in both the front and rear, especially in the radiator shroud department and it's undoubtedly the slimmest feeling bike in the entirety of the lineup. The cockpit is roomy and the flat seat promotes a lot of

body english on the motorcycle, allowing the rider to move forward and back with ease while riding.

The KX450 tips the scales at 246lbs, making it the lightest of the Japanese manufacturers in the 2019 shootout. It is nimble and agile in the corners and encourages more of a front-end-steering style as opposed to the riding style of

Eli Tomac, but it still manages to retain a great amount of stability in a straight line. In conclusion, the 2019 KX450 finds the perfect balance of all the necessary components to create an all-around motocrosser that isn't lacking in power, suspension, handling, and aerodynamics -- making it the most complete and ultimate package on the market in 2019.



2nd HONDA CRF450R

The overhaul of the Honda CRF450R in 2017 has made it a regular front-runner in 450 motocross shootouts for the past few years, winning a fair amount of the various publication's comparative tests in 2018. The 2019 Honda CRF450R has undergone even more updates this year which include alterations to the engine, suspension, and chassis, therefore making it the best CRF450R to date. Regardless of finishing second place to the Kawasaki, Honda produced a winning bike with the 2019 CRF450R and its one of the most competitive bikes on the market with a bone stock setup, making it a fan favorite among average joe riders and test riders.



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THE 2019 450 MX SHOOTOUT

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The new CRF450R's Unicam powerplant has been gifted a new cylinder head, revised clutch lifter, and pressure plates, an updated scavenge pump design, a new piston oil jet, HRC launch control, and updated engine mode select options. Additionally, it has a new shift sensor, a different exhaust with a larger pipe diameter, and revised design at the branching location. In favor of the electric start, the kickstarter has also been removed from the side case of the engine to help reduce weight. Out of all six bikes, the Honda CRF450R is the most impressive in both

horsepower and torque statistics on the dyno, producing almost 54hp at just shy of 9,800rpm and slightly more than 33lb·ft of torque at approximately 7,300rpm.

The engine characteristics are almost reminiscent of a two-stroke and it produces the lightest-feeling out of all the bikes in terms of how quickly it revs, making it playful for a beefy 450cc machine. Improvements in terms of ease of riding have been made from the previous models and it produces a smoother bottom-end to midrange transition, although it operates best when



being ridden in the higher rpm range. A handlebar-mounted engine mode button allows the rider to choose between three different programmable maps: standard, smooth, and aggressive. The cable clutch is the smoothest out of all six bikes and it's also the loudest due to the dual mufflers and large airbox openings.

The CRF450R suspension has seen a few updates since the overhaul in 2017

and this year both the Showa 49mm coil-spring fork and Showa shock underwent improvements. They are plusher in the initial part of the stroke and helps to absorb braking bumps and chop better, especially at low speeds. The harder you push, the better the bike works which is something that Honda should be proud of considering its race-ability out of the crate.



The chassis has been massively updated for 2019 -- the lower frame spars have been updated, the swingarm is new, and the top triple clamp now has two clamp locations that allow the black Renthal Fat-bar handlebar to be adjusted by 26mm. The front brake caliper is lighter and uses a pair of 30mm and 27mm pistons, the footpegs have a different shape and are 20 percent lighter, the fork guards are

HONDA CRF450R



new, and the bike is now fitted with black rims. The bike tips the scales at 250lbs, which ties it with the Suzuki as the heaviest bike in the class, but ironically it seems to feel the lightest and turn the quickest out of the lineup. The 2019 model performs well in rough conditions compared to previous iterations of the bike, but it really shines on smoother surfaces and good dirt, although it doesn't lack in rear wheel traction.

It makes the most horsepower and torque and the suspension rewards performance-oriented riding and pushing the envelope, but it's unnerving feeling in rough and rutted conditions slotted it into second place behind the Kawasaki.



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The
LS2 MX470 // SUBVERTER
KROME GLORY

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**3rd
YAMAHA YZ450F**

The YZ450F was new and improved in 2018 and was revered by many for its outstanding engine, plush suspension, and improved ergonomics. Yamaha calculated a few changes to further expand on the refinements that they made in 2018, which includes an updated electric starter system designed to reduce drag, a one-tooth-larger rear sprocket, and new, more rigid front and rear axle wheel collars. Stiffer compression damping has also been added to the fork and shock, including stiffer seat foam, and a retention tab to the right-side number plate. Yamaha comes standard with the free Yamaha Power Tuner app, allowing the user to adjust a multitude of different things to their preference and create a setup that works for their riding level and various conditions. They've stepped the game up with this new YZ450F as it maintains the same class-leading stability and serves up one of the plushest suspensions in the 2019 lineup.



YZ450F

Considering that the powerplant to the was completely redesigned and praised last year, there haven't been any alterations in that department with the exception of a new electric starter system which is aimed to reduce drag and horsepower loss. The engine pushes out a total of 50hp at approximately 9,600rpm and produces nearly 30lb-ft of torque at about 7,500rpm. The engine is both powerful and aggressive and especially packs a punch in the bottom-end and midrange, although it lacks a little bit on the top-end comparatively. It likes to be ridden a gear high and performs well at low RPMs, making it a beast out of the corners before it hits the rev limiter. The Power Tuner app is a fantastic addition which helps to customize the feel and characteristic of the motor to an individual rider's liking, allowing modifications in both

the fuel and ignition timing changes. The clutch is consistent and the transmission shifts smoothly while the muffler is the quietest of the six separate bikes. Yamaha has always been praised for its excellent KYB Speed Sensitive System (SSS) fork and KYB shock. For 2019, the YZ450F has stiffer compression on both while retaining the same spring rates as the 2018 model. It's nearly race-ready right off the showroom floor as not many clicker adjustments are necessary to get comfortable on the track, contributing to its title of having the plushest and smoothest suspension on the market. It only gets better as the track gets rougher and it's easily the most comfortable of the bunch, working incredibly well in the higher range of the stroke which helps to facilitate a performance feel.

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YAMAHA YZ450F



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The front and rear wheel collars have been given more rigidity which aims to improve traction and front end feel while the seat is 16 percent stiffer than the 2018 model. It weighs in at 248lbs which makes it the lightest Japanese model by two lbs ahead of the Honda and Suzuki. On a rough track, it's the most predictable and stable out of the entire stable of machines and those qualities retract a little bit from its agility, although it more than makes up for it with confidence inducing stability in rough conditions. The radiator shrouds and fuel tank are a bit wider than the other bikes, but the overall ergonomics package is an improvement. The updated seat offers a better rider position and makes it easier to move around on, yet remains comfortable.



The strengths of the Yamaha YZ450F are rooted in the powerful engine, undeniably plush suspension, and class-leading stability, in addition to the Power Tuner app which ties it all together -- but it doesn't do enough to find the right balance in terms of ergonomics and cornering.



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4th **HUSQVARNA FC450**

The 2019 Husqvarna has undergone improvements in every department ranging from the engine, suspension, and chassis; therefore, contributing to a freer-revving, more comfortable, and much more agile bike. The main strengths of the Husqvarna, not too dissimilar to the KTM, are its cornering ability, stability, and build quality.



THE 2019 450 MX SHOOTOUT

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The Husqvarna FC450

The engine has undergone several updates which include a more compact cylinder head that is 15mm shorter and 500 grams lighter, a new camshaft, a Dampened Diaphragm Steel (DDS) clutch, a Pankl transmission, a redesigned exhaust system, and updated traction control and launch control settings. It produced nearly 51hp at approximately 9,500rpm and churned out about 33lb-ft of torque at around 6,800rpm. It ranks third among the six bikes in both horsepower and torque, putting it right in the middle of the road. On the track, the FC450 has a smooth power delivery that is sneakily good, but the lack of bottom-end hit makes it feel heavier than it really is although its the second lightest bike on offer. The power comes on strong in the midrange and the engine has an excellent top-end, encouraging a high-rev riding that promotes the urge to bounce it off the rev limiter. It has two maps that concentrate on bottom-end power and top-end power depending on which characteristic the rider favors, while traction control is present in both.



HUSQVARNA FC450



The FC 450 is equipped with a WP AER 48 air fork and WP shock, and Husqvarna updated the components to match the new chassis for 2019. Both the fork and shock get new damping settings and the latter features an updated main piston. The fork offers lots of adjustability with air pressure, compression, and rebound. It has a plush feel throughout the stroke but is bouncy on hard impacts. Overall, the WP suspension on the Husqvarna is good and continues to improve from year to year. However, the AER 48 fork doesn't offer the same amount of performance or comfort that the coil-spring units on the Kawasaki or Yamaha do out of the crate.

The 2019 FC 450 has a stiffer blue frame, a two-piece composite carbon-fiber sub-frame, a more rigid upper triple clamp, an updated swingarm, new bodywork, and a ProTaper handlebar that has a different bend. The Husqvarna is one of the best-handling bikes in the class. It's very neutral, balanced, corners well, and has good stability. The increased rigidity allows it to change direction quicker than the previous year model, yet it remains stable in a straight line. The FC 450 is easy to move around on with its open cockpit area and flat, grippy seat. The rider triangle of the seat, handlebar, and footpegs is very comfortable, too. The

Husqvarna has the strongest brakes in the class with the Brembo components in the front and rear. The two also share the fantastic ODI lock-on grips.

Its strengths are found in the neutral-handling chassis, comfortable ergonomics, the stopping power, and the hydraulic clutch -- but the overall smoothness and mellow power make it feel as though it's heavier than it is and the suspension isn't up to snuff compared to the Kawasaki and Yamaha in stock form.



CHALLENGER GT



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BOLD. UNAFRAID. THE GAME HAS CHANGED.





5th **KTM 450SX-F**

The KTM 450SX-F was a perennial front runner in various media shootouts throughout the last couple of years, mainly due to its reasonable powerband, good suspension, and nimble handling characteristics. A number of changes have been made to the engine, suspension, and chassis, similar to the same that were present on the 2018 Factory Edition model. The stiffer frame, updated suspension settings, narrower chassis, and more comfortable ergonomics were huge improvements, but the mellow power curve on the bottom end made it feel as though it were heavier than actuality, although it weighs in as the lightest in the class at 234lbs. The 2019 450 SX-F is an improvement over last year's model in most areas, but the bottom-end power left something to be desired.



The **450SX-F** engine features a slew of changes for 2019 including a more compact cylinder head that is 15mm lower and 500 grams lighter than the 2018 model. There's also a new exhaust system, a Pankl transmission, a new 44mm throttle body, updated ECU maps, a reworked airbox, and revised traction control and launch control settings. It produced just over 50hp on the dyno at around 9,300rpm and churned out approximately 32lb-ft of torque at 6,800rpm. It ranks fourth

out of six in both horsepower and torque, sliding in just behind its distant relative, the Husqvarna. The KTM engine has a very smooth power delivery that makes it deceptively fast. It's easy to ride but doesn't have much of a bottom-end hit, which makes it feel sluggish from a low rpm. There's also a noticeable amount of vibration at low rpm that dissipates at about quarter throttle. The engine comes alive in the midrange and top-end, and revs to the moon while continuing to pull. It shifts smoothly as well,





KTM 450 SX-F

and the Brembo hydraulic clutch is easy to pull in and doesn't fade under heavy use.

The 450 SX-F is equipped with a WP AER 48 air fork and WP shock, and KTM updated the components to match the new chassis for 2019. Both fork and shock get new damping settings and the latter features an updated main piston. The fork offers lots of adjustability with air pressure, compression, and rebound. It has a plush feel throughout the stroke, but feels a bit bouncy with the stock clicker settings, especially on hard landings. Overall, the WP suspension

on the KTM is good but not as plush or comfortable as the Kawasaki or Yamaha in stock form. Fortunately, it's the most adjustable. The 2019 450 SX-F gets a new, stiffer black frame, a more rigid upper triple clamp, and a revised swingarm that has a longer slot for the rear axle. The subframe is now 40mm longer, and the redesigned radiators are 12mm lower than the previous model. Designers also resculpted the fuel tank for better ergonomics, and there's new bodywork and a reshaped seat to match. The KTM is one of the best-handling bikes in the class.

It's very neutral, balanced, corners well, and has good stability. The increased rigidity allows it to change direction quicker than the previous year model, yet it remains stable in a straight line.

Just like the Husqvarna, it has a neutral-handling chassis, the strongest brakes, a hydraulic clutch, and its the lightest out of all six bikes -- but it wasn't able to make up for its shortcomings in suspension and sluggish power in the bottom end range, therefore placing it fifth position as it didn't improve as much as the other manufacturers compared to last year.



6th **SUZUKI RM-Z450**

The selling point of the Suzuki RM-Z450, which was all new in 2018, was based in its excellent cornering ability and improved suspension. The top-of-the-line motocrosser from Suzuki receives a few minor updates in 2019, including a lighter shock spring rate. The comfortable ergonomics and torquey engine of old make it a good motocross bike, but it sits in sixth place on the overall list due to the stiff competition.

The engine produces 50hp at around 8,400rpm and nearly 33lb-ft of torque at approximately 7,300rpm -- ranking it fifth in horsepower and second in torque, just narrowly losing out to the Honda CRF450R. On the track, the Suzuki engine is easy to ride and has an old-school four-stroke character. It's a bit slower revving and has a noticeable amount of engine-braking. Power comes as a mellow hit off the bottom that transitions into a good midrange and moderate top-end, encouraging successful short-shifting. One of the glaring differences is that it's the only bike in the 450 class to come with a kickstarter, skipping out on the electric start craze that has taken over the industry.

With the stock clicker settings, the Showa 49mm coil-spring fork is a bit harsh due to how stiff it is and benefits from being softened up a bit. The Showa Balance Free Rear Cushion (BFRC) shock has a bit of a dead feel and rides low in the stroke, but soaks up acceleration chop well.



The **RM-Z450** tips the scales at 250 pounds which ties it with the Honda for the heaviest bike in the class, resulting in a much heavier feel on the track. The RM-Z450 lives up to Suzuki's reputation of cornering exceptionally well. The chassis feels long and is a bit rigid, and the latter can lead to some unpredictability in rough parts of the track. The Suzuki's ergonomics are good and easy to get used to quickly. The midsection of the bike is thin, the levers are agreeable, and the lower position of the Renthal Fatbar is likable, too.

The bike deserves praise for its cornering ability and comfortable ergonomics, as well as its rideability, while it's also the most affordable of the 450 motocross bikes at under \$9,000. Nonetheless, the suspension and chassis aren't as good out of the box as its competitors and the lack of electric start is undoubtedly detrimental in this day and age.

THE 2019 450 MX SHOOTOUT

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SUZUKI RM-Z450



THE 2019 450 MX SHOOTOUT

PART TWO

Now that we've seen where the six different leading manufacturers' flagship 450cc machines line up in the statistics and test track department, it's time to see how things stack up on the professional race track. The Monster Energy Supercross series is the biggest stage in all of dirt bike racing and the 2019 season has been one for the ages -- in order to sort out the pecking order of the bikes, we're going to take a closer look at some of the top riders on each brand and their best finishes throughout the season. Although the KTM was ranked fifth in many of the shootouts, they've been dominating the stadiums this year with Red Bull KTM Factory Racing teammates Cooper Webb and Marvin Musquin. As the series heads to Daytona, the pair of them are first and third in points with HRC Honda's Ken Roczen in second and one of the early title favorites, Monster Energy Kawasaki's Eli Tomac, in fourth.

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COOPER WEBB | KTM



THE 2019 450 MX SHOOTOUT

ANAHEIM II

As a child, Cooper Webb would dream, day and night, of moments like these. Whether it was by studying tape aboard the VHS player, or reading magazines like MotoPlayground cover to cover, he would become obsessed with the sport of motocross. Looking up to riders like Jeremy McGrath and Ricky Carmichael, he could only hope, pray, and dream that one-day he would be in held that high of regard. Although there were those that called his vision lucrative, he, and those close to him, knew that he could reach the pinnacle of this sport with due time. And as the 2019 season approached, he believed there was little that could stop him from doing so. Lining up for the first dropping of the gate, his flare would be easy to see, with the relaxed pose of his upper body. Sitting back, letting waiting for the referee to signal the revving of the engine, a subtle yawn could be seen from beneath the shell of his helmet. But that sight would quickly be washed away, as the gate would crash into mother earth, and he would emerge near second on the first lap. With heavy hitters all around, he was showing absolutely zero hesitation when contending to put his front fender in the lead. His determination was startling, showing no signs of backing down toward the leader, Ken Roczen. He would hound the number ninety-four, really making a substantial chase toward the front in the last few laps. He would look to make a move just before the finish, coming alongside of Roczen in the final rhythm section! With both riders squaring up the last corner, Webb would actually go on to make the move! Cooper Webb would win! For the second round of action, the number plate would remain relatively clean for quite sometime, his numerical "two" glistening from the beams of these skylights. Getting out to an early lead, he would power around the track unscathed, nailing every triple combination in sight. Dragging the footpeg through the unique, two-lane switch back section, he would ride a relatively clean race for the duration of this main event. It would result in yet another win, one that would help inch him toward an overall victory. Second off of the start to begin the last main event, he knew that he had to stay at the front of the field, if the gold medal were to be placed around his neck. Displaying veteran-like charisma, he would remain second until around lap six, when a charging Marvin Musquin would go by. He would latch onto his teammate, where the duo would pack a one-two punch, behind Tomac. Finishing third for the final go-around, his victory in the 2019 450 class would arrive! Cooper Webb was the Triple Crown champion!



OAKLAND

Arguably one of the biggest surprises of the season thus far, is that of Cooper Webb. And it's not that many didn't believe in the speed of the young man, but the quick spike in drastic results, in regard to his positioning in the first few rounds, has been truly astonishing. He came seemingly out of nowhere to win arguably the hardest round of them all, that of the Triple Crown, and has most definitely carried that momentum through the Oakland round. Walking onto the stadium floor for practice with a swagger like no other, he seemed to be standing tall with his head held high, when talking to media and competitors alike. Deep down, you could sense that he was confident he could get the job done again. And after letting the field go, he would take a parade lap of sorts, almost as if he wanted to strut around the course with reassurance if you will.

Hitting all of his marks with immense precision, he would line up for his heat race ready to baffle the field. Taking the early lead, he would look to sprint away from the field in the first three laps, with Joey Savatgy and Ken Roczen behind. With a series of players involved in this 450 mix, it was truly anyone's race. And that could be seen on lap four, when a mistake by that of Webb would cost him dearly, tossing him into the caution lane, and now in that of third position. With the altercation of both he and Roczen in the past, he had to make sure to just stay upright, and avoid the temptation of locking bars with the Honda rider. He would do so, taking third for this particular portion of racing, and eager for the main event to begin. As the field would dart off of the line and hit the opening circuit running, Webb would take the green flag with a sprint-like mentality.

Each lap, he would think of as another point earned, or another second gained. Breaking this race off into multiple pieces, each lap would inch him just a tad bit closer to the checkered flag. With an array of shuffling going on behind, he would begin to pull from Musquin, although still seeing a bit of orange hue out the side of his peripheral vision. With the halfway point becoming an afterthought, he would now wait for the white flag to fly. But his mechanic would be noticeably energized, relaying the message of adrenaline to that of Webb. Cooper could then feel that of Musquin beginning to creep up, and the roar of the crowd becoming more and more prominent. Getting through the final portions of whoops on the last lap, he would nail the twentieth circuit with flying colors, although Marvin was now within a few bike lengths. Never wavering, he would cross the line fist pumping and as excited as ever. He'd captured yet another victory.





ARLINGTON

What is there to say that hasn't been said about Cooper Webb thus far this season? The young man from North Carolina has been a true gladiator on the brink of greatness, conquering a new frontier in the 450 division that hasn't been seen in ages. What wonders can a speck of confidence do, huh? Backed by the boys of Factory Red Bull KTM, Webb seems to be involved in a recurring fairy tale, that can't be paused; accumulating win after win, as the weeks continue to press on. He came into Dallas hoping to do the same, knowing that he had everything within his arsenal needed to get the job done. Feeling strong throughout practice, he was creative, yet efficient throughout his specific combination of proportions. Watching Cooper, you could see he had a few things left up his sleeve, waiting to uncork them in the festivities to come. As the gate would fall for the heat race, Webb would be situated behind a few of his fellow front-runners; including that of Eli Tomac and Cole Seely. With the veteran Chad Reed slipping back, it was

almost as if Webb decided to save a bit of energy for the main event; he would work his way into the final podium spot, barely breaking a sweat. It was now time for the big show, where Webb would be positioned in seventh; nearly out of the main view for fans within the stadium, nevertheless across television screens. But it was Webb, the "KTM Engine That Could" chugging along the tracks, as the laps would accumulate. Into the top five by lap seven, it was still Roczen and Musquin who were receiving the bulk of attention. Yet Webb was turning in noteworthy lap times; and not just one, but in conformity of consistency, he would continue to chop away with his ax of a front fender. He was into third by lap thirteen, with his eyes fixated on the number twenty-five just ahead. He couldn't take it anymore, and had to sweep away the idea of complacency; the second position would then be overtaken, looking exceptionally fast by the mechanic's area section. He would then hone in on the red ninety-four, detecting a vast array of heat

on the sensor. There were two pieces of real estate where he seemed to gain substantial time; the rhythm section before the whoop pad, and the actual section of whoops themselves. It was in the last few laps, which he began to "quad-out" of the prior lane; a feat that no one else was doing. And with the aforementioned whoop section beginning to be really chewed out, he eyed the final go-around to make the pass stick. Running the outside line, he would perform a skimming maneuver, to Roczen's jumping antics. The gap would then close, and Webb would dart inside in the turn before the finish. Leaving him a mere tire length of room to stay on course, both riders would repel one another, fender to fender in a dash for the checkered. With the cameras out, everyone in attendance would hold their breath at the line to see who would cross first. And it was Webb! In a true photo finish, Webb would take victory by near milliseconds, crazed as he landed from the air!

KEN ROCZEN HONDA



ANAHEIM I

Taking a look back at the races of the past, the grounds of Anaheim are a true spectacle in the realm of Supercross. Hosting the event for numerous decades, every great that has left a mark on this sport, has been a staple in the midst of battle on these particular grounds. And Ken Roczen is no different, being a threat for title contention, in every year of his career thus far. Overcoming tremendous adversity over the past few years, you could tell when hearing him speak, that he was truly thankful for a healthy off-season, and to come in prepared. With a strong team around, he was setting himself up to excel from the get-go, flourishing with his set up throughout the qualification rounds. Carrying the torch for the Honda team, many had questions about just how well the team would perform, with injuries riddling the roster for the past few years. But with Roczen's adequate preparation and serious training regimen, many in his corner felt he had the capability to do extremely well. And he would prove them correct. Behind Dean Wilson to start, he would stalk the number fifteen for quite sometime, before mak-

ing the move on lap three. Hitting the series of triples and quad(s) through the far rhythm section, everything would be going according to plan. Pushing the pace until he had a substantial gap, it was a solid win for Roczen, as he looked forward to the main event. Sixth place off the start, he would then begin to work his way up ever so steadily. Railing the ruts with very little dabbling of the inside leg, he was focused on riding mistake free, rather than getting out of control in this mud-ridden layout. He found Justin Barcia early, and would latch onto the back of the Yamaha rider, making sure to stay just out of the radius of his roost. Looking to penetrate into the top three, a position would be gained on Malcolm Stewart's misfortune. He would then only trail Barcia, and by all means, you could tell he wanted victory. But a voice of composure would overtake him, telling him to make due with the ride he had. An exceptional second place would then be where he would place, finishing runner-up in the overall standings.





If you've been around the sport of motocross for any time at all, then you most certainly have heard the name of Ken Roczen. A pure "Wonderboy" overseas throughout his amateur career, he would dabble in and out of the United States; contesting himself at selected nationals throughout the country. Doing well at the likes of the Winter Olympics and Loretta Lynn's, the Red Bull-backed athlete knew that one day, he would like to make America his residency. And after multiple years with Suzuki and KTM, he's done just that; riding red for 2019, and looking to take home the highly coveted Monster Energy Supercross Championship. Being one of the most consistent riders on the tour, has led Roczen to hold the red plate for the Arlington round; his number plate background and shroud graphics, looking synonymous with one another. And despite being frustrated with his lack of pure victory, he knows that at the end of the day, the consistent, top-tier finishes he's presenting are ones that will have him hoisting the trophy at the finale. He would terrorize the track for practice, using every trick in the book to creep towards the touted pole position. Coming into the mechanic's area for a brief bit, a few tweaks to the suspension settings, would have him soaring to new heights (literally and figuratively.) With an adequate source of propulsion now beneath him, he would be sent directly to the front, for heat number one. Never looking back, he could see a brief bit of Yellow in his peripheral view; and it was that of rising prospect, Justin Hill. But never one to bow down to fear, he wouldn't tremble at the thought of anyone behind him. Going on to lead every single lap of this particular event, Roczen would through a subtle, stylish whip over the finish line, taking the win. Second early on to begin the main event, Eli Tomac looked to be on a path of destruction out front. However, the Honda of Roczen wasn't letting Eli go that easy. Roughly four minutes would subside, and Ken would have enough; he saw an opportunity to pass the number three in the rollers after the finish line and snuck around the inside when the door opened. Leaping through the following section, he would sprint, running from the crowd behind him as fast as possible. All looked to be well, clicking off scorching laps in pairs; until the number two of Cooper Webb would come into play, with just a few short laps to go. Roczen could feel him and would try his best not to crumble to the pressure. But it was Webb, setting up a trap behind him. With Roczen hopping through the middle of the whoops on the last lap, Webb would blitz up the inside. Literally visor-to-visor beside one another, Webb would cut under as Roczen went high. The two would then nearly touch, in an all-out sprint to the finish line. And just like that, truly by a knobby tread, Webb would win at the stripe. Roczen, devastated as you can imagine, was ready to leave this race behind and move on.

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ELI TOMAC | KAWASAKI





SAN DIEGO

If you had the pleasure of watching Eli Tomac throughout his amateur career, you know just how well he was able to master each and every event he participated in, during his younger years. From the likes of the World Mini's, to the Winter National Olympics, and everywhere in between, Tomac was a true threat to win from his inception aboard the 50cc machine. However, if you look back to his performance during his last stint at Loretta Lynn's Ranch (the year of 2009), you can see that he swept all six moto's in a host of different conditions. There were multiple instances that year, where the track was absolutely dismantled with inches of rain, and a rising of the creek beside the track. And whereas many would flounder, Tomac would excel; hardly ever showing any sign of frustration, and almost forecasting his ability to handle any type of environment in which he was forced to compete in. Fast forward to the 2019 San Diego Supercross, where many of his competitors could be seen biting their nails and tapping their toes in bits of anxious anticipation. Tomac, situated aboard his number three Kawasaki for the heat race would gaze onto the start stretch; quietly zeroing in on his plan of assault. He would unleash his anguish at the expense of others around, getting off to a fourth place ride. Charging to the front, he watched, as others around him would begin to crumble; first it was Chisholm, followed by former amateur competitor, Justin Bogle. And once making his way around the two previously stated, he eyed rookie Aaron Plessinger on the last lap. Tomac, a carnivore growling at the piece of meat covered in blue hue, would snap at the number seven on the final circuit; Plessinger, doing everything in his power to hold on, couldn't sustain the pace, and would forego the lead to the powerful Kawasaki combatant behind. The win would be Tomac's. And despite all the chaos that loomed around the event and track itself, Eli's focus was of Zen-like quality. Staying calm throughout the literal storm that would immerse the coliseum, Tomac would trek to an early lead. Bogle would be behind at first, but a faint echo of only lap traffic would begin to enter slither into his eardrum. Chatter of Roczen and Musquin coming through the pack would have ricocheted via the intracellular radio network, but Tomac's channel would be speed-dialing his way to victory. It was he and mechanic working as a team, and albeit a brief hiccup where he stalled the motorcycle and was forced to restart; the race would be completed in perfect fashion. Eating roost only from lap traffic, Tomac would prance his way around this disastrous masterpiece, claiming a much-needed win for the Kawasaki crew.



DETROIT

Coming into the season, many had Eli Tomac as arguably the championship favorite. He had all of the ability in the world to complete the task at hand, coupled with the experience of being a champion in the past. And although he's shown flashes of brilliance thus far, as the series has unfolded before our eyes, Eli has had episodes of question and uncertainty. Whether it's mistakes in critical times, or lapses of focus in terms of pure speed, Tomac has been on the "short end of the stick" on numerous occasions thus far in 2019. However, from his showing in practice, competitors and fans alike, knew what just type of beating Tomac could place on the field for this particular round in Detroit. An eleventh place start to begin wouldn't make it easy though, as the field would blister around the circuit for the commencement of moto number one. He was in dire need to work his way forward, pushing anyone in his way aside. Taking hold of the field,

he would pluck away anyone who tried to deter him, blazing past them in an episode of pure blitzkrieg. He would work his way into third, somehow, by lap thirteen. He would have Chad Reed in his way, who he would pass with only three laps to go. And by that point, Justin Brayton, who was out front, could sense that something was unraveling behind him; and it was that of the number three making his presence known. It was lap sixteen, when Tomac hucked the quad out of the two-way rhythm section, pushing the throttle a tad bit more as he passed by Brayton. Never blinking, he would aspire to hold the checkered in his hands, doing so with victory shortly thereafter. For the second round of action, he would look at Cooper Webb as the matador out front. And although he was covered in an orange hue, the raging bull of Tomac saw a violent red, plastered all over the machine of the

number two. Bucking and stampeding his way to within an arms-length, Tomac would blitz the whoops on lap five, to the inside of Cooper Webb. Dragging the rear brake in the last possible second, he would push Webb to the top of the apex, making sure the lead was secured. He would go onto only encounter lap traffic from that point on, taking the win in superb fashion. But for moto number three, it was though all hell would break loose. He was buried in the back of the pack to begin, almost going backwards to begin! He had to rekindle the fire that sparked his early streak of the evening, and luckily, would begin to do so. After going off track, it was though he knew he would have to march down the pack ahead, moving on from fourteenth. The mistakes of early on would be foregone, and ever so steadily, he would accomplish the task at hand, working his way to sixth. Although not pretty, he would do enough to win the overall.



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