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LONG HAUL WRAP-UP 2014 HUSQVARNA TC 85

Story By The DR Staff · Photos By Joe McKimmy & Jeff Allen

PRIMARY USE: FAST KIDS MX PRACTICE BIKE AND ADULT TRACK PLAYBIKE

MAIN MODS: NONE. WE KEPT IT BONE STOCK.

MOMENT OF GLORY: PASSING 250FS AND 450S ON THE TRACK

FORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE: HAVING TO BUMP-START IT BECAUSE THE KICKSTART LEVER DISAPPEARED

TOTAL HOURS: 20

AFTERMATH: WORN CONSUMABLES (CHAIN, SPROCKETS, GRIPS, TIRES), FOLLOWED BY A TRAIL OF SMILING FACES (AND ONE KICKSTARTER)

While many of the Long Haul bikes in *Dirt Rider's* stable are fed a steady diet of hard hours, long days, and frequent maintenance, other long-term machines receive similar treatment in a much faster time frame. The Husqvarna TC 85 falls into this category, and, although we didn't put 200 hours on the engine or complete a full teardown at the conclusion of the test, we still learned a good amount about this tiny two-stroke while it was under our care.

Following the first test (September issue), we handed the TC 85 to hotshot *Mini Rider* testers Gordon and Ryan Keck and gave them the following instruction: Ride it like you own it. And ride it they most certainly did, putting in some fast practice motos and logging time aboard the stylish little mini. The biggest thing we learned with the Keck brothers at the helm is that the Husqvarna has great durability that is far and away better than other minis that were designed several years ago. Whereas the boys and their dad used to have to weld and gusset the frame on their Japanese racebikes, the modern Husqvarna showed no signs of fatigue or breakage, even with the high-speed riders on board. The wheels, hubs, and axles also stand out as superior quality parts; this bike is definitely built tough for today's breed of ultra-fast kids.

Handling is very stable on the Husky and suited for higher speeds. Conversely, it wasn't as good on tight tracks as our testers wanted. The motor stood out and was stronger than other bikes in the class, but power and response are improved when the needle is dropped one clip leaner (even when they raced at

Mammoth). The brakes worked excellently and were among the first things mentioned when asked what was good about the bike. One issue that came up is that the TC 85 would often stall when shifted into first gear because the clutch would not disengage when cold, though it worked well when warm (the reason for this, we suspect, is that the clutch is a Formula—a Taiwanese brand—and not a Brembo, like on KTM's big bikes). As mentioned in the first test, the suspension is good for the average rider but is limiting for faster riders because of the lack of a linkage and an overall soft nature.

Following Gordon and Ryan's run on the bike, the 85 went to Web Producer Lindsey Lovell, who shared it with some of the full-size testers on staff while throwing down a few fun moto days. Lindsey felt that the Husky was extremely light and flickable, with BMX-like handling that was responsive and easy to control. At 100 pounds, Lindsey was pleased with the TC 85's strong and healthy power delivery, though she mirrored some of Gordon's comments that the bike is likely too powerful for a beginner or really small rider.

Overall, the Husky is easy to work on, with a simple design and easy-to-access air filter. Somewhat funky in shape, the plastic does make the bike tough to clean with all the nooks and crannies. Our only mechanical issue took place when the kickstarter bolt backed out after a few hours (due to a lack of threadlocker and an abundance of vibration) and caused the kickstarter to go AWOL in the middle of the track; we never found it, despite searching like crazy. If we had more time with this bike, we'd be looking at replacing the top end—85s are constantly in the high rpm ranges, which causes significant wear to the motor after a while—and we'd likely stiffen up the suspension as well. Our best piece of advice for the next owner would be to always be sure to run the proper fuel-oil ratio in the Husky (little motors can be sensitive to this; Husqvarna recommends 40:1) and make sure that the bike is properly jetted for the temperature and elevation you're riding it in. Oh, and don't forget to throw some Loctite on that kickstarter bolt! **DR**

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