

QUAD FEATURE

RACE OR PLAY 450R





Good enough for the track or trail

By the staff of *Dirt Wheels*

□ Last month in *Over The Bars* we brought you the incredible news about the team that won the Baja 1000 on a virtually bone stock Honda TRX450R. For 2004, that Golden West Cycle team, headed up by John Gregory, was awarded a factory support contract for their efforts. While running a completely stock machine may possibly get the job done, the team has decided to modify the 450R to give them an even better chance to take on the competition this year.

Days before the start of the 2004 desert racing season, we had a chance to join the Gold West Cycle (GWC) team at a test session. These days, desert race quads are what we can consider the ultimate trail bike. They have to be super reliable, handle all types of terrain and be comfortable to ride for hours on end. Don't you agree? With that in mind, while we were at the test session we jotted down all of the fine details and setup tricks on the GWC machine and are going to pass them along to you. When you finally get your hands on a new Honda, you too can create your own ultimate trail quad.

The test rider (Doug Eichner), sponsor (Scott Wright), engine tuner (Loren Duncan), chassis builder (Doug Roll) and shock gurus (Martin Lamoureux and Sam Arsemault) make a powerhouse team in ATV racing. Some may have other names for them; we consider them some of the best.



To make it easier to add oil, the GWC quad has a long filler tube attached to the oil cap. TRX450R owners have to remember to check and change the oil on both sides of this engine.

RACE OR PLAY 450R



The Golden West Cycle TRX450R is a long way from the stock 450R they rode in last year's Baja 1000. This one is twice as good, so the team will be twice as tough to beat.



Doug Eichner is a key part of Duncan Racing's testing program. He personally helps develop every Duncan racing product.

DETAILS

Gregory and GWC are actually fielding two identically prepared Hondas this year. The team will be going after titles in the Score and Best in The Desert racing series. Doug

Eichner and Mark Speath will pilot one machine while Gregory and Danny Rudd will man the other.

Duncan Racing will build the motors on both quads. As of this test session Duncan had only an



This TRX450R is about 2-1/2 inches longer than stock. This helps it fly better and conquer the rough stuff more smoothly.

exhaust and the HRC (Honda Racing Corporation) cam on this machine. Plans are to have their own cam and piston kit in the very near future. The team installed a Hinson clutch kit and uses Maxima

RACE 450R

20/50 synthetic Gold engine oil as well as Maxima chain lube and coolant.

The stock carb is used with varying jetting specs depending on location. A K&N filter is mounted in the stock airbox. IMS supplies the team with a 3.8-gallon quick fill gas tank to outfit the new Honda.

CHASSIS

A DID Gold Series chain connects the front 15-tooth Sunstar sprocket to a 38 Sunstar in the rear. The GWC team has Elka and Roll suspension all the way around. The front was dialed in with plus-one-inch wide and one inch forward Lobo II A-arms with Elka Quad Rate fully adjustable Elite series shocks. Maximum travel is an impressive 13.5 inches.

Out back, a Lobo II swingarm with an Elka dual rate fully adjustable Elite Series shock travels 12.5 inches. To give the riders more stability, a set of IMS large footpegs are installed. IMS also supplies shifters, brake pedals and bumpers to the team.

Golden West Cycle Private Label parts made their way on to the race quads in the form of a bar clamp and under-belly skid plates. The billet rear skid plate from their Baja winning quad found its way on to this new machine.

CR high bend Tag Aluminum T-2 oversize bars and Tag grips (medium/soft compound), with a Motion Pro Twist push/pull style throttle kit controls the machine. An Acerbis Rally II handguard kit protects the riders hands.

TIRES, WHEELS, ETC.

Getting the power to the ground, these guys rely on IIP Holeshots to do the trick. This machine had six-ply XCT's measuring 23-7-10 up front with eight psi and on the rear 22-11-9 six-ply XCT's held another eight psi. Since this quad was using a stock axle, the rear Holeshots were mounted on a deep 3+5 inches offset Douglas Ultimate in the rear. Up front, a protecting 4+1 offset Douglas was installed.

The team does have some confidence in Honda's stock components and kept a number of items OEM. Those include the frame, body, spindles, axle, hubs and ignition. However they did add an extra inch of foam plus a GWC cover to the stock Honda seat for comfort.

THE RIDE

Now that you know what goes into assembling the 2004 factory Honda desert race quads, it's time we told

you how they work. In one word; awesome. The Duncan exhaust equipped motor was still very smooth with a throatier feel. The motor would rev slightly quicker than stock and pull just as good out of corners and up hills. The push/pull twist throttle made gassing it buttery smooth.

Stock, the Honda brakes are the best in the business but for some reason the team changed to steel braided lines on the race quad. They didn't work as good as the stockers.

With 22-inch tires and 15/38 gearing, the desert racer hit a top speed of just over 90 miles per hour. At an average race speed of 40 mph the team expects to get 74 miles out of one tank of gas. However, those mileage expectations will drop after the motor receives more modifications.

The biggest improvement this machine received was in the suspension department. With a 1-1/4 inch longer swingarm, the quad's front end stays planted under acceleration. Now, it is just light enough to loft over obstacles if necessary. But it stays on the ground when it should and tracks great.

In the rough stuff, the front end is amazing. You could literally slam into large bowling ball size rocks with either front tire and barely feel it. The Hondas light and twitchy nose is also reduced with the help of the heavier front end and a GPR stabilizer.

During this test the GWC team was still finalizing settings on the rear end. However, this quad still had the best suspension on any TRX450R we have ever tested. We took several laps around our private desert test track and felt comfortable from the beginning.

Unlike other race quads, which are sometimes rigid, this is smooth, plush and very forgiving. With a prep job ready for 1000 miles in Baja, this machine could last a year out on the trails easy. Just be sure to check and change the oil on both sides of the Honda engine and you're good to go.

To find out more about the GWC desert 450R or to build your own ready for the trail version, call them at (800) 383-6776. □