

# ***MINIBIKES***

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What are those strange looking things on the hill? Are those insects going up, down and around the hills? Maybe they're hunting for food. They don't sound like most of the insects that live around the hills.





You're right! They're *minibikes* and they are hunting for something but it's not food. They are hunting for hills and trails. Some people even call them trail bikes. Call them what you like. They'll take you up and down the trails, anyway.





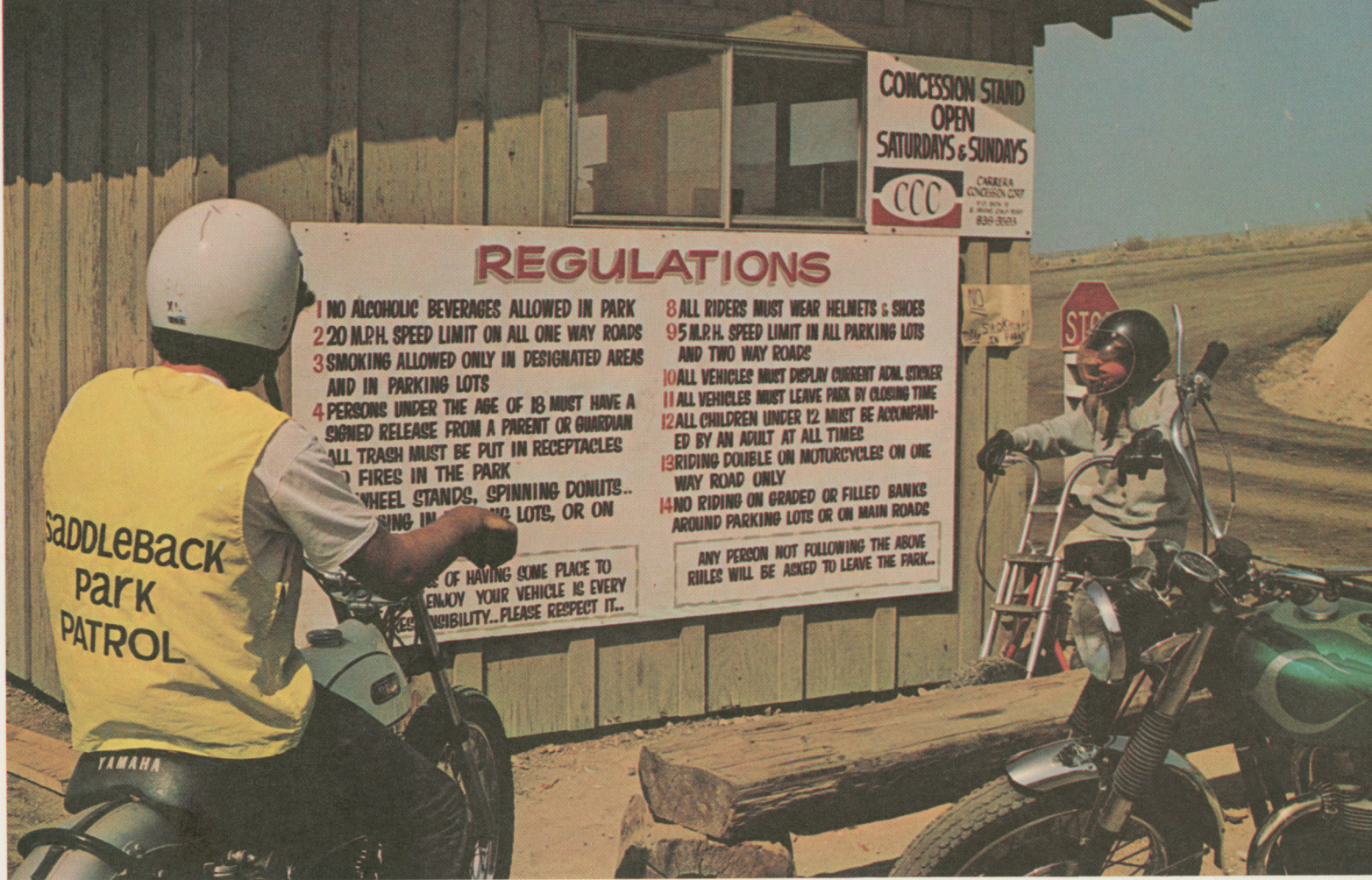
It's a good idea to check your minibike before you take it out on the trails. You should check the *drive chain*, tires, and brakes. A broken drive chain or flat tire won't take you where you want to go. Bad brakes may take you where you *don't* want to go.





Minibikes, minibike engines, and minibike riders come in all sizes. That's what's so great about a minibike park. Any size rider can ride any size minibike anywhere he likes — as long as he rides safely on a safe minibike.





At the park you pay to get in and use the trails. This park is for minibikes and motorcycles. You can ride in the park or enter races as long as you go by the rules. People who don't go by the rules get their money back and a chance to go home early.





There are so many hills and trails that it's hard to know where to start. You may as well start with a steep hill. It's a good test for the air cooled engine and your riding skill.





If you have plenty of skill, try a jump. It isn't hard going up. It's coming down that takes skill. If you don't get the rear wheel down first, it could be the last jump you'll make for a long time.





On some days a minibike club has races. Anyone who wants to may enter the races. The club rules say that riders must wear *helmets*, long sleeves, and shoes. If you *dump* your bike, you'll be glad you wore shoes, long sleeves and a helmet.





A club *official*, the *inspector*, checks the *frame*, tires, and brakes on every minibike. If the official finds a cracked frame, thin tires, or poor brakes he will keep you out of the races.





A minibike is a racing machine, so you must work on it before you race it. People do the work in a place called the pits.

When the work is done you put on your helmet and start your air cooled engine.





The rules say that a rider must race in a *class* set by the rider's age and engine *horsepower*. There are classes for different ages and different engine horsepowers. What class would this rider go in?





Everyone gets a chance to *qualify* for racing. To qualify you drive a fast lap around the track. An official times your lap. Riders with the fastest lap times go to the front and left of the *pack* at the start of the races.





In a minibike race it's a little easier to stay in front than it is to pass other riders in the pack. That's why every rider wants to be at the front of the pack at the start of a race.





Races are eight to twelve laps long. Twelve times around this kind of track is hard work. It's hard work for the mini-bike and the rider. Sometimes the rider in last place gets lots of free dust.





It isn't always the fastest rider who wins. Riding in a minibike race takes skill. Minibike people say the winner is the rider who can control his bike with the most skill. A turn like this takes control and *footwork*.





Riders who are ahead like to see the white flag. It means there is one lap left in the race. A red flag means stop. Yellow means go slowly and no passing. Riders don't like the black flag because it says to get off the track.





The checkered flag is what everyone wants to see. If you're in first place it means you win. If you aren't in first place, then the checkered flag just means that the race is over.





Footwork is part of minibike riding and control. Minibikes are built close to the ground so you can use your feet and legs for balance, steering, and even a push if you need it. Footwork can keep you in the running.





It doesn't take footwork, balance, or steering control to *dump* a minibike. If you spin out and dump your bike in a race, it's bad news. The red flag goes up to stop the race and you lose.

The club rules about safety clothes kept this rider from getting hurt.





Here's another way to lose. Minibike people say, "Hills and trails are for minibikes. Public roads are for cars and trucks." If you see a minibike on a public road it's bad news for the rider and *all* minibike people. Everyone loses.





Some models are called minicycles. A minicycle is a minibike that has a gear shift. You shift the gears to get different speeds and power. These minicycles with gear shifts were built in Japan. Yes, there are hills and trails in Japan, too.





No matter where a minibike is built, it must have certain parts. The main part, the *frame*, holds the seat, engine, rear wheel, and *front fork*. The handlebar and front wheel go on the front fork.





The angle of the front fork is called the *rake*. If the rake angle is too long, the bike is hard to steer. You can't be sure where the bike will go. Too little rake can make a bike hard to control at high speeds.





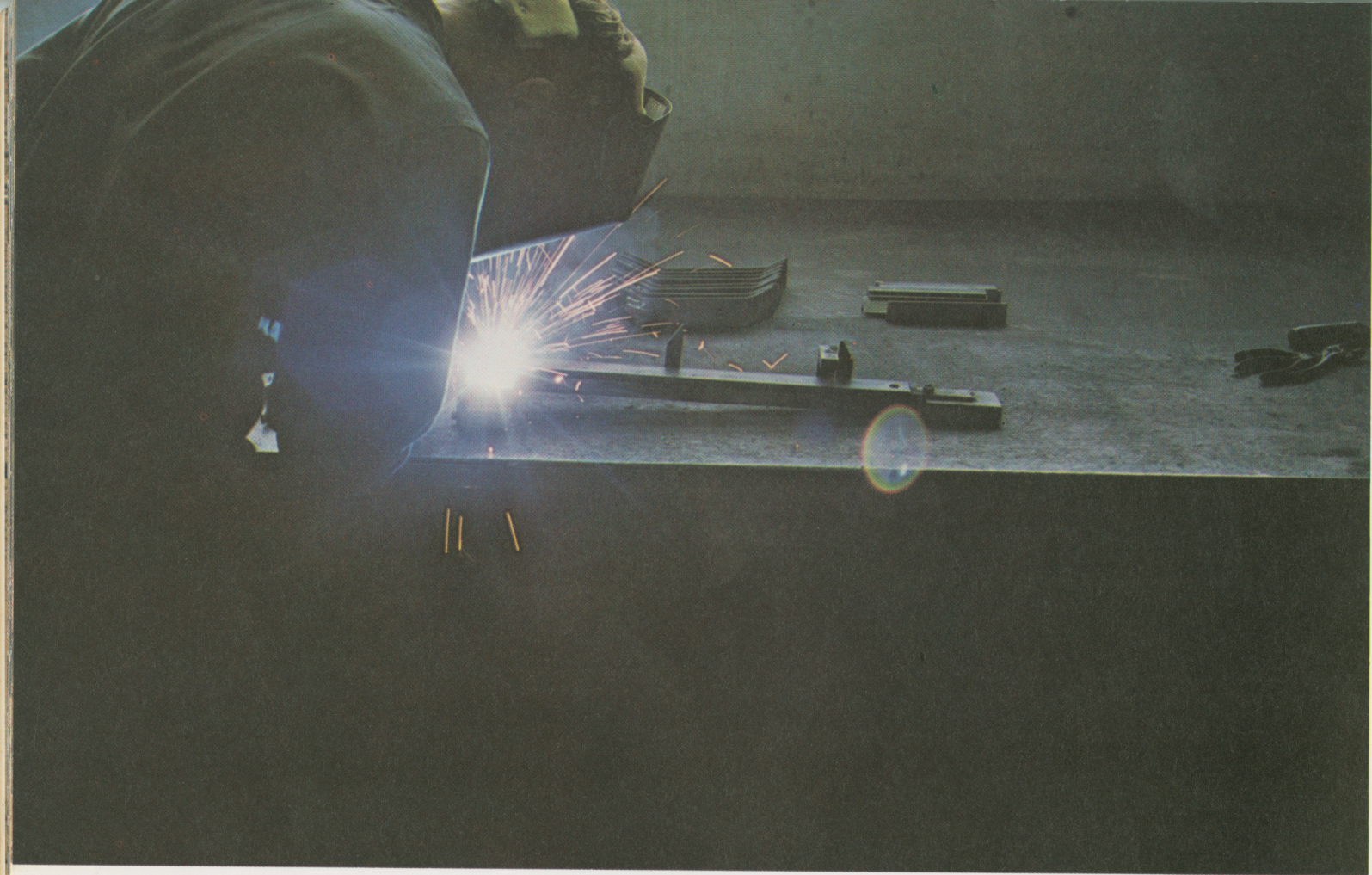
If you know how to *weld* you can build your own mini-bike. After the frame is welded together, you put on the wheels, handlebars, brakes, and seat. Then all you do is hope all the parts stay together while you ride.





When you are finished, some people may wonder if your minibike is a bicycle, or if your bicycle is a minibike. But when you feel that engine power, you'll know you finished building a *minibike*, not a bicycle.





Most minibikes are built in a factory. There's a man in the factory who works all day welding minibike parts. A welding mask protects his eyes and face from the light and hot sparks. He takes his mask off to eat lunch.





These minibikes are ready to leave the factory. All they need are riders to take them out into the trails, steep hills, and races. Which one do you like? The red one?





At the minibike track you can see every kind of machine and lots of action. Every rider in a race thinks his machine is the best. And he thinks he will come in first—or second—or third. Well, let's try to finish the race, anyway.





Riding in the race is as much fun as winning. Hills, turns, curves and the other riders are a big part of the action. It's your skill and your machine against all the others.





But even without a race, a minibike means action. Miles of steep hills, trails, curves, and turns are there for your bike to eat up. Shouldn't every town have a minibike park?



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