

First there was Thunder,

Now

# HUFFY PRO LIGHTNING

by Bob Hadley

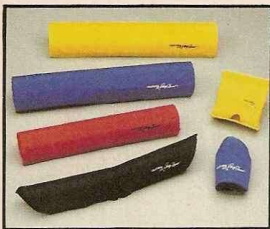
*Sitting down for breakfast on an average morning and going through the big ads in the daily newspaper, one invariably sees "Huffy 20" BMX, \$69" in bold type. Of course, anyone with half a brain about BMX knows what you'll get for sixty-nine bucks: junk. Why would anyone bother with junk? Why indeed. The business of making these cheap little bogus-bikes is mega-volume, mega-bucks. The big discount houses that advertise and sell them do it for little or no profit in order to draw customers into the store, customers they hope will shop around and buy high-profit items like a toaster or a microwave oven. They call such low-profit items "loss leaders."*



*Pro Robby Rupe riding the storm out aboard Huffy's new top-of-the-line Pro Lightning. During testing this bronze beast made for some red-hot, white-knuckle flights through the wild blue.*

Photos by John Ker





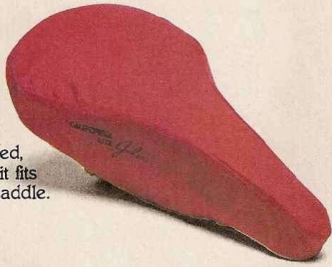
**CALIFORNIA LITE PADS**  
California Lite safety pads are made from the lightest weight foam possible, covered with durable nylon and include a velcro-style closure. They're made for frames, handlebars and stems and are available in blue, red, yellow and black.



**CALIFORNIA LITE-NING PADS**  
Designed with dazzling new graphics, California Lite-ning pads weigh only one ounce to stay lightning fast, look lightning sharp. Made for frames and handlebars and are available with multi-colored bolt graphics on black nylon.

**PADDED SEAT COVER**

The new padded seat cover from Johar cushions rough rides with high quality foam that retains its shape ride after ride. Available in red, blue, yellow and black, it fits any hard plastic BMX saddle.



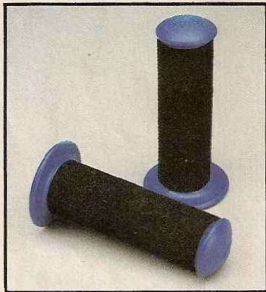
**RADGRIP™ CRUISER**

The cushioned comfort of Johar's Cruiser grips are EZ to install, EZ on your hands and EZ on your wallet. Ultra-tough Cruiser grips stay smooth and are guaranteed against normal wear and tear for a year. Available in red, black and blue.



**RADGRIP™ BMX**

Strong, comfortable BMX grips withstand drying, cracking and breaking and feature a super-tough plastic sleeve end that refuses to break after repeated spills. Comes in red, black, blue or yellow and is covered by Johar's one-year warranty.



**ANKLE GUARD/  
ELBOW PAD**

The new lightweight ankle guard and elbow pad protect against injuries caused by contact with bike parts or other riders. Each available in red, blue, black or yellow. (Sold separately.)



**BRAKE LEVER COVERS**

Johar's new brake lever covers provide good-looking protection from dust and dirt. Available in red, blue, yellow and black for coordinating with other Johar accessories.



*Johar*  
OF CALIFORNIA  
GARDENA, CA

**Q. What's the hottest thing about Johar?**  
**A. Everything!**

Distributors contact Alan F. Cohan Co.

# HUFFY PRO LIGHTNING



So what is Huffy doing with a \$250 bike? Can a company with their reputation for low-priced bikes actually build a race bike? That's what they told us the Pro Lightning was, a race bike. We figured on finding some interesting things, but basically a bike still built on sixty-nine dollar technology.

**Surprised—No, Shocked**

Boy, were we surprised. Visually the bike is long and low, with heavy "aero" styling. Most striking are the tear-drop shaped tubes used throughout the frameset, including the entire seat mast tube. For this Huffy had to come up with their own "exclusive" aerodynamic seatpost to match the inside of the seat mast. Because of its shape, it eliminates any problems of seatpost twisting. Unfortunately, its antitwist quality makes it a hassle to remove as well, a problem made more complicated by the fact that the post fits the frame extra tight due to the welding-penetration swells inside the tube at the top tube/seat stay intersection.

All the welding is true heliarc, which is a "major" for Huffy bikes. Their cheapest models butt-brazed, and the rest have usually been welded with a production arc-welding system that, while yielding stronger welds than butt-brazing, looks gruesome. Heli-arc is definitely not sixty-nine-dollar technology. The Pro Lightning's welds aren't bad. The penetration is good (as evidenced by the seatpost problem) but the filleting is inconsistent. It's good in some places but only marginal in others. On our bike the beads around the head tube looked too flat.

The welding on the fork was excellent. Looks-wise the unit is similar to JMC's teardrop fork. Construction-wise it's sound except for one peculiar thing: a one-tenth-of-an-inch gap between where the fork crown is welded and the lower race flange. We thought this was very unclean. Everyone who looked at it shook their heads.

That was, in fact, the only

Has Huffy gotten serious about BMX or what? Just lookit this thing—trick, aero-tubed frame and fork, and name-dropping, big-time componentry. All at a small-time price. How do they do it? They're America's largest—that's how!

BRADLEY



unclean part of the Pro Lightning's design. The rear triangle, for instance, shows very careful planning. The front chain ring has decent clearance and the caliper brake mount, a slotted plate, is positioned to coincide perfectly with rear axle adjustments. The rear dropouts, as well as the caliper mounting plate, are one-eighth-inch thick which should be substantial enough to eliminate any twisting or spreading.

Comparatively, the workmanship is reflective of what you'd expect to find on your average two-hundred and fifty dollar bike. If you've been following the trends and competition in this price range, you'll have found good to excellent work.

### The Groupo

Europeans like to bunch all the main components together and call it a "groupo." A groupo consists of the stem, cranks, brakes, levers, pedals, headset, seatpost, and hubs. For all practical purposes, you won't find any better groupo on a two-fifty-priced bike. Every component is easily beyond our minimum standards of acceptance.

Starting with the hubs, they are black-anodized, low-flange SunTour unit hubs. These are the exact hubs you'll find on the new Red Lines. The front is a basic loose-ball unit. The rear is a

"cassette"-style integrated freewheel/hub system. The cogs are splined and snap-ringed in place. Standard gearing is 16 in the rear, 44 on the front.

The cranks are Sugino chrome-moly one-piece units (175 mm). The chain-ring set is Sugino quick-change. The bottom bracket, unfortunately, is of the sixty-nine-dollar-caliber. Rounding out the drive-train components are two new MKS pedals with removable cages. They aren't as high-class as platform pedals, but better than those found on most two-five-zero-priced bikes.

Brakes are by Dia-Compe, which we never get tired of seeing or complimenting. Once again, for anyone who yet doesn't know: Dia-Compe calipers are tops, the best. Cable operation is smooth, the return spring action smooth, and the lever feel is solid. The Pro Lightning uses "Pro-bend" Dia-Compe touring levers which work just fine.

ACS supplies the stem. Ours had a new Allen bolt replacing the old-style stem-binder bolt. This is a welcome change.

Now one doesn't always have to carry around a socket and ratchet just for the stem bolt. Also, the Allen wrench size for the binder bolt is the same as for the pinch bolt, one-quarter inch. Our stem fit into the fork with just a smidgen of



Rupe wrings out the new Pro Lightning over a typical jump on any BMX track in Anytown, U.S.A.

play. We found we needed a flex-fighter if we wanted to run the stem up any amount. The flex-fighter kept the stem from rocking back and forth at all.

Rims generally aren't considered part of a groupo. The Pro Lightning uses the very newest in rims: Araya Aeros. The new Aero rims are reported to be the strongest alloy rims on the market, even stronger than the old 7C's by Araya: they aren't as light as a 7X rim but they still aren't heavier than an old "C." The braking surface is adequate, and the rims are easy to keep true for those of us who do our own rim maintenance. Because the rim has such a deep dish to it, we suspected it might ding easily, but throughout the test we never encountered that problem. In all, we like the rims for their sturdiness, but for racing we'll stick to the lighter-weight 7X's.

Handlebars are much a matter of personal preference. The Huffys are a bit small considering the sizing of the rest of the bike, but you never know, they may work for you. We figured the bike to best fit riders around 5'5" or taller. The thirty-seven-inch wheelbase and rearward



If you're looking for department-store equipment on this scooter, pal, forget it! This Huffly is like no other you've ever seen before. It features name-brand goodies and quality you can brag about. Check out the tricked-out chainguard. It looks so good you probably won't take it off.

seat angle dictate that. We tried a set of eight inchers and found them better suited for our test sessions. The stockers are aluminum V-bars, which are very light.

We've seen the Avocet touring seat on several cheaper department store Huffys. Likewise, the same seat sees duty on the Pro Lightning. It's no doubt one of the most comfortable seats you'll find on a BMX bike, but like any padded seat, the cover will inevitably get ripped to shreds after a few crashes. Also, the underside clamp on our seat was pretty flimsy; a couple of hard landings just about did it in. Like the name says, it's a *touring* saddle, meaning "road riding." If you're careful, it'll last you a while (but who is careful about BMX racing?).

If we had a choice about being able to change only one item on the Pro Lightning, it would probably be the tires. The bottom bracket you can live with for a while, the same for the seat. Maybe the bars don't suit you either but, hey, they don't on a lot of bikes we test. The one definite change before hitting the track would be tires. Specifically, the front.

Both are 1.75-inch, Cheng Shin Snakebelly treads. It's actually an

all-right tire for the rear, even for racing, but up front we found ourselves wanting something with a knobby tread on it. The tire didn't really affect the steering characteristics that much. It just wanted to skip around and wash out in loosely-packed corners. On hard-packed dirt or clay surfaces, places where you might in fact race with snakebellies on both ends, they worked fine. And in the street, too, they worked fine.

### The Basic Ride

The Pro Lightning rides better than any other Huffly we've ever tried. It is quick steering, responding to handlebar movement almost like it's got power steering. Lack of stability isn't a problem even though it's a quick turning bike, probably because of the long wheelbase. The balance is front-end light over jumps but not uncontrollably so. That same feature also makes the bike easy to wheelie. It's somewhat more of an "expert"-handling bike than you'd normally find in this price range. Not that a stone novice couldn't handle it—he could. It would just take him a hair longer to get used to the bike at speed. Then again at slower speeds it's well suited to any novice.



Double R and the sharp new Pro Lightning strike a classic pose while bolting high above our secret and sacred testing grounds.

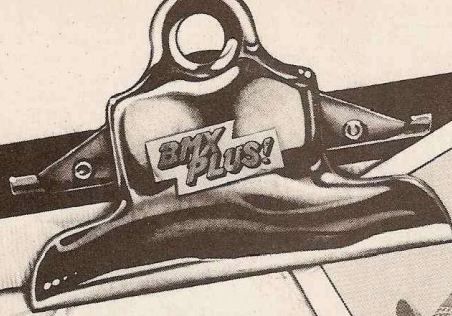
### Conclusion

As far as a race bike goes, Huffly's Pro Lightning compares on par with some of the best bikes in its price range. The key is its componentry, 90% of which is totally dialed-in. This bike obviously doesn't fit into the usual Huffly mold. It wasn't designed to be advertised as a "loss-leader." Still, even though Huffly expects to see it sell for about two-fifty, don't be surprised if you see it for much less. And the cheaper it gets, the better buy this bike becomes, because if you can live with the stock handlebars and the gearing will suit you fine, this may just be the best buy on the starting line.



If you don't think this guy is full-on flat-out you're kidding yourself. That's Robbie Rupe, Eric's bro and Huffly's hot new pro. As a team, he and the new Huffly are Lightning fast around just about any course, any time.



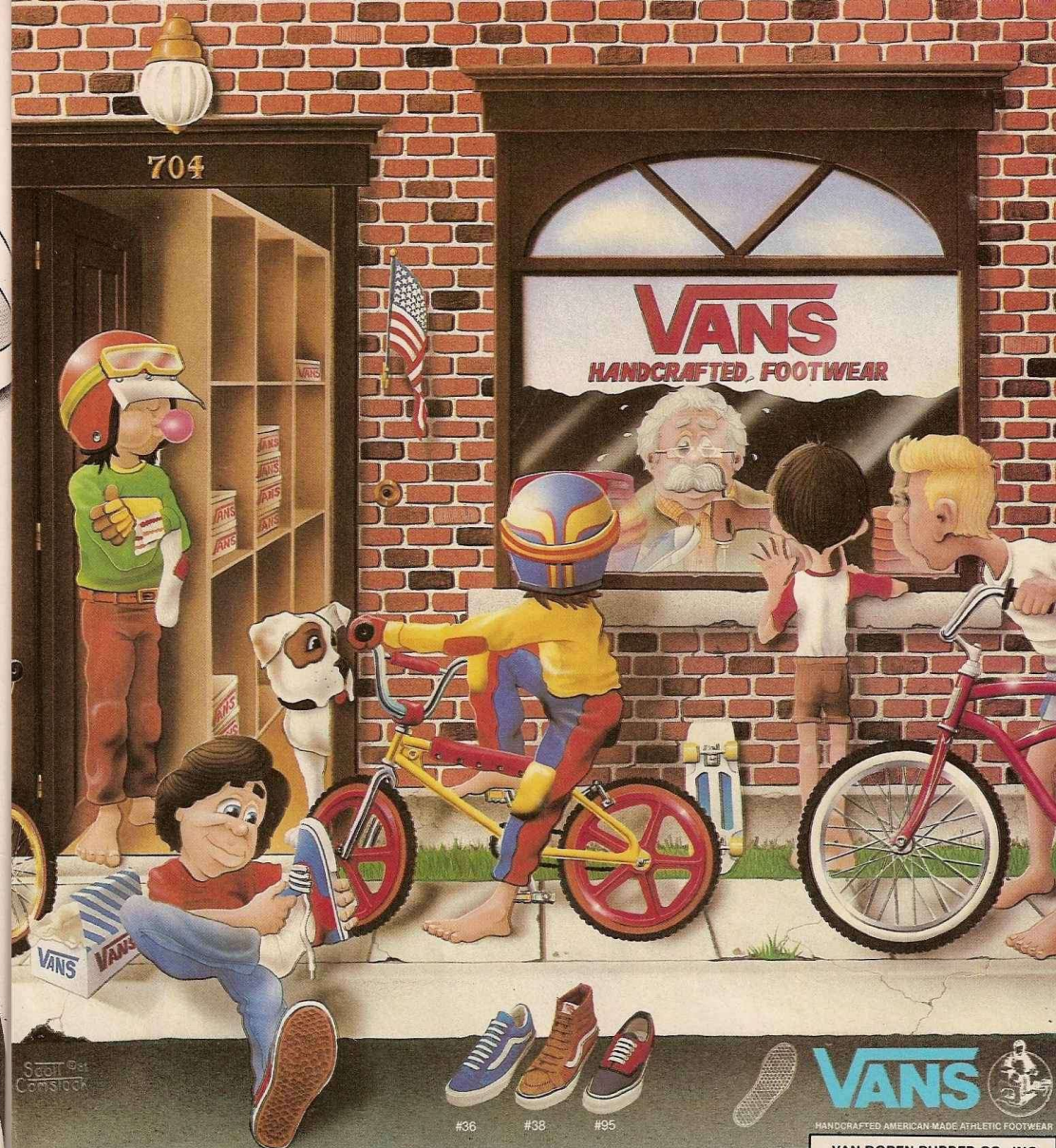


Bike: **HUFFY PRO LIGHTNING 20.**  
 Age Range: **10 AND OVER.**  
 Country of Origin: **DAYTON, OHIO, U.S.A.**  
 Intended Use: **RACING/HIGH PERFORMANCE STREET.** Frame: **HUFFY 4130 CHROME-MOLY TEARDROP TUBING HELI-ARC WELDED, BRONZE FINISH OVER CHROME PLATING** Fork: **SAME.**  
 Wheelbase: **36 1/4" TO 37 1/4"** Top Tube: **21 1/2" HIGH**  
 Chainstay Length: **14 3/4" TO 15 3/4"** Steering Head Angle: **71°**  
 Bottom Bracket Height: **11 1/4"** Bottom Bracket: **AMERICAN**  
 Seat Tube Angle: **65°** Head Tube: **4"**  
 Wheels: **RIMS: ARAYA ADX-7W 20" X 1.75" AERODYNAMIC, ALLOY, 36-HOLE.**  
**SPOKES: 080/36, CHROME PLATED. HUBS: SUNTOUR LOW FLANGE, ALLOY, 36-HOLE WITH QUICK-CHANGE CASSETTE-TYPE REAR MODEL, LOOSE BALL. TIRES: CHENG SHIN SKINWALL 20" X 1.75" FRONT AND REAR (35 PSI)**  
 Drive Train: **CRANKS: SUGINO ONE-PIECE CHROME-MOLY, 7", WITH RETAINERED-BEARING BOTTOM BRACKET SET. PEDALS: SR ALLOY W/REPLACEABLE CAGES, CHROME-MOLY SHAFT. CHAIN: 1/2" X 1/8". FRONT SPROCKET: SUGINO 44 T ALLOY QUICK-CHANGE WITH CHROME-MOLY SPIDER. FREEWHEEL: SUNTOUR QUICK-CHANGE CASSETTE 16 T.**  
 Brakes: **DIA-COMPE 890 CALIPERS FRONT AND REAR W/ DIA-COMPE CABLES AND PRE-BENT TOURIST LEVERS.**  
 ETC: **HEADSET: CHROME-PLATED STEEL W/ RETAINERED BEARINGS.**  
**STEM: ACS ALLOY 4 BOLT W/ CHROME-MOLY SHAFT. HANDLE-BARS: ALLOY V-TYPE, BLACK ANODIZED, 7 1/2" RISE X 2 3/2" WIDE. GRIPS: A'ME TRI. SEATING: AVOCET TOURING-PLASTIC BODY, LIGHTLY PADDED, NAUGAHYDE COVERED W/ 12" CHROME-MOLY POST AND ALLOY SEAT POST CLAMP. Overall Weight: 25 3/4 POUNDS.**

ACCESSORIES: Three Johar California Lite pads, Zeronine Airflow number plate, full set of CPSC reflectors, and a Lexan plastic chainguard.

For additional information contact:  
 Huffy Corporation  
 P.O. Box 1204  
 Dayton, Ohio 45401  
 (513) 865-5428

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