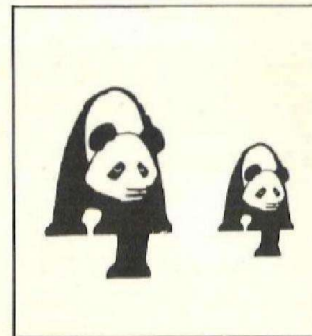




# Pandarctos melanoeuca minor (Panda Mini Pro/Am)

"Guess what I've got for you?"  
 "What?"  
 "A new Panda!"  
 "Does it bite?"  
 "Uh, what...?"  
 "How big is it? How much does it weigh?"  
 "Only around 22 pounds."  
 "Mmm... seems harmless enough, is it on a leash?"  
 "A leash? What are you talking about?"  
 "The Panda. I'm really into exotic pets."  
 "Hey, I think you misunderstood. I'm talking about the new Panda Mini Pro-Am bicycle."  
 "That's fantastic, how'd you teach it to ride a bike?"  
 "No! No! No! It's a racing bicycle!"  
 "It races too? That's fabulous, that's incredible, that's... Hey man, why are you crying... Was it something I said..."

If you survived that corny introduction now would be an appropriate time to truly associate ourselves with the Panda Bicycle Companies newest, the Mini Pro-Am.



As you can see, the Mini Pro-Am is a direct off-spring of the regular Panda Pro-Am. (Ha, Ha, fooled ya again).

While the real Panda is a carnivorous raccoon like beast, the Mini Pro-Am is 100% pure bred 4130 Chrome-moly aircraft steel. Top grade material, it's the "in" stuff on all the super bikes these days. Panda uses TIG welding

(Tungsten Inert Gas) at all the joints. The welding beads are very fine and reflect the work of a genuine craftsman at the welder. From the first glance the Mini Pro-Am strikes you as a very stout machine. The oversize downtube and short wheelbase give it that stocky appearance. The bike looks like the perfect mount for a miniature Larry Czonka, or perhaps more appropriately, a miniature David Clinton.

The frame feature a couple of designs that you don't normally find on Jr. size bikes. The head tube is precision machined on the inside for proper bearing fit and alignment and the outside is machined to shave a few ounces of excess weight. The bottom bracket is machined on the inside so the BB parts fit as well as the headset. The other trick part on the design of the Mini is how the seat stays wrap around the seat post all the way up to the top tube. We're not sure where the design originated but Patterson Racing Products uses it also. The advantages are more surface area of weld on the stays. It can also cause some minor problems, if you're not careful. The extra

welding can penetrate through the seat post tube and obstruct the insertion of the seat post. Fortunately Panda reams out the seat post tube on all their frames to insure proper fit.

Panda took a big step forward by introducing their new fork with this bike. The fork blades are tapered chrome-moly tubing similar to Schwinn's Sting fork. The dropout has been re-designed and the fork legs have been trimmed at an angle for smoother lines.

The geometry on the Mini leaves no doubt as to the market that this machine is aimed at. Any one over ten years old, on the average, would be too big for the Pro-Am. It is for six, seven, or eight year olds it right on the money. It's very short in the front bringing the bars within a very comfortable reach of the average tyke. The bike favors the type with short, stocky legs; the front triangle is very compact, strong evidence that Panda designed this bike especially for this type of rider.

The hardware and components also reflect the type of thinking that went into the frame

(Continued)



Tim powers the Mini through a soft sweeper. Young Ellis could easily maneuver the Pro/Am in any direction or circumstance.



The machine is very versatile in any turning situation. Berms can be attacked full out.

# Panda Mini Pro/Am

## Panda Mini Pro/Am

Frame	4130 Aircraft C/M TIG Welded
Fork	4130 C/M, Leading Axle
Cranks	Tourney 170mm
Headset	Tange
Pedals	KKT
Chain	HKK
Wheels	Shimano Free Hub 80 Ga., Araya 7C rims
Tires	20x1.75 Comp II
Seat	Faellia D'oro Black Plastic
Seat Post	Fluted Alloy
Seat Post Clamp	X-Caliber
Handlebars	Race Inc. Alloy
Grips	Oakley II's
Stem	Sun Tour
Brakes	Dia-Compe

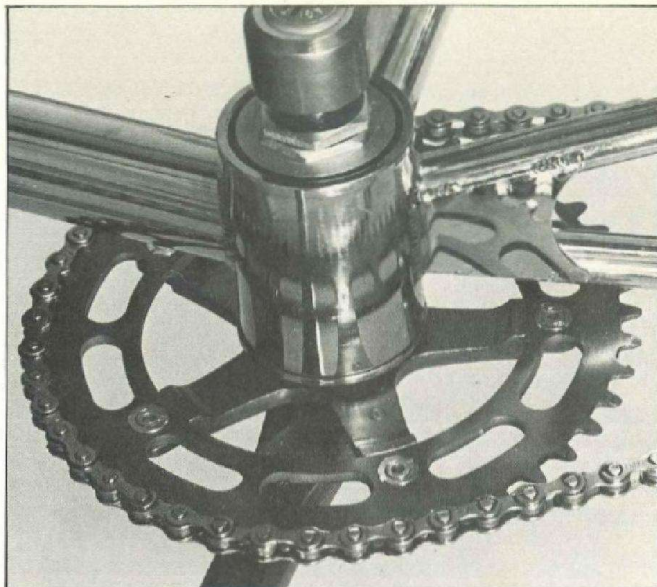


geometry. The D'oro seat is small and light, the Race Inc. aluminum bars are the smallest available (*Editors Note: for the test session we used the medium size bars*) and the Suntour Alloy stem have only a small amount of offset from the steering axis, which keeps the bars close to the rider.

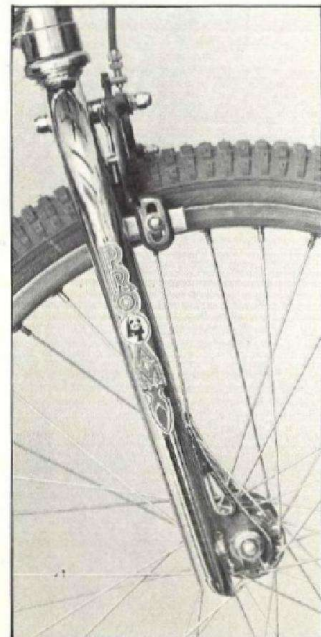
If we had to get critical about any part of the bike it would have to be with the height of the crank hanger. It seems to be a bit high, a fact that is made more noticeable due to the short (33.5 inches) wheelbase.

Regardless of the hanger height, our testing showed that the Mini Pro-Am has excellent balance. This is very important for a small machine, a bike that is easy to control, is easy to race, and a young racer shouldn't have to worry whether or not he is going to lose control. The Mini Panda instills confidence, it lets the rider control the bike instead of the bike controlling the rider.

The bike is absolutely free from flex. The heavy duty tubing, short



Here's a look, up close and as personal as you might want to get of a Panda Mini Pro/Am's underbelly. The craftsmanship is excellent.



Here's a close look at the Panda's tapered front legs. The angled ends are welded closed.



Tim took several runs down this extremely soft downhill turn section to see if the short wheel base would cause any trouble because of the sand. Tim's prognosis: No trouble!

wheelbase and solid design concepts all combine to make it perhaps the most rigid mini on the market. If anything the Panda is over built. It will probably outlast just about anything of comparable geometry. On the other hand, however, the Mini is slightly heavy. It's nowhere near as light as a slim, trim, bare to the bone mini DG racer or similar mount.

It's a toss up, you're either going to have a super light bike that won't last or a heavier bike that will be around for the next Star Wars episode. The choice is yours.

Even with the weight, the Mini Pro-Am is "definitely a hot racer" according to Tim Ellis. Tim really liked everything about the bike. It comes standard with many components that are high up on his list of preferences. Oakley grips, Mitsoboshi Comp II tires, Race Inc. handlebars, KKT pedals and X-caliber seat clamp to name a few (See specs for complete list).

The 170mm Tourney cranks gave us no problem. The stock 44T front sprocket worked universally well with any combination of 16 or 17 tooth rear cogs on the Shimano free hubs. Tim raced with a 44/16 but for younger (Tim is 9) riders Tims' father suggests trying 42/16 or 44/17 depending on the track. The way the Panda comes stock gives you a good variety of options to work with. Takagi front sprockets and rear freehub cogs are readily available almost anywhere.

The suggested retail price on the Mini Pro-Am should be in the neighborhood of \$340. The prices will vary from place to place so check around. Panda has a fine product and they have a good reputation for prompt delivery even to the East Coast markets. For more info on the Mini Pro-Am write:

**Panda Bike Co.**  
1450 Franquette Ave  
Concord, Ca 94520



Tim had no trouble at all in the air, despite the 33.5 inch wheelbase. Panda put a lot of well spent time in the design of the Mini Pro/Am.