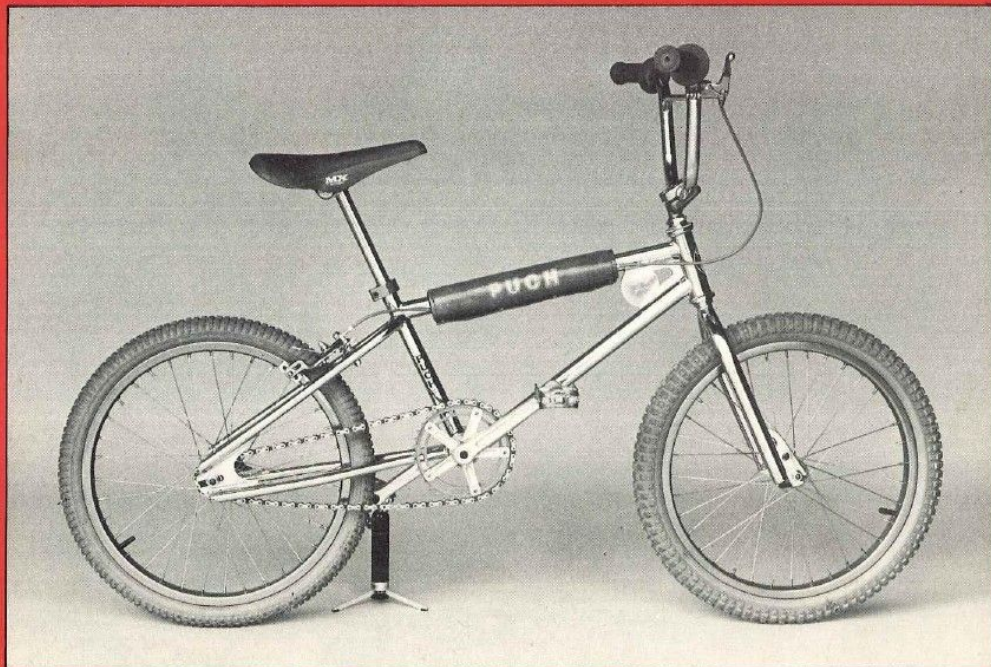


PUCH TEST

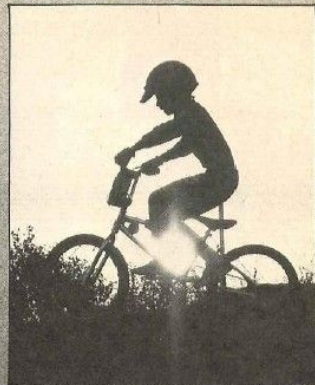


Puch is *not* pronounced "Putch". Nor is it pronounced "Poosch", or "Puck".

The correct pronunciation is "Pook" (it rhymes with kook). Steyr-Daimler Puch of America is the United States Branch of the second largest corporation in Austria. In Austria, Puch has been making bikes for over 100 years. Today they manufacture motorcycles, mopeds, four-wheel drive vehicles, and a variety of military vehicles, including tanks (Hey! Maybe we'll get to test one.) Since 1976, Puch of America has been supplying the American market with mopeds and teh-speed bikes.

In addition to their Austrian-made machines, Puch imports bicycles from other sources to keep up with market demands. When the need for a Puch motocross bike arose, they came to a U.S. manufacturer that could supply them with the required product.





Tim Ellis found the weight balance point on the PRO/TRAK to be slightly to the front of the bike. Power wheelies are easy, if you want to do them.

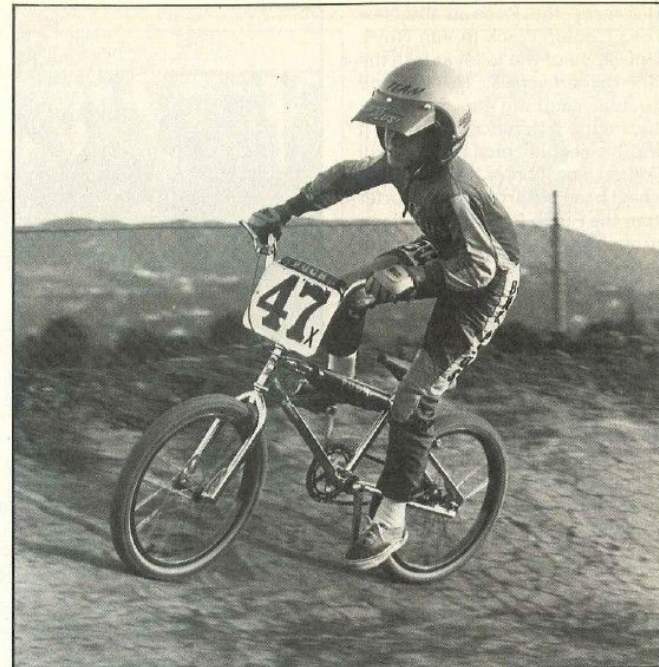
The source of the Puch Trak/Pro is the Speed Unlimited Company. They also make the Thruster bicycle. The two frames share a few basic construction features. Both are bred from 4130 chrome moly tubing. Both are heli-arc welded (very cleanly). Both have nearly identical rear dropouts. The big difference between the Puch frame and the Thruster is the chrome moly floval top and down tubes and the seat stay arrangement.

The floval (flat oval) tubing increases the vertical loading capabilities of the frame. Impacts from jumps and ruts are less likely to cause the frame to flex. The low profile of the bike was specified by Puch because they want the bike to fit a full range of riders ages 8 to 16.

The geometry of the Trak/Pro is versatile enough to accommodate those requirements. The head angle seems to be a bit less than the SU Thruster. So, the Puch doesn't handle as quick. The Trak/Pro is forgiving and easy to ride. The Trak/Pro costs over \$450 bucks. That may seem steep at first, but if you had to outfit a bike identically you'd have about 350 in parts alone. For a fully equipt race bike it's a good deal.

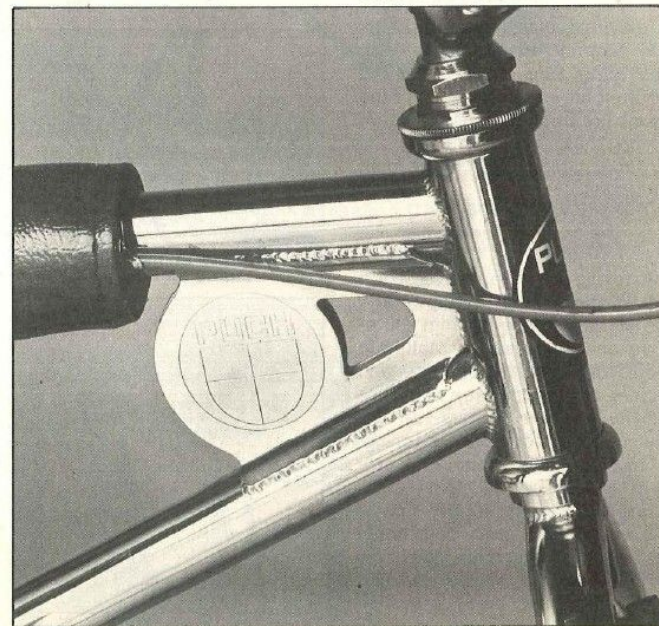
If you can't justify the price take a close look at the components on the Puch. Dura Ace cranks alone retail for around \$70.00 without any chain rings. That alone accounts for a big portion of the price. If you already have all the goodies you need but are lacking a decent frame, Puch offers the Trak/Pro in a frame and fork combo.

Also standard equipment on the Puch is a full set of high quality safety pads. The extras that come with the bike are rear sprockets size 13, 15, 16, and 17. We would recommend getting at least one more front chain ring. The stock 39-tooth just doesn't give you the versatility of a 43 or 44. We would suggest a 43-tooth for younger riders and a 44-tooth for older riders (over 14 years old). A 44/16 gear is almost identical to the stock 39/14. Our test rider Tim



ABOVE: The bike is aimed at the 9 to 15 year old market. As you can see, Tim, nine, has plenty of room.

BELOW: The head gusset are form fitted to the tubes and have the Puch logo stamped on. All the welds are very sano.



Ells raced the Puch at the New Teen Center Track in Van Nuys. Tim is one of the taller kids in the nine expert class. He had no trouble adapting to the Puch despite the differences between it and his regular race bike, a mini Torker. The Torker has a 35 inch wheel base, a full one inch shorter than the Puch. Even though it is a larger bike, Tim still finished third overall.

For the Teen Center Track Tim chose a 43/16 gear, a bit lower than the stock 39/14.

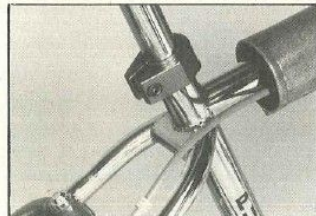
Tim also mentioned that the bars felt just a tad bit to tall for him. That means that the bars should be perfect for anyone larger than Tims 4 foot 9 inch size. The width and bend are comfortable. The cross bar is modified on both ends for "bent" brake levers.

Puch handling is predictable. It does exactly what you expect it to do, no more no less. The Puch has some handling traits similar to the Schwinn Sting. The turning response is excellent as is the bikes ability to track strait over ruts and bumps. The one trait that set it apart from the Sting is the Trak/Pro seat positioning. It sits just slightly more forward than the Sting. The result is less leg room but more weight on the front tire in turns. The leg room Puch has sacrificed is not critical, it still has room for most riders.

All the components on the Trak/Pro are top notch performers. The drive train components were especially outstanding. The 170mm Dura-Ace one key release cranks are state of the art. Durability and ease of maintenance were obviously key factors in the selection of components for the Trak/Pro. The 170mm crank size was a wise choice. Most small kids that run the longer 175 or 180mm cranks can't even come close to spinning them. The Izumi chain worked flawlessly and Shimanos New link lock system never gave us any hassels. Once you figure out how it works you'll realize what a great feature it is.



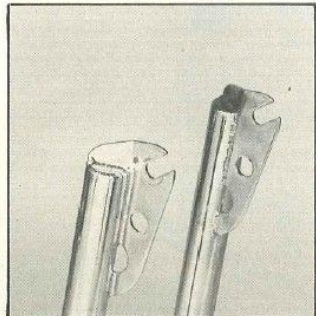
The Puch TRAK/PRO was a dream to ride and race. The bike made maneuvers like this jump/turn combination with style and relative ease.



Here's a close-up look at the ultra-clean welding on the TRAK/PRO.



The long wheelbase makes these long slides smooth and predictable.



ABOVE: The forks feature strong, extra-strength drop-outs. RIGHT: "Terrible" Tim Ells was back in the test business on the TRAK/PRO.



For your hands they give you the luxury of Oakley grips. On the right side of the bars is mounted a Tourney "bent" brake lever. We found the brakes to work adequately at first then, with some minor adjustments. We were able to improve their performance a noticeable amount. The Shimano chevron Style brake shoes seem to work best with only a minimal amount of toe-in.

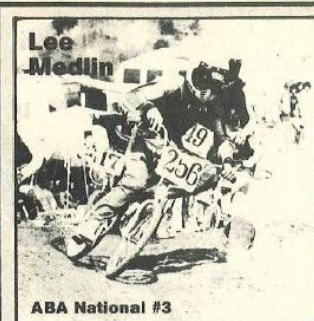
When we tore the bike apart for the routine overhaul everyting slipped off perfectly. No amount of excess force of any type was ever needed to remove any component. The crank cups and head cups fit perfectly, Not to tight yet not to loose. Speed unlimited machines out each crank case to insure exact tolerances. The rear wheel slipped right in and out of place with zero effort. Chain alignment is good and it has an abundance of clearance at the dropout.

The Speed Unlimited fork has very unique dropouts. The axle slips into the slots from the front. Most convention forks slide the axle up to the fork from the bottom. The drops are also reinforced by the extra surface welded under the leg itself. It has to qualify as one of the more rigid forks on the market.

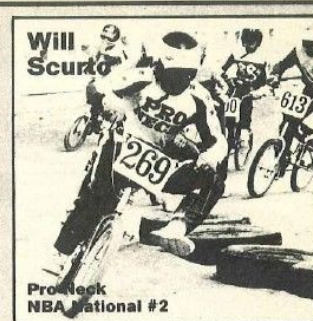
The rim covers (tires) are trusty Mitsuboshi Comp II's. The blue gum walls are the perfect rubber for the Trak/Pro. They offer excellent traction, and are light weight, and match the chrome and blue color scheme of the bike.

Special from Puch.

Since Puch hasn't been in the BMX biz for very long they thought it fitting to release a special edition Trak/Pro. A black and gold version will be available in limited numbers at Puch dealers only. The bike will commemorate the introduction of Puch to the racing world. It will be set up almost identical to the one we tested so if your thinking of getting one check out the Special Edition, it may be a classic one day?

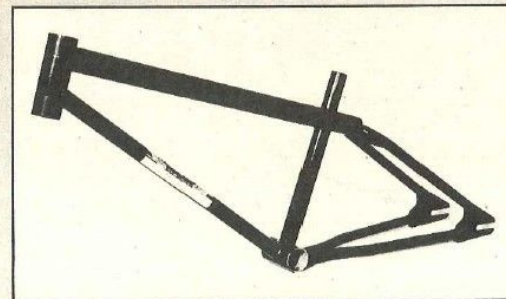


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