

BMX
ACTION
OFFICIAL
test

GETTIN' SERIOUS



**ROBINSON
PRO
TEAM
MODEL**

WRITTEN & TESTED BY
CHRIS "MAD DOG" MOELLER

Part two (out of four parts) of the Robinson test was stopping by the NCB Clinic for some thrashin' with Cecil Johns and Terry Tenette. Moeller put a jump called "Kong" to good use. The Nor. Cal. boyz call this place the Clinic because it's where you get "treated."



No, he didn't cut himself shaving. No, he wasn't break dancin' when his cardboard slipped. Actually, Moeller looped out racing the Robinson because he wasn't used to the light front end . . . one raspberry chin, to go.

ONLY SERIOUS RACERS NEED READ THIS TEST

For years, the Robinson name has been a symbol for quality in the sport of BMX racing. Robinson has never sold a freestyle bike and not once have they turned to inferior overseas manufacturing.

In the past, only hardcore, dedicated racers have ridden Robinsons—mainly due to its limited availability and high price. Up until now, this exclusive bike had only been offered as a frame and fork, with handlebars of equal design. This combo has taken the abuse of some of the best riders in the world and has managed to develop a following that is small but very distinguished.

Along comes 1987, and with it, the expansion of Robinson. They've now been able to put together an incredible all-race machine with a list of components that reads like the who's who of top 'o the line parts. As our great grandfathers told us, there is a price to pay for near perfection. True. But, I ask, how bad do you want to win?

I'll tell you how bad this bike wants to win.

AT ALL COSTS

When buying a bike of this caliber, there are a few things to remember, a few things to consider, and a few things to forget.

Since the Robinson is made for the most serious racers in the older expert

and pro ranks, traditionally important points such as weight and price suddenly seem to take a back seat to more vital things like handling, componentry, and durability.

Not to say that weight isn't important—it's just that a person who would buy this bike cannot afford to tweak the frame or taco a paper-thin rim. Price also becomes somewhat overshadowed when the price of one out-of-state national event can easily surpass the price of any complete bike on the market. So, skip a national—buy a good bike instead!

HANDLING BREAKDOWN

First of all, I'll try to break down the handling of the Robinson into three parts—accelerating, turning, and

jumping. The Robinson has a very short rear triangle. Quite simply, this means the chain is shorter and the rider is placed over the rear wheel more than normal. By allowing for less chain slop and more direct drive, this improves acceleration out of the gate and coming out of slow corners. Having your weight over the rear wheel keeps traction to the ground when you come out of the gate. It also places the rider in a more comfortable pedaling position. These concepts in bike design were taken directly from the ten-speed type bikes many years ago when Robinsons were first designed.

The overall length of the bike is not necessarily shortened due to the rear end. Rather, the front triangle is just a little bit longer than usual. What this

Here's what the Robinson is really meant for—national caliber racing. On Sunday, Moeller took the Pro Team model to both his 16 X and 16 open mains. And if you know how hard those classes are, you better believe the Pro Team model is worth 550 bucks!



There are a bunch of things you should know about this photo.

1. Stop number three for the Robinson test was an ABA national—this is it.
2. In order to wake up the crowd, get some killer pics, and bring the fun back into BMX races, the ABA held another after-the-third-moto's jumping contest.
3. \$100 was up for grabs—courtesy of Totally Awesome (the video people) and us—BMX ACTION magazine.
4. The Robinson performed to Mad Dog's liking—he was doing can-can Leary's, this here one-handed can-can, and (for the first time ever attempted) a no-footed 360 to his doom.
5. Moeller had some tough comp, though, from a Nor. Cal. local called "Mr. Air."
6. But never fear, once again, the angry canine came out on top. He's now 2 for 2 and has enough money to go to the next national.
7. The ABA is stoked on jumping contests this year. The crowd loves 'em, and we hope to see them at more and more races.

does is transfer into a bike with adequate wheelbase but more knee room for the rider. Since the turning is determined by the wheelbase, head tube angle, and fork rake, the short rear end doesn't contribute to squirreliness like a short wheelbase would.

For 1987, the head tube on the Robinson Pro frame has been steepened one degree to compensate the trend in recent years toward tighter tracks.

The Robinson forks are famous for

their straight leg design. The axle is straight down under the fork leg—not out in front like most everybody (except for Mongoose and Quikline). What this does is lessen fork rake while still being able to use a safe amount of offset at the top of the fork near the crown. A bike like this, with less kick or rake in the fork turns better and gives the rider more control. This also eliminates the "flop" effect that you get when turning a bike with choppered forks.

All of these aspects (steeper head tube, good wheelbase, and less fork rake), allows the Robinson to carve turns at high speeds with control. It turns quickly and accurately in tight racing conditions. You don't have to fight with the Robinson to make it perform.

Believe it or not, the things that make a bike accelerate and turn good are the same things that contribute to its jumping. The short rear end of the Robinson allows the front end to lift easily for speed jumps or ruts. The lengthy

overall wheelbase provides stable control while in the air.

Along with steepening the head tube, the '87 Robinson also has a raised bottom bracket—only about 3/8ths of an inch. How does this effect the bike's jumping, you ask? Well . . . now the bike can go over taller whoops and not hit the crank or sprocket. Most importantly, it won't drag a pedal while cranking over a jump or around a turn.

Since the bottom bracket has been raised, you may need to raise your gooseneck about 3/8ths of an inch to equal out the distance between your bars and feet. This is only necessary if your old bike had a low B.B.

QUAL COMPONENTS MINUS TWO

Even with such good geometry, a bike can easily be ruined by the choice of componentry. Not the case with the Robinson Team Pro Series, thank goodness! Almost every single part on this bike is worthy of its excellent frame

and fork design. Almost. I'll save the two bogus parts for last.

The good components on this bike start off with the aluminum three piece GT Power Series cranks—with sealed bottom bracket. I've found no flex in them at all—I even run them on my personal race bike. The bearings are smooth and maintenance free. At the end of these aluminum sculptures of art you'll find SR Speedtrap pedals—also equipped with sealed bearings for your pedaling pleasure. Robinson chose a 43/16 gear instead of the traditional 44/16—a nice and needed change in stock bikes.

Another part that usually lacks on production bikes is the stem. Eighty percent of the time you get some cheap Taiwanese imitation that won't hold bars for more than one jump. Proudly clamped onto the Robinson is a DK Pro XL stem—aluminum head, chrome-moly shaft. Almost every pro chooses to use DKs. This neck is one of, if not THE, strongest stems in the world.

The seatpost and handlebars are both made by Robinson and have original designs and function. The bars are a little taller than most and have a very small bottom section (clamping area near the gooseneck). This is made to eliminate knee slap. The seat post is brand new for '87 and is going to be very popular. It's a lay back, but the bend is real sharp—not gradual like most. This hides the lay back section underneath the seat for a clean look and most importantly, allows you to cut the post down to fit your size and still leave a lot of room to mount your seat. Both bars and seat post are 100 percent 4130 chrome-moly and are made in the USA—just like the frame and fork.

One aspect of the bike componentry that people seem to be more concerned with lately are hubs. The hubs on the Robinson are definitely the best I have ever seen on a stock bike—small flange, sealed bearing, chrome-moly axled GT hubs. You might think the hollow axles are weak, but after abusing the bike myself and watching 185 pound guys like Jerry Jones and John Crews pound the bike into oblivion, I doubt anything can hurt these hubs.

Laced to the GT hubs, you have Ukai shiny-sided 1.75 alloy rims. They're strong and fairly light weight, but if you are about 13 or so, I'd suggest putting on 1.5 inch rims. Of course, that means you'd need to get new tires, also . . .

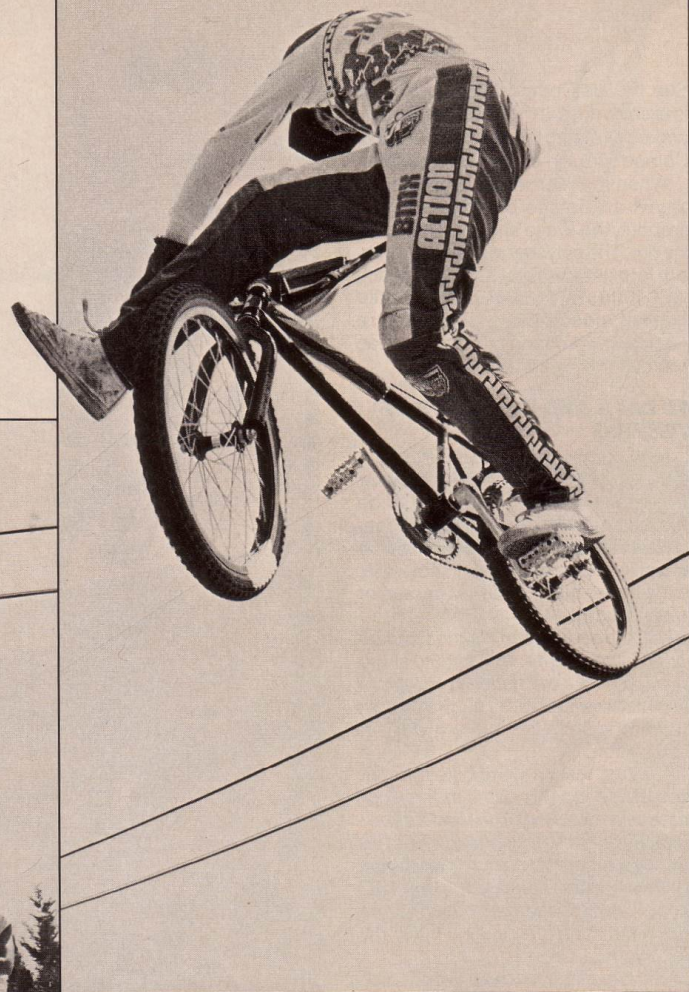
Which brings us to the 2 bogus parts—the IRC so-called "BMX racing" tires in the front and rear of the Robinson. The tires look like paddles with countless rows of perfectly flat knobblies—no curve in shape. Very flat. They sorta resemble the ancient

Carlisle Aggressors. There are no staggered knobs to break up the paddles, so what happens when you turn or start to slide, you die. No way around it. If you're wondering how to solve this traction problem, it's quite simple—you throw the tires away and slap on some Comp III's. (Maybe keep the IRC's around for a mud race or a track with no turns.)

Aside from the tires, there is only one other problem with the Robinson—the brakes. Or rather, the brake position.



It's fun to show bail shots like this because you know that he just learned a new jump from it and will have it dialed in a couple months. Looks like a kicked-out no-footed can-can, don't it?



Diary of a Mad Dog. His latest creation—the can-can Leary. Slight Matt Hoffman influence, here. Only an itty bitty example of what a thrashing the Robinson stood up to.

See, the Dia-Compe 901 caliper brake is excellent, as is the Tech-7 lever. The braking problem I'm getting to isn't Dia-Compe's fault—maybe Robinson's.

When the rear wheel is positioned anywhere in the back half of the dropout, the brake shoes won't reach the rim. The only way to solve this problem is to get a brake with longer reach (MX-1000s?) or reweld the brake bracket closer to the tire. I'm sure Robinson will change this problem as soon as they read this test.

40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS OF TESTING

Now comes the critical part of the test—when we try to thrash the sucker to pieces (heh, heh). How do we do this, you ask? Well, usually we consider what kind of bike it is we're testing and give it appropriate treatment—like, is it a street bike, beginner beater, or full-on race bike? For the Robinson, it's a well known fact that it's meant to be raced. It costs a lot, so it should stand through a lot. And believe me when I say this bike was put through the most grueling test EVER in the history of BMX ACTION.

The first test I put the bike through was at the local races—in the 16 X class with me as the pilot. How did I do? First place on it my first time—with no damage except for ripped grips. It was this race that I discovered that IRC stood "I Ride Concrete." I used Comp III's in the main after sliding out in my first two motos.

Part two of the test was get crit on it for two weeks straight—street riding with no mercy. I flogged it at Stevo's track in Huntington Beach and hit my usual concrete jumps. The Robinson pulled through that part of the test with minimal damage—only two VERY bent pedal cages. This minor problem was fixed by taking it to my local bike mechanic, Greg Scott, at South Coast Bike Shop in Santa Ana (there's your plug, Greg). He replaced 'em with Urchins—the finest in grippage for us "pure" racers.

Next, we (Gork, Windy and I) hopped in the ol' Astro Van and took off to an ABA National to further evaluate its capabilities. Stopping in the bay area first, we let Cecil Johns and Terry Tenette try their hand at thrashing the Robinson. Of course, they had no more success than I did.

Then came the race. The national



Test site host and hyper Nor. Cal. A-pro, Jerry Jones, loftin' his jive BMX style.

was a two day event, so I had plenty of time to get used to the bike on the track. On Saturday, the front end felt a little lighter than I was used to because my "Mad Dog" signature forks are about 6 ounces heavier than Robinson's. But for the most part, I rode well on the bike considering it was only my second race on it. The Robinson and I made the 16 open main on Saturday but got caught in a big pileup over the first jump. We bailed, but in ABA, there's always the next day . . .

Sunday was a lot better. I changed the gear to a 42 so I could get out of the gate a bit faster, and I made both mains. A 5th in 16 Open and a 5th in 16 X was pretty impressive results for a 99 percent stock bike . . . if I do say so myself.

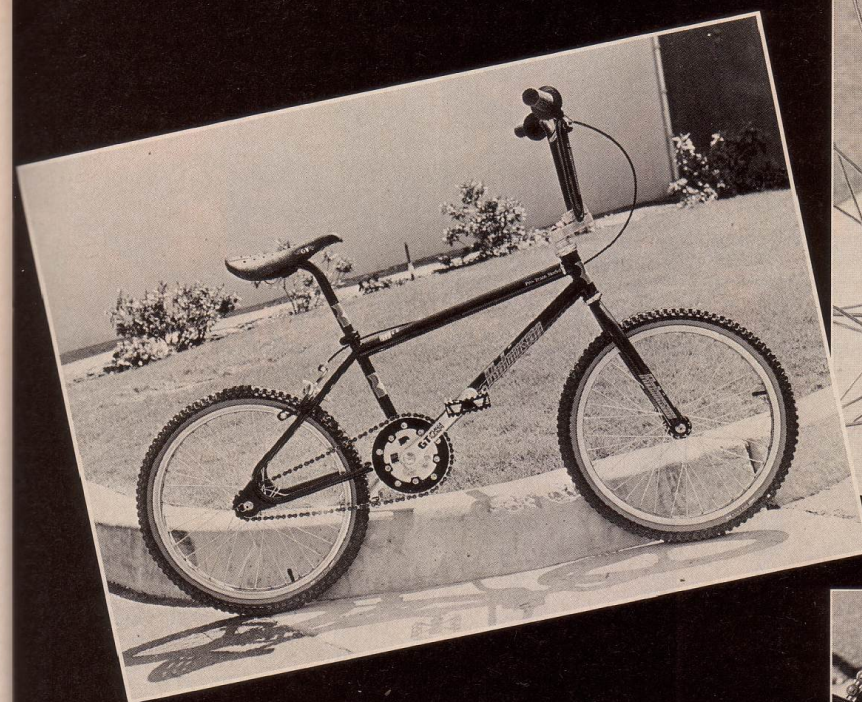
The forks bent just a hair when I rode in the jumping contest, but then I'm not quite the mellowest (or smoothest) guy around, either. It's hard to avoid a slight tweak on any forks nowadays.

On Monday we drove up to Rockland—home of Jerry Jones' Supercross track—lengthy doubles running rampant through his front yard. We let Jerry and John Crews (you remember him, right?) ride the Rob the whole day. The seat post bent a little under Jerry's 185 pound impact landings and the forks continued their flexing when John was doing his 8 foot high "Crews" over J.J.'s massive doubles. At Jerry's house, the bike was really put over its limit—but the rims never bent and the cranks and frame never flexed. Overall, I'd sum up that this bike is one of the strongest in the world. No other test bike has been put through so much . . . and survived.

CLOSING NOTES

In conclusion, the Robinson is a great handling bike with years of design built into it. The componentry is excellent except for the IRC tires. I'd expect to see Robinson do something about the brake position or change to longer brakes. As for having to buy replacement parts, I doubt you'll need to unless you thrash it worse than we did—and that, my friend, is impossible.

Race this bike—if you don't, I'll slap you. Anybody can rip on this thing—Greg Hill and Todd Mitchell both do. Save your money up and get a Robinson. Start racing. Start getting serious. And hopefully it will help you start WINNING.



PRICE & SPECS

COMPLETE BIKE PRICE: Between \$520 and \$550.

AGE RANGE: 13 and up, intended for expert and pro racing.

COMPLETE BIKE WEIGHT: 24 1/4 pounds.

FRAME WEIGHT: 4 pounds even.

FORK WEIGHT: 1 pound, 9 ounces.

HANDLEBAR WIDTH: 29 1/2 inches.

HANDLEBAR RISE: 8 1/2 inches.

TOP TUBE O.D.: 1 1/4 inches.

DOWN TUBE O.D.: 1 3/8 inches.

FORK LEG O.D.: 1 1/8 inches.

HEAD TUBE ANGLE: 73 degrees.

SEAT TUBE ANGLE: 74 degrees.

BOTTOM BRACKET HEIGHT: 11 3/8 inches.

REAR END LENGTH: 13 3/4 inches to 15 inches.

WHEELBASE: 35 1/4 inches to 36 1/2 inches.

BRAKE PADS: Dia-Compe.

BRAKE CABLES: Dia-Compe.

BRAKE LEVERS: Dia-Compe Tech-7.

CRANKS: GT Power Series, three piece, aluminum, 175 mm.

PEDALS: SR Speed Traps, sealed.

SPIDER: GT power disc, aluminum.

FRONT SPROCKET: GT chain ring, 43 tooth.

REAR SPROCKET: SunTour 16 tooth.

CHAIN: Zumi Zebra.

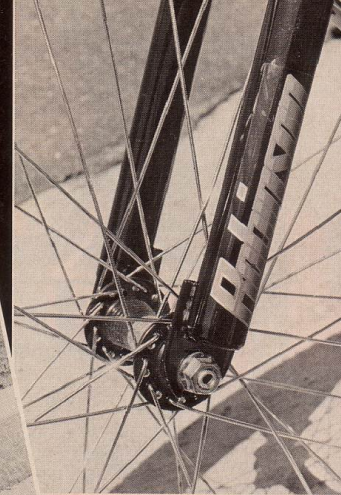
BOTTOM BRACKET SET: GT, sealed.

SEAT: GT/Viscount, plastic.

SEAT POST: Robinson, 100 percent chrome-moly.

SEAT POST CLAMP: GT, alloy.

ACCESSORIES: Robinson pad set . . . yes, all three of 'em with the new logo in red, blue, and gold.



MISCELLANEOUS COMMENTS: "Man, that black paint job looks BAAAAD!" . . . "I dig on the seat-post." . . . "Chuck the tires, bud. They toot." . . . "All I did was change the cages, tires, and the gearing." . . . "Maybe they should make it stock with 180 mm cranks?" . . . "What's the handle underneath the seat for?" . . . "Is this bike one big sealed bearing, or what?" . . . "The attention to detail is bitchin! Take that little plate on the seat tube for instance." . . . "The Tech-7 levers are cool since you don't have to take the grip off to remove the lever." . . . "Made for racers. Made to win races."

TEST AREAS: Pre-testing done at Stevo's Track in Huntington Beach, race testing done at Orange YMCA and the Stockton BMX Track during the Springnationals, and abusive testing done at the NCB Clinic in Palo Alto and Jerry Jones' house in Rockland, California.

TEST INPUT: Insane Animal, Jerry Jones, John Crews, Randy Shaftner, Rick Palmer, Stevo, Greg Scott and his chick, Greg Hill, Todd Mitchell, Mindy Joe Robinson, Windy, and Gork (whew) . . .

MANUFACTURER: Robinson Racing
5422 Commercial Drive
Huntington Beach, CA
92646
(714) 891-7451 ■

COMPONENTS

FRAME: Robinson Pro model, 100 percent chrome-moly.

FORK: Robinson Pro model, 100 percent chrome-moly.

HANDLEBAR: Robinson Pro, 100 percent chrome-moly.

HANDLEBAR STEM: DK XL, polished aluminum head, chrome-moly shaft.

GRIPS: AME Rounds.

HEADSET: GT Epoch, alloy.

RIMS: Ukai, aluminum, shiny-sided, anodized black.

SPOKES: 14 gauge, 36 of 'em, chrome.

HUBS: GT, small flange, sealed, aluminum, with hollow chrome-moly axles.

TIRES: IRC, 20 X 1.75 front and rear.

BRAKES: Dia-Compe 901, rear only.

Performance Evaluation

QUALITY OF FINISH: Excellent. Durable, glossy . . . cool decals, too!

QUALITY OF WELDING: Great. We can sum it up in three words—MADE IN USA.

QUALITY OF COMPONENTRY: The best, with the exception of the tires.

GEOMETRY: Cool. You can't get any better—short rear end makes it speed jump easy and quick out of turns.

HANDLING: Quick. Turns killer and totally stable in the air. The lengthy front end subdues the rear end's tendency to allow the front wheel to lift prematurely (get it?).