

HIGH-TECH MINI FROM SUPER LA



Left: Test-pilot Aaron Malt easily lifts the front wheel as he comes to grips with the ultra-lightweight. Above: Madonna and Webster show off their SLA prototypes.

Bike Test

We heard the rumour that SLA, Queensland's most popular bike manufacturer, had come up with another top bike. This time it was one for the anklebiters, the Junior Championship Special. Now it was pretty obvious the two young team riders, Madonna and Webster, must have been aboard some pretty slick machinery judging by the plates they picked up at the Nationals but we wanted to see for ourselves just how good the bike really was. So Darrel Lockhart and the intrepid test team set off for the turf.

By Darrel Lockhart.

SLA MANAGER, Graham Stevens, is well known throughout Australia for his design and manufacture of BMX bikes of all types. Since 1980, Graham's been putting a lot of effort in to the junior end of the market and has been rewarded with a long string of successes.

But it was only recently that he turned his attention to the mini. And what a ripper he came up with! The SLA Junior Special was originally designed for six-years-old Madonna Scott at the request of her father Wally. Soon the prototype was on the track and there was no doubt this bike was everything Graham promised when Madonna started creaming the opposition — no worries.

Graham also signed up seven-years-old Wayne Knipe (otherwise known as Webster) to ride the other prototype. These two little hotshots racked up quite a few wins and both turned in top performances at the Nationals recently.

Now the Super LA Junior Special and the Super LA Junior Championship Special are available in the shops and Graham's absolutely stoked in these new models. His aim was to design a lighter bike with improved handling so the kids could still rip

around the track without coming to grief when they were pouring on the power.

New concept

Incorporated in this little bike is a new needle bearing bottom bracket design and front headset angle. It all sounds pretty technical but it really means that when you hit the berm at top speed and get that dreaded feeling that you're gonna end up on your head, you still have power to spare to get you out of danger.

The frame and forks come supplied with the bottom bracket set because it incorporates the needle roller and end thrust bearings running on a specially manufactured chrome-moly hardened axle. Unlike conventional bikes, the bearings run directly on the crankshaft and are lubricated by oil. This is far more efficient than any sealed bearing set-up.

The bike weighs in at only 12 lb 2 oz. Madonna's bike is even lighter as half of the front spokes are removed for racing!

Well, promises are one thing, but we wanted to see performance. The team headed for Brisbane's Lockyer Valley track which

seemed like a good place to put the bikes through their paces. Wayne Knipe and Aaron Malt from the Sandgate Club came along as test pilots.

On the turf

The little guys donned their safety gear and Aaron put in a few slow laps to accustom himself to this ultra-lightweight.

He was soon joined by Wayne, already an expert at handling this machine. They set off at a blistering pace, both demonstrating the exceptional

gate starts this radical new design is capable of, and hit the first berm at top speed.

One of the more impressive features was the way it handled. Both guys were pushing it to the limit but still managed to get the right line on the berm without it drifting out.

Over the whoops the lightness of the frame was obvious. Aaron was lifting the front wheel with no effort at all, then replacing it neatly to put power to the pedals and move on. The hardest part of the test was getting the guys off the bikes.

When asked what he thought, an

excited, though somewhat exhausted Aaron said "excellent". We didn't need to ask Wayne his opinion.

We later heard that Aaron was so pleased with the performance that his Dad's already put in an order.

The SLA Junior Championship Special is available through your local SLA dealer, but by order only. The entire unit, which includes the frame and forks, headset, gooseneck, needle roller, end thrust bearings and bottom bracket, retails at around \$600.

If you're looking for mini-muscle power, check this one out!



A close-up of the craftsmanship that went into this super mini-model.



Left: Now Aaron's really flying and wrapped in the bike while (above) Webster demonstrates how well he knows this scoot.

SPECIFICATIONS

FRAME: SLA 4130 chrome-moly, finished in chrome plate or powder epoxy, white or colour to order.
 FORKS: SLA 4130 chrome-moly.
 HEAD TUBE: 3 inch racer.
 GOOSENECK: SR.
 HANDLEBARS: Powerlite.
 GRIPS: AMI.
 BRAKES: Shimano 600.
 BOTTOM BRACKET & CRANK: SLA Special (needle bearing).

CRANKS: Suntour.
 PEDDLES: Bear trap.
 HEADSET: Shimano or Galli
 PADS: SLA
 CHAIN: 3/32 racer.
 RIMS: Araya
 HUBS: Sunshine sealed bearing hubs with special aluminium axle.
 SPOKES: Sewups SS double butted.
 SEAT: Uni.

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