



GOLDEN WEST CYCLE'S YAMAHA RAPTOR 700

Taking on the Quad Cross Series

Photos by Pat Carrigan

As the ATV sport scene continues to grow, that means there are more quads to race as well. The new Raptor 700 is no exception, as Open Classes all over the country are being filled with the fuel-injection big bores. Needless to say, Golden West Cycle (GWC) has joined the mix and fielded a trick 700 in the Quad Cross Series with Daryl Patton aboard.

HOW DID WE SEE IT?

Golden West Cycle's team manager John Gregory called us one day. "Hey, do you guys want to check out our new Yamaha Raptor 700?" That is like one of those dumb questions that will get a dumb answer; do you think we would say no to that? So we met up with the Golden West crew at Race Town motocross track to see what the quad was all about.

HOW DOES THE QUAD LOOK?

The 700 looks really nice. ITP hoeshot MX tires, streamline rotors and shiny Douglas wheels help make the machine look fast even at a standstill. The Pro Armor bolts, like bumper, nerf bars with heel guards, and shift and brake lever are very high quality and add to the overall aesthetic appeal of the machine. Finally, Maier plastic and Golden West graphics really give it a refined, clean look. It's aggressive looking without being overdone.

WHAT IS UNDER THE FENDERS?

A few enhancements have been done in the engine department, but nothing overboard. A JE 12.5:1 piston, DASA MX grind cam, GTYR pipe and GWC filter adaptor with K&N filter help coax more power from the big 700. In order to get the engine running in peak form, a GWC fuel injection management system helps, along with a complete Hinson Racing clutch assembly (basket, inner hub, pressure plate and plates). To keep things cool, a larger PWR radiator was installed along with Maxima coolant.

WHAT ELSE HAS BEEN DONE?

On the rear of the machine, a standard length GWC limited edition swingarm is used. Handling is maximized up front through the use of a complete Laeger's Pro-trax front end that has everything, including A-arms, tie rods, spindles, anti-vibe steering stem and oversized streamline rotors. Elke Elite shocks are bolted on to keep things running smooth by providing 13 inches of front wheel travel and 10.5 inches in the rear of the quad. Other features include Lonestar billet front and rear hubs, 2+2 Axcaliber Axle, twin row bearing carrier and dual pinch locknut.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO RIDE?

We spoke to Daryl Patton before taking a spin to get his feelings on the mighty 700. He said that he really likes riding this quad. He felt a rider who is used to 450s might feel the quad is a little big at first, but larger riders will feel very

GOLDEN WEST RAPTOR



It may be a bigger quad than the 450s but the Yamaha Raptor is a great jumper and actually very nimble in the air.



The Golden West Raptor 700 pulls hard in the mid-range, so it hooks up and pulls strong out of turns.



comfortable on it. And, upon riding, we would have to say he was right with his assessment. Sitting on the bike, it is very roomy, but everything feels like it is in the right place for most sizes of riders. The difference is that it does have a wider feel at the footpegs.

The quad fired up easily and has a very strong-sounding bark. When shifting through the gears, one thing become evident right away; this thing has a ton of mid-range power. And as you ride, it soon becomes noticeable that the quad likes to be ridden by short shifting and lugging it around. We were able to clear any obstacle with ease by using this riding style. It turns very accurately, because it is hooking up everywhere, which is something that helps inspire a lot of confidence.

When it comes to airtime, that is not a problem. The quad may be a bit heavier than the 450s, but the Elka suspension combined with the Laeger's front end makes pounding the rough stuff and landing big hits a very smooth process. We quickly felt comfortable on the quad and felt con-

fidant we could easily win races on this thing. It was evident Daryl was used to it; he looked like he had a great time riding the Yamaha out on the jump-filled race track. He was able to flick it around just as easily you would see a 450 rider do.

CONCLUSION

We knew from previous testing that the Yamaha Raptor 700 is a great all-around bike. Dune riding especially was a ton of fun on this quad; however, Golden West Cycle's modded 700 is truly a top-of-the-line ATV that would have no problems winning grueling motocross races. It is really easy to ride on the MX track and is very forgiving, so we are convinced. Although GWC needed to take the bike back, we would like to thank them for being so open to us putting a pounding on their equipment. The ATV Action crew was even asked if we wished to race the quad and we will probably take them up on the offer. For more information on what to do with your 700, call (800) 383-6776 or log onto goldenwestcycle.com. □



The rear end of the machine is equipped with Lonestar running gear, like axle, locknut and bearing carrier. The Elka Elite Shock and Golden West swingarm after a total of 10.5 inches of wheel travel.



The Elka Elite Shocks, combined with the Laeger T-pin front end, give the front of the quad a very plush 13 inches of travel.