



SUSPENSION TEST RACE TESTED

YSS

Words: Glen Williams Photos: fotoCD / White's Powersports

A few months ago we ran a feature on Glen Williams' YSS-equipped FZR1000 Post Classic racer; GW updates us on how it's been performing on the track.

It can be hard to evaluate a product sometimes when the testing of it occurs in a controlled track day environment and with nothing around to directly compare it to. So in the case of a new suspension system recently fitted to my Pre89 Post Classic Yamaha FZR1000 (aka GW01), it was time to get to the nub of the matter and give it a proper test against other machinery in the real world of racing.

When riding in 'race mode' you are naturally trying to get on the gas as hard as you dare out of corners whilst also getting on the brakes in relative anger going into them. This will quickly highlight your own 'setup' and allows you to directly compare it to your competitors. With that in mind I packed up my gear and set off to Round 1 of the Victoria Club's Actrix Winter Series at Manfeild to give this YSS suspension stuff a solid workout.

Welcome to winter racing

We arrived at the track on a damp, cool autumn day – whilst this might not have been ideal weather for the riders, it was bound to test out the new suspension's ability to provide traction and highlight any weaknesses in this area quick-smart.

A quick change of tyres was the first order of the day (some second-hand wet weather Dunlops that I had managed to blag off a mate) and we ventured out into the wet gloom with a slightly tentative throttle hand for our qualifying session. I needn't have worried though as after only a few sighting laps I found that the bike was hooking up reasonably well and was able to push a little harder to 'feel out' where the grip level was. First impressions were that the rear end was a bit unwilling to follow the front into the faster turns of Manfeild in a straight-ish line, and also that rear grip would need to be improved for getting out of the slower turns. On a positive note however the front end felt pretty solid and the YSS PD (progressive dampening) valves with accompanying springs fitted appeared to be working quite well in the conditions.

So whilst I knew we had some work to do, the qualifying result (pole) still confirmed that things weren't too bad overall – and it was a good start to the day.

Time for change

The YSS service agent (Kerry Dukic) was on hand for the day and after a brief talk I decided to have him fit

BANG FOR BUCK SCOREBOARD

It's reasonably safe to assume that if the YSS suspension works this well in the taxing environment of a racetrack with a 140hp/210kg of motorcycle with grippy slick tyres fitted, then it's a fair bet that it should work pretty well on the road as well.

At this stage I give the YSS gear 8.5 out of 10 for ease of use/fitting, 8 out of 10 for on track performance and 8.5 out of 10 for supply/service and value for money. That's an 8.3 average.

The performance score might seem harsh – but may simply be mostly down to the poor winter season weather with little quality track-time to develop further improvements. It would be reasonable to expect this score to hopefully improve as we dial things in closer to the mark come summertime.

The rear custom built shock that's fitted is an X506-TRCL model and it includes a remote reservoir, ride height adjuster, high/low speed compression adjustment and rebound adjustment. It costs around \$1299 inc GST from your local shop in this spec, whilst the front PD valves retail for around \$230 inc GST per set giving pretty good 'bang for your buck'. NZ importer White's Powersports also tell me the YSS suspension range is supplied with a 12-month manufacturing warranty.



a lighter compression valve stack in the rear shock. This was in the interest of finding a little more 'bump compliance' and also to hopefully give some extra grip on corner exit. To help with the corner entry issue we also decided to wind off a fair few clicks (six in total) from the rear rebound adjuster located at the base of the shock to hopefully 'quieten' the rear end down a little as we both agreed that the bike was possibly 'packing down' the rear end going into the faster turns.

I didn't feel that it was justified to re-valve the rear rebound stack at this stage (yet) as the wet track conditions could well have been playing a part in this corner entry issue and the rather average clutch action of the old FZR wasn't helping either.

Half an hour later the shock was back in place and I was looking forward to seeing if the new settings were going to make a noticeable difference.

The changes made were also going to provide us with an indication of the sensitivity of the YSS unit, as it has been my experience that a good quality suspension system is one that you should be able to detect a differing ride quality even when relatively minor valving or clicker changes are made.

As far as the front was concerned I was happy to leave it as it was (as long as it stayed wet), if it dried out I was planning to add a bit more spring pre-load in the interest of maintaining a slightly higher ride height in the front through the turns.

For the wet though, the 'soft-ish' feel that the bike was exhibiting was just fine by me, as I find that this tends to give more confidence in the wet.

Race time

The clock ticked around to 12.15pm and we rolled up on the grid to get underway for the first race. Conditions had dried out quite a bit, so some of the changes we had made were now a bit of a gamble in respect to whether they were in the right direction for the rapidly drying track.

The grabby clutch provided a bit of an average start off the line but half a lap later we were swinging past race leader (Wellington's Stephen Mossman) and putting our head down to try and pull a gap and produce some good lap-times. The bike's rear end grip and stability into the turns was improved as was its ability to hold a tighter line mid-corner. Traction exiting the turns also felt slightly more consist-



ent in both faster and slower turns. Second place man Mossman later confirmed, "When I was following you - there was no way I could get on the gas where you were getting onto it - you were killing me out of the turns." The bike also handled consistently for the relatively long ten-lap race, so the YSS brand earns itself a tick for resisting fade and not overheating.

With the drying conditions we were now going faster around the circuit and the bike had developed a slight lack of 'feel' through the middle of some corners - I wasn't sure if this was simply me being over-cautious on a still unfamiliar bike (it was only our second ride together) or if we required a further change to the set up?

Room for improvement

The track had completely dried

for race two and prior to going out we decided to make some minor setup changes to the bike to hopefully eek out some faster lap times. This involved going firmer at both front and rear - two more full turns of preload at both ends, plus a couple of clicks of compression damping on the rear to help with 'pitch control' and slow the bike from transferring its weight from front to rear in mid-corner. We also added 2mm of ride height to the YSS rear shock via its built-in thread adjuster.

Unfortunately this first race meeting was running behind time and the second race of the day had been shortened to only five laps giving us less time to assess the changes made so far and the performance overall.

Nevertheless the changes produced a faster lap time (by half a second) and on top of that we managed to secure a second race win in the bike's first race outing. **BRM**

STOPPRESS:

Since the first round of the Vic Club's winter series Glen has managed to produce 10 wins from 10 starts and he also grabbed the Pre89 senior lap record in the process, so it's looking good for our racing reporter in the series overall and confirms the YSS products ability to compete at a competitive level.