

HAWKWORKS

V57 / ISSUE 2
May/June 1997

BY KARL "KRAZED" GOLDSCHMIDT

HAWKSTER EXTRAORDINAIRE

Hawksters know Kiyo Watanabe as one of the first people to offer a larger tank for our beloved ride. His carbon fiber tank has been the standard replacement for Hawk endurance racers and long distance riders alike. I first met Kiyo because of his tank, but soon found that he was more than just a businessman. Kiyo, head of Kiyo Watanabe Racing, has a passion for the Hawk and the knowledge to build and use one to its full potential. Hawkworks was lucky enough to talk to him after he got back from Daytona and ask him a few questions.

HW Many Hawksters know you from the high capacity, carbon fiber Hawk tank that you sell. Could you tell us a little bit about your motorcycle history and background?

Kiyo Yes, I started racing motorcycles in 1986. I won eight championships within two years, including the AFM National Championship, AFM Northern Championship, AFM Southern Championship, and the ARRA Championship. I then decided I should race AMA 250 Grand Prix. That is how I got into professional racing in 1988. I raced a 250 until the Honda Hawk came out. Then I switched from 250 GP to Pro-Twins. Since then I have won one national championship on a Honda Hawk; I won three Daytona Sprints. Oh, I do not know how many races I have won, but I always run in the top group of the AMA professionals racing as a Pro-Twins. I also have a WERA National

Championship. Now I am kinda getting old, but I am still racing.

HW That's interesting. You started as a two-stroker and then went to the four-stroke.

Kiyo I always had interest in the four-strokes, but the two-stroke was an easy way for me to start racing. I went out first on an RD 400 as a novice, then I switched to a TZ125. That 125 taught me lots of stuff about racing and also about working on a motorcycle—the thing broke all the time. After that, the 250 taught me a lot, and I guess I was ready to go into four-strokes after that.

HW Did you fall in love with the Hawk as soon as Honda introduced it, or was it a bike whose potential you discovered later?

Kiyo I went riding with a Cycle magazine test rider on a Hawk when I was riding a 400 four. I knew the bike was good, but I had no intentions of racing the Honda Hawk as a Pro-Twins contender. I guess I found out when I borrowed my friend's stock Honda Hawk and went out to Sears Point with it with just slick tires and a shock. I finished fifth. That's when I said, "Well, if I modify this bike, I should be able to win." So when I came home, I went out and bought the Hawk, and that's how I got started. So I guess I found out the potential of the bike by accident.

HW What was the first modification you did to your first Hawk?

Kiyo Taking a brand new motorcycle apart into pieces and looking at it, throwing all the heavy stuff away, I guess that has to be the first modification.

HW Is there anything that you can leave stock?

Kiyo Actually the transmission on a Hawk is not so bad. I do modify them, but you can just about leave them stock. The clutch basket, clutch components, you can almost leave them stock. The oil pump I use is almost stock. When you are really talking about purely stock parts, no—everything is changed on my bike. Sorry!

HW What is, in your opinion, the single product that gives the best performance "bang for the buck" for the street rider?

Kiyo I sell a carburetion kit, which is really modified stock carburetors. They are machined. This is not a jet kit, but it gives you better flow into the intake induction system. I think this is the best product that you can buy for the stock Hawk or any Hawk. But you have to know how to tune the carburetor. That's the thing. It's just like a component that you buy from the

Continued on page 3

in this issue

Hawkster Extraordinaire	1	The Black Art of Carburetion	4
Page 2 (Editorial)	2	Add a Dash of Carbon	6
Hawk Droppings	2	In Box	6
Joe Rocket Ballistic Jacket	4	Hawk Bits	7

