

Pace RC-500 downhill bike

Considering the Pace boys' background in motorcycles, it's no surprise that their very latest downhill machine should use a linkage swingarm *à la* KX, YZ, RM, CR etc, etc. In fact, it's so like a motorbike that designer Adrian Carter has even joked about adding a little 50cc engine to it, or even making 'proper motorbikes' in the near future. Some bizarre twist of technology, eh?

Frame

The main frame is made from Pace's own square 7000 series aluminium tubing, welded into a compact design for maximum strength and stiffness. The seat-cluster area is a removable subframe — intended to allow for different positions to be tried for continual development purposes.

Swingarm

The simple box-section swingarm is beefier than it looks. Described as "bloody heavy" by one industry insider who attempted to lift it, it's heavily reinforced internally and the struts supporting the shock are solid aluminium. The pivot point is located vertically over the bottom bracket — a simple position, but one, according to Pace, that eliminates chain-induced suspension reaction.

Shock

Between the two parts is a Noleen NR-3 coil over oil shock with adjustable rebound damping. This shock offers six inches of travel via the linkage system. It has been custom-valved for Pace by Noleen to suit their rising-rate spring curve.

Linkage

This is the clever bit. Instead of driving the shock directly from the swingarm, a linkage is used which allows a far more tunable shock rate. This linkage is mounted on an eccentric bearing in the downtube, which enables the rider to set the bike up for a given course condition easily.

Forks

Up front is Pace's downhill fork featuring double triple clamps for rigidity and accurate steering. Inside the fork are steel coil springs and a low pressure air spring assist to provide a little extra preload if required. The springs are oil damped by a cartridge in one leg. A Hope hub clamps through the dropouts, and a Hope brake does the stopping. These forks will be available for sale in the summer.

Pace expects to sell the machine as a frame, fork, hubs and discs package. There is no price fixed yet, but that sort of technology and superb machining doesn't come cheap. If you want to see one in action, Pace factory riders Stefan Gleed and Richard Thackery will be piloting them all season.

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Cheddar Gorge, Somerset

May 17-18 NPS DH and XC
Fort William, Scotland

May 31-June 1 NEMBA Round 2
Sheffield, South Yorkshire



FIND THAT GREASE

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