

MEAN GREEN: 2009 KAWASAKI KLX250SF



SMR

SUPER MOTORCYCLE RIDE AND RACER MAGAZINE

FIRST RIDE:
2009 Honda CRF450R

WE RIDE:
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HMC/Factory
KTM 450 SMR

OPENING DAY:
2009 XTRM AMA
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Championship

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JOHNSON LEATHERS FORCEFIELD BODY ARMOUR ACTION SHORTS

Safety and protection when riding is one element that we at *SMR* are very adamant about. Dress for the crash not for the ride. There is that give and take between comfort and protection. More often than not, riders don't wear enough protection and it doesn't matter if we're talking street, off-road, dual-sport or racing.

There was a time where we never wore under-the-pant protection but after seeing your ass bruised up beyond belief or some severe road rash, we learned many years ago that an ounce of prevention is worth its weight in gold. Padded riding shorts are nothing new but most of the models on the market have nothing more than a crappy piece of foam for protection. It looks good on paper and might be better than nothing at all but we say "might."

We contacted Johnson Leathers, distributor of Forcefield Body Armour. We were interested in the Action Pro Shorts. The main feature is the 4-layer Armourflex CE approved protection. This is a very dense rubber/foam material that actually absorbs an impact on the hip and thigh area in the event of a crash. There are different versions of this material and some call it impact foam. Some of the high-end road-racing suits feature impact foam.

The main short is made of DuPont Coolmax breathable materials for maximum comfort. The pads are easily removable and the main short is machine washable to remove any funk from a hard day's ride.

Most padded shorts don't even come close to offering the protection like the Forcefield Armour. We wore these shorts under our TLD race pants for racing and under jeans on a street/dual-sport ride. You may need to run a larger size jean to make room for the extra protection but in this case it's good to have some junk in your trunk.

And now that more and more supermoto riders are wearing standard MX pants for their gear of choice (we don't recommend it) but if you do decide to go that route, these shorts are a must-have. Not only will they put some protection between you and the pavement, the 4-layer padding will help keep your bare skin away from the pavement in low-speed slides.

We did go down once wearing the shorts and were glad we had them on. There is just peace of mind when you know that you have the protection in case you happen to take a tumble.

At first, we feared the shorts might be too bulky but after our maiden voyage with our new panties, it was hard to remember you were even wearing them. The only adjustment we had to make was in the butt area. The tailbone

pad extends down too far and, when racing, you can feel the pad under your ass in certain conditions. You can trim the pad down or remove it altogether. If you trim the pad, you may have to put a stitch in the pants to keep it from riding down in the pad pocket.

We stand behind this product and highly recommend it. We just wish that all pads on the market were required to meet the CE standards like the Forcefield builds into their product.

The shorts retail for \$146 but when your ass is on the line, we would pay it any day. Johnson Leathers also distributes a full line of Forcefield Body Armour protection.

Johnson Leathers: 415.775.7393, johnsonleather.com

