



TM Racing is a powerhouse when it comes to two-stroke engines. Anybody in the karting world will tell you that their 125 motors are rockets. We took their 144, a machine that's already quick, and turned it into a race bike for our friend Jimmy Albertson.

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PHOTOS: SIMON CUBBY



TO SEE HOW THE 2018 TM MX 144 PERFORMS WITH THESE MOOS, HEAD OVER TO >>>

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## 2018 TM MX 144

**H**ere's the thing about TM bikes: there isn't much you can do to them. Frankly, they don't build enough of them for aftermarket companies to invest the time or money to make parts for them. The flip side is that they don't need much anyway. The engine is already quick, so we simply added a VHM head with a TM spec for higher compression, a Vertex piston, and a Scalvini exhaust. The bike comes with a V-Force reed block and what is essentially an aftermarket silencer, so you don't have to do much else. We added some VP MRX02 fuel and were good to go.

Jim Lewis at Merge Racing set the suspension up for Jimmy's weight,

speed, and riding style and used the stock triple clamps, which are beautifully machined aluminum. The footpegs were titanium units from Scar and offer all the grip you want. We used the stock wheelset, which looked great, and added a Supersprox sprocket, Pro X rotors, and Dunlop MX3S tires. Thunder Designs created the graphics for this project (they're one of the few companies that have the die lines for these bikes), and Moto Seat built a matching seat cover for it. We used Renthal bars and grips and a Works Connection stand to hold up our steed and this blue and orange beauty was ready for the track.

On the course, you could feel the engine's potency. With just a slight tap of the clutch, this thing is up into the power and pulling—and it pulls far. The bulk of the power is right in the middle, where

you want it to be. It isn't a motor you have to rev to the moon, and it doesn't sign off too early; they did a great job making it easy to use. The suspension works well, which doesn't surprise me since it's good KYB suspension to start with. Also, small bikes just handle better because you aren't dealing with so much weight and rotating mass. The pegs are great, the tires hook up, and the controls are all comfortable and in the right places.

Jimmy Albertson raced this bike at the 125 All Star opener at Hangtown (though the 144cc engine displacement was not legal for this exhibition race) and was well on his way to a podium finish before a tip-over dropped him back a couple spots. Still, he proved this thing is more than capable of going fast. To see this TM in action and watch the full test, go to [Racer X Online](#). ■

