

TRIED AND TESTED

Sweet Sixteen (and a half)

**Goldspeed Street legal 16.5 Rain pattern
£94.50 medium compound front and medium
compound 160/70 17 cut slick rear £109.50**



approach. Okay it may not look quite as impressive but many top riders now only 'back it in' when absolutely necessary. Shame really but lap times mean much more than looking cool.

The Goldspeed 16.5 inch front tyre is a first for street legal supermotos and when matched to a legal 'cut slick' from the same company the all important butch supermoto racer on the road 'look' is complete. The Goldspeed rear 'cut slick' has been around for several years and is well respected as a legal sporting supermoto tyre. However all of these good looks amount to nothing if the boots don't deliver and AAA Racing sent us a set to use, abuse and report on our findings. The most suitable bike we had for the task was 'Crasher's' street-legal(ish) Honda CRF250-X enduro bike which may not be the most powerful SM bike out there but it does have well set up suspension and is a pretty neutral handling bike. Plus of course it looks cool as hell when parked up at the local watering hole.

Well it had to happen! After several years since the introduction of 16.5 inch front race tyres we finally have a fully street legal version from supermoto tyre specialists Goldspeed. These Dutch designed and developed boots are manufactured in Taiwan and are perfectly suited for sporting streetmoto use. The big news for this season is this all new 'wet' pattern 16.5 inch front tyre which looks uncannily like the new generation of race 'wets' and it certainly adds that race track refugee look to any street legal moto. But why 16.5 instead of 17 inch, after all half an inch can't make that much difference can it?

Well yes it can (just ask the missus) because the idea behind the 16.5 is that the tyre has a higher profile than a regular 17 incher. This additional height means that when the bike is down on it's ear and scraping the pegs the front has a larger contact patch on the tarmac, in other words more rubber on the ground equals more grip and faster cornering. This has been common place in the supermoto race scene for years and it actually encourages faster 'wheels in line' cornering than the traditional supermoto backing it in

The new Goldspeeds are a cinch to fit compared with some tyres and they seated easily on the tubeless rims. Making sure we put the yellow dot on the opposite side to the valve, the pressures were set at a baseline of 25psi and off for some fun. The immediate feel is of quick steering which is good for a sporty ride. Once scrubbed in it was clear that these super sticky tyres really give a fantastic amount of confidence inspiring grip plus a healthy feel for what is going on beneath the wheels. The front and rear are a good match for summer time back lane scratching but even Goldspeed admit the rear 'cut slick' isn't the best wet weather tyre out there. When you see just how few grooves this tyre has cut into it's 'ubber' soft carcass it should come as no surprise but the flip side is amazing levels of grip for a tyre of this type.



We raised the pressures a little to make the bike a tad more stable when flat out but the rubber still warms up pretty quickly from cold.

To really test these boots though, took a trip to our usual local test track and this is where the Goldspeeds really impressed. Pushing the front hard and getting on the gas even harder these tyres certainly deliver. It was clear that the 250-X's lack of power wasn't really enough to stretch these boots to their limits so we slipped them onto our SM Lites S3 race bike which has around an extra 20 bhp. Even this didn't faze the Goldspeeds. A perfect feel for what is going on helps the rider know when the rubber has had enough and grip is tenuous. The front 16.5" wet pattern Goldspeed certainly feels grippy enough on the street but you can feel the tread blocks moving around when pushing hard on the track. This of course is to be expected but it still gives a good feel for what's going on at the sharp end. For street legal rubber these really are hard to beat and if you want a more planted feeling on a dry circuit you could always match up the cut-slick rear with a matching front although these only come in traditional 17 inch sizes at the moment.

Goldspeed tyres are supermoto specific and are constructed in such a way as to allow you to get the very best from your moto. A quick warm up and quick steering means these boots do suit our kinda bikes. It's difficult to say if a 16.5 street tyre is any better than the usual 17 inch hoop but at least you now have the choice. With more and more track bikes having 16.5 rims (and now this road legal tyre is available) these wheels will eventually filter their way down to the guys on the street. These tyres look pretty good too and we all know how important this is parked up with your mates. What is also great news for the more sporting rider is that Goldspeed are soon to launch a legal version of the ultra-soft wet race tyres in time for the forthcoming winter months. No doubt these will have a limited life expectancy on the street but imagine the grip and traction to be had from a truly super soft 'wet'. The ride to work really will be like Mettet.

**Contact AAA Racing on www.aaa-racing.co.uk
tel: 0844 8260 528** for prices and full details of the full Goldspeed range of supermoto tyres and accessories