



Suspension TIMES

THE PRO-FLEX OWNER'S CLUB NEWSLETTER

NUMBER ONE

A Welcome message from Paul Hinton:

"I now officially declare the 'Pro-Flex Owner's Club' open..... let's Party!!!"

At this point, the Pro-Flex Owner's Club support team would like to welcome every Pro-Flex owner to what is and will be essentially your club. By the mere fact that you are reading this newsletter, we can tell you are a Pro-Flex owner. Or is it that you aren't a Pro-Flex owner and you're finding out what you're missing by not being one!

Why an 'Owner's Club' for Pro-Flex?

Why not! After all, you deserve it. You've laid out your hard earned cash for the bike of your dreams and with your brands you are then left to ride your earth without as much as a 'Cheers for choosing our bikes to ride on!' Well, it's not quite like that at Pro-Flex - and the Owner's Club sets out to show the difference!

The main reason for starting the club is that we want you to know that we value your custom. And here's what you'll be getting: a quarterly newsletter like this one, packed full with competitions, technical updates, questions answered, a free 'For sale and Wanted' column, and membership services like contacts for other local Pro-Flex Owners, etc. And that's not all! In due course we hope to be able to arrange some (if not all) of the following:

Membership deals at mountain bike centres around the country; race and technical support at all the big events; special price offers on Pro-Flex team kit; events organised just for Pro-Flex Owners; Security/insurance offers; special deals on selected products, etc. And a host of other things that we haven't thought of yet - we're sure you'll tell us when you think of them!

Have you heard the saying 'You get out what you put in'? Well, this is YOUR club. By everyone contributing, everyone will benefit. We value your ideas and input, especially for the newsletter. If there is something that you would like to do (like a week's

Subscription to this newsletter is £19.95 and here's what you get in return:

A FREE Pro-Flex T-shirt
and
A FREE Pro-Flex Baseball cap

And that's just in the first issue! There's more where that came from - so subscribe now and get the inside track on some very special offers.

So to wrap up this introduction, we would just like to say.....why are you reading this when you should be out riding your Pro-Flex?!!



downhilling, or even snowboarding in the French Alps) then drop us a letter or e-mail and we'll consider organising it for you.

How does the Club Work?

Well, we are asking for money! Hey - but don't throw this away just yet - since we guarantee we can save you money in the long run. How? Read on...

Pretty Trick Pro-Flex!

Many of you have bought just the Pro-Flex frame and Girvin forks. Now call us stupid but you're not going anywhere with just a frame and



fork! So what are you speccing on your dream machine? What's the best of some pretty trick equipment. But just how well does a mish mash of

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equipment work together? We know from warranty claims that not all is well on the 'do it yourself' front. It could be that the tools people are using are inappropriate for the job. Anyway, it's for the best that you take your bits and pieces to a reputable cycle shop to have built up. That way you can claim on any problems you have with the build of the bike from the shop. If you have any major problems with parts you have specced, drop us a line so we can warn other members about the problem.

But if your bike is working sweet with the parts you've thrown on, and you reckon your bike is one pretty trick Pro-Flex and you'd like to show it off to the world (well at least to the Pro-Flex Owner's Club members), then send us a photo of your pride and joy with some details about you and the bike, and we'll print some of the trickiest ones and have a best of the best competition decided by the members in a later issue.



I LIKED THE COMPANY!

Do you remember that old TV commercial featuring Victor Khayam who "liked the company so much that he bought it"? Well, the same thing has happened in mountain biking. This time it was Girvin Inc. (manufacturers of Pro-Flex) who tested every available shock system on the market to see what components they'd like to spec on the '97 bike line. Seems that they liked Noleen shocks so much they decided to buy the company! So it's no surprise to learn that these excellent shocks are gracing most of the '97 range of Pro-Flex bikes. (You'll find a little more about Noleen elsewhere in this newsletter).

New Face at Pro-Flex

We thought you might like to know that there's a new guy at the helm of Pro-Flex in the UK - he is Mark Jaggard (pictured below), the new Brand Manager for Pro-Flex and Girvin products.



Mark, who is 24, formerly worked on the sales and marketing side for Cambrian Tyres where he handled Parkpre Bikes and Continental tyres. Prior to that he had a two-year spell of cycle retailing. Since he's regularly raced cross-country and downhill races he has a very rounded understanding of the mountain bike market.

His colleagues at Ultra Sport confirm that Mark not only lives and breathes bikes but he sleeps with and probably dreams of bikes too! Look out for him at race meetings he's a very approachable guy! But don't let his seemingly quiet-spoken nature fool you - he's half-animal, half-bike - it's a dangerous concoction!

Amazing X-Works Offer!

Contact your local Pro-Flex retailer and you may find that they're currently offering a most amazing deal on the 'Limited Edition' X-Works bikes that were recently launched by Pro-Flex. These bikes are now being upgraded with coil-over-oil shock at no extra charge! "That, let me tell you is one helluva saving - on the X-PX and X-P8 it's as much as £150 (for the front and rear shocks) and £100 for the rear shock on the X-P6. More X Works news on page 3."



What a Start!

The new range of Pro-Flexes have been introduced to all UK Pro-Flex shops and the message is clear - these bikes are going to be heavily in demand this season! Our order books have already set new records and we're only a few weeks into the season. Girvin have yet again got the formula exactly right and their purchase of Noleen shocks and the introduction of coil-over-oil forks was timed to perfection. Of course, this demand is not just happening in the UK - this is a world-wide 'disease' which may cause a slight short-fall in the early part of the season. If you've made up your mind to get one of the new Pro-Flexes you might also find you've got to be patient! Hey - the wait will be worth it!

In particular, we believe the new forks (featuring Noleen shocks) will simply 'GO OFF' this season.

California Dreaming!



One of the major industry shows (Interbike) took place not so long ago at Anaheim, USA. It's a trade only show so don't try to book a ticket for this time next year! It's considered to be the industry showpiece as the world's media descends to see exactly what the major manufacturers will be offering for the new season. Girvin/Pro-Flex products were received with great acclaim - as the UK's premier weekly cycling mag, Cycling Weekly said: "The most exciting bike of the show was the 22lb Pro-Flex." In the same review Cycling Weekly spoke about Noleen: "The performance is off the scale." We look forward to receiving more of the same when other mags start testing our products!



Time Out gives the 656 '10/10'

Time Out recently reviewed the Pro-Flex 656 and had this to say:

"Some day all bikes will be built this way. Pro-Flex has been concentrating on full suspension, for nearly six years now so it stands to reason they know a thing or two about the subject. We were impressed with the comfort and handling of the company's new World Cup Design 656. Unlike most front suspension bikes (which use inverted telescopic forks) the Pro-Flex keeps its nose to the ground with the aid of Girvin's amazingly sensitive, linkage-design Vector II's. The large yellow urethane springs smooth out all those irritating bumps. Couple this with the outstanding climbing properties of the Pro-Flex's rear suspension unit, and the result is a bike you can ride for hours without feeling trail heat. Furthermore the 656 sports a quality aluminium frame, a top-drawer group-set encompassing Shimano L Gripshift 400, and Sugino cranks, plus excellent WTB Velociraptor tyres."

Rating: 10/10

"IF THIS IS WHAT THEY THOUGHT OF LAST YEAR'S MODEL, WHAT ON EARTH WILL THEY THINK OF THE 657 WITH COIL-OVER OIL SHOCKS?!"



XP-X Test!

'What Mountain Bike' have just tested the XP-X and given it a resounding 'thumbs up' - just read this:

"As a pure cross-country bike it is the best in the group. The elastomers take the sting out of constantly hammering over small bumps and...they soak up the bigger stuff too. The Vector forks track superbly."

"...elastomer-suspended trailworthy bikes we have known and loved for a couple of seasons."

"It is an excellent climber; the semi-active design lends itself to rear-wheel grip."

"The XP-X carries on the great tradition of easy to service, easy to ride, easy to upgrade, full-bounce bikes that ProFlex is famous for."



The above test, by the way, was what they made of our X-Works bikes before we decided to upgrade them with the new GDT Shocks (see page2). But what about this for a deal - we're offering Suspension Times readers a fabulous new price deal for the X-Works bikes. The prices below offer great savings, but we only have a limited quantity left, so you'll have to move fast if you want to reserve one:

XP-6: £1099
XP-X: £1349
XP-8: £1599

BIKE TEST UPDATE....

Paul Hinton is one of the most respected riders on the MTB scene. One of the first faces on the national race circuit, Paul has more riding experience than most of us could ever dream of, both on and off road. He is also the tutor for the popular 'Masterclass' series in MTB Pro. We caught up with Paul to find out about the 1997 range of Pro-Flex bikes, and in particular, his new 857.

So, Paul, how's the new bike?

It's nice! (laughs) - they've obviously done a lot of work over the winter, tweaking the ride and so on - it's a great cross country machine, I love it!

What are the main changes for '97?

Well, it's lighter for a start - the carbon fibre swingarm takes a fair chunk of swingarm weight off, about 3/4lb I believe. You'll also see they've moved the pivot a bit further forward, this makes it a bit more plush as the swingarm moves more 'up-and-down' compared to a shorter swingarm. Everything is being made by Easton this year, the frame is custom drawn for Pro-Flex, and they make the carbon fibre and fork legs too.

What about those shocks?

The Noleen shocks make it way more active, the spring rate is linear which means that it doesn't get all stiff at the limit of travel - you really feel you're using the full amount of travel, and the damping is tuneable on the trail - neat hey! It definitely feels more comfortable over the big stuff.

Those forks look different.

Yeah, they've redesigned the whole lot. They've got 3" of travel, which is useful for some of the stuff I'm riding! And because it's a linkage, it doesn't jack the front end up like a telescopic does. The linkages are one piece now, I guess it's going to be a whole lot easier to take them apart - and they've now got grease ports as well, which is pretty cool.

How does it climb with that new swingarm?

Hey, it's still a Pro-Flex you know! The pivot point is still in the same plane as before, so it still climbs like a demon. If anything it's a bit easier, as the bike's a bit lighter, and the new rear hub picks up real quick - no lag at all. It's also useful for sneaking up on people in races. Yeah, I'm going to have to get myself a bell!

Any niggles at all?

Well, where I ride tends to be a bit muddy this time of year, so I'm considering running a continuous cable outer down to the swingarm. I understand that the frames now come with top tube protectors where the forks meet it, which is neat. Other than that, no worries - it's a really sweet bike!

Thanks for your time - Hey - no worries.



No, this is not the lewd section of our Newsletter - it's a great gift idea for Pro-Flex riders who still thrive on the wonder of elastomer technology. Yup - the absorption qualities of Girvin's microcellular elastomer technology have been encapsulated in a pair of balls now nicknamed 'Happy and Sad Balls! And they're great fun to play with - no kidding! One ball (the Happy one!) bounces like a yo-yo whilst the other (a real sad ball) simply sticks to the ground no matter what height you drop it from. What's funny is that the balls really cannot be told apart - they look and feel exactly the same. It's almost s-p-o-o-k-y!

We thought about making an offer for people who wanted to play with these balls - but someone here at the office said "Nah - they wouldn't want 'em." So - go ahead prove us wrong - if you do we'll get a load in and offer them in a future issue.



Have you seen the Pro-Flex Web Site on the Net? No? Well it would probably be a good idea if you got a computer and modem wouldn't it! For those already living in the twenty first century, you have the chance to log on to the site to find out the latest developments, up-to-date product information, the chance to interact with other Pro-Flex owners, find help on technical questions, and be more up to date with things concerning the Club.

There's even an '855-heads' news-

group that is really active and gives you many interesting ideas and findings from Pro-Flex owners around the world. If you want to get listed simply send an email to the group's moderator: 855-heads@hrp.no and you'll soon be receiving Pro-Flex news and info from all around the world.

And if you're surfing the web here's two sites that you should bookmark now: Girvin Inc:

<http://www.girvin.com> This is the official Pro-Flex site and, as we said above, provides you with everything you might ever want to know about your bike and its components.

<http://www.sportuk.com/ultra> This is Ultra Sport's web site which is still in the process of being built. We didn't want to simply duplicate what's already on offer at Girvin's own site so we've delayed things until we saw what direction they were going in. The US site is great and answers 99% of questions you might have about Pro-Flex. But while it is applicable to the world it is, essentially, a US-site so we intend to develop a web site with much heavier emphasis on what's going on in the UK. So, if you've got suggestions for what should be up in cyberspace - let us know!

Did you know?

Did you know that Girvin make a lot more than Pro-Flex bikes? New for '97 are Girvin mag pedals and the incredible Flexpost...not to mention Klinkit luggage and Pro-Flex race team clothing. We'll cover these items in future issues



Pro-Flex/Hints Roadshow

Not so long back we ran a Pro-Flex Roadshow - a nationwide series of events that let riders place their butts on some of our stunning '97 models. And the view of the masses seems to be that this was an event well worth attending. So - thanks to all of you who came along and joined in the fun - we're glad you enjoyed it. Of course, the back-up team complained about being doggone tired at the end of the roadshow - but that's what they're paid for!

If you missed it - well, we're sorry...but most Pro-Flex Dealers have Demo Bikes available for test. Try call your local Dealer - their name and address is on the back page of this newsletter. And if you want to come along to next year's Roadshow then make sure you subscribe to Suspension Times now - that way you know we'll tell you in good time!

**FOR SALE
WANTED**

If you're looking to buy or sell a Pro-Flex or bits and pieces for your bike - why not advertise it here. It's free to those who subscribe to Suspension Times. Simply send your advert in to the Ultra Sport address that's hiding somewhere in these pages - along with this voucher!





TROUBLE SHOOTING

In future issues we'll be answering all those Pro•Flex questions you've been saving for us! Are you seeking to upgrade a component but are not sure whether it's compatible? Wondering how to get the best out of your present set-up? Not sure how to fine-tune your steed? Whatever your problem - simply drop us a line (mark it for the attention of 'Hints Trouble Shooting') and we'll cover it in a future issue of Suspension Times. In the meantime, here's a trouble-shooting guide that will help if you've got forks with an ODS unit.

FORKS WITH ODS UNIT

Problem

Resolution

Feels stiff

Check bearings and lube with Girvin Goo
Check seals - if needed, these can be replaced with Extreme seals (semi-transparent).
Remove shock unit and check action of the fork; without the shock it should be smooth and free.

Over-damped

Check grease on inside of MCU's/Elastomers. These should be greased when new and then every three months or so (depending on how hard you're riding it). If the MCU has hardened it will need replacing - they harden if insufficient grease is applied. If you're desperate for a ride try microwaving the elastomers for 30 seconds - but this is a short term (ie single ride!) measure only.
If MCU is OK the oil in the ODS unit may need to be changed. Check oil - shaft should move inside the unit smoothly but will be stiff. If it doesn't move correctly the oil needs changing - contact your Pro•Flex Dealer.
It is possible to tune the shock making it more active by fitting lighter oil. 30wt. is supplied as standard - some riders prefer a lighter (ie. 15wt) oil as this gives a more active feel.

Play in the Forks

Front-to-back movement when brakes are applied:
Check Headset adjustment.
Bearing modifications - Hula-hoop style bearings - check for wear.

Side-to-side:
Check and replace seal kits (can be upgraded with Extreme seals).

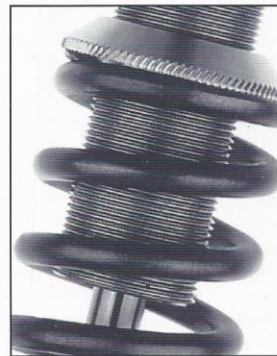
News from the Hub

This is the technical corner of Suspension Times! Here we shall be providing regular technical and service info. First up:

Living With Your **PRO•FLEX** A beginner's guide to tuning

Wow! Springs at both ends! I wonder what they do...

Riding a full-suspension bike is a whole new experience off road; suddenly you have more control, more comfort, more traction (if you've got a ProFlex!) and you can see where you're going. But... everyone is different in size, shape, riding style and, of course, where you prefer to ride - so it's worth spending some time making sure your bike is set up specifically for you.



Suspension works to absorb trail shock, and to keep both wheels on the ground as much as possible - you can't steer or brake if you're in the air... and you can't accelerate either! So the wheels need to be able to move both

up and down as the trail demands. This is accomplished by dialling in 'sag' at the shock - when you sit on the bike, you apply a load to both spring units which will cause them to compress.

Adjusting the preload has the effect of altering the bump force necessary to start the shock moving. The greater the preload, the harder the bump force needed to move it, and vice versa - but remember, when you sit on the bike, you apply a force to the shocks, reducing the amount of additional force needed to get things moving. So don't worry if the shock seems stiff when you're standing next to it - it's what happens when you're on the bike that matters!

As a rough guide, you should be looking for between 1/4" and 1/2" of compression at the shock units when you sit on the bike (no bouncing now!). This will translate to between 1/2" and 1" of reserve travel - 3/4" is a happy medium. Imagine sitting on your bike, hammering along, when the trail drops away a bit - the 'negative travel' you've dialled in will extend the rear wheel, keeping it in contact with the ground. And you still have almost 3" of travel for rocks, roots, whatever...

The new Noleen shock units make it easy to measure sag - just slide the bottom-out bumper up to the wiper seal, sit on the bike, and see how far it moves. If you've got an elastomer stack, you're going to need a friend with a ruler and a bit of patience!

If the shock compresses too far, wind down the adjuster to increase the preload. Too little? Just back it off a bit... simple huh! If you find that you can't achieve the correct amount of sag, no matter how far you adjust the

preload, you may need a stiffer or lighter spring. The table below gives some suggested spring rates for rider weight.

This gives the optimum spring rate for the average rider. BUT - not all riders are the same! As a rule of thumb, if you're not bottoming out the shock on the biggest hits, you need a softer set-up; if you bottom out all the time, stiffen it up... If you find the shock tops out a lot, you can reduce this by backing off the preload.

But enough of the physics lesson, hopefully this will have helped you get more from your ProFlex! If you have any questions, ask the Pro•Flex guys at a race meeting - don't forget your pencil and paper...

In our next issue we'll be looking at adjusting your bike's damping and how Girvin's 'Dig-in' Technology works.

TIP FOR THE TOP

Here's a tip to get the best performance out of your '96 Pro•Flex - upgrade the MCU's to a coil spring. Make sure, though, that the spring is long enough to give full travel. Some springs presently being offered are too short and become 'coil bound'. Girvin have introduced a new spring conversion kit retailing at £50 which utilises the ODS unit for damping and a coil spring for more active action. Normally a coil spring would need a heavier weight oil than an MCU - but a completely unrelated technical feature of Girvin's MCU design means that they already have a heavy-grade oil - so fitting these springs does not require an oil change. Ph



Mini-glossary

Bottom out: when the shock is compressed to maximum under load.

Top out: when the bike is unweighted suddenly, causing the shock to extend to maximum under the force of the spring.

Spring rates are measured in pounds per inch (lbs/in), or alternatively Newtons per metre (Nm); 100 pounds per inch, or inch pounds, means a load of 100 lbs is needed to compress the spring one inch. An 'ideal' spring has a linear rate, ie. the same amount of force is needed to compress it a given distance irrespective of load already applied.

Spring Rate Chart

Rider Weight (lbs)	Spring Rate (lbs/in)	Girvin Part No:
Fork Springs: Noleen, GDT and ODS		
100-150	175	NB2-175
140-190	200	NB2-200
160-190	225	NB2-225
180-220	250	NB2-250
200-280	300	NB2-300

Rider Weight (lbs)	Spring Rate (lbs/in)	Girvin Part No:
Rear Springs: Noleen and GDT		
100-150	200	NB2-200
140-170	250	NB2-250
160-190	300	NB2-300
180-220	350	NB2-350
200-280	400	NB2-400

MCU Spring Kits

Rider Weight (lbs)	Spring Rate (14") Arcadia	Spring Rate Arcadia	Spring Rate Attack/Attack LE	Spring Rate 656	Spring Rate All other '96 Pro-Flex's
90-120	30	20/40	30/50	70/90	60/80
100-140	40	30/50	40/60	80/100	70/90
120-160	50	40/60	50/70	100/120	80/100
140-180	60	50/70	60/80	120/140	100/120
160-200	70	60/80	80/100	140/160	120/140
200+	80	70/90	100/120	150/170	140/160

Note: All bikes except the 14" Arcadia require 2 springs. On the 756, Beast, 856, Animal and 956 models the higher rate spring must be placed on top of the lower rate spring when mounted on the bike. On all other models the higher rate spring must be installed below the lower rate spring.

What the press say:

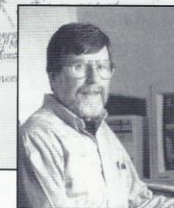
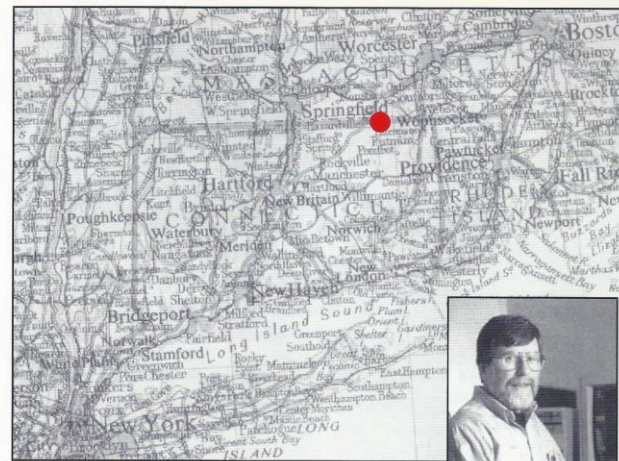
And you don't have to take our word for how wonderful the new Noleen shocks are - here's what Mountain Biker International had to say in their recent test of different shocks:

MBi Verdict: "Everyone knows that the shock is the most important part of any suspension bike, if you run a crap shock you're riding a crap bike. A good shock can transform a poor design and can make a good design brilliant. So it's worth spending some money on some serious hardware and in our test the Noleen is the most serious. If you can't afford one, the other new Girvin hardware is well worth a look."

And if you want to know how it compares to MCU's or ODS - here's what MBi called the "Bottom Line":

"Compared to the MCU bumper and ODS damper the Noleen is in a different league. The NR2 is good enough for most riders but if you want the best we definitely recommend the NR4."

Now you can begin to see why Girvin bought Noleen and fitted coil-over shocks to the '97 range of Pro-Flex bikes!



History lesson

Lesson One. A long time ago, in a far away place called America in the small village of Woonsocket (real name) lived a man called Bob. Not the sort of Black Adder 'Bob' but more a bearded Bob. Now Bob had a clever idea. Having seen the growth of these funny off-road bicycle things and seeing the effect it had on the people riding them (I like my ride shaken, not stirred) Dr. Bob decided to do something about making their ride a lot more comfortable. So before some one came out with suspension forks, Bob delivered to the world.....the Flexstem!

The riders of those funny off-road machines who used a Flexstem either loved or loathed the boingy action (which is what it was suppose to do). All of a sudden, they started appearing on the other side of the big water in a

country called Britain the Great (or was, once). There, a few top racers started to benefit from the use of a boingy stem and it wasn't long before mere-mortals went 'Hmm, maybe I could ride faster and harder if I used one of those boingy stem type things like the real good guys are using'. Unfortunately a guy called Turner came out with a mass market telescopic fork called Sock Block or some thing like that. So while being out performed by the new kid on the block, Flexstems still enjoy popularity amongst recreation riders and leisure riders. Girvin's titanium Flexstem model which incorporated the handlebar, was one sweet piece of equipment even though it did cost £200! Survey time. How many of you have used a Flexstem? Did you like it or loath it (passing it on to a friend saying that 'it's really good, honest')? Does your Grandmother use one? No, didn't think so. A red Flexstem elastomer to the first three members to reply (don't know what you're going to use it for, maybe you could give it to your kid brother/son as a test tube stop for his chemistry set).

LATE NEWS

Mountain Bike magazine in the USA have just tested the 857 and we couldn't resist summarising some of their findings for you:
FULL SPEED AHEAD

"The Pro-Flex 857's entire chassis has gone on a significant diet for '97, shedding almost half a pound. The 857's thermoset carbon swingarm is entirely new and world's better than last years...a thing of beauty. The reshaping of the swingarm gives it a much sexier look, but it also increases heel and mu clearance.

But the big news is the Noleen NR2 shocks that come standard on the 857. The NR2 comes with easy-to-adjust external preload and external rebound adjustment. On the trail the Noleen NR2 shock makes the fork feel a hell of a lot more supple and gives the Elite an extra half-an-inch of travel.

The new Elite also manoeuvres better because it's stiffer and lighter. Girvin is light years ahead of any telescopic fork when it comes to customizing the shock for any ride or rider.

In the rear the Noleen coil shock is far more sensitive to small hits and has a more linear absorption of big stal than its microcellular twin. The Noleen coil-over units were smooth and progressive. Like the front shock, the rear is super-easy to adjust.

The Pro-Flex really makes you feel like a better rider - you can make it up rocky ledges and down drop-offs that you might not even attempt on a hard-tail. Pro-Flex's active suspension also digs in on the climbs - especially smalling numbers - to give great traction.

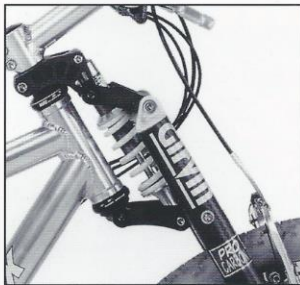
What do the major changes to '97 Pro-Flex bikes achieve? They make for a bike that's a flexible cross-country full-suspension mount with the shock quality of a downhill machine."



957 Tested in America:



The first test of '97 Pro•Flex bikes are now appearing in America - and it seems that, once again, Pro•Flex will prove unbeatable as far as the American press are concerned. Here's a summarising paragraph that will give you an



cellent feel for what the new range is offering this season: "Bravo to Pro•Flex. Yes it's true

that Pro•Flex has always been an important player in the suspension game, but buyers were accepting a host of idiosyncratic design features. No more. Now its linkage fork is honestly as good or better than anything else out there, and the same can be said about its rear shock. Full suspension naysayers can no longer complain about excess weight and the fiddle factor."

OK, I couldn't resist another couple of quotes: "Now Pro•Flex owners can honestly say that their front suspension is one of the reasons they purchased the bike."

"A rave review. You bet. None of the telescopic forks we've ridden lately have touched the stiction-free responsiveness of the new Cross-link Pro Carbon."

Attack LE Test:

We've just launched the new '97 Attack - a great bike that now features the original World Cup swing arm (with a 'chain-line' pivot point). So it's good to know that last year's bike was well received when Cycling and Mountain Biking Today reviewed one recently:

"Once you've got your position sorted, the suspension tuned to your weight and style and have built the confidence to get out there and do it, you're going to love the LE. There's no doubt about it; you'll be quicker down the hills than you would be on a rigid or hard-tail bike, the Shox and the MCU unit keeping you and any trail shock nicely separated, so you can calmly plan your next move rather than hang on for grim death."

"If you are coming to full-suspension from a mid-range or hard-tail, front-suspended bike then you're in for a shock. It's a pleasant revelation in the main, but it's likely that you'll need to change the way you ride. If you're coming to full suspension as a new cyclist though, you're going to like it straight away. Whatever happened to the sore backside and aching wrists you expected?"

"...the Attack LE is ideal for the entry-level mountain biker."

"...we like it a lot for quick and aggressive blasts through the woods..."

10/10

SO WHO ARE NOLEEN?

nitrogen separated by a hard seal. This was also the time when rising rate linkages, parallelogram linkages, etc. were born.

From this background, the Noleen NR range of mountain bike shocks was born. Noleen's attention to quality and detail, combined with

Noleen Racing started out as a premier suspension company for motocross motorcycles. Being on the leading edge of suspension design in arguably the toughest arena (racing) Noleen was prepared and equipped to transfer knowledge and design acumen into the world of mountain bikes.

Back in the 70's Noleen's founder, Clark Jones, was a professional motocross racer and travelled the world to compete in world-class events. In the early days the average motocross motorcycle had around 6" of front travel and 4" of shock travel. By the early 80's wheel travel was 12-13" at both ends!

It was also during this period that DeCarbon style shock came into its own. These shocks are the forerunner of today's Noleen NR shocks. The DeCarbon style shock features oil pressurised

are measured. As President of Girvin Inc., Kip Pitou says: "Quality, performance and leading edge technology keep Noleen Shocks at the forefront. As time goes by there has been no shortage of imitators and 'wannabee's' - but without the commitment and experience Noleen possesses, the imitators are doomed to failure."

And we know that! One ride will tell you. One season of riding will confirm it.... Noleen's Shocks surpass all others. It's that simple!

And as for quality... Noleen leads the industry in design - virtually all competitors are producing variations of Noleen's original designs - which means Noleen are definitely producing state-of-the-art kit! What's important to note though, is that Noleen uses nothing but the best materials and componentry. The aluminium, for example, is aerospace quality 6061T6 material whilst the shock springs are chrome silicon valve spring quality items. Seals, bushings, scrapers - all are the best that money can buy so you can be assured a Noleen shock is a premium item.



COILS ARE AVAILABLE IN A VARIETY OF COLOURS AND STIFFNESSES TO SUIT INDIVIDUAL RIDERS



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THERE ARE 3 MAIN SHOCKS IN NOLEEN'S 1997 LINE UP: THE NR1 WHICH FEATURES A NITROGEN CHARGED FLOATING PISTON, A CHROME SILICON STEEL SPRING AND FINGER ADJUSTABLE PRELOAD; THE NR2 ALSO INCORPORATES A COMPRESSION/REBOUND ADJUSTER WHILST THE NR4 INCLUDES A REMOTE RESERVOIR AND SEPARATE COMPRESSION AND REBOUND ADJUSTERS. PREVIOUS YEAR'S PRO-FLEX BIKES CAN BE UPDATED WITH NOLEEN SHOCKS. AS CAN MOST OF THE WORLD'S OTHER SUSPENSION BIKES.



Suspension TIMES

Suspension Times is produced by Ultra Sport (UK) Ltd., distributors of Girvin and Pro•Flex products in the UK. It is produced four times a year and is available at a subscription of **£19.95** - for which you receive a Pro•Flex T-shirt and Baseball cap - as well as regular special offers!

If you'd like to submit something for inclusion in a future issue please send your mail to the address below. Please include a stamped-addressed envelope if you want it returned - and don't hold us responsible if the Post Office lose them!

The Editor, Suspension Times, Ultra Sport,
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PRO•FLEX

THE PRO•FLEX OWNER'S CLUB NEWSLETTER

WHERE TO BUY PRO•FLEX

PRO•FLEX TEAM NEWS

This years Pro•Flex International race team gets hotter and hotter! We're delighted to announce that the reigning national women's cross-country champion, Tracy Brunger, will be racing Pro•Flex bikes this year. She will join two other new Team signings, Marcel Arntz from Holland and Nora Roesch from Germany. The other Team members include: Beat Wabel, Peter Van den Abele, Nick Feld and Carl Swenson.

Go get 'em team!

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PRO•FLEX

THE PRO•FLEX OWNER'S CLUB NEWSLETTER



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Tested: MTB Pro; March '97, No 45. Pages 76-78

ANIMAL

Mountain Biker (USA); March 1997, Page 33

"For a play-biker, to whom timed speed is less of a consequence than fun and thrills, the approach of a bike like the Pro•Flex 657 can open up a variety of new trail experiences related to extra comfort and damage limitation."

"The first thing that's apparent is that the coil spring/oil damped shock characteristics are well balanced. The hand adjustment should suit the needs of most riders and a move to coil springs rather than elastomers makes the bike feel more responsive to small surface bumps than last year's models. Big hit responses also feel more controlled."

"The main attractions of the Pro•Flex 657 are in the ride. Point the Pro•Flex, pedal hard, steer in the general direction of forwards and there will rarely be times when it feels challenged by the terrain. You can take more calculated risks (or should that be under-calculated risks?) on the Pro•Flex simply because it's more forgiving."

"Pro•Flex have always promoted their bikes as all-rounders, and with good reason. What they refer to as 'Dig In' (the way the rear wheel pushed harder toward the ground when you push hard in the granny ring) really does seem to assist traction on steep technical climbs. Also there are times when you can fly up short technical climbs with far more confidence than you can with a hard-tail."

"Inevitably, the suspension is at its most advantageous on fast rocky stuff where you don't want to choose lines with the sort of care that's necessary with a hardtail. The 657 is great for riders who just want to push that little bit harder than normal reserve allows. It lets you get away with stuff that wouldn't be wise on a bike like the Specialised."

Ultra Sport (UK) Ltd.,
Acton Grove, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 1FY
Tel: 0115-973-1001 Fax: 0115-946-1067
email: ultra@sportuk.com

"Pro•Flex has taken the best a downhill bike has to offer and combined it with the same from a cross-country bike...to produce bikes that are fun specific not just terrain specific."

"The Animal was so incredibly fun to ride it made us want to continue even after our legs had turned to mush."

"The bottom line is that the Animal is a super all-round machine. It's one of the few bikes we've tested that didn't feel out of place on any terrain, and excelled on most."

"Unlike most extended travel bikes, the Animal uses Pro•Flex's cross-country frame. Thus while suspension travel is increased dramatically, overall weight is not."

"The entire package worked well for the Animal. The handling was perfect for East Coast single-tracking and the suspension did just what it's supposed to do by keeping the roughness away from the rider."

"The suspension sucked up rocks and other trail inconsistencies without even a whimper."

"The bottom line is that the Animal is a super all-round machine. It's one of the few bikes we've tested that didn't feel out of place on any terrain, and excelled on most."

TESTED!

The latest from the Bike Mags...

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Tested: MBUK, March '97, Vol 10, NO. 3 Pages 94-95.

BEAST

What Mountain Bike; Issue 18, 1997, p56

"If you want just one bike to do everything with a leaning towards long XC rides and races, the Pro•Flex is one of the best packages out there."

"A simple but effective suspension design. Well balanced and accessible to any level of rider...the Pro•Flex rear suspension is designed so that hard pedalling pulls the swingarm down slightly. It's not much, but it does mean you can put in a sprint without it feeling like you're wading through sticky black molasses."

"Having exactly the same shock units and similar travel at both ends means the Pro•Flex is perfectly balanced, and the preload adjusters and rebound damping clickers give plenty of tuning options. Even a die-hard rigid bike rider can hop on and feel much at home, only with more comfort and better traction over the bumps."

"The Pro•Flex 857 doesn't have the most complex suspension system out there, but the single pivot design has many fans. It's also loads easier to look after; the pivot is out of the mud-firing range of the rear wheel and the whole thing looks more like a 'proper' bike..."

"It's reasonably light and sturdy and you can put it on a bootrack (hooray!)."

"The Girvin Cross-Link Pros have been boosted greatly with the Noleen coil-over-oil shock. You can now get full, plush travel out of them. They steer well and look set to be a popular upgrade."

"The rest of the equipment is good quality stuff; some is own branded and some is unbranded, but it all holds together fine...and the Girvin clipless pedals are a good addition on a bike at this price."

"The Pro•Flex 857 is shedloads better than previous year's bikes. There's some great componentry on it and the Noleen shocks have livened up what was quite a dull ride. The single pivot means less wear and less maintenance. If you've liked the look but been put off the feel of Pro•Flex bikes in the past, the 857 is well worth a look."

"If downhilling, jumping and general hardcoreness was all we were interested in, the Beast would get hands up all round. It has more travel than the rest, and despite having slightly different front and rear springs, the balance is good too. The high-rise handlebar is also giveaway of the bike's intentions."

"Since Pro•Flex now own Noleen shocks we see an NR-2 unit installed in the Beast. This is a proper shock, with chrome silicon spring and a nitrogen-charged floating piston, that offers preload and compression/rebound damping."

"The secret of the Beast's success is the Pipe-Line Chubby fork with its four inches (adjustable to five) of travel in a triple-clamp design. Inside are MCLU bumpers and coil springs, damped by an ingenious air-flow valve. The stanchions are made from 7075 aluminium and the sliders are magnesium. There is even a mount for a disc brake. In the field this fork was a revelation. The action is smooth with no bottoming and no topping. The triple clamps aid pinpoint steering. The fork inspired the Pilots to seek out bigger lumps and stumps and steeper drops to jump down. The fork mates well with the Noleen shock giving a supple and arm-pump-free ride."

"With the speed from the suspension, we needed good brakes and we had 'em! Magura HSI hydraulics are fitted and do a good job of taming the Beast."

"Going uphill on the bike isn't as nice as descending, but it's not as hard work as you would believe. Accurate steering helps when grinding up a granny-ringer. Long travel and a high bar made cornering sublime."

"The other kit is from the drawer marked 'quality'...a healthy mix."

"Well worth the money"

"Great ride"



Putting the Pro•Flex onto the trail was joy for all but one MBA's test pilots. That unlucky member of the wrecking crew missed a double jump - but he did prove that the Beast could take one heck of a beating without suffering much more than a scratch."

"The Beast's wheelbase was long enough to keep it stable at speed, and its roomy cockpit and 130mm stem kept the test riders from feeling too cramped on long ascents."

"With four inches of wheel travel up front and 4.5 in the rear, the Beast could erase a lot of ugliness from the trail."

"Overall the Beast was a good mix of handling traits. Its front end steered quickly enough to make it a blast on singletrack without hampering its descending prowess."

"If the need arose the Beast could be delightful on longish cross-country rides (flat ones). At speed it was easy to push the front tyre through the corners."

"The Beast's extended swingarm was one of the reasons for its balanced handling - adding stability without compromising its nimble, cross-country steering geometry."

"Was the Beast a Beauty? Yes, it would be tough to find a better definition of a production velo-schussing bike than the Beast. It's outfitted with everything a wheel-skier needs right out of the crate and it's affordable enough to suit the not-so-serious weekend warrior (it even comes with SPD-compatible click-in pedals).

"It stops, corners, climbs and descends as well as some pretty heady one-offs, and it doesn't require a brain surgeon to keep it running."

"The suspension action was very smooth and stiction-free."

"The ride handling was a nice combination of comfort and speed stability. The supersoft suspension really grabbed your attention when you sat on the bike."

"The Pro•Flex Attack is a lot of bike for the money."

"Cheap and cheerful and a good ride if you get suspension that suits your weight."

"The Pro•Flex is cheap and I don't think you would be disappointed if that's what your money will stretch to."

"How we voted:
Pro•Flex: the cheapest, but not really too bad bike."

BEAST

Mountain Bike Action (USA), March 1997, Page 33

757

MBR; May 1997, p128

"Ones to watch...."

"Top value full-suspension for the great unwashed."

"This year Pro•Flex has ditched the pencil rubber suspension in favour of coil-over, oil-damped shocks by Noleen, so you get a more sophisticated machine with more tuning potential that gives a better ride."

"The main frame is made from the top-rated Easton Program Custom aluminium tubing, which, along with the alloy swingarm, keep the overall weight below 30lb, reasonable for £1,500 fully suspended bike."

"The drivetrain is robust and gets a hop up in the shape of the XT rear mech. Other big names are Titec handlebar and Mavic rims."

"We could find no noteworthy weak links. And you even get Shimano M600 brakes and clipless pedals."

"Next to a rigid fork there really isn't anything close to the Girvin in terms of lateral rigidity. The thing doesn't flex at all."

ATTACK: MBR, April '97

OUTSIDER ACTION SPORTS

Bits 'n' Pieces: April '97

"Pro•Flex Going's on..."

There's plenty going on over at Pro•Flex just recently. Not content with a major re-design for this year's fully-suspended range (check out our truly drool worthy 857 in the next issue), an owner's club for the bouncing brigade has recently been launched. For your £19.95 membership fee you get a quarterly newsletter/magazine titled 'Suspension Times' as well as a host of regular special offers and (here's the good bit) a natty Pro•Flex T-shirt and baseball cap. Mmmmmmmmm."

"And spotted at a recent trade show was an awesomely drool-some full carbon fibre (frame, swingarm, forks, the lot) bike kitted out with XTR and plenty more unobtainium goodies. At the mo' it's the only one in the world but there are (possible) plans for a production run in the future so get saving for this sub-23lb beauty now."

"It stops, corners, climbs and descends as well as some pretty heady one-offs, and it doesn't require a brain surgeon to keep it running."

GIRVIN CHUBBY 4" FORK

"The Chubby handled the big hits real well, compression wasn't loose but progressive, and the fork returned at a good rate, making for a more predictable ride."

"Basically, the Chubby worked extremely well. Cornering was a pleasure. With the top crown positioned at max on the stanchions, the fork felt stiff and steering was responsive. There was none of the nasty 'dive' and it didn't get over-active, especially under heavy breaking into the turns."

"The Chubby tracked well."

"We managed the full 4", but that was with me riding and it obviously depends on your weight, riding style and what springs you use. There was no top-out noise even with the pre-load set at 'full out'."

"Overall the fork stayed progressively smooth throughout all three days of testing."

"So how long will the air-assisted damping system last for? Well, we've been running a set of air-assisted damped forks for over a season and the system is still going strong. So we know that twin air-assisted damping stays good, the fork can be up-graded and the overall performance was beyond our expectations."

"What more can we say? Well priced, easily maintained and stiff - for sure!"

"Our stock sliders stood up to some awesome pounding..."

"At this sort of price, the fork is well-proced for up-grades, so don't be shy!"