


# RACING FOR EVERY MAN, PART 1



While there is plenty of dynamic growth in off-road racing's upper stratosphere, today's scene is seeing new thinking and more economical products targeted to a more grassroots crowd. In the first of a three-part series, *Dirt Sports* takes a look at what's just around the corner—big fun on a mainstream budget.



Thanks to the folks at Redline and Crandon International Raceway, *Dirt Sports* enjoyed the exclusive privilege to test the new Revolt on one of the greatest off-road tracks in the world.

STORY BY MARTY FOLKA >> PHOTOS BY BOYD JAYNES

It is the trailing edge of calendar year 2007. Fall now surrounds each of us, a time filled with comforting autumn days and the conclusion of a racing season that may well go down in off-road racing history as the greatest ever. As we write these words, the incredible celebration that will eventually define November's 40th running of the Tecate SCORE Baja 1000 is only weeks away. So, too, will the greatest year in short-course racing since the late 1980s conclude near Las Vegas, with CORR putting the bow around a season defined by unexpectedly good execution, a huge growth in motorsports influence and a future characterized by almost unlimited potential.

Be it desert or short-course,

however, in our opinion the collective success of this sport and lifestyle in the years to come is grounded in the ability of every man to access it at some reasonable level. Yup, we love ogling at the latest and greatest Trophy-Truck, Class 1 or CORR short-course technological showcase, but we also recognize there is strength in numbers. In other words, the more the merrier and the more the stronger.

Several months ago, *Dirt Sports* highlighted one of the first entities to invent a more affordable way for a less affluent demographic to enjoy our sport—Nestor Berardi and Nick Baldwin's instantly popular TrophyKart concept. While admittedly targeted toward the

sport's youth, the foundation of TrophyKart may nonetheless evolve into one of off-road racing's most influential developments.

Happily, in recent weeks our offices have been inundated by new entities betting their combined futures on making the fun and cutting-edge performance of modern off-road technology much more available. Think of all this like the growth of Apple's now ubiquitous iPod, which took an expensive concept to a cost affordable by the mainstream.

In Part 1 of our three-part expose, *Dirt Sports* will spotlight the latest and greatest of these groundbreaking racing opportunities. Let's begin with an in-depth look at the way-cool Redline Revolt.



## REDLINE REVOLT BY THE NUMBERS

Builder:	Redline Holding LLC
Model:	Revolt
Chassis:	Powdercoated-tubular space frame
Body:	Molded high-impact TPO body panels
Configuration:	Single-seat
Engine Location:	Rear engine
Fuel Capacity:	5.5 gallons
Length:	98 inches
Width:	65 inches
Height:	60 inches
Ground Clearance:	17 inches front 14 inches rear
Wheel Base:	73.5 inches
Dry Weight:	694 pounds
Top Speed:	70 mph
Price as Tested:	\$14,999

### DRIVETRAIN:

Engine:	Liquid-cooled, four-stroke, SOHC twin cylinder
Displacement:	749cc
Manufacturer:	Weber Motors
Power:	75 horsepower
Lubrication:	Dry sump
Induction:	Port-injected EFI
Transmission:	Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT) via Redline proprietary gearbox
Gears:	Forward/neutral/reverse
Drive:	Two-wheel independent

### SUSPENSION:

Front:	Double, chromoly A-arms with 10" of wheel travel
Rear:	Chromoly trailing arms with 10" of wheel travel
Shocks:	Custom 10" Fox air shocks

### OTHER:

Brakes:	Four-wheel hydraulic disc
Starter:	Electric
Tires:	23x8.0x12 (front) 26x10x12 (rear)
Belts:	Five-point racing harness
Gauges:	Tach/speed/odometer

### THE POWER AND THE PASSION

In truth, we originally spotted the Redline Revolt at the first-ever World Series of Off-Road Racing (WSORR) event at Owatonna, Minn. It was there, located within a relatively non-descript display, that we discovered what may turn out to be the next great thing.

OK, does anyone out there remember the influence that Honda's original four-wheel Odyssey and Pilot ATVs had on our culture? This was back in those golden 1980s, when our world was killing itself on three-wheel ATVs.

Well, if you don't remember that era, we understand. Here is a quick refresher. In a nutshell, Honda realized in the early 1980s that maybe, just maybe, not all of the Off-Road Nation wanted to *ride* something. Their thought was that they might like to *drive* something. So, the forward-thinking company introduced the Odyssey, a fully-caged go-kart-like ATV that had no suspension other than the terrain-eating capability afforded by the vehicle's large, high-flotation tires. In 1989 and 1990, Honda manufactured their revolutionary Honda Pilot, a single-seat ATV powered by a 250cc engine that incorporated a suspension offering consumers a respectable amount of wheel travel.

Now meet the Redline Revolt. The overall fit and finish of these new off-road toys reflect the next level of sophistication made available to the consumer for this type of vehicle. Even the prototype looked very well put together, and when we asked about it, the story got even better.

The Redline story is one of those business stories that reflects the rise and fall of American entrepreneurship. Redline was originally founded by Kent Harle and Chris Rodewald, and also included SCORE Technical Director Bill Savage. Their concept was to crack the \$1 billion snowmobile market with a luxury sled that incorporated Savage's idea of using off-road suspension technology to increase travel, enhancing both ride and performance. Founded in 2000, the company went public in May of 2006 with an IPO that raised \$10 million. While the radical Redline



### LUST AT FIRST SIGHT:

We first spotted this black Revolt at WSORR event in Owatonna, Minn. We later discovered it was a prototype.

machines were featured in magazines of all types, demand never materialized and the company went bankrupt in 2004—its assets purchased by a new group of investors based in Perham, Minn.

That new company's first product is the Revolt, a throwback to the Honda Pilot with plenty of modern updates and innovation. As we said, the prototype we saw was enough to peak our interest, but once we realized the cool little single-seater packed a 75-horsepower, 750cc, water-cooled engine into a 694-pound frame, we knew it had the potential to pin the fun meter.

We tried to drive them in Minnesota, but rain turned the track into a quagmire. Our next opportunity came at Crandon International Raceway, home to the Labor Day World Championships and that famous Forest County Potawatomi Turn One.

### WE COULD DO THIS ALL DAY

When we arrived at Crandon to cover the Labor Day festivities, there in the display area sat four of the new-production Redline Revolts. One had a race number on it, and another even carried a set of new beadlocked wheels. Our curiosity peaked again, and we soon discovered Redline was approaching the WSORR folks to create a new racing class using spec Revolts. Being the good journalists we are, a quick discuss with the Redline folks and



#### A PLACETO RACE:

While there are no current plans to add a WSORR class for Revolts, there is little doubt about the merit of such an idea.

1/2 island

Crandon track management granted us precious track time to test these potential new race cars for ourselves.

Throughout the photography process that proceeded the actual driving, we were again struck by the high-end finish of the Revolts. The cars featured such recognized component names: Fox Shox, a C&R radiator, Wilwood and Brembo brakes and PIAA driving lights.

But, of course, the proof was in the driving. We had complete access to the entire Crandon course, but the sun was bidding the Labor Day crowd "good day" so it was time to get going. *Dirt Sports'* group director Jim Ryan, Boyd Jaynes and I were each given a helmet, strapped in to the five-point harness, shown how to use the wrist restraints and then set loose.

As we suspected, the 75-horsepower, liquid-cooled engine pushed these little rockets with authority, taking my rather large frame to nearly 70 mph just at the powerplant's 8,400 rpm redline. With the CVT gearbox, there was no gear shifting, making it easier to concentrate on having fun.

On Crandon's massive, but well-groomed jumps, the Revolt soared, with the valving in the Fox units seemingly perfect. Like the Nissan Pro-Lite truck I drove a couple years ago, like one of those tiny Olympic gymnasts, the Revolt literally stuck the landing. Clearly, this little beast was no play toy, and the faster we went, the more enjoyable it was. As photographer Jaynes said afterward, "Christ, I could have done that all day."

In terms of being a viable race machine, the only suggestion we had in terms of modifications outside the usual items (window nets, D-cell unit, number plate, beadlocks, nerf bars) would have been some type of sway bar. With 17 inches of wheel travel and a short wheelbase, hard cornering weighs down the outside enough to easily lift the inside front tire nearly everywhere. Very fun, but not fast or safe.

The verdict? Certainly the boys at Redline have done their homework on this one. The Revolt is nothing more than a smile-inducing, neck-snapping bundle of joy that isn't your daddy's Honda Odyssey or Pilot. If enough of these sell, churning them out in large numbers could just be the best way to make racing affordable.

At a manufacturers suggested retail price that just tickles \$15,000, the Revolt isn't cheap. But, at about half the price, it was twice as fun as any modified side-by-side we've driven. Considering their sordid business past, that fact is something Redline can take to the bank. 