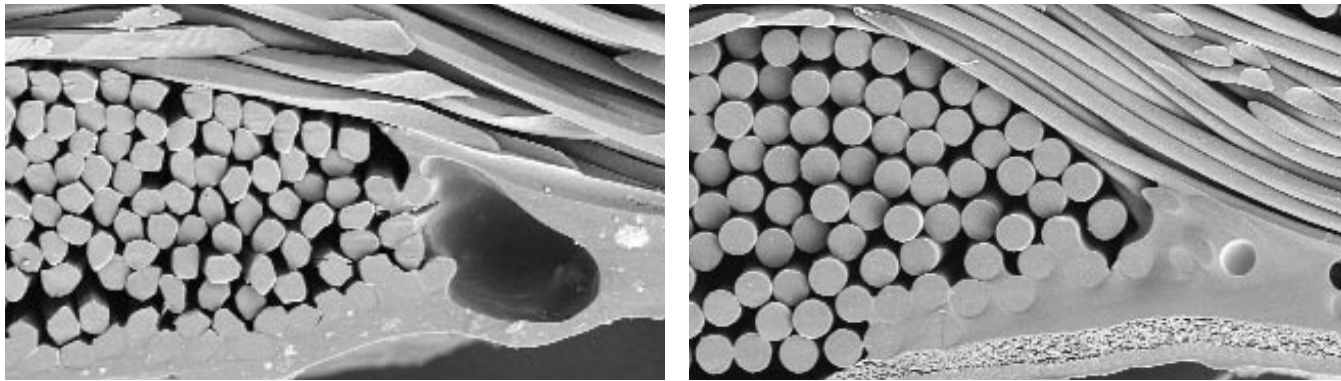


Product Comparison



Side-by-side electron microscope scans of a standard "coated" waterproofing material (left), and a Gore-Tex membrane (right). Note the more uniform and compact layout of the material strands in the Gore-Tex, which probably accounts for its superior waterproofing qualities and durability. In our testing, the Gore-Tex materials consistently outscored the other products, and it remains the industry standard for breathable waterproofing.

age becomes an issue. Those with bulky back protectors may be even harder to store, as they prevent the jacket from folding.

Flexibility

A jacket of this type should be as flexible as possible to allow it to be used in weather that is either slightly too warm or too cold. The liner plays a big part in this rating, and those jackets that had liners that can be worn separately scored extra points. If the liner was reversible, it got even more points. Those jackets that had liners that could not be worn alone or that were difficult to remove scored the worst. The message we are sending to the manufacturers is that we, as motorcyclists, need garments that can be used in a wide range of environments. Special kudos to Aerostich here, for making simply the best liner of the group.

Comfort

For us, comfort basically meant whether or not we enjoyed wearing the garment for a long period of time. Little nit-picky things

add up over time and start to bother you. For example, a collar that is slightly too stiff at first can turn into a major pain in the neck—literally—after eight hours in the saddle. We used a subjective scale and resorted to multiple ride notes to come up with the ratings in this category.

Value

In this evaluation, value is simply the total score in all categories divided by the price of the jacket. Since some jackets cost more than three times what others cost, the value will be very different among this group. If absolute performance is your only motivating factor, then simply skip the total score, and go only by the functional score. If, however, you are like us and always on a strict budget, it may be wise for you to take a look at the total score.

Conclusions

As always, we encourage you to look not only at the final scores but to also look closely at the individual categories. If you

are one that rides in the rain a lot, for example, then you should really look hard at jackets that offer the very best in water repellency. A good example of this would be noting that the three jackets that scored highest overall (Fieldsheer, IXS and Zero-60), rely on their liners to provide waterproofing. If you want a jacket that is waterproof without wearing the liner, then you should probably look at the FirstGear, Rukka or Aerostich models.

While the jackets that scored the highest may offer the overall highest scores considering all categories, some of those categories may not be as important to you as others. Also, some jackets have features that others do not, so if, for example, you really want a garment that offers a zip-out liner that can be worn as a stand-alone jacket, then make sure you look carefully for that feature. Other significant issues are mentioned in the notes in the ratings section, so pay particular attention to that section for any other features or problems that we encountered along the way. ➔

Fieldsheer Highland 2 Functional Score: 41.0 Total Score: 46.0 \$199



Armor	●●●●●
Waterproofing	●●●●○
Reflectives	●●●●●
Pockets	●●●●○
Ventilation	●●○○○
Sleeves	●●●○○
Closures	●●●●●
Fit	●●●●●
Construction	●●●○○
Flexibility	●●○○○
Comfort	●●●○○
Value	●●●●●



Notes: Uses CE-approved armor including an easy to remove back protector that goes into a preformed pouch, making reinstallation easy. Stitching on waistband, sleeves and logos are all reflective material in addition to strips of material across the back and front shoulder area. Outer shell is quite porous to water, but the inner liner is 100% waterproof and withstood our limit of 15psi on the water test. Has large rear pocket but access is only through one side zipper. Two levels of waist and hip adjustment. Front closure uses zipper, snaps and Velcro. Comfortable collar. **Contact:** www.fieldsheer.com; (800) 884-9026

IXS Apollo Functional Score: 43.0 Total Score: 45.0 \$495



Armor	●●●●○
Waterproofing	●●●●●
Reflectives	●●○○○
Pockets	●●●●○
Ventilation	●●○○○
Sleeves	●●●●●
Closures	●●●●○
Fit	●●●●●
Construction	●●●●●
Flexibility	●●○○○
Comfort	●●●●●
Value	●●○○○



Notes: Most comfortable of the group. Gore-Tex liner assures water resistance. Collar is adjustable. Sleeve has full length zipper for cuff placement over gloves and allows easy removal of back armor. Other armor is non-removable and CE-approved. Waist includes elastic band as well as adjustable strap and snaps. Sleeve has adjustment band on forearm and snap adjustment on upper arm. Metalized liner is not suitable to wear by itself. Jacket includes an elastic crotch strap to prevent riding up. With better reflectivity and a stand alone liner it would be just about perfect. **Contact:** www.motorace.com; (800) 635-6103

Zero-60 Ambush Functional Score: 39.5 Total Score: 44.5 \$200



Armor	●●●●○
Waterproofing	●●●●○
Reflectives	●●●●●
Pockets	●●●●○
Ventilation	●●○○○
Sleeves	●●●●○
Closures	●●●●○
Fit	●●●●●
Construction	●●●○○
Flexibility	●●○○○
Comfort	●●●○○
Value	●●●●●



Notes: All armor is CE-approved except for the back, which uses a single density foam pad. Large front exterior pockets and front Velcro closure boost scores on this otherwise average jacket. Features desirable zipper sleeve cuffs. Sleeves offer two adjustment points. Jacket relies on an inner waterproof membrane to keep the rider dry as some of the outside materials leak. One of the most reflective jackets from the front and rear, however, it contains no side torso reflectives. Liner can be removed and worn by itself but is the least desirable of those that have this feature. **Contact:** www.zero60.com; (866) 234-0260

FirstGear Kilimanjaro II Functional Score: 41.5 Total Score: 44.5 \$325



Armor	●●●●○
Waterproofing	●●●●○
Reflectives	●●○○○
Pockets	●●●○○
Ventilation	●●●●●
Sleeves	●●●○○
Closures	●●●●○
Fit	●●●○○
Construction	●●●●●
Flexibility	●●●○○
Comfort	●●●○○
Value	●●○○○



Notes: Two layers of soft foam on elbows and shoulders, one thin layer on back. One layer is removable on elbows and shoulders. Has four large air vents in front and one in the back. Sleeves are quite large and not adjustable. Front two breast pockets are the best designed of any in the test. Lower front pockets have limited access size. Waistband has reflective stitching. Very nice embroidered, fleece lined inner jacket with pockets, and the best retention system of the group. Good construction quality with taped seams throughout. Outer shell withstood 15psi water pressure. **Contact:** www.firstgear-usa.com; (714) 258-2120