

The rear pod arrangement has been steadily refined over the years

organisers and a lot of pressure on the drivers competing in the event. As always at these events manufacturers and distributors took the opportunity to launch their new products across the world, giving them great PR coverage. Top drivers are usually given new equipment to give them the advantage over their competitors in order for them to achieve results, and the manufacturers hopefully improve their sales. As ever in Motorsport, everybody wants a little bit more power than the next person, everybody is looking for that extra edge. At the world championships we saw the launch, or at least the prototype of, the new Associated 1/12th L3.

Associated only managed to get 10 cars ready to hand out to the team drivers and obviously they went to the talented drivers such as Craig Drescher, Oscar Jansen, Phil Davis, Nigel Hale and Masami Hirosaka. It was very interesting to see these drivers taking a packet containing carbon fiber components, axles and front-end assemblies and turning them into a competitive racer in only in a matter of hours. I spoke to Mike Reedy and asked him when the finished product would be hitting the streets and he said that all they were waiting for was the new box design to come through from the printers, and then the car would be ready for production. True to his word, as always, within a few weeks the

car was available in this country from the importer CML, who kindly supplied this review sample.

First Impressions

The packaging is good and it is attractive, showing you what the car is like on the box top art. On opening the box you can see a bag full of goodies and brief instructions. Associated seemed to have slimmed down on the instructions but then a 1/12th car is not as complex as other classes of cars and therefore do not take too long to assemble. All components are neatly packed so they are easy to identify in order of assembly. As ever, Associated supply plenty of 'PR bumf' telling us about all the products they deal with such as motors, T-shirts, other kits etc.

Kit Improvement

One of the first things I noticed with the new L3 is how well the components are finished. They seem to have taken their time and upgraded the quality and the finishing of the compo-

ponents as well as providing some refinements such as lighter components on the car. The chassis has a new shape to it but the actual dimensions of the car remain the same. The Motor plate and left hand axle carrier are both made in lighter material. The T-bar arrangement is the same as the LC, but there has been a modification to the rear axle. Tools such as Allen keys, a spanner and diff nut spanner are included in the kit. The actual main spanner for using on the turnbuckles is a great improvement as it actually fits better than the one before.

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Assembly

One of the off-putting chores with Pro10 and 1/12th cars is obviously when using a carbon fiber chassis you have to file cutouts for the cells to make them fit more snugly. Some people have a little moan but it's all part and parcel of racing in this class. This is after all a Model Car and some of the enjoyment is assembling the model and then taking it out to the track. Never rush when filing the chassis it's the main part of the car. If you treat the chassis right and protect it

properly, then you should not have any problems with it unless you hit something that does not move such as a brick wall. Once you filed the battery slots and you are happy with them, it might pay you to file all sharp, square edges round to the needle file and then seal them with Superglue. Should you have a shunt, the car is better protected and stronger and this prevents delamination. This is applicable to any car that has a carbon fiber chassis.

Over the years in model car racing I have learned that after using patience and putting some effort into building the car, the results and the response you get from the car when its build correctly makes it all worthwhile. Of course, these models will work okay, if you just slap them together while watching the TV! However, you take that little bit of tender loving care

'a bag full of goodies and brief instructions'

while building it, checking it, making sure you don't strip threads and simple things like that, and you will get more satisfaction out of driving the car, knowing that you have built it correctly and according to the instruction manual.

Since the World Championships and the launch of the L3 there have been a few teething problems with the chassis, mainly to do with breakage at the front of the chassis. I contacted Associated and spoke to Cliff Lett the head of R&D. When I brought this problem to his attention, he apologised and could not see any reason in the design of the chassis and why it should break. Cliff is contacting the manufacturer of the carbon fibre to follow it up. Cliff believes it might be a material fault, rather than a design fault. By the time this review goes into print, this should have been corrected. Cliff also asked me to pass on his utmost apologies to all his drivers of the new L3. For those of you who wish for extra protection on the front of the car, it may be an idea if you go to your local hardware store and purchase two half inch tap washers. These make excellent bumpers when placed under the body posts, replacing the aluminium spacers.

For this review we are going to assemble the car as 'kit'. In a later issue we will look at how to modify components to allow more room for radio and show some fine tuning to make the car more competitive.

Front End

Associated have stuck with their ever successful dynamic strut front end. Associated are now using a slightly different material, more refined and easier to assemble. Simply following the instructions, the front end goes together very smoothly. The pivot balls seem to go in a lot easier and are quite free on assembly which means you do not have to run the car in as much before a major event. Axles and King pins are the same as before with a little anodised blue screw and pivot balls. Anodised titanium turnbuckles finish off the front end very nicely, making it an even more attractive car.

Always take care when assembling the front end, never rush to tighten up the screws too much. Remember to line up all the part first, making sure everything is square and that no threads or screws are stripped. Make sure all holes are deburred and everything is a smooth fit before final assembly.

Rear End

The same revised rear end as the LC has been used just using lighter components with a new magnesium Motor mount and the left hand side bearing carrier made out of lighter material. The plus sides of Associated are that all the lighter components are just as strong as before. So the advantage is in having a lighter car just as strong as any other previous model. The top and bottom rear plates are the same as before and it is an advantage to round the edges to give it a nice smooth finish. With the top rear plate it may be an advantage to use some 1200 wet and dry. Do not forget to smooth off the rear end on both sides as it gives a better action on the back end, especially in low traction conditions.

The right height adjusters fitted to the rear end of the car seem to be a lot better fit. The machining looks a much higher standard. Do make sure that you don't have any bearings binding and make sure the axle is free at all times. Once again the rear end is finished off with very nice blue anodised screws to contrast with the rest of the car.

T-Bar Assembly

The revised T-bar as used in the 1/12th LC. car has been used again for this car. The traditional Associated ball and club cup features, using 2 screws at the front for adjustment. Take time to install the ball and cups on the T-Bar, making sure the ball is not binding in the cup, giving a free action on the T-Bar.

The T-Bar brace fitted on the LC car has been used again as it has been a success. One the T-Bar has been fitted to the rear pod, and it has been secured onto the chassis, then you can move on to the rear brace and damper assembly.

Tip

The one thing that we racers change is take the middle screw out of the T-Bar, allowing the T-Bar to flex slightly more, giving more traction at the rear end. Once the T-Bar has been assembled and the twig screws have been installed, take a needle file and file down the outer ears around the twig screws to avoid catching the batteries when installing them in the car as the T-Bar moves. It is always best not to over tighten the screws that hold the T-Bar in place. Always make sure they are tight but not too tight.

Rear Suspension

The two round things with the springs above and below, are the squeegee damper springy things connected to the chassis and this is what we call the rear suspension setup. This part of



The completed car ready to race

this car is quite unique and very important to the handling characteristics of the car. Very minor adjustments to this system can transform the car into steering very aggressively or very tamely. This depends on personal preference. First off the damper post should be secured on the rear brace and then the rear brace secured to the chassis by three fixing points. Sadly however, these have not been anodised in blue and haven't even been polished therefore require some work to make them look attractive. Once the brace is in place, you can install the spring then the circle damper washer, the top plate, another damper washer, another spring and yet another washer, followed by a nut securing the whole assembly in place. Don't forget to secure the top plate onto the rear pod. At this point leave the top plate and the damper washers dry. Once you are happy with the installation of the rear pod, top plate and the rear brace it should begin to look like a model car. Now you can begin with fitting the shock mounting, antenna mount and the body posts. For the time being we are going to leave the servo posts in the standard pre-drilled position, ready for easy installation of the electric's and the Radio gear.

Next month we will finish the assembly, fit the electric's and start shaking down the chassis for competition. **RRCI**

Quick Spec

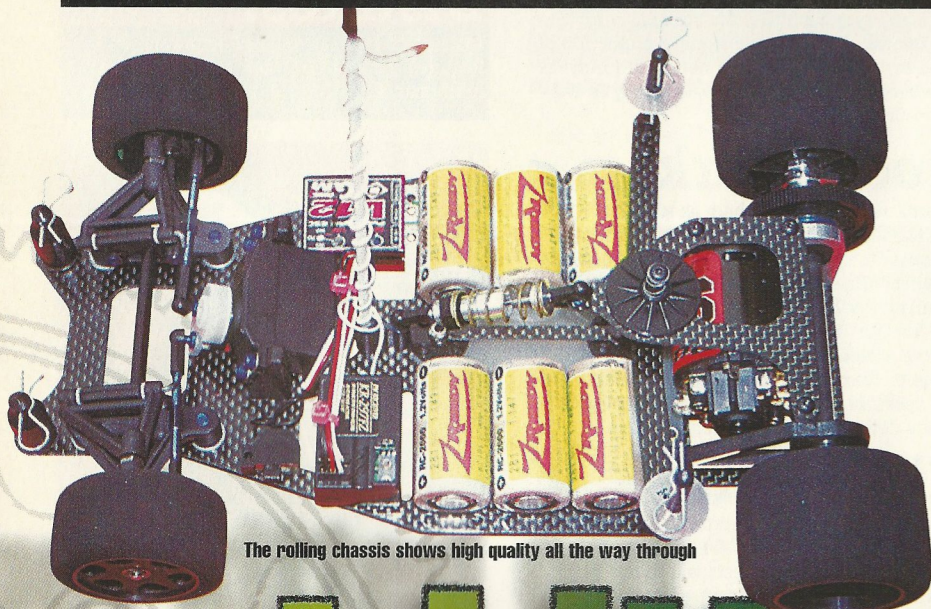
1/12th scale On-track racing chassis kit. Carbon chassis. Requires Motor and speed controller, 2 channel Radio, Bodyshell and paint, cells and charger to complete.

Introduction

Earlier in the year, Great Britain hosted one of the greatest events in the world of Model car racing. The IFMAR World championships and World Cup had three competitive disciplines in 16 days. This provided quite a task for the

World class

The new Associated 12 L3



The rolling chassis shows high quality all the way through

get kitted out