

Associated B2 Sport Review



It's just over a year ago when RRC reviewed the first of the Associated B2's to arrive in the UK, this of course was the car that Matt Francis won the 1995/96 World Championship, straight from its kit box. Having given the "racer" a car to win with, Associated have turned their attention to the beginners out there. The B2 Sport carries probably 90% of the "racer" car specification, allowing the "beginner" to develop his driving skills, and then develop his car.

It's not Metric

This may sound a little daft, but as the B2 is manufactured in the USA, it comes with "American" sized screws etc. now as the UK has been metric for some years a lot of people don't have the correct fitting hand tools, although Associated do supply Allen wrenches and a handy spanner, I do recommend you get some good quality Allen drivers, as a lot of the

screws do not have very deep locations and they can strip very easily, may be even the wrenches made by especially for Associated for the B2, also a couple of nut drivers to suit the plastic nuts that Associated seem to favour.

Got the Tools...get building

If you haven't built an Associated car before, and if you are reading this I doubt you have, you will find the pictorial instructions very clear and precise, you do have to spend a little time cross referencing between the spare parts list and the instructions, as often two "like" parts will have different part no's and will require identification.

The build starts with the very simple front suspension, a 30° castor block supports a steering block with an alloy stub axle. A steel king pin passes through all three components, a check on the fit between the king pin and the front axle is recommended, when

sportsman's World champion

The steering bell cranks are trapped between the top plate and the kick-up plate. The servo link is the one you adjust to track the car straight.

complete I suggest a little thread lock should be used on the grub screw locating the king pin/steering block.

Two very long, slender, composite wishbones mount to a narrow front bulkhead, which the glass fibre shock also bolts too, a neat alloy cross brace stiffens the point the wishbones mount to the bulkhead. A single top link connects the caster block to the shock tower. Associated must have done a good deal of testing with the B2, as they only provide one position for this link, a steel turnbuckle allows quick and easy "static" camber adjustments. Once assembled check that the wishbones drop under their own weight, mine didn't, the rectification being the removal of a small amount of material on the inside face of the inboard end of the wishbone.

Kick-up to chassis...are you there

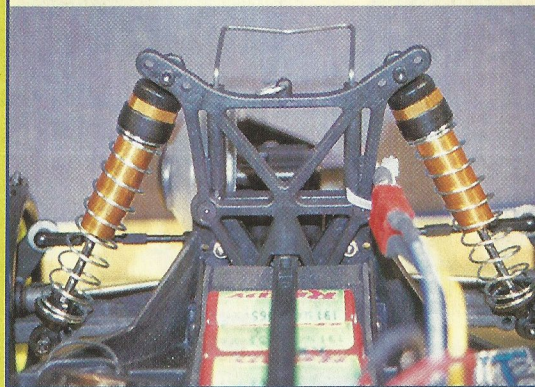
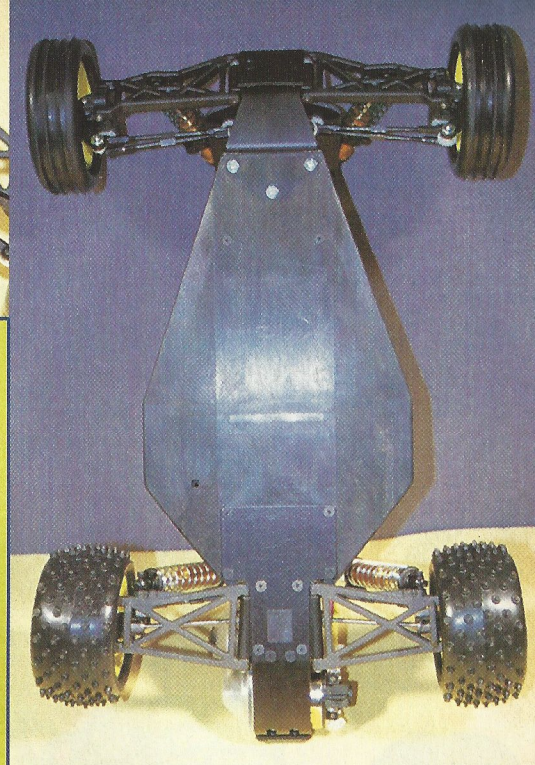
An alloy "kick up" bracket mounts to the front of the moulded chassis, if you purchased the Allen drivers you will find the job made



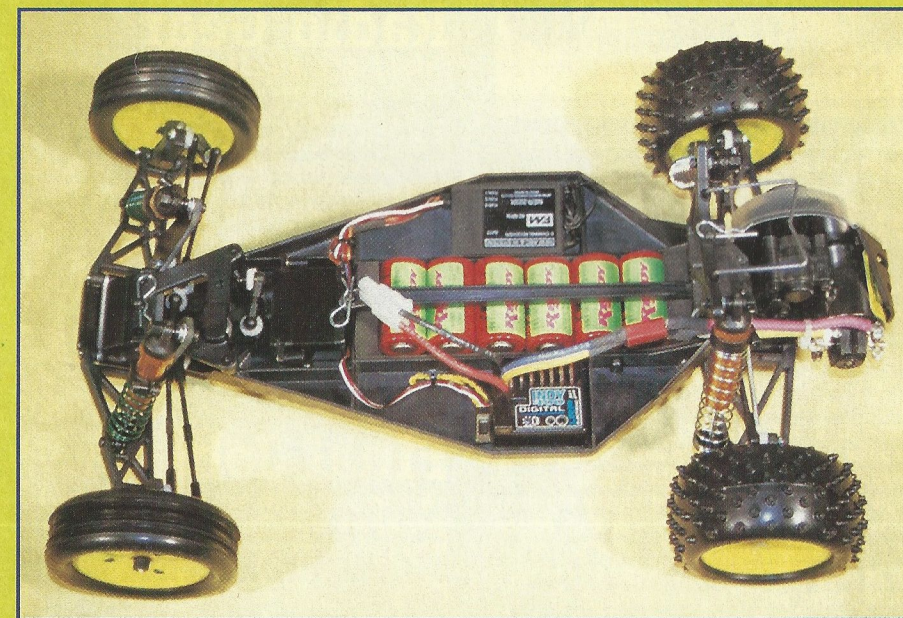
Right: Associated made a major change with the moulded chassis of the B2.

very easy, if you use the kit supplied keys, be very careful to locate the key in the head of the screw correctly, as it's a snap to strip the head. Both the mounting pins for the twin steering bellcranks are trapped in the same plate.

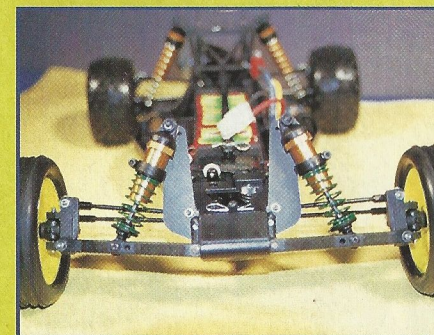
In normal "off road" style one half of the bellcrank is sprung, to give protection from bumps and crashes for the steering servo. The bellcranks do give you a choice of pick ups for the drag link, the standard position gives a very soft, smooth steering, however if you know your going to race on a high grip surface such as carpet, then use the optional pick up point. The bell-cranks are trapped between the kick up plate and the moulded top plate, plastic bushing running on the pivot pins. After this the completed front suspension is slid under the top plate and is located by CSK screws top and bottom in to the moulded chassis, not forgetting the mini-bumper below the nose of the chassis. The front end is completed with the fitting of the turnbuckle track rods.



The rear shock tower, moulds well into the B2, note only the two alternative's for the location of the rear shock absorbers.



The completed rolling chassis, note the location of nicad pack - see text.



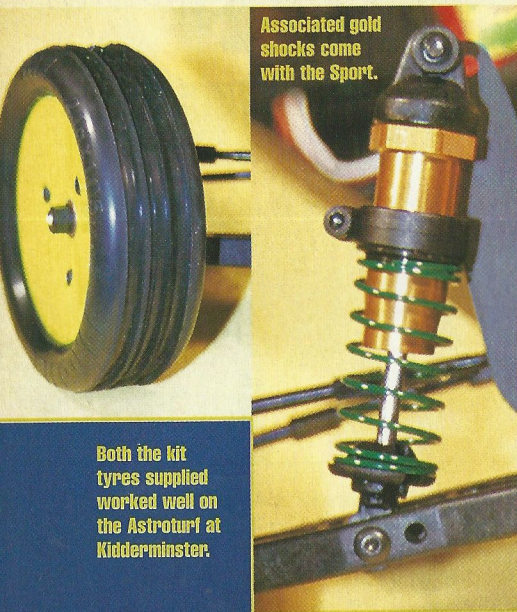
A very simple front suspension, limited adjustments, so just build and drive.

The Sport comes with a very smart, snug fitting bodyshell, the cooling duct on the right can be opened up and used to good effect.

Rear End

An alloy lower chassis plate locates the two 3° suspension mounts, again CSK screws are used, do fit the correct length screws. Having located the mounts the plate is screwed to the chassis. Two more long wishbones hang from the blocks, pivoting on steel hinge pins. Do make certain the outer stiffening rib is facing down, again be sure the wishbones fall under their own weight, if not find where the tight point is and rectify by trimming or polishing.



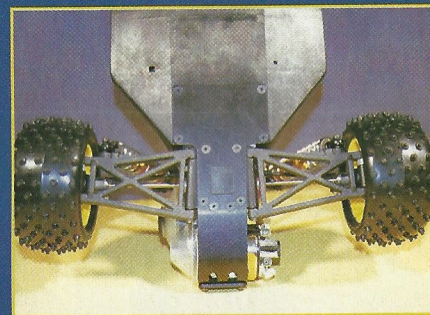


Associated gold shocks come with the Sport.

Both the kit tyres supplied worked well on the AstroTurf at Kidderminster.



Motor comes from the Dual Sport, it's plenty quick enough.



The bottom rear mounting plate can be clearly seen, note the amount of rear toe-in.

The Heart of the Beast

With a 2WD car correct assemble of the transmission is of paramount importance. Take your time over it, because the Sport is "bushed" not ballraced play particular care over the fits on the shafts and the diff out drives. Don't grease the bushing, use a very light machine oil, this will give less drag. The instructions are very clear and concise and you should have no trouble in assembling a smooth efficient tranny, one tip I will give here, when putting the two halves of the gearbox case together smear a little diff grease on the two jointing surfaces, this will stop any dust getting in and making the transmission "notch".

The next step is to install the slipper clutch to the tranny, if you lay out the parts in order and do a "dummy" assembly you will be able to see any problems with the fits, I did need to de-burr the inner clutch hub, so it would slide on the main/top drive shaft. The Rulon disc should be flat and undamaged, also make certain the disc is central on the hub. Don't worry about adjusting the clutch at this point, the track is the best place.

Finished Rear

Having mounted the tranny to the chassis plate, the rear hubs can be assembled and fitted, again don't grease the bushing, just a light oil for lube. The mid point is a good place to start for the wheelbase, only track time will tell if it works. The dog bone driveshafts have short springs fitted to the drive cups, this will keep the driveshafts central and stop them dropping out. As per the front suspension, a single steel turnbuckle is used for the top link, unlike the front suspension two pick up points are provided, so a limited amount of tuning can be done. Attaching the composite shock mount to the rear bulkhead completes the basic chassis build.

Old Ones but Good Ones

Associated famous gold anodised shocks are included with the B2 Sport, prior to Associated releasing their Teflon coated shocks, the "gold" bodies were world leaders. The shocks are unique in as much as the seals for the shocks are fitted from the top inside the shock body, a plastic "C" clip locating them. This system keeps some of the dirt and grit away from the seals. When filling the shocks with oil, follow the kit instructions to the letter as Associated recommend a certain amount of rebound. Once filled and adjusted the shocks were super

smooth. Add the springs and adjust the preload collars as per the instructions.

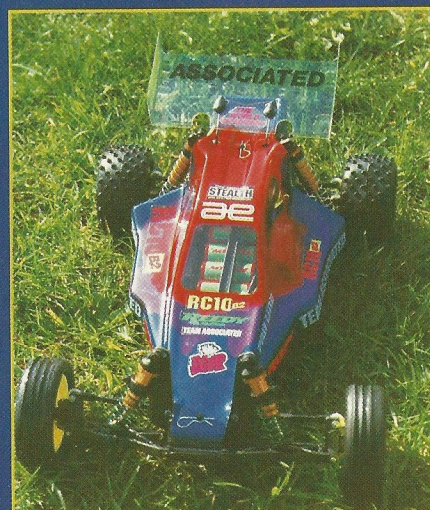
When you mount the shocks be very careful not to tighten the plastic locking nuts to tight. Again Associated must be very confident of their testing results as only a limited amount of adjustment is available for the shock locations, normally a major tool in the "tuning" of Off-road cars.

Radio Gear

The B2 will cope with most types of radio gear, as a beginners car I don't think you have to go out and buy the best FET servo that money can buy, I fitted a "cooking" JR4135 which retails for around £60.00. As part of the Sports specification a mechanical speed controller is included, this is about as good as this type of controller can be, being a resistor type, however I made a decision to fit a budget electronic speedo, an LRP Indy 400 to be exact. Seeing the Sport comes with a Reedy DS "standard" motor, I decided to fit it along with the kit supplied pinion. My JR X756 receiver completing the electronics.

Final Jobs

Now we come to the one single job which gave me any sort of problem, assembling the three piece wheels/tyres. This type of system



allows you fix the tyres to the wheels without glue, a plastic ring traps the bead of the tyre between the rims, then the rims are bolted together, sounds easy doesn't it, well it's not!!! After using large amounts of liquid soap and brute force, four wheels were built, do remember to drill vent holes in the four plastic locking rings, as the tyre seal is so good no air can get in and the tyre may collapse. Supplied with the kit was some quite soft Proline Edge fronts and a pair of Associated spike rears, these tyres will give a lot of grip on hard packed surfaces or astro turf.

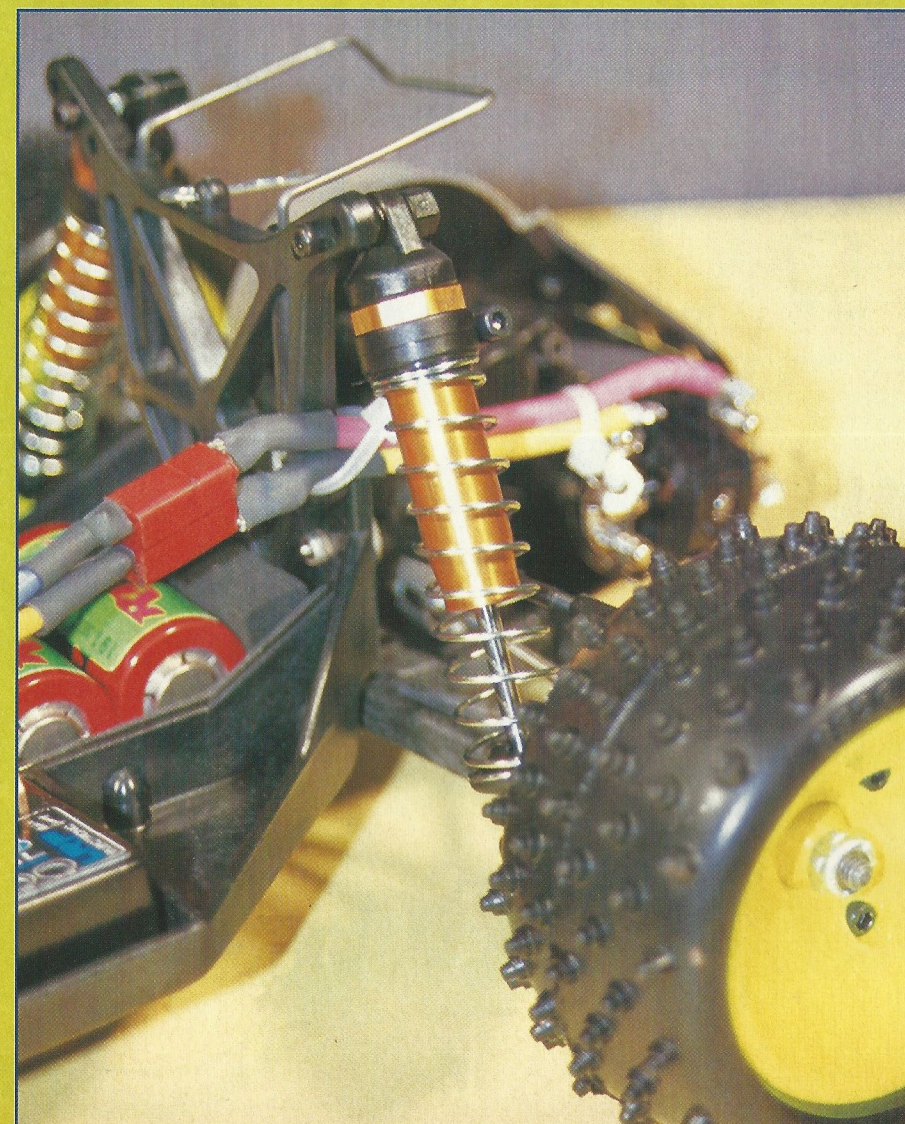
Final jobs were to trim and paint the shell and mount the wing on the pre-bent wring wire. I would suggest you bend outwards the bottom 1/2 inch of the wing wire, so you have to "spring" it in place on the car.

Testing Time

Having read through the comprehensive set up details in the back of the instruction manual, I headed off to Kidderminster. Having raced at the RRC finals with the Schumacher Fireblade 2000 I thought it would be the ideal place to test the B2. For those of you who don't know Kiddy is an artificial track, with several different surfaces, but 80% Astro turf. On arrival at the track it became clear although the weather was dry, but windy, the track was very wet.

The first job was to trim the steering, although my JR radio has various sub trims for this, I decided most beginners would have a basic radio, so I spent a little time adjusting

Associated gold shocks come with the Sport.



the track rods and the servo link till the car ran straight, a little fiddly, but well worth it. Next was to adjust the slipper clutch, it's a good idea to run a few minutes with the slipper set solid, this will allow the diff to bed in and give you the chance to check its setting. This was promptly done, the diff requiring a minor adjustment as it did run a little loose.

Now for the slipper, the damp main straight was used for this, plant the throttle and the front of the car will reach for the sky, too much drive, the slipper was loosened in small stages till the car would accelerate straight without lifting the front too much, in fact it's surprising how loose you could run it and still have good traction. This I suspect had something to do with the spiked rear tyres and the relatively mild DS motor.

Having built up two packs of Reedy Nova 1400 SCR's in an "in-line" layout (stick will fit, just) I was ready for some fun. Having raced at Kiddy I knew that parts of the track were very bumpy and that a good car set up was needed for quick times, so I was a little amazed that straight from the box the handling was very predictable, the oil/shock/spring combination working perfectly. Having attended a recent Associated Team test day I did know which "lines" to use, so I did have a little advantage. Having run my two cell packs I sat down and decided to play around a little, as Associated feel they have optimised the B2 settings, the only major changes that can be made are weight distribution. By using the foam rubber cell packs, the position of the nicad pack can be moved forward or back. I had gone for maximum traction and had positioned them to the rear. A quick swap round had the cells right to the front of the moulded tray, what a differ-



Sportsman's World Champion.

ence. The almost docile machine had become a lot more aggressive, the slight power-on understeer was now almost oversteer but it was a lot quicker, I really was surprised.

The more I try and test Off-road cars the more I realise how sensitive to set-up changes they are, so Associated's "optimised" handling should make it a lot simpler for a beginner just to perfect his or her driving styles without having to understand a complicated car as well.

Chequered Flag

The B2 Sport carries a great deal of its "older" brothers qualities, in fact without the bodyshell and the mechanical speedo it's very hard to tell them apart, and I suspect it would take a driver of almost World Class standard to tell the difference on the track straight from the box, such is the high spec of the Sport. Obviously the racer is a little better as it's ballraced as standard and the shocks are a little better, but the Sport can be easily built up that spec after you have run it for a while. For a first time car you can see the B2 leaves you little to buy as extras, and as Associated have done their homework, gives you a great deal of time to develop your skills.

The Associated B2 Sport can be bought from most good model shops. Distributed in the UK by C.M.L. Distribution, see their ad for more details. **RRCI**

Quick Spec

2WD. Moulded Composite Chassis. Centrally Located In-line Nicads. Oilite Bushings. Triple Shaft Stealth Transmission. Adjustable Ball Diff. Slipper Clutch. Dog Bone Drive Shafts. Independent Suspension. Bottom Wishbone & Top Link All Round. Adjustable Camber Front and Rear. Oil Filled Coil Over Shock Absorbers. 3 Piece Dish Wheels. Rib Front Tyres. Spike Rear Tyres.

Testers Kit

Radio:-	JR X756
Receiver:-	JR Ner 223X
Servo:-	JR 4135
Speedo:-	LRP Indy 400
Nicads:-	Reedy Nova 1400 SCR
Motor:-	Kit
Tyres:-	Kit
Bodyshell:-	Kit