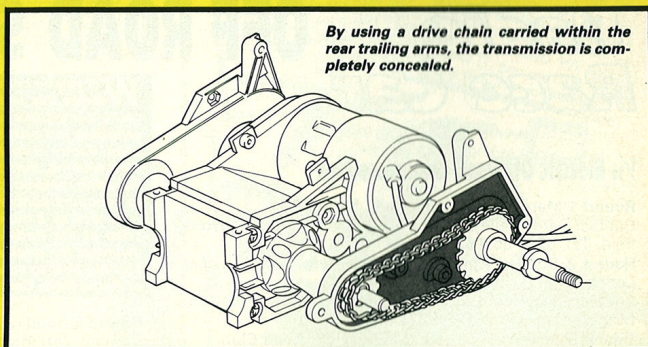
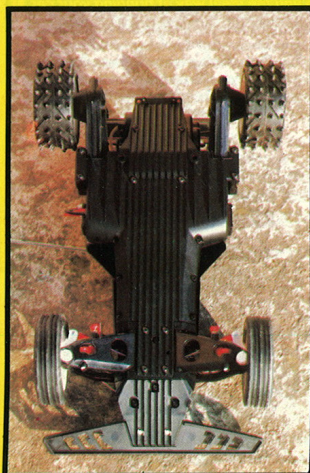


These views show the Mad Wolf's outlines. The front body was removed to show the servo installation in the second photo, while the third shows the Mad Wolf's significant feature, no drive shafts.



MAD WOLF

Bandai's premier car
the Mad Wolf is
reviewed by
GORDON BATT



By using a drive chain carried within the rear trailing arms, the transmission is completely concealed.

During the recent years, several Oriental toy and kit manufacturers have attempted to break in to the world of 1/10 scale buggy production, but so far without notable success. Bandai's debut model, however, shows that this firm has really done a lot of 'homework' before stepping into this highly competitive field. So, while reading this review, bear in mind that this is a first kit and you may feel, as we do, that Bandai is a name to watch for now and in the future.

The Mad Wolf is a chain driven 1/10 scale rear wheel drive off road racer for 7.2 or 8.4 volt (six or seven cell) power and BEC radio control systems. It comes in kit form and as

construction presented no problems — even with the Japanese only instructions in the review kit — we will simply describe the car in detail.

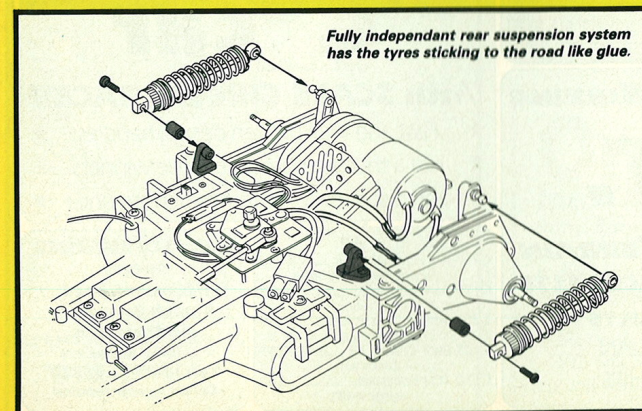
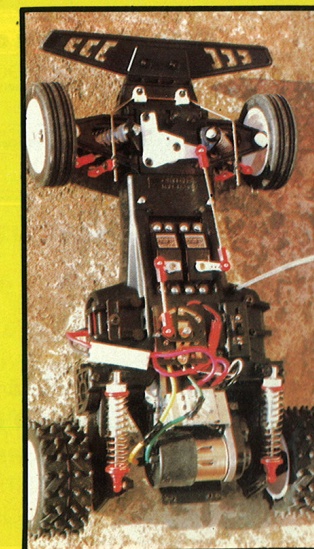
Starting at the sharp end then, the Mad Wolf's first line of defence is a full width flexible plastic bumper, kind to ankles as well as the chassis. Front suspension consists of a full double wishbone, moulded from high impact plastic, with the suspension unit (coil spring over oil filled damper) well protected within the 'cage' formed by the arms. The shockers are superbly simple and have only one unique feature, the use of a thin rubber diaphragm to separate the oil from the necessary air space. In terms of

suspension geometry, the front end is excellent, there is no trace of bump steer until the front end literally bottoms out, while the camber also remains unchanged throughout the suspension movement. Another feature that makes this model notable is the presence of an anti-roll bar, an item that on some cars doesn't appear until the second, 'uprated' kit.

In the centre of the car is a true monocoque chassis, a hollow shell that carries the radio and main battery. One of

the car's few negative points appears here, in that the receiver is well and truly buried and changing a crystal will be a task of epic proportions. However, experienced racers will foresee this possible problem and cut a little hole in the chassis, through which the crystal can be changed. The battery pack can be changed in a few seconds and clips are supplied to suit either six or seven cell packs. A three forward and three reverse speed mechanical speed controller is supplied in the kit, this item is fully wired

Removing the roll cage reveals the mechanical speed controller.



Fully independent rear suspension system has the tyres sticking to the road like glue.

up with ceramic resistors, motor suppressor and BEC plug (Acoms type) already attached.

The rear end carries a number of notable features, most unusual being the chain drive system which means that the transmission is totally enclosed. From the motor, mounted sideways at the very rear of the gearbox, the transmission runs outside the gearbox side plate, which allows easy access to change the motor pinion or even the motor itself. From the first idler gear — which presented the only tight fitting shaft in this nylon bearing'd car — the drive train is taken inside the strong cast metal and plastic gearbox. A planetary geared, fully enclosed differential gear then transmits the drive out to the trailing arms along the pivots of the arms, and a drive chain then takes the power from the pivot back to the hub. Such a system does seem to be a little tortuous and long winded, but does run remarkably smoothly and quietly.

Thanks to this type of drive the rear underside of the car is very uncluttered and the suspension has a fantastic amount of movement which does not affect the power transmission in any way. Independent shockers are used on the rear.

One piece wheel hubs with soft rubber tyres, knobblies on the rear and grooved on the front, are employed, while decoratively the Mad Wolf features a red plastic rollcage at the rear with a clear Lexan wing and front body shell.

Wolf On The Run

Our test runs were with the car as built out of the box, using the Mabuchi 540 standard

motor, with large pinion, nylon bearings (including the tight ones on the idler shaft) and a 7.2volt, six cell racing pack.

Initial acceleration was, to be honest, only just comparable with the best of the current club standard cars. Top speed in this comparatively choked form was similarly un-startling, but the stability and road holding was most impressive. Totally predictable, one could tell to a degree how much lock to apply at a given speed and surface to obtain a turn of the required diameter. It was fascinating to watch full speed tight turns on concrete, for each time the Mad Wolf would haul itself sharply through 90 degrees, then the front end would skid and skip twice before gripping again to continue the turn.

During the evening the gearbox was stripped down and the tight idler gear eased on its shaft, which resulted in a dramatic improvement in its performance. Mad Wolf was now up at the front of the pack of kit standard club racers as far as speed went, yet it still retained its remarkable stability.

The most significant bad comment one could make about the Mad Wolf is that it is pretty heavy for a six cell car, but after all, it is designed for use with a seven cell pack as an alternative, and here it is noticeably lighter than the opposition. So, an 8.4 nicad was obtained, charged up and fitted, then it was out on to the track again.

A tentative touch on the throttle brought in the first step on the speed controller and the Wolf rolled smoothly away. A quick wiggle showed the cornering was still tight and stable with the heavier battery, so open up to the next step. By now the car was moving at its previous top speed (although

it should be said that the kit's standard RS540 had been swapped for a Technigold motor) and still retained its handling qualities, so no excuses remained for not letting the Wolf off its leash. Left thumb forward ... ohmigod ... what previously seemed to be more like a Chihuahua with a chip on its shoulder started to live up to its name.

Mad Wolf now had to be driven with more care, for the suspension and tyre combination barely coped with the power the car was laying down. Nevertheless, it was still predictable — i.e., if it rolled on a certain corner at high speed it always would unless the speed was reduced — and far more stable than most cars. The way it could be set into a controlled drift was an eye opener and you would swear the front anti-roll bar could be seen to work, the nose dropping as the turn started.

Summary

As a first excursion into this field of racing, an exceptional model, well designed and ideally suited to the newcomer to competitive racing (i.e., a novice could put it together.) 'Blue printed' and ballraced, its superior handling more than makes up for its slightly inferior top speed in six-cell, 2wd racing, due no doubt to its excessive weight. However, in a seven cell race it must be a contender, for here its not only lighter but considerably less expensive than its contemporaries. Bandai might be an unfamiliar name but the Mad Wolf will be well worth a close look when you see it on your local shop's shelves.

Available mid August and distributed by Bandai U.K. Ltd., Steward House, Sydenham Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 3SR. Price approx £90.00.



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