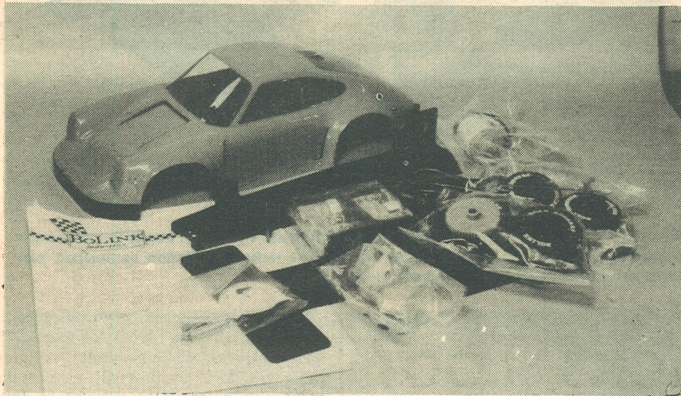


AN RCW TEST

BoLink \$79.95

1/12 Electric Kit Car



Contents of the box, each sub-assembly bagged for easy identification. Body does not come painted, had the color applied only to make it show up better in this picture.

by Dan Rutherford

In the R/C car market, the cars either seem to cost too much or are acceptable in price but do not meet the minimum standards required for even casual competition. Never mind the fact that by and large you get what you pay for and that we are presently being offered race cars that represent very good value for the money... what counts is that it does cost some bucks to even get a car rolling down the pavement, under your control.

So for many the entry-level pricing is a bit much when looking to proven race cars, yet the "toy" cars can be seen at a glance to be just toys. What is needed is for some manufacturer to offer a sound chassis/motor/battery system for low bucks; the lower the better.

Enter BoLink with their 6-cell electric car kit (stock number BLX-155) that is presently retailing for only \$79.95. If price is to be the determining factor on whether or not you get into R/C cars, this car kit deserves a close look. If ultimate performance is your bag, you are reading the wrong article.

As the word "kit" indicates, this car does need to be assembled and you should count on taking an evening or two to do the job right. Some soldering is required, the entire chassis must be assembled, the body must be painted and of course you will need to install the radio of your choice. This is what keeps the price down, you doing most of the work instead of an assembler at BoLink.

An interesting side to the idea of assembling your own car, instead of just buying an R-T-R (ready-to-run) is that once you have the thing running you will have a much better knowledge of what goes into the car and so be better prepared to tinker with it, or fix it as the case may be.

INSIDE THE BOX

Whenever looking at a new car, the first thing I do is to dump all the parts on the table and rummage through them; then it is on to the instruction manual. In any car, especially a kit car like this, the proper instructions are very important. And decent instructions indicate to me

that the manufacturer is indeed trying to give his customers the best shot possible at successfully completing and running the car. In this kit car, BoLink has done an acceptable job with the instructions. A few tools required are listed, a check list of furnished parts is there as is a diagram of a complete car, chassis instructions, radio installation instructions, and so on. Going an extra step, there is a page devoted to troubleshooting, another to charging, one more to painting the body. In all, they tell you how to build the car from one end to the other and we had no problems with the instructions.

Supplied bits and pieces will look familiar to anybody that has been around 1/12 cars for long. The black plastic chassis, steering blocks, gear and rear axle are from Jerobee. The six sub-C batteries are GE, of course. Everything else is BoLink from the body to the motor to the front and rear tire/wheel sets. Speed control is by the usual resistor, cheap and dependable. Not so usual is the full-length Kydex pan/bumper piece that bolts to the bottom of the chassis with countersunk screws.

Our particular kit came with BoLink's Street Porsche body, made of Tuffak, which is very similar to Lexan. Other bodies are available with the kit cars and as BoLink has over 25 different bodies you may not find exactly the one you wanted in your kit. The body did come complete with a flat black interior piece that is just stuck inside the body with tape.

If you already have the radio, there are only a couple of things you'll need to complete the car, other than that supplied. Servo mounting tape is one, the other is an antenna kit or at least a tube for the antenna to run in. Naturally, you will need some paint for the body, but other than that BoLink does give you the whole ball of wax.

BUILDING IT

This is no problem, the instructions go through in a logical sequence, step-by-step. It would be an excellent idea to read all instructions before doing anything, but

not really necessary. As with any kit that has to be universal enough to accept most any radio, there are compromises made that need to be worked around. We used a Futaba radio and the S7 servos are a bit big. This meant putting a funny bend in the resistor wiper arm, plus grinding the lugs off the steering servo so it would lay on its side in the channel of the frame.

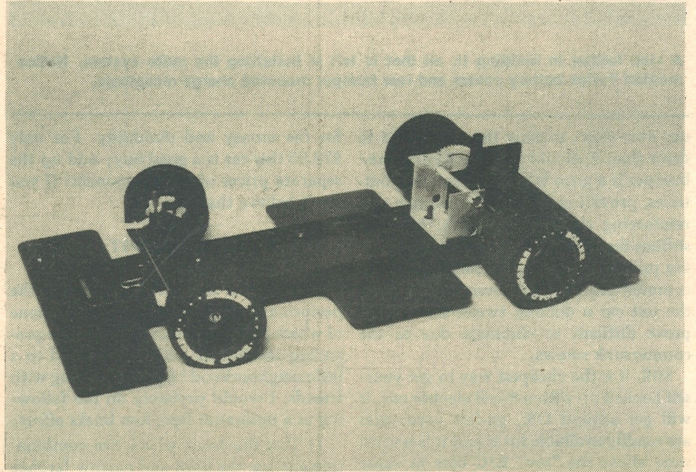
The only other problem in assembling the car was that the supplied, rear bumper mounted charge plug did not match the drawing. Not knowing which lead was positive or negative a blind stab was made and, of course, it came out wired in reverse. Check this, and all other wiring, very carefully if you build this car. A mistake here can be costly.

RUNNING IT

I hesitate here, as this car is not really being marketed for the gung-ho racer that has chosen racing R/C cars as his hobby. It is more for the people that already have a radio and just want to try car racing, not be dueling with Carbonell in their first race.

But the name of the magazine is *Race Car World*, so...

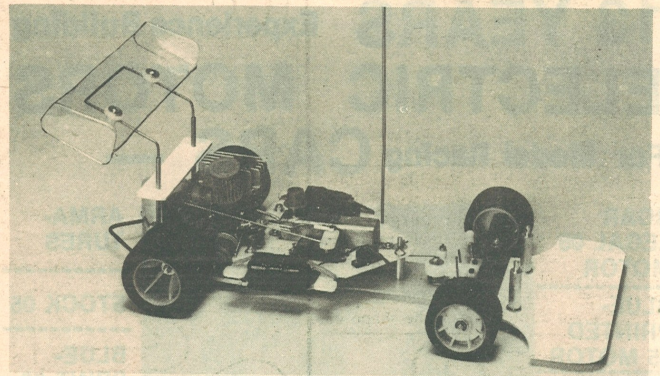
This BoLink car is not something I would run as-is in a serious race against other domestic electric cars (certain Jerobee, MRP and Leisure models or any Associated electric), as it is just not right for that. Those wide foam front wheels look neat and all but promote instantane-



Chassis ready for installation of the necessary electrics, radio and motor.

CHALLENGER

Swedish R/C Racing Equipment



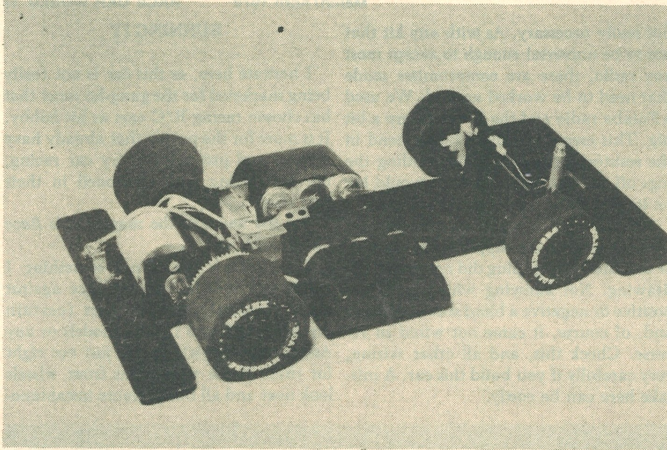
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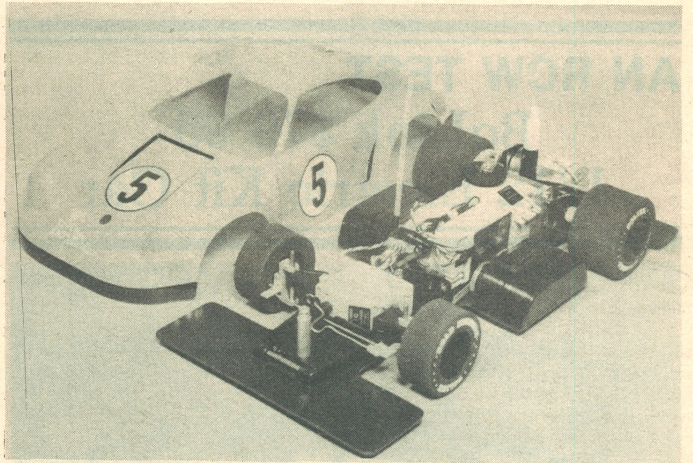
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A step further in building it, all that is left is installing the radio system. Notice molded Tuffak battery covers and rear bumper mounted charge receptacle.



ABOVE & BELOW: A short time after starting to build the car, it ought to look something like this. Use of smaller servos would ease radio installation somewhat, pictured are Futaba S7s, a bit large for the job.

ous over-steer, making the car harder to drive than it should be. The Kydex pan/bumper is a good thing for mounting batteries, providing front end protection and reinforcing the plastic chassis, but also stiffens the chassis, causing it to quit flexing properly. Although it might not be a common problem, this bumper/pan gave the test car a definite tweak that would prove difficult to eliminate due to the countersunk screws.

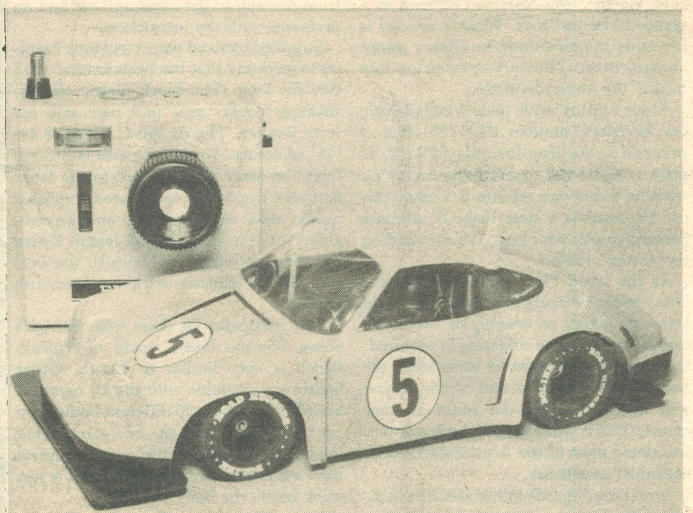
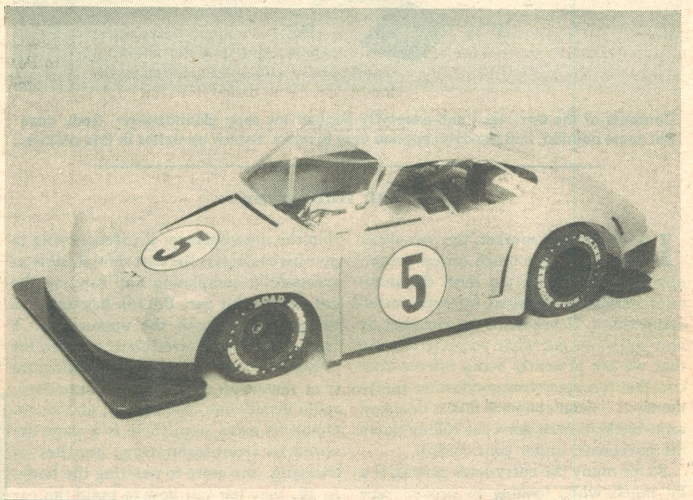
Still, it is the cheapest way to get yourself hooked up with a 6-cell electric car, it will get around OK, go-fast accessories are readily available for it and it is several steps above the "toy" R/C cars in value

for the money and durability. For only \$79.95 this car is a good buy; add up the separate prices of the components if you don't believe that.

IMPROVING IT

There are a few ways to upgrade the performance of your BoLink kit car, none of which cost much money. If I were preparing one to race with, as opposed to a little neighborhood blacktop blasting with friends, I would probably do the following as a minimum fuss, low bucks effort:

- 1) Toss the front wheel/tire combination and use the hard and narrow Jerobee



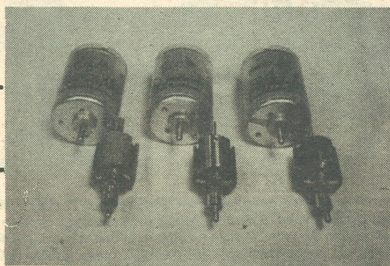
Finished car with flat black interior piece in place and BoLink's lettered sidewall tires looks good and is ready for some racing.

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or MRP tires on the bushed wheels. Bo-Link has just released a new front wheel/tire set that also might work very well, the F-650 series pictured elsewhere in this issue.

- 2) Chop up the Kydex Pan, leaving only the battery pack area and the front bumper. These two pieces would still be attached to the chassis with the stock countersunk screws.
- 3) Scrap the chassis mounted charging

resistor in favor of BoLink's BL-116 resistor, giving the faster 15-minute charge instead of 30 minutes.

- 4) Run the car until the chassis breaks and then use either a BoLink or Jerobee Lexan chassis; it is a simple remove-and-replace operation.

5) PRACTICE . . . but then you have to do that no matter what car you choose to race with, don't you? RCW