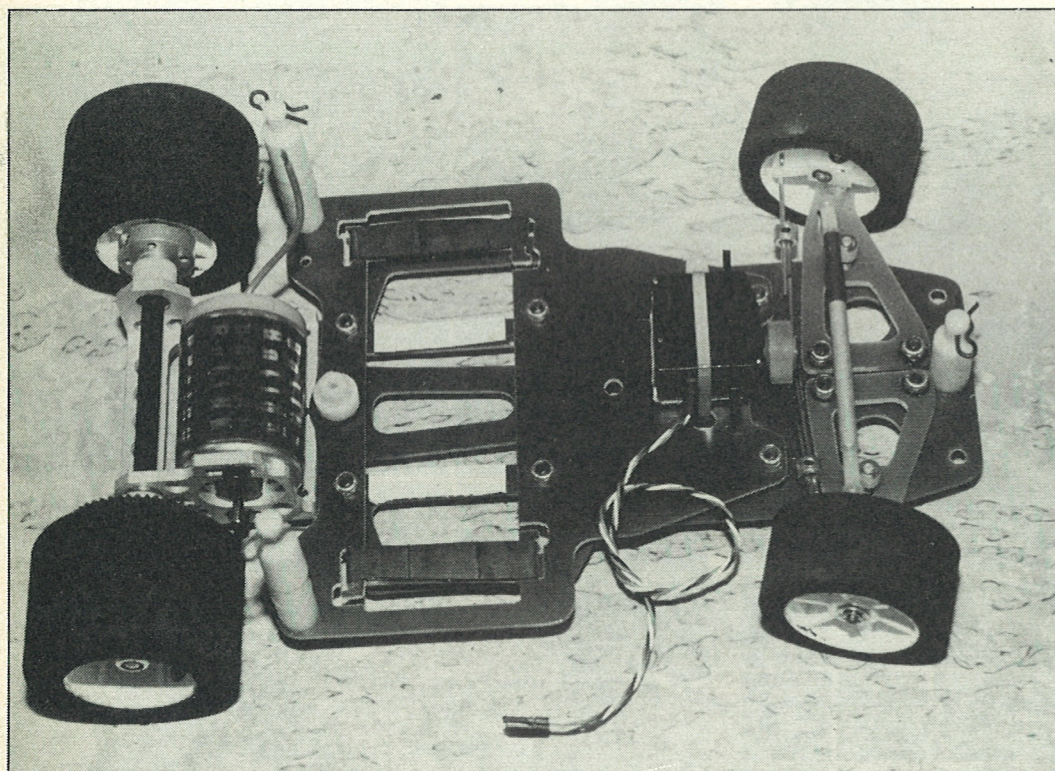


Bolink Bandito

Pete Winton takes a look at an American 1/12th scale electric race-car kit.



Above; completed rolling chassis. The nyloc nut just forward of the motor adjusts the amount of chassis flex.

WATCH OUT!! (says the publicity) BANDITO IS HERE.

With all the subtlety of a road drill we are informed how this 'revolutionary' kit will give 'maintenance-free racing' and features an 'aluminium rear pod to pull heat from the motor'.

Revolutionary it is not. There is nothing new about the 'Bandito' that Associated/Schumacher/Parma have not done before.

However, there are variations on the theme which combine to give a wholly competent product and makes for an ideal club racer with simple sturdy construction backed by vice-free handling. If this is what Bolink were aiming for they scored a direct hit.

My 'Bandito' arrived in January in a huge box which contained everything except radio gear, and differential hub carrier, more of which

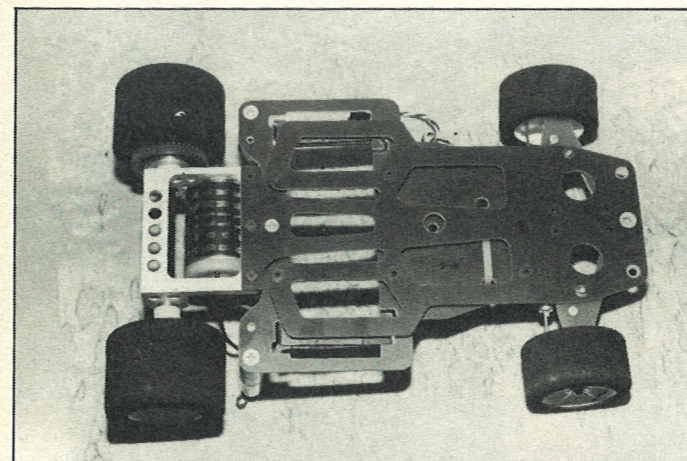
attached. The tongue flexes to give suspension movement to the pod just like Associated/Schum... etc.

Separated from the chassis by about 1/4" is another fretted out GRP item called the radio plate. This is mounted to the chassis at six points, providing support for the steering servo and speed controller as well as locating the Ni-Cads. Rear body posts are attached to the radio plate outboard and just forward of the rear wheels. At the rear of the radio plate is a hole with a rubber grommet in it; a screw bolted to the tongue on the chassis passes through the grommet and is retained by a nut and washer. This alters the rear end flex; tightening the nut reduces the flex.

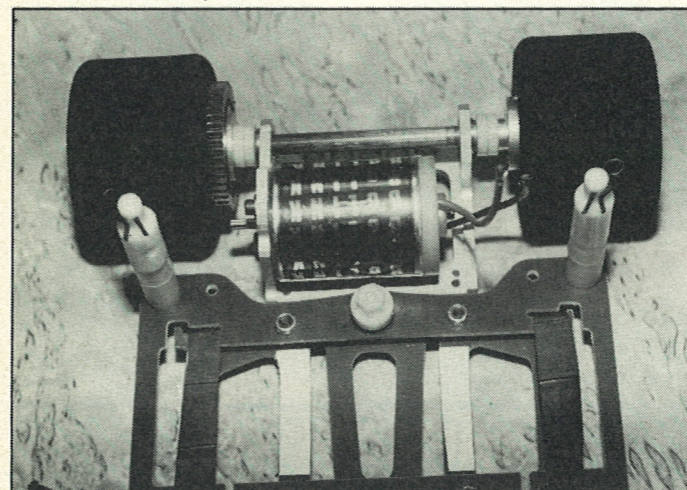
At the front is a single wishbone system supporting each wheel with the pivot points closely spaced to allow room for the steering servo. Linking the two wishbones is a simple but effective damper. A brass rod runs inside the outer aluminium tube and the hole is filled with light grease to give damping. Since there is no anti-roll bar the damper has very limited effect in roll, but it seemed to work well on the bench in vertical movements. The stub axle blocks were the old Associated type with full .125in. kingpin/stub axle

later. The main chassis components had been factory assembled, leaving only the differential and front wheels to be fitted.

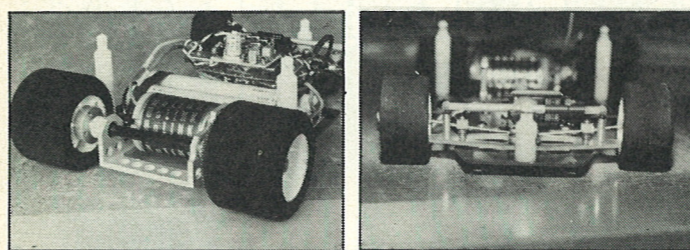
The main chassis plate is glass reinforced plastic (GRP) a material used by most 1/12th scale kit manufacturers. The plate has a number of holes fretted out to lighten it, and at the rear features a tongue to which the aforementioned ally pod is



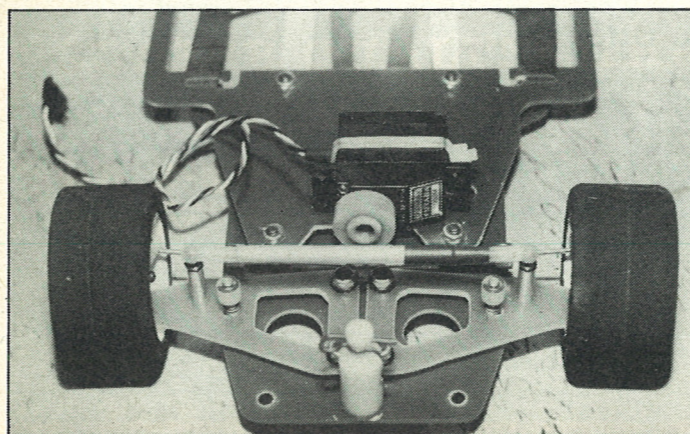
Above; underside of the Bandito' showing the chassis cut-outs and 'T' piece linked to the rear axle pod.



Above close up of the rear-end and flex adjustment. The motor supplied in the kit was an Igorashi '05'.



Above left; one-piece rear axle pod prevents distortion and also acts as a heat sink for the motor. Above right; close up of the front-end and damper.



offset, and for this reason I left the castor at the factory setting of 1° — 2°, less than I felt is necessary. The greater off-set compensates for an apparently low wishbone angle.

Overall the car's specifications are very close to European standards. Rear track is the same, front about 3mm (1/8in.) narrower. Wheelbase is 192mm, only 4mm more than a Schumacher, the same as a Demon. This is shorter than most American cars.

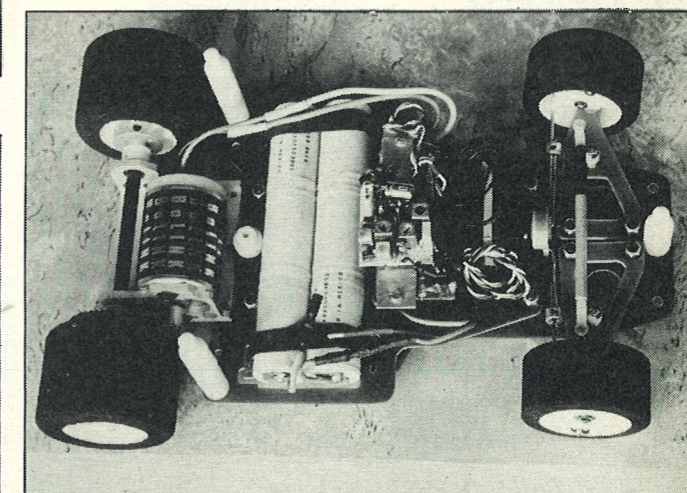
Fitted with the motor supplied (Igorashi 05) and Futaba FD30M servo, a Laser Compact speed controller and a JR 'Beat 2' receiver the Bandito weighed in at 2lb. 1/2oz. with the (heavyweight) Skee body supplied. I thought this was very good, since the radio plate could be lightened and the large body posts can be replaced in favour of the lighter Schumacher type.

The diff. supplied is a mixture of Associated and Schumacher type parts. However, there were no instructions, nor any part suitable for attaching the gear thrust washer to the wheel. In the end I had to use an old Associated diff. to take advantage of the excellent Carro wheels. These look great, weigh almost nothing and are the best you can't buy anywhere. The fronts are equally good, but the Alpha

Track Parts fronts also look nice and weigh only fractionally more. The tyres were round black, rubbery and called 'Trakker' compound.

The 'Bandito' is quite impressive on the track. It turns well and responds to the available adjustments just as you would expect. In fact all is well until you try and dice closely with a Schumacher or Omega car, when you find that it lacks that extra sharpness normally found on the European chassis. This is a shame, because it is well made and has just the sort of adjustments suitable for a beginner to use, as well as providing a good base for the more experienced to add anti-roll bars, reduce weight, etc. It is possible that a change of tyres, or indeed an anti-roll bar at the front, would give that extra little bit. Overall, I liked it; it is very disappointing that the existing Bolink agent is unlikely to import the car, and give you all a chance to use it. Oh, that damper at the front? Don't take it off, whatever it does, it works. Without it the car gets very twitchy.

Manufacturer: Bolink Industries, 420 Hosea Road, Lawrenceville, GA 30245-4695, USA.



Left; front suspension wishbones and damper. Above; the finished 'Bandito' fitted with Futaba receiver and servo and Laser 'Compact' speed controller. Ni-cads are General Electric.