

BoLINK CHALLENGER

A RADIO RACE CAR KIT REVIEW



Bob Rule "Mr. Bolink", with one of his new 1/10 off roaders. How about this for a body - Can't wait to try one!

When manufacturers give their kits a name, I feel that careful thought should be given to whether it has any significance to the actual car itself.

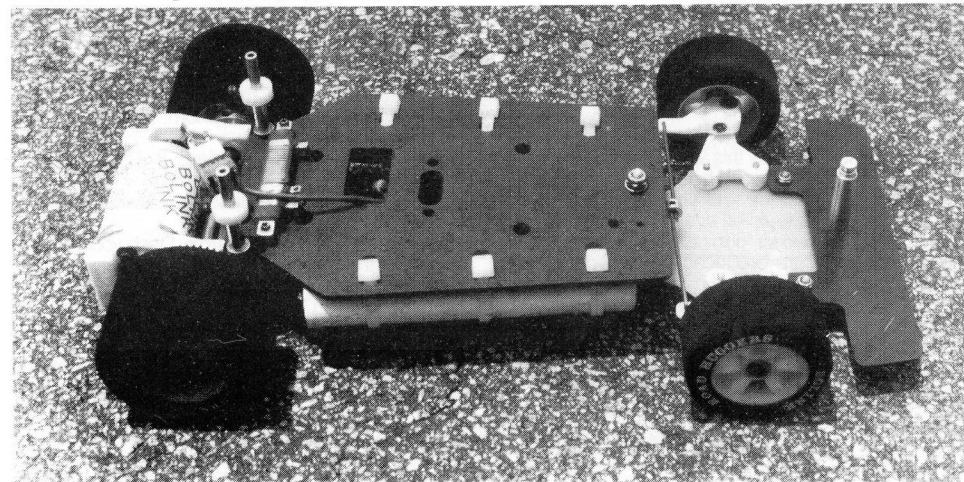
I suppose that when one designs a model race car with thoughts towards gaining a share of a very competitive market, nothing could have more significance than the name "CHALLENGER".

Bolink are a long established leading force in the USA, but I am not certain if the original design of this kit was derived in that country.

I say this, because approximately six months ago I ran for a short time, a Swedish Mini car version of the same car.

Where the design originated from, is I suppose, of little significance, in that the kit we are reviewing is manufactured in the States and currently run by Bolink team drivers in all leading indoor and outdoor 1/12 meetings, with, I believe, a fair measure of success.

Bolink Challenger in rear mounted motor. Standard kit can be built either as mid or rear motor.



On now to the actual building of the car, and a quick glance at the very well written instructions, shows to the experienced eye, that this design is not in any way breaking new ground.

It follows well tried and proven ideas, and offers the buyer the choice of two variations of car from the one kit.

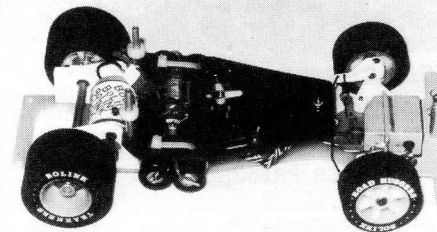
The one design I mention first, is that which we do not see very often in the UK, namely, a car with the motor mounted behind the rear axle. However, with the possible advent of more outdoor racing over here, who is to say that we "Engine in the boot" car couldn't be a winner with smooth, fast, high traction surfaces.

Before opening any of three carefully packed plastic bags, retaining each section of the car, a decision has to be reached over mid or rear mounted motor. I suppose current trends from our own indoors racing scene dictated my decision to opt for a mid engine.

Either choice is not an irreversible one, because Bolink supply a lightweight fibreglass chassis with pre drilled holes for either position of motor. Also supplied are two radio plates, and wiring harness with plug for the speed resistor.

Each section of the car is easily followed from the written instructions, enhanced by exploded views of all parts.

The chassis comes with all holes ready drilled, waisted front end and all cut-outs for chassis flex and lightness. The ready shaped front bumper is attached to the chassis with two 5-40 UNC countersunk screws and nyloc nuts. Front body post which comes drilled and tapped is attached with similar screw, and comes with machined annular groove to accommodate the body retaining "R" clip.

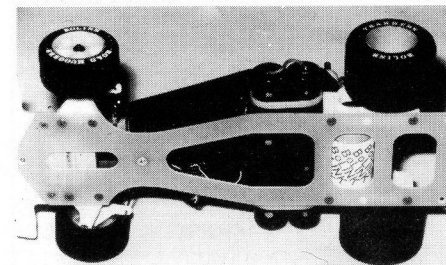


View topside - very neat and tidy.

Steering arms are attached with more 5-40 UNC countersunk machine screws. One or possibly two washers, should be placed between the front of the arm and the chassis, to give the steering its positive castor.

King pins are then pressed through the steering arms and held in place by circlip. Unlike other steering set-ups, the king pins in this kit remain unsupported, giving a very neat, light, and easily accessible steering set-up.

Stub axles are pressed through the steering arms and retained by circlips. These arms are dropped over the king pins and also a circlip completes this assembly.



Underside of the "Challenger" showing nicely fretted chassis countersunk screws, etc.

Rear blocks are attached to the chassis with 5-40 NC screws. Oilite bushes are a press fit into the blocks to accommodate the new axle. Aluminium body posts are also a press fit into the front holes of the blocks. These rear posts are also used for location of the radio plate, around which we now direct our attention.

The radio-shaker plate, like the rest of this kit, comes ready to assemble with no cutting or drilling to be done. Provisions are made for fitting of throttle servo, battery ties, radio switch and speed resistor. The resistor was new to myself and is a lighter, flatter design to those currently in wide use. It comes with ready fitted mounting supports on

each end. A few seconds work with two small self tapping screws supplied, soon had it attached to the shaker plate.

Two, three cell battery sticks are fitted crosswise beneath the shaker plate and are held firmly in place with double sided tape and tie wraps.

The wiring harness once more leaves nothing to chance. It comes ready assembled with plug and both positive and negative wires cut to exact length and pre-stripped for soldering to resistor and batteries.

There is acres of space on the underside of the shaker plate, behind the throttle servo, to fit the receiver and voltage regulator, both being held in place with servo tape. With all electrics fitted, the plate is dropped over the rear body posts and located loosely at its front on an aluminium post, screwed to the chassis.

Quick work can be made of the steering arm assembly. The screw is attached to the chassis with servo tape. Added to the servo is a simple three piece servo saver, with tension on the saver made by adjusting a Philips head screw against a small piece of nylon tube. Simple but quite effective. Steering arms come ready trimmed and bent to shape, and once fitted to servo and steering arms are held in place and adjusted by small steel collars.

Little is now left to do, to complete the car. The plug is soldered to motor, which in turn is fitted into the new blocks, and the differential is assembled.

An exploded view is supplied of the differential, which is a copy of an early Schumacher, made under licence in the States.

In these days of ultimate performance which of course is closely coupled with weight saving, my impressions of this differential is that it is totally unacceptable for any seasoned racer. A solid steel axle, heavy steel nyloc adjusting nut and a mild steel spacer behind the diff hub, 3/4 inch dia. 1/8 inch thick is, not on. However, these points critical as I am about them, can be easily improved upon at little expense.

Finally, with oilite bushes fitted to front hubs, all wheels, with ready glued outdoor tyres, added to car, we are ready to run. Don't forget though, those axle bushes need lubrication.

A little WD-40 proves excellent for free running, but remember never use oil heavier than say 3 in 1. Also, whilst we are on the point, a little lubrication is necessary for both motor bushes (not just at the start, but right through its working life).

With 13 x 48 gearing driven by modified Bolink motor supplied, the car ran fast, smooth and untroubled on the smooth tarmac of a local car park. I suppose akin to the conditions it is normally raced in the States. Its easy handling under these conditions is partly a result of good weight distribution (approx. 65% rear, 35% front) and a long wheelbase of eight inches.

With our smaller indoor circuits on wooden floors, this long wheelbase would not be an advantage, and would have to be adjusted to give the best results. However, an aptly named car with lots of potential - the Challenger will no doubt leave its mark.