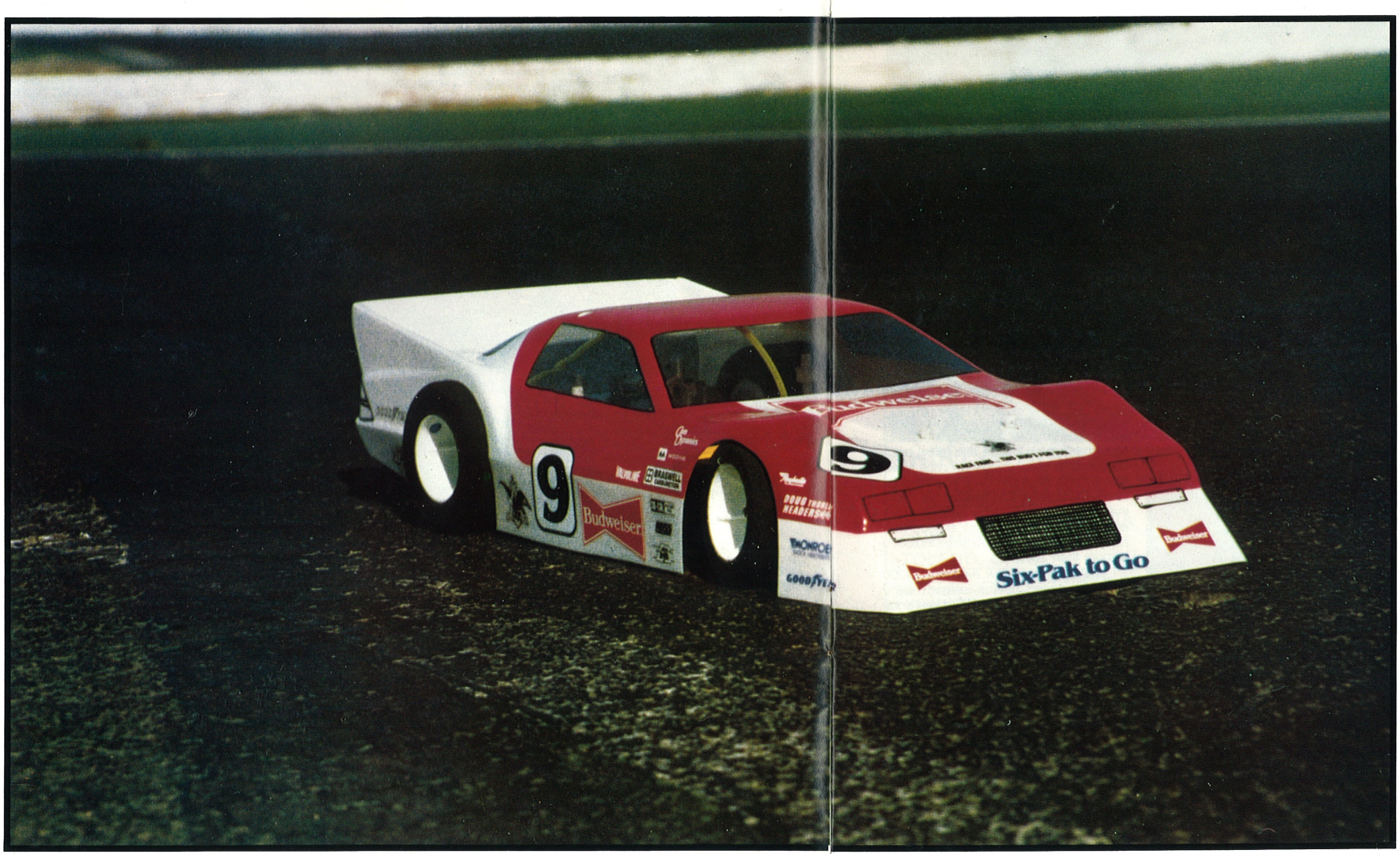
Inside the New BOLINK INVADER

The new 1/10 scale on-road Invader is an easy-to-build, good handling racer that can run well under adverse conditions, like on streets, parking lots, and schoolyards. This could well be the start of a ground-swell of popularity for 1/10 scale on-road racing; it's a lot of car for little money.



BY GARY KYES

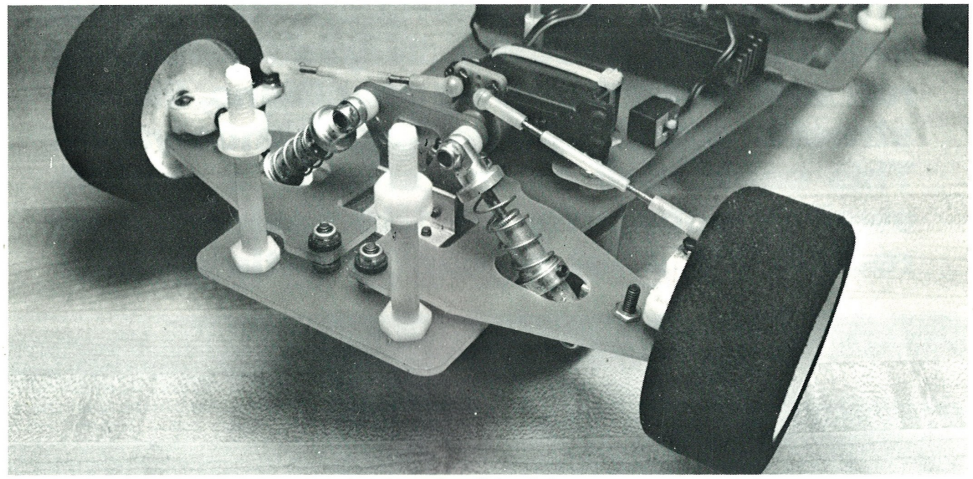
Electric car racing started about 10 years ago with 1/12 scale Jerobee brand, Cox .049 fuel-powered cars that had been converted to electric power. Over the years, better motors, batteries, and, of course, better chassis, have been developed to further the performance and enjoyment of electric R/C cars. The Bolink Invader 1/10 scale electric on-road racer is quite possibly the most important development for electric R/C cars in recent times.

The concept of a 1/10 scale electric car is not new as evidenced by the popular 1/10 electric offroad cars that have proven so instrumental in introducing R/C cars to the masses. Since most of the on-road electric cars rarely see a prepared race track, but rather spend their hours churning out laps in the local cul-de-sac or schoolyard, the larger 1/10 scale would seem a natural size. The larger 1/10 scale cars are effected less by the rough surfaces or rocky covering so often found in streets, parking lots, or school yards. An added bonus is that as the size of the car grows, the action and reaction becomes slower and hence easier to control. Please don't misunderstand, I am not implying that the cars get slower, just easier to handle.

In the case of the new Bolink Invader, the car is not only easy to handle but also very easy to build. Unless you have one of the previous 1/10 scale Bolink on/off road cars, I suggest you start with the complete (deluxe) kit (#BL1360) as I did for this review.

The instructions supplied are not exactly the most flashy but don't let looks fool you as they are most complete. The drawings and pictures are more than adequate. The basic design of the car is quite simple, yet employs the latest state-of-the-art technology being used on the smaller 1/12 scale cars.

All of the fiberglass parts are neatly machined and finished. The few aluminum parts are of a similar high quality. It would appear that the boys at Bolink tried their best to make life easy for us builders by using hardware of a common size (6-32) and limited length. This all adds up to one of the easiest-to-build cars on the market. With all the stacking and interlocking pieces, I was absolutely amazed that every-



Steering servo saver is a must; simple layout leaves lots of room for radio installation.

thing fitted, lined up, and assembled so easily.

The chassis uses independent front wishbones or suspension arms at the front. Each side has its own oil-filled, adjustable, coil over shock absorber to control and smooth out the rough running surfaces the Invader is likely to see. The rear end features a modular power pod arrangement that allows both side-to-side as well as up and down movement. This rear movement is controlled by a fiberglass "T-bar" and a coil-over shock similar to that used at the forward corners. Simple yet technically advanced and surprisingly light weight, it took only about one hour to assemble the chassis. If all this sounds too simple its only because it is!

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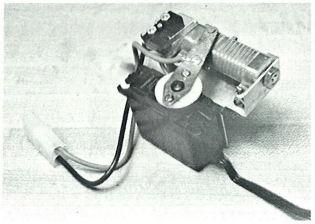
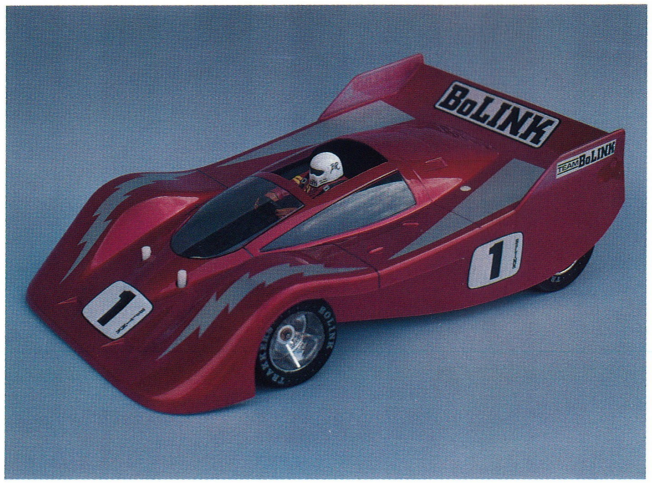


The Bolink speed control, as supplied with the Invader kit.

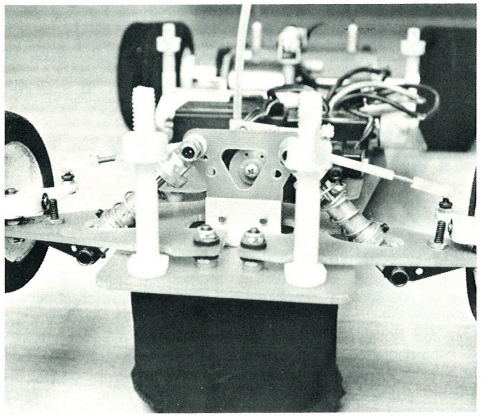
The radio installation is also very simple since both servos as well as the receiver mounts with good old-fashioned, double-sided servo tape. The steering servo should have a servo saver-type output arm. I used the Kimbrough steering servo saver on my Airtronics 99462 servo. Although this is a smaller servo, all standard servos will work equally well since space is not a problem and the power required is not extreme as in other applications. By the way, the 99462 servo used is a real buy since it features high speed, high torque, and a ball bearing output for an amazingly low price. Make sure you locate the steering output as far forward as possible and dead center to limit the bump steer. I chose to use Du-Bro ball ends for my steering linkage although the nice, pre-bent piano wire linkage included is more than adequate.

I opted to use a new Airtronics #1000 electronic speed control instead of the stock rheostat unit included. This was done to try this new speed control rather than replace the stock item. I have since put the electronic speed control into an offroad car, and the stock unit into its intended chassis. Mounting the stock speed control is also accomplished using servo tape. Of special importance to you street racers is the fact that this speed control does have reverse, and to make life easy, comes prewired. After locating the speed control on the throttle servo and attaching the wiper arm, you can mount the servo/speed control assembly with—you guessed it—good ol' servo tape!

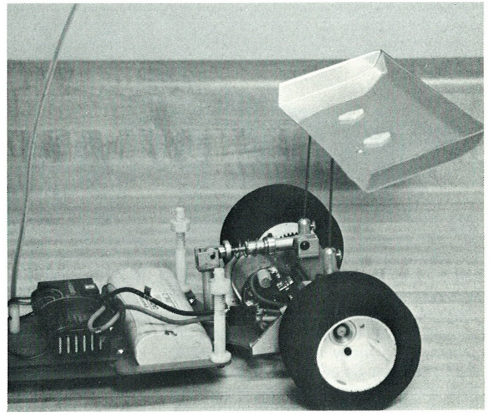
The receiver and switch are mounted with. . .well by now you have already



One of the body styles available for the Invader. The 1/10 scale on-road racing class is starting to take off; it won't be long before we see more oval tracks opening up across the country.



Simple, functional front end design is a hallmark of the Invader. Note the adjustable body mounts, which makes changing bodies easy.



Low center of gravity makes for excellent handling, as does the optional wing. Note rear suspension.

figured it out, haven't you! Tie up all loose wires with small pull ties, mount your antenna and batteries and you should be operational.

Mounting the lexan body is made simple with the almost infinitely adjustable body mounts included. These mounts also allow for quick body changes without time-consuming body mount changes.

The Invader's performance is extremely pleasing. The first laps run were completed in my court (Californian for cul-de-sac) by my 8-year-old son. Within minutes every kid within two blocks was waiting for his turn at the wheel. When I finally got my hands on the transmitter, after the third or fourth charge, I noticed a slight instability at speed. Back in the shop I dug in the spares box and came up with a set of RPS/Yokomo wing mounts #ZB50M, some wing things from Associated, and a 1/8 scale, 8-1/2-inch wide lexan wing from MRP. Obviously, there are any number of alternative parts that could be used so long as you end up with a wing on the rear power pod. Back out in the court I found the wing made an incredible difference.

In conclusion, let me say that if you are looking for a great car that you can run on otherwise unrunable surfaces take a long look at the Bolink Invader. The price is only marginally more than the smaller 1/12 scale cars, and the performance will impress you. Its ability to handle well under adverse conditions is remarkable. Now, if I can only get it back from the kids out in the court. . . .