

BoLINK *Kit Review* RENEGADE

1/10 scale electric racer review by Paul Hobbs

Bolink is a name from the very early days of one twelfth racing and quite a few people will remember the impact that the original Bolink car made on the British racing scene with its one piece moulded chassis at a time when the average model car was little more than a plank of fibre glass with a wheel at each corner. Since then there have been various other Bolink cars, but in the UK at least they have maintained a very low profile indeed.

The subject of this review might do something to correct this situation as it is very much 'state of the art' as far as carpet racing goes, with sprung kingpins at the front and a rocking motor pod at the rear. Almost all of the components are actually made by other firms, Bolink providing the glass fibre parts and instructions, although the completed car manages to be something different to the others on the market.

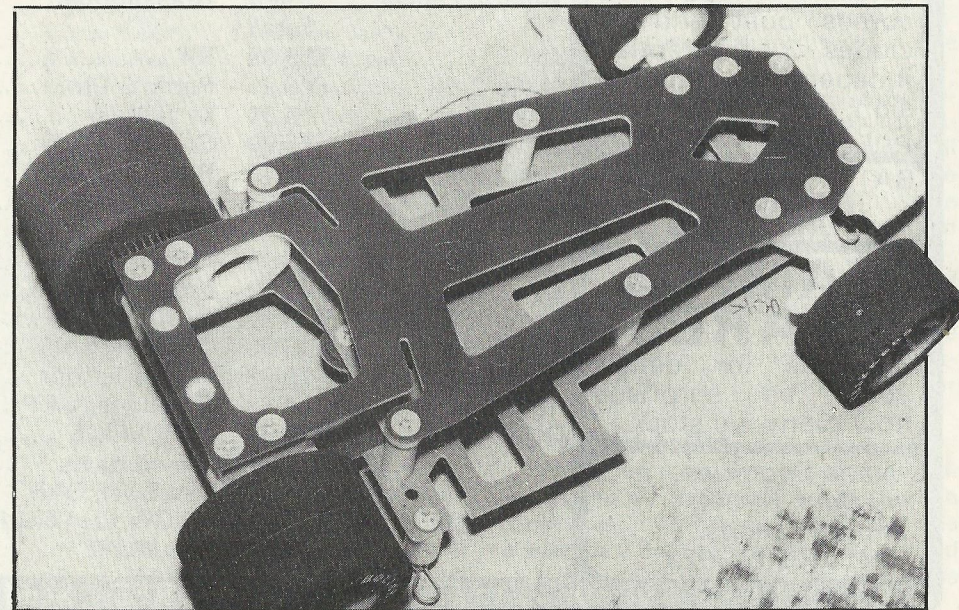
Building the chassis

Opening the box revealed large quantities of Associated parts, notably the rear and front end sets from the RC12i car, together with a Schumacher differential, Delta wheels and a Bolink Ferrari bodyshell. It is actually a rather good idea to use components that are already commercially available as the model shops will have less bits to stock, and something like the rear motor pod mouldings do not effect the handling of the car, so why go to the expense of tooling up for new items? Although the car is 90% Associated, the difference that the chassis and radio plate design make to the finished car is all important.

One of the most important considerations when designing full sized car suspension systems is above all to make the centre section of the chassis as rigid as possible, and the Bolink Re-

negade achieves this by having a full length radio plate which stiffens up the chassis plate proper — this gives a solid base to start hanging the suspension on. Apart from this the car is pure Associated RC12i, and so little further comment is needed except to say that the excellent instructions provided pain staking details on every aspect of constructing the chassis. I experienced few problems, the major one being the long bolts that secure the front of the radio plate to the chassis and the steering blocks. Castor wedges are supplied to allow 0,2 or 4 castor, but anything other than 0 means that the holes in the radio plate do not line up with the screws. The instructions suggest bending the screws (!) to overcome this, but I decided to take the path of least resistance and use 0! A small misalignment on one of these front screws caused an enormous twist in the chassis — probably my fault as the screw got a little cross-threaded in the steering block, and bending the screws had to be resorted to in any case. Things might have been made easier by drilling out the steering block hole to just clear the screws, as the screws do not need to self tap into the blocks.

One other small problem was encountered with the rear pod top plate



An underside view of the chassis — the instructions suggest leaving out the inner rear screws holding the rear blocks to the chassis to make the job of lining up the bearings easier. No problems were experienced with this while building the review kit.

which did not allow the pod to flex equally in each direction as the hole to clear the damper screw was not quite in the correct place — this was swiftly dealt with using a needle file.

The Differential

Another old familiar friend here — a steel axled Schumacher differential, although the axle itself is a special one to accept Demon, Delta or Associated wheels (the Americans must have something against quick change sleeve systems!). I must admit that I drew the line at using a steel axle as it weighed 34g and the car was already looking overweight! In a strange contrast to the heavy axle a lightweight plastic hub carrier was supplied for the fixed wheel instead of the usual chunky Associated item.

Radio Installation

A Novak servo and receiver were fitted, together with a Laser 'compact' speed controller (not being a great lover of the 'turbo lag' the recommended resistor speed controller induces!) as the battery packs are intended to be two separate three cell packs instead of 'sticks' there was plenty of room for the radio, and the weight could be kept low down on the chassis.

All up weight (with an Associated carbon fibre axle differential) was about 2oz (57g) over the weight limit which was quite surprising considering the large numbers of relatively heavy Associated parts used in the chassis.

Running Tests

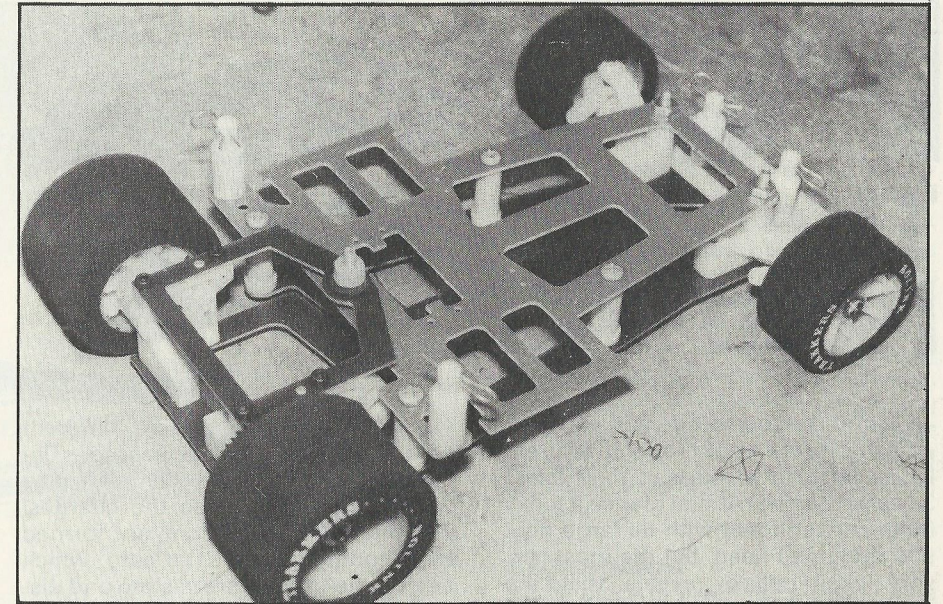
The car proved to have few vices right from the start on the usual carpet racing surface, apart from a slight tendency to lift the inside rear wheel on tight corners — this was traced to the fibre washers in the friction damper being a bit rough and not sliding freely. A quick dollop of silicon grease soon sorted that out! The Renegade

understeered more than other cars I have driven, requiring the front tyres to be fully coated with Tractite tyre additive (even when Tru-Tyres 07s were fitted all round). This was not really a problem as enough steering could be obtained using the additive, and it actually made applying the additive a lot easier as you just covered all the tyres all the way across!

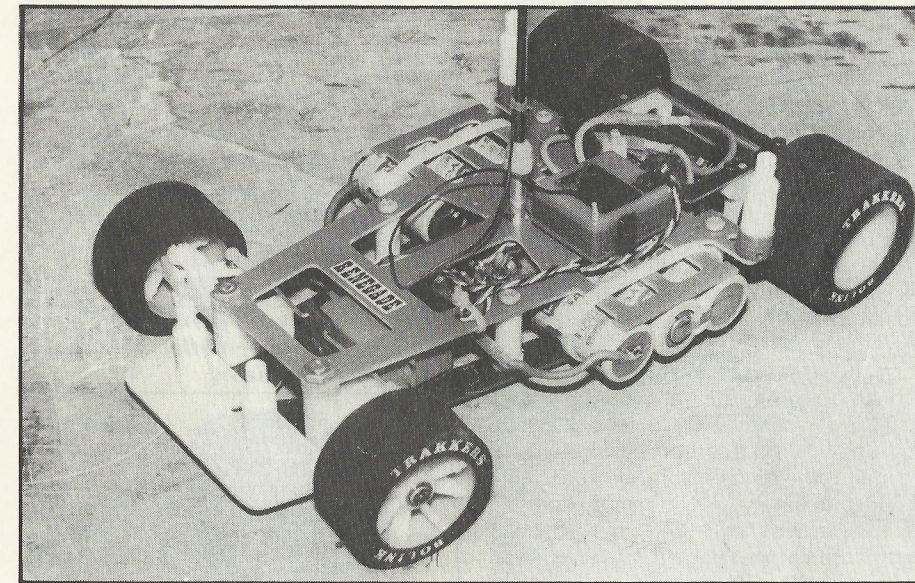
As far as performance went, the Renegade was very good indeed — I won at our local club for the first time in ages, and also made two National 'C' finals with it which was a lot better than I had been doing with my own car! It really was easy to drive, even on a bumpy circuit. Some of the excess weight was pared off to make it only 1/2oz. overweight fairly easily, and further work could have been done to make it even lighter.

Conclusions

Interesting though the Renegade is, I cannot really see Associated owners flocking to change over, as it is too



The rear blocks with PARMA axle cams fitted to enable smaller tyres to be used. These fit straight in and there is already a hole in the blocks to take the peg — but it is slightly in the wrong place. I cut off the moulded peg and substituted a screw to hold the cam in position. For very large tyres the cams can be easily replaced with the original bearing inserts.



The completed car with radio — Laser Compact lurks between the battery packs and the tiny Novak receiver is offset on the radio plate for the purposes of fitting the body. Note also the Schumacher damper post used to support the roll over mast.

The finished car resplendent with its Ferrari body shell. This is a very low body, but it fits easily over the Renegade chassis despite the long radio plate. The paint job is purposely see through, I was saving weight!

similar to the RC12i, but considered in its own right it is certainly as competitive as anything on the market. In this respect I should mention that I did not get on at all with the RC12i, but liked the Renegade very much — it seemed to be a completely different car despite using many of the same components.

I shall not, however, abandon my existing car and use the Renegade all the time for the following reasons. The rear end ride height, even with Parma axle cams fitted does not allow the use of really small tyres — I seem to keep going on about this, but it would cost a fortune to throw away tyres once they get worn down to about 48mm diameter. The car also lacks the wealth of suspension adjustments that can be made to the Schumacher cars to tune them to the track, although this probably means the Renegade would be better for beginners as there is less to confuse them. □

