

Junior

Losi are looking for newcomers with their entry level Junior 2.



The Losi Junior two is aimed at the entry-level 'club' racer who wants a competitive 2 wheel drive car but can't afford or justify the expense of an all out competition car such as an RC10, Cougar 2000 or a Losi XX.

This is not a niche market that only Losi have exploited, indeed it seems to be one of the most fiercely competitive markets with models from

Schumacher, Traxxas, Associated and Mardave on offer, and to succeed in this market, the kit has to be very good.

The Junior Two, like most the others in this market, is a lower specification version of the range topping competition car, in this case the JRX Pro SE which, up until the recent introduction of the Double X has been the TEAM LOSI flagship.

In the UK, virtually every club in the land has got their club 'expert' – you know the one – He's the one with the most motors, the best batteries, the most power and the most excuses and opinions for when he doesn't finish first. He's the one that believes that you can't be competitive, even at club level, unless you've got more tires than Goodyear, more power than the national grid and more money than the Queen! Well, I hate to throw the proverbial spanner in the works but it's just not true and cars like the Junior Two will provide the ideal platform from which to achieve better and more consistent results for the club drivers.

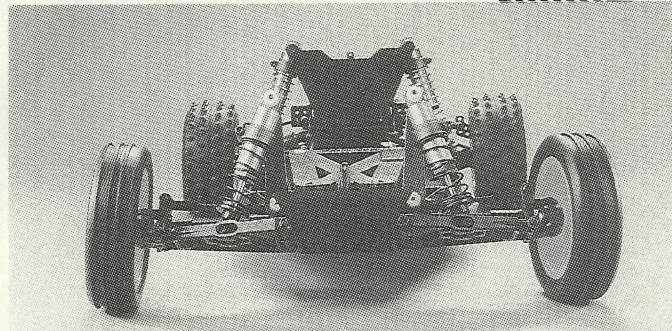
The Assembly

The Junior Two comes in a colourful shoe box which proudly displays the car in question and gives you some indication of the heritage of TEAM LOSI and 'what they're really getting at!'. Upon opening the box, you're greeted with the normal lexan bodyshell wrapped up in tissue and several bags of components labelled up A to G. IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT YOU DON'T OPEN ALL OF THESE BAGS IN ONE GO because Losi have obviously looked at how to make the car easier to assemble and have ended up putting all the components that are required for EACH stage of the assembly into separate bags.

This is really a good idea which

Flat underside of the Losi Junior 2 helps it slip across rough ground.

Front suspension uses relatively short arms and has two positions for the damper on the arm.



is better than putting all of the screws in one or two bags and leaving the components on the plastic sprue. It also reduces the amount of 'finding time' which is the time that is always spent looking for the right size screw in a bag containing dozens of different size variants. It also reduces the amount of desk space that is required for the assembly because you only need to have one bag open at any one time – the rest of the components can be left in the box until required.

Unsurprisingly, the assembly begins with BAG A which deals with the front and rear shock mounts and the bulkheads. The shock mounts are both moulded from

thermoplastic and have nice features designed into them such as the body mounts and the upper shock locations. The front wishbones are also added at this stage and are non-handed items which, once

assembled, move freely on the pivot pins which will aid the handling of the car.

Another nice feature is the moulded chassis which provides integral location for the battery pack, receiver and electronic speed controller and also provides a positive

location for the steering posts and the front mini bumper. All of the chassis screws are countersunk and actually fit into the recesses provided so that the end result is a smooth underside to the model.

Up front

Bag B deals with the steering assembly and the front suspension – minus dampers. The steering assembly is a double bellcrank linked by a metal rod which provides the location for the track rods. Do be careful not to over tighten the screws or else the assembly will bind up and not operate very freely. The front stub axles have to be aligned perfectly with the steering arm or else the pin will never go through the complete assembly. A little force was required to ensure the pin was located correctly – a small desk vice or pin hammer will help the assembly.

Track Rod lengths have always been a problem, some manufacturers tell you what length you require and you need to measure them yourself, others print a ruler in their instruction manuals but the best idea has come from

certainly the best bushed gearbox I have assembled since my Tamiya Grasshopper! There is even an extra diff ball and a thrust race ball included in case you lose one during the assembly.

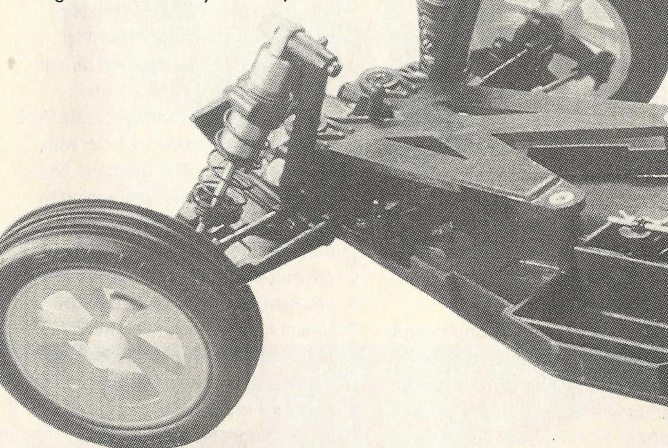
The gearbox is slightly different than most other model car gearboxes in that the differential is actually the idler gear in the gearbox and not the bottom gear. This does mean that you can adjust the differential without taking a driveshaft out which is normally the case.

The driveshafts themselves are, in this case, telescopic style universal joint type similar to those found on the Schumacher and Traxxas cars. Without a doubt, this style of driveshaft provides an extremely positive, wear resistant shaft which is excellent in operation. Unfortunately, they are quite difficult to assemble as a roll pin has to be inserted into the joint part of the shaft. This is achieved by using pliers but quite a lot of force is required so some help may be needed at this stage. A tool is provided to help install the joint into the driveshaft and this is not too difficult to achieve (unlike some of the early Schumacher shafts). The spur gear is a 32DP gear held on with an E-clip. This does mean that the gear is more difficult to change than if it was held on by a lock nut on a threaded shaft. No slipper clutch is provided in this kit although a certain degree of slippage can be introduced into the differential. Both a friction (normal) slipper clutch and the innovative LOSI HYDRA-DRIVE are available as

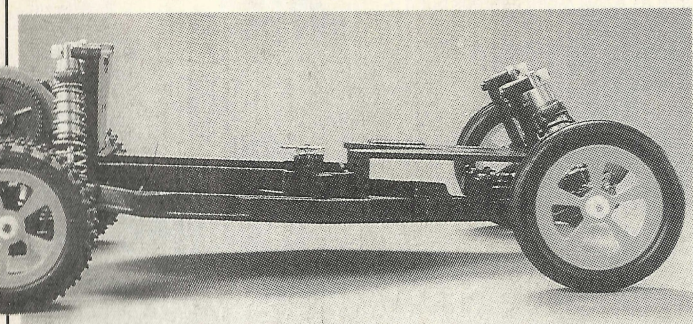
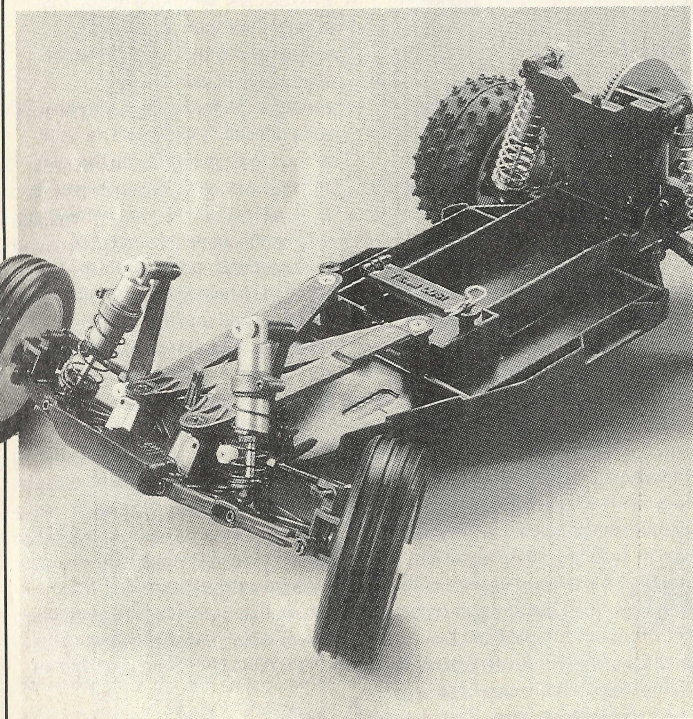
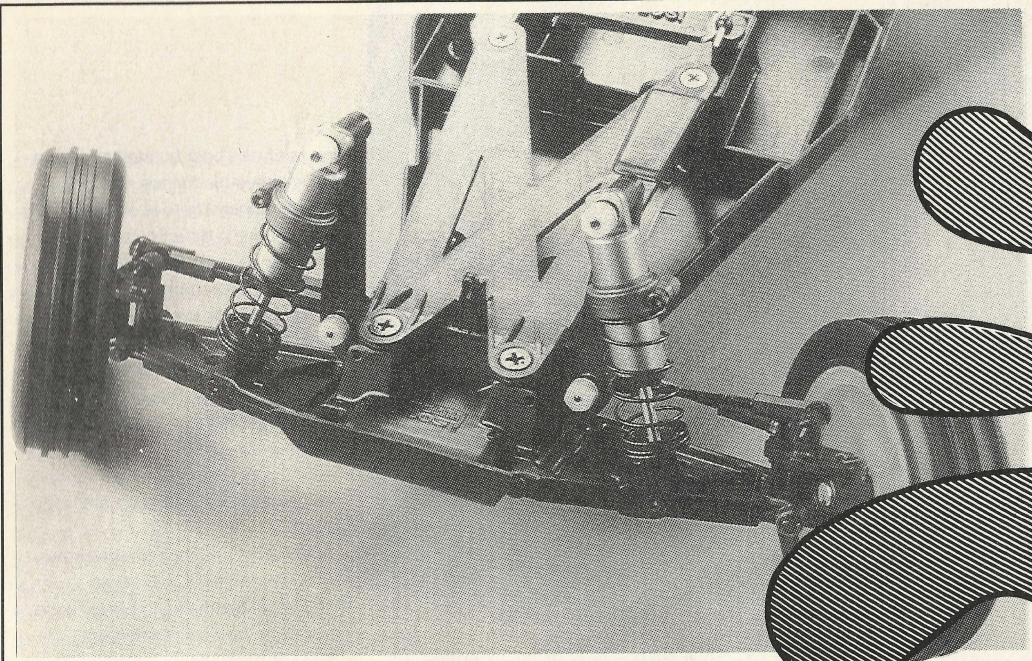
Losi who have included a moulded spacer which you fit between the trackrod ends to ensure you have the right length. In order to accommodate the different lengths for the steering rods and the camber rods, the spacer has a staggered side to it and you simply align the track rod with the writing on the spacer – what could be simpler! Unfortunately, clipping the ball joints on to the rod ends could do with being a lot easier but at least they won't fall off during a race!

Bag C is next up on the agenda and deals with the gearbox assembly. This is a bushed gearbox which houses a ball differential. Unfortunately, the instructions refer to a ball raced gearbox but there is another single sheet instruction leaflet included in the box which refers to the bushes instead of the bearings. The gearbox went together with no horrors at all. Even the bushes are neatly designed two part items which ensure excellent smoothness for a bush. It's not as free as a ball raced gearbox but it is

Rear arms on the Junior 2 are very chunky and strong and look like they will last for ever.



Moulded top plate keeps the chassis stiff, battery strap is fussy and weak...



5 spoke red racing wheels are included in the kit, as are Losi tyres.

add on components when you want to upgrade. In fact, the whole car is upgradeable to the PRO-SE spec and this includes the LOSI XX gearbox albeit the 'retro fit' and not the 'laydown' version of the box.

At the rear...

Bag D deals with the rear suspension and once again, the assembly is very smooth in operation with no binding during the wishbone movement. The rear wishbones are unique. The are non

handed and have several location points for the rear shock absorber. What makes them unique is that they provide multi positions for the shock in the vertical plane as well as the standard horizontal adjustments. This affects the ride height of the car. The rear uprights are held in place by the outer pivot pins which, surprisingly, are not located by E-Clips but by plastic clips which are placed either side of the upright. E-

Clips are used for the wishbone pivot pins and care must be taken to ensure that they don't fly off over the room when trying to clip them in place. Once again the moulded plastic spacer is used to ensure that the rear camber rods are adjusted to the correct length. The driveshaft assembly is completed by installing another roll pin into the stub axle side of the shaft. This is then placed into the rear upright where it runs on plastic bushes. An aluminium spacer is placed between the wheel pin and the bushes which I found seemed to make the assembly bind up. This spacer is required so I ended up by filing a Vee groove in it in which the wheel pin located

without binding up the assembly. Finally, installing the camber rods finish off the rear suspension assembly and all that remains is the shock absorbers.

Bag E contains all you need for the for oil filled shock absorbers. The Dampers are very similar to the HARD BODY shocks found on the PRO-SE and DOUBLE X but are anodised a light blue/grey rather than being teflon coated. The seals are in pre-assembled cartridges which eliminates alot of fiddling around with tiny o rings and plastic spacers. Simply slide the shaft through the seal cartridge, install the piston and fill the shock body with the supplied oil. The Dampers fill from the bottom and are sealed by the seal cartridge. Filling the dampers correctly proved to be quite difficult and messy so make sure you have plenty of kitchen roll or tissue handy. Once filled though, they provide a smooth action and don't appear to leak as long as the cartridge is screwed up tight. Soft black springs for the front and harder silver rear springs are included but the complete range of coloured Losi springs are available to ensure that the car can be tuned for any track condition.

Bag F contains the wheels and

tyres and front bushes and wheel nuts, or rather it should contain the bushes and wheel nuts because the kit supplied to us only had the wheels and tyres. This sort of problem is more frustrating than anything else because it prevents the car from being completed. What is surprising is that the kit is actually factory sealed and therefore, the problem appeared to be a packing problem at Losi. However, a short phone call to the new UK importers, Helger Racing, had the problem rectified very quickly and I am assured that this is a very rare occurrence as they have sold many Junior Twos and have had no reported problems.

A slim fitting Dune buggy style bodyshell and lexan wing need to be cut out along with the gear cover and then sprayed. Another useful feature is that window masks are supplied in the kit so that the inexperienced (or lazy) can make a half decent spray job of the bodyshell without trying too hard.

Conclusion

Even with considering the minor problems I encountered during assembly such as the missing bushings and the filing of the rear aluminium spacers, I find it very difficult to fault the car. The instructions are very clear and concise and the car has a feel of quality about it which indicates that the Team responsible for the Junior Two are totally committed to providing a high quality product for what is a reasonable price. With the cost of racing seemingly going up and up, it is refreshing to see a supplier look at the market and provide a quality product at a low cost. Losi aren't the first to do this and no doubt they won't be the last but I feel there is something about this kit which sets it apart from its contemporaries, something that says 'NO COMPROMISE'. Its a feeling I got when I spoke to Ron Rossetti (an American Losi Team driver) at the worlds last year when he spoke of the commitment that THEY had as a team to ensure that their products won races.

The joint commitment from both Losi and Helger Racing is further backed up by the fact that they have come up with a video entitled 'Doing it right' which takes you through all the basics associated with an introduction to model cars and model car racing. This video will be sold to the model shops who may or may not hire it out to buyers of the Junior Two but it is worth looking at if you get the chance and if you feel you could learn from it! The Junior Two was supplied by the UK importer, Helger Racing and is available from all good model shops price approximately £120 and a ball race kit is available to eliminate all those bushes for a further £40 approximately.

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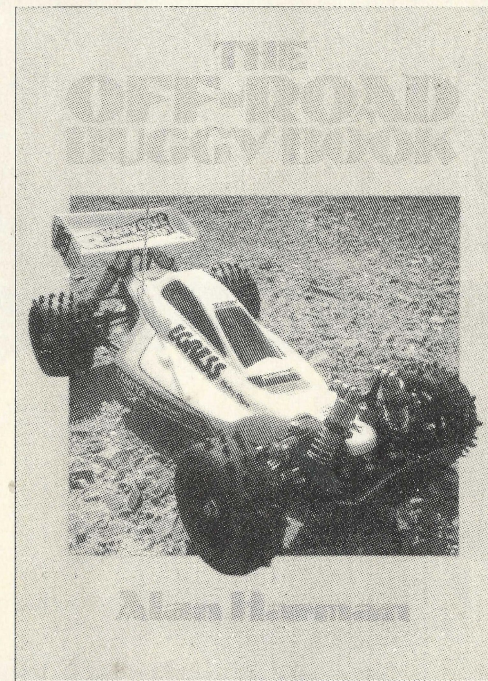
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