

FT Track Test "THE BOBCAT"

1/24, a new dimension in R/C Racing from **parma**

Review by Dave Day



AS A ONE-TIME slot racer (or, going back even further, rail racer) who gave up the hobby some time before slot racing priced itself out of existence, I have tried not to get too deeply embroiled in electric R/C car racing in the belief that the same fate would befall it. Whether recent developments confirm this feeling or not, you must judge for yourselves, but I must admit that I have viewed the trend towards smaller scale with some interest.

Thus the latest Parma offering, the 'Bobcat' at 1/24th scale, immediately caught my attention, since I had at one time helped to form a club (short-lived, unfortunately) to race 1/24th scale slot cars, and I thought the comparison with 1/24th R/C cars could be interesting.

The Kit

This is cunningly designed to make the car seem even smaller, since the box is only slightly larger than the body shell. All the components are packed in polythene bags and stowed inside the shell; only the batteries being packed separately.

The chassis is of Lexan with all holes ready drilled, while the back axle assembly

1. Polycarbonate receiver case. 2. Torque-tube, pinions and steering parts. 3. Motor. 4. Speed Controller and reversing switch. 5. Painted polycarbonate bodyshell. 6. Polycarbonate chassis. 7. Instruction manual. 8. Charging cord and plugs etc. 9. Wheels and tyres. 10. Ni-Cad battery pack in case. 11. Double sided foam sticky tape.

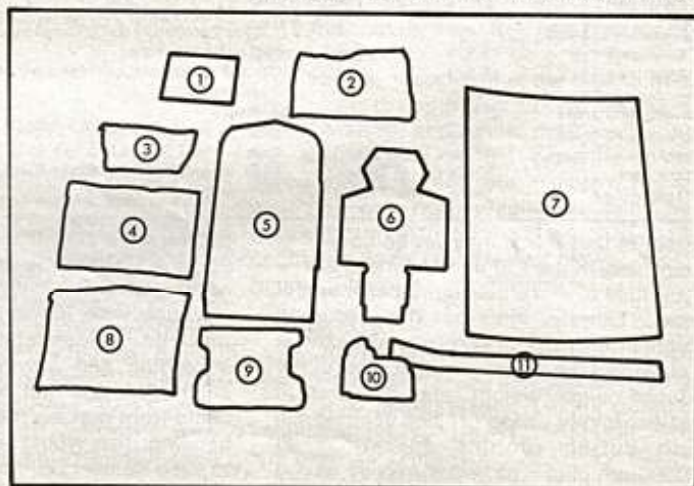
consists of a brass tube with the motor bracket brazed to it. Axle bearings consist of bronze bushes which are simply pushed into the end of the tube, with the wheels and gear being attached to the axle with grub screws.

Simplicity is the keynote of the front end assembly which has shaped nylon blocks pivoting on vertical bolts screwed through the Lexan chassis. Both the bolts and the blocks are retained with nylon bolts which allow a degree of adjustment. The track rod is simply a piece of wire with a 'U' bend which engages on a self-tapping screw in the servo arm. Stub axles pass through the nylon blocks and the wheels and spindles are retained at each end by 'E' clips.

Construction

Although this is very straightforward, I did run into one problem due to not using the Futaba servos specified.

The instructions state that other mini-equipment can be used and, though this is undoubtedly true, the servo which I used for the speed control resistor was, in fact, *too small!* When using the specified S.20 servo, the resistor mounting bracket is bolted to the fixing holes at one end of the servo and the reversing switch is similarly attached to the other end. In my case, I made up a ply plate which was mounted on to the servo, and then attached the resistor and switch to the ply plate which was then trimmed to as small a size as possible. Both this and the steering servo were then





attached to the chassis with servo tape as per instructions.

A transparent plastic case is supplied to re-house a Futaba two-channel receiver and save some weight. A similar case houses the four 250mAH Ni-Cads which power the car and the radio equipment.

Some very nice, flexible wire is supplied, but unfortunately nowhere near enough to wire the complete car. The easiest answer

Above: Bobcat is small, compare it with the Tamiya 4 x 4! Below left: general layout under the shell. Below right: variable mini resistor speed controller with reverse switching.

was to use the wire supplied for wiring the moving contact and find something else to wire the rest.

Attachment of the body shell (supplied ready painted) is by means of two ingenious wire clips which attach the base of the

body to the sides of the chassis. This is rather useful, since it is only necessary to detach one side to obtain access for charging or switching on.

Performance

This is far better than I could have expected, and certainly more than my limited driving experience can make use of. Despite this, the normal running time is of the order of 12-13 minutes which is a fair achievement from such small batteries.

Conclusions

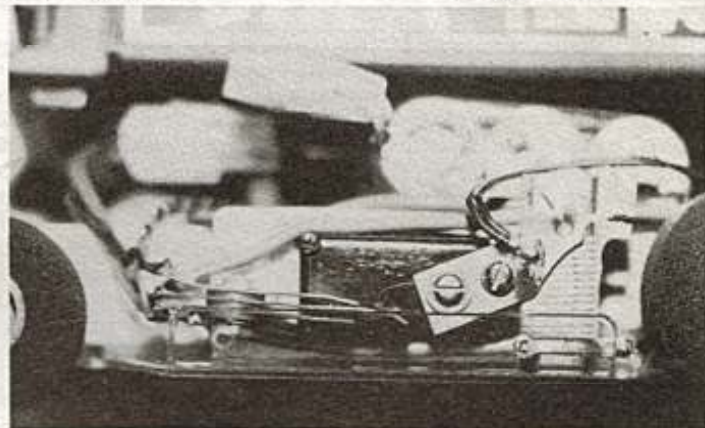
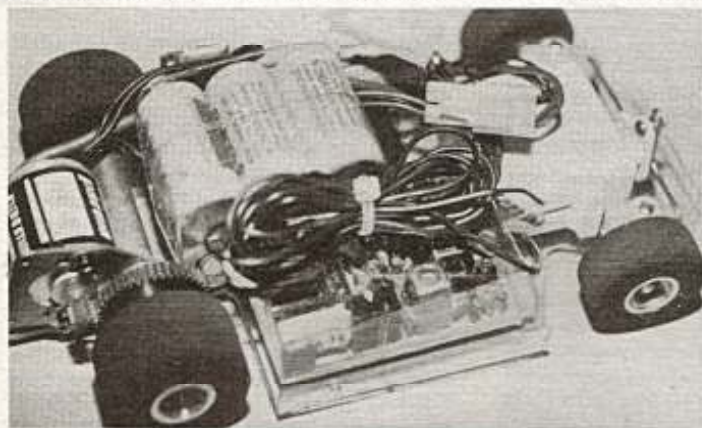
A simple, practical, electric car of surprisingly good performance. With luck the idea will catch on and I just might become an R/C car nut.

Now then, supposing we put a peg under the front of the car and build a track with a slot running round it. All we have to do then is drive the throttle! Come to think of it, why not pick up power from the track surface and dispense with the R/C and Ni-Cads. We could be on to something . . .

Distributed by: Ted Longshaw Model Cars, Beech Tree House, Downe, Orpington, Kent. Tel: 0689 55313.

Price: on application.

Track Test



Model Cars

Handy Hint No. 1

Uses for discarded 35mm film cassettes containers are various and imaginative, this one is rather neat. A simple 'trim and drill' operation converts the plastic box into a neat air filter cover for the compressed paper Beehive type filter. Do trim away the base to allow airflow to the filter!

