



S.G. FUTURA TEST

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READERS of R.C.M.C. Issue No. 8 will recall that your editor built the Futura III from a standard kit, then passed it over to us to be track tested at the London R/C Car Club's circuit. Having both started racing with S.G. cars about 2 years previously we were most interested to see the latest goodies from the Italian S.G. factory. Unfortunately, the early cars with which we started, although well engineered, were not really able to utilise all the zip of the latest generation of A.B.C. racing motors which were, at that time, just arriving on the scene, and required a lot of modification to make use of the power available. Just a glance at the Futura III shows that S.G. have brought everything bang up to date with all the sophistication one would expect in a competition bred car. The standard of finish throughout is excellent and we could hardly wait to examine it more closely. We liked the change from the early one piece chassis to a flexible front and with a rigid power pod to the rear. It was particularly nice to see that the alloy plummer blocks which hold the rear axle ball races are supplied as standard with this kit. An interesting innovation is the incorporation of the disc brake caliper into the left hand plummer block, thus keeping the whole brake assembly away from the "dirtier" end of the motor, and at the same time creating a bit more space around the engine. Changing a drive gear in a hurry will present no problems with this car.

The rear wheels are positively located on to the axle with just one grub screw

and the drive gear fits over two short dowels on the right-hand rear wheel. Simply remove the wheel, pull off the old gear, push a new one into place and refit the wheel. Moving on to the front of the car, the front axle assembly is a substantial affair incorporating plenty of castor angle and Ackerman geometry.

Dominating the whole rolling chassis is a large radio plate which holds battery, receiver, and both servos. Also included in the kit is a whip aerial. The only thing we were not too keen about was the way that the steering pushrod normally runs from the top of the servo to the top of the servo saver. This means that any flexing in the chassis causes the steering to move, and may put unnecessary load on the servo output shaft. We turned both the servo and saver upside down to completely eliminate this situation. Apart from this very minor change, the car was in absolutely standard form for testing purposes. The tyres supplied with our car were medium/hard foam on the back and very hard foam (moulded?) on the front. The motor in the test car was, of course, the Super Tigre X21.

It was brand new and unmodified in any way save for the Perry 61 pumper carburettor which we fitted. By the time all the finishing touches were completed and the car was ready to race, winter was well and truly upon us and we were forced to shelve it for a few weeks. We were determined not to test the Futura III until good weather conditions prevailed in order

to be able to give a fair assessment of what was, after all, a standard car with standard tyres. Finally THE DAY arrived, mild, dry and calm. Everything had been charged up ready and off we went to the track for the test session.

We took the precaution of taking some photographs before starting the engine (just in case!) then filled the tank. The engine was cranked over to suck in some fuel with the Perry set 1½ turns open on the main jet and just a fraction on the rich side on the idle disc. With the Tigre duly primed, and the glo-clip attached, it started first time. Carb. adjustment was about right, giving a slightly rich idle with crisp pick-up so we tried a couple of quick excursions around the pit area just to check the settings. The clutch set-up was just perfect. There was no drag at idle, and even a mild blip on the throttle would not cause the clutch to bite. At first we thought it was going to be too soft, but with the car on the track, given a boot-full of throttle the engine picked up cleanly until the clutch bit smoothly at just the right speed with no sign of snatching nor over-revving of the motor. Out on the track a couple of steady laps to bed the engine down without over-straining it (this was the first time it had ever been run) we found the car to be stable, very easy to drive and pretty quick too. The car ran very true on the straights, but did understeer rather on the tight bends. However, this is certainly due to those ultra hard front tyres which have, no doubt, been supplied by the manufacturer to make the car stable in the hands of relative newcomers to model car racing. The back end gripped very well indeed and it was hard to go wrong provided the

twisty bits were approached at a reasonable speed. The car showed no signs of spinning out if cornered too hard, those front tyres just took it a smooth, wide line. With the engine freeing off we peaked out the carburettor and had a bit of a dice with the others. Performance was good and although the understeer proved a bit of a snag at first, entering the bends slowly then powering round — in slow, out fast — made the car pretty competitive in its standard trim.

Having suffered with a multitude of teething problems with other cars in the past we were very pleased to note that nothing broke or fell off of the Futura on its first outing, and that must be a good sign! The only problem encountered was that the plastic fuel pick-up pipe in the tank kinked, and we had to replace it with a length of silicon tubing to resume running. Apparently it's a fairly common problem with what is otherwise an excellent tank, with internal baffles, built in sump, and which, being clear nylon, allows one to see how much fuel is inside at a glance. Use of a silicon rubber tube when building the tank should solve this potential kinking problem.

To sum up, then, the S.G. Futura III is a fast, easy to drive and competitive car in standard form. Some experimentation in tyre compounds will certainly give more responsive handling for the experienced racer. We understand several special go-faster goodies are now available for the car including glass fibre front chassis plate, special front axle assembly and, of course, the latest Super Tigre Rear Exhaust racing motor. We look forward to seeing Futura III's appearing at more meetings in the near future. They certainly have great potential and will undoubtedly do well.