

Model Cars investigates the latest specification CAT - the XLS

The success of the Schumacher 'CAT' in 1/10th off-road to date has been unsurpassed, with not only the European Championships going to Phil Davies driving the car but also the World Championships in the hands of Masami Hirotsuka. The secret of all this success was a combination of obvious driving skill of the two drivers

joined to the latest 'spec' of the 'CAT'. This 'spec' of the car has not been kept quiet by team Schumacher - in fact they have even supplied *RCCM* in the past with exact details of how to modify the basic 'CAT' kit to bring it up to top competition level. Only now though has Schumacher produced a complete replica kit of the cars used to win the two major

championships — the 'CAT XLS'.

What are the differences?

The specification of the 'XLS' 'CAT' reads pretty impressive, apart from being in usual long wheel base guise it also has slight, but vital modifications — along with some purely

cosmetic changes!

Firstly starting at the rear of the car, the rear track is widened by 10 mm. This is achieved by 5 mm plastic spacers which fit between the suspension arms and the chassis. Also a new fibreglass rear suspension bracket is supplied to go with the spacers to allow the completion of the widening process. Another

change which takes place to the rear suspension is that the mounting points are altered to give the rear suspension an angled 'lay'. This brings the front of the suspension arm up slightly and the rear down, thus angling the suspension in such a way as to help the car ride the bumps.

Bumpster is virtually eliminated at the rear but I

WILL DOG CAT

found an extra washer under the rear tie rod totally eliminated any sign of bumpster.

At the front

The front end modifications on the 'XLS CAT' are slightly more extensive. With all the valuable testing that the *Schumacher* team have carried out, the specification for the 'XLS' car was decided to contain both one-way roller clutches and a front differential. This gives the car awesome turning abilities but remaining quick on the straight and stable over the bumps.

The front track and geometry have also come in for some change. On the most successful 'CATS' of '87 — Masami Hirosaka's, Phil Davies and Jamie Booth's the front ends were widened. This was carried out by using two shock mounting brackets bolted together, although for the 'XLS' a new moulding has been produced. This now incorporates the extra width required bringing the car right out to the legal maximum.

Of course if the front track is widened and the steering geometry is to remain the same a new steering plate is required — and in the 'XLS' this is the case.

On the steering side of the car some other changes have also taken place from the original 'CAT'. The steering bellcranks now run on brass collets, this was not always the case as in the early kits the bellcranks ran on 3 mm bolts. Now the steering is smoother and has no free play. A nice touch in the new kit is the inclusion of left and right hand threaded track rods. These make it unnecessary to remove the ball joints to alter their length — a nice idea, well done *Mr. Schumacher!*

Also at the front of the car is a new bumper. This is now a much smarter object than the original, moulded in black plastic. The new bumper not only looks better but is actually neater in design in that it allows a groove in the lower section to go over the belt cover — this in turn gives the car slightly more ground clearance. Also the new 'CAT' logo is smartly moulded in the front — just in case you forget what your driving!

Roll it over

Not included in the new kit is a rear anti-roll bar, although the front one is retained. As the rear didn't seem to need one on its way too many successes in '87 — why include it in the kit.

Another new item which I'm sure has already caught your eye from the accompanying photos are the new chrome



Above: smooth lines of CAT bodyshell picked out well in spray job.

wheels. These are the same moulding as the old ones but have a plastic chrome coating to smarten them up. I'm told by Phil Davies of *Schumacher's* that the wheels can be lacquered to give different

colour changes — this was seen at the M.E. race as Phil's car had blue wheels! Although they didn't seem to help Phil in conquering Jamie's domination of the whole weekend. (Sorry Phil).



Kit Cat

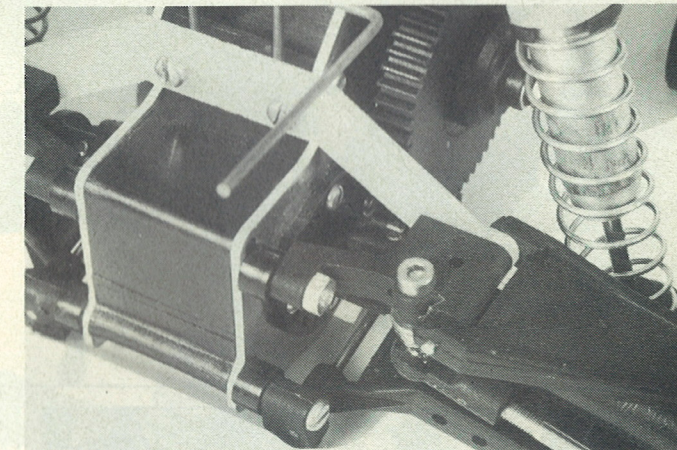
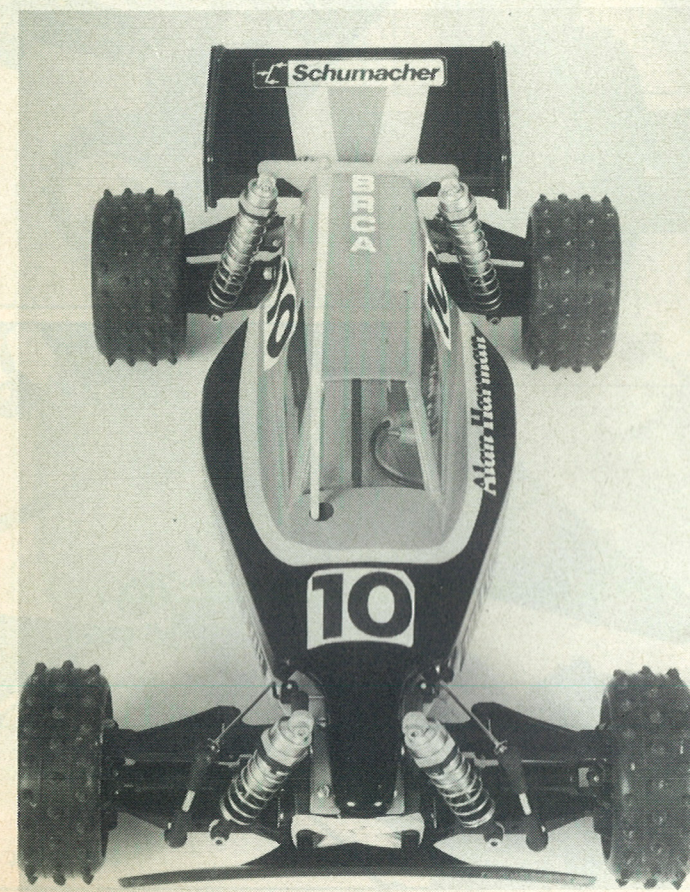
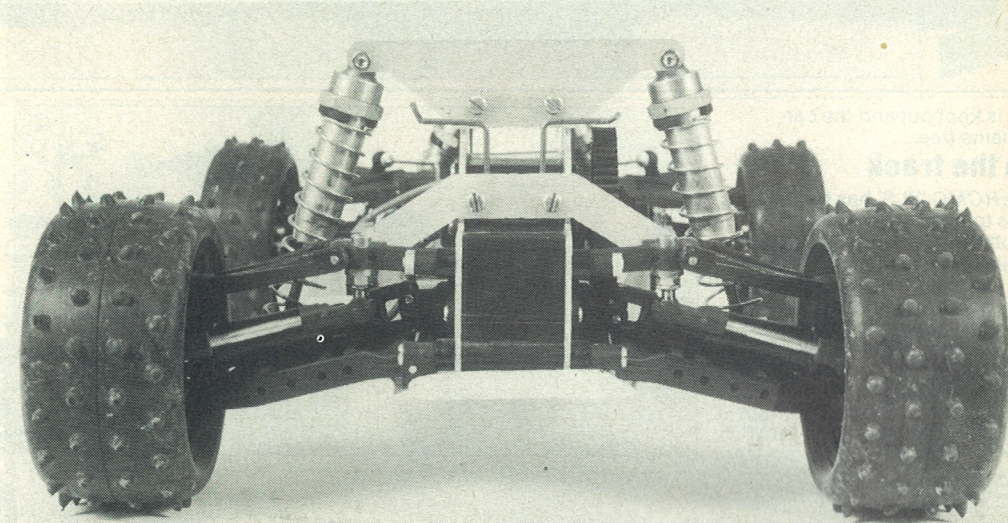
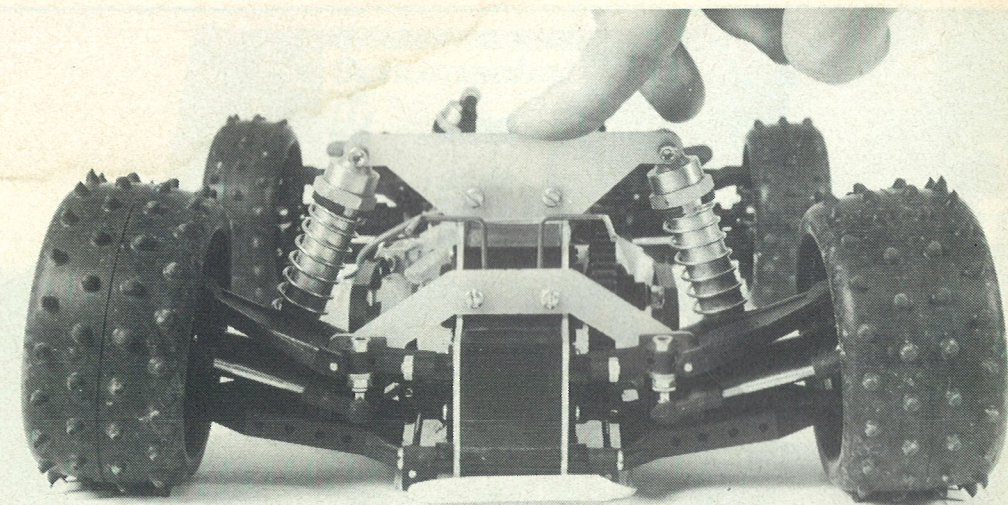
The *Model Cars* 'XLS CAT' was kindly built by Phil Booth of *Phil Booth Models* - who assures me the car was built and set up just as he built the World Champion's car Masami Hirosaka. The 'CAT' can take a while to build but if time is taken in preparation and setting up the new 'XLS' gives you the car for the job — as has been proved. Although *Phil Booth Models* will actually take the job on for you — as they offer a build service for a very reasonable figure.

Hints and Tips

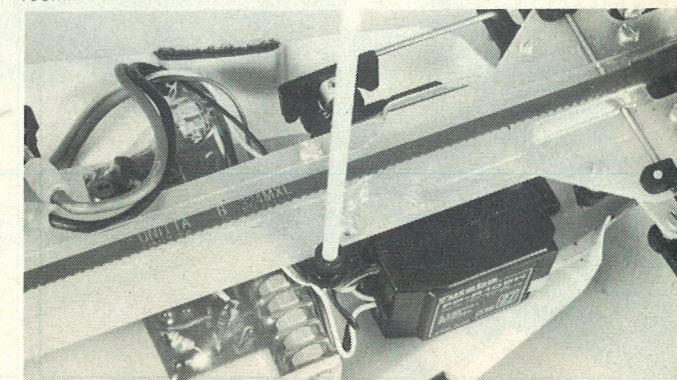
Although this review was only supposed to cover the revisions included in the 'XLS' kit some helpful hints and tips have come up.

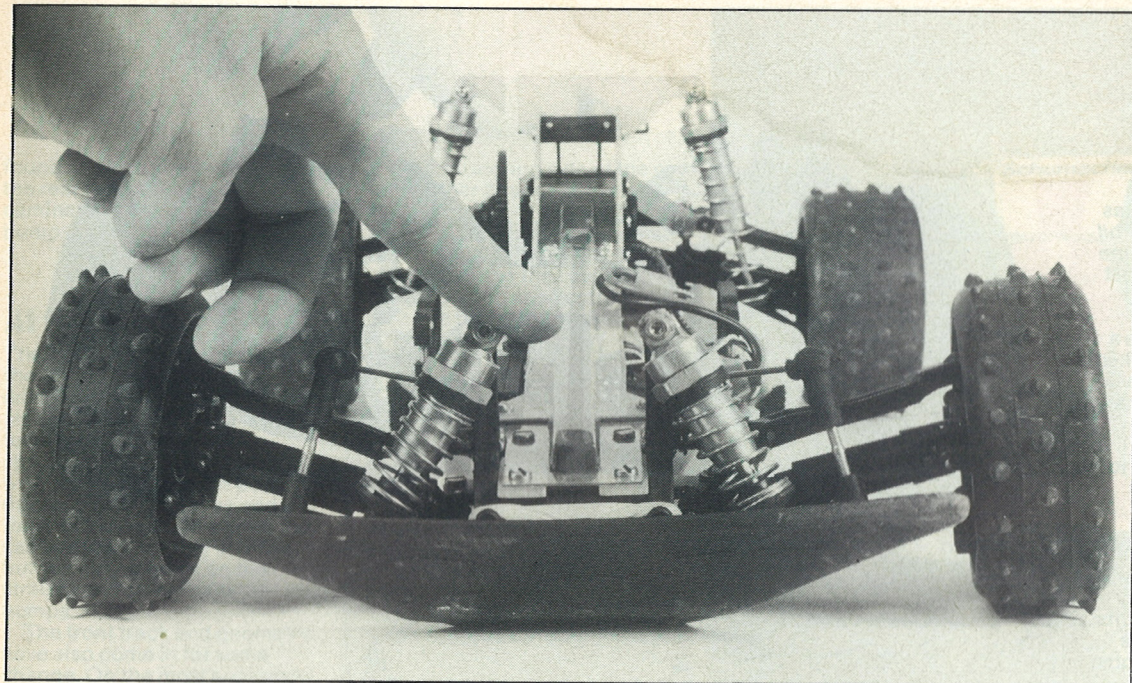
On the suspension side the kit now includes ideal springs. The damping should be quite light in the rear allowing the car to actually bottom out on the bench when dropped from six inches — although the front should be stiffer in damping.

The front shocks should be placed in the second hole from the centre and the rears on the outside hole. The bearings supplied in the kit are double sealed, one brown and one black. The black seal is rubber and actually touches the steel balls in the race — this causes drag so the 'hint' is to remove the black seals and place all the bearings with the brown shields facing outwards. This way the



Above: rear suspension gives plenty of movement. New spacers widen up rear end. Below: radio installation is simple as long wheel base gives plenty of room.

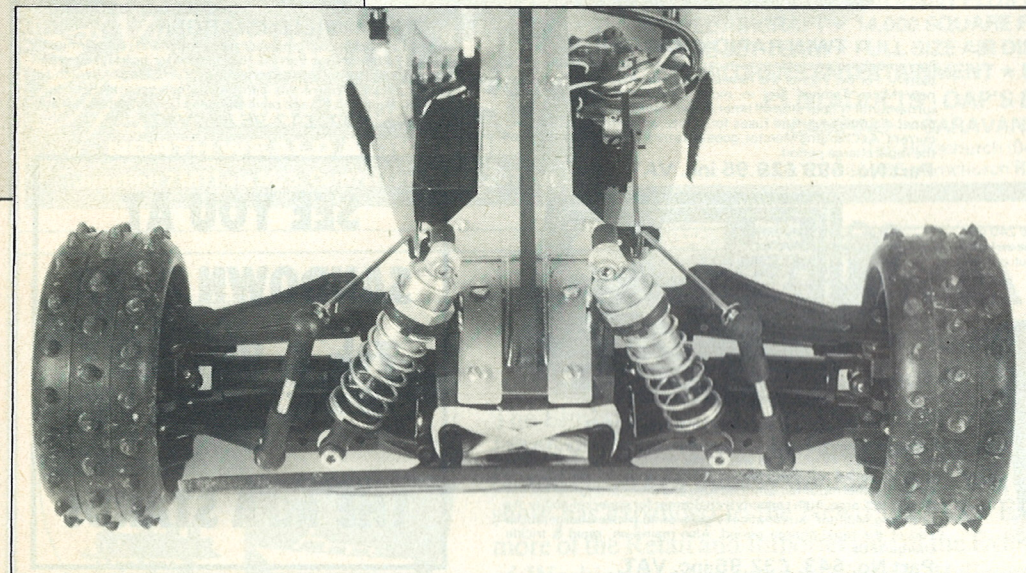
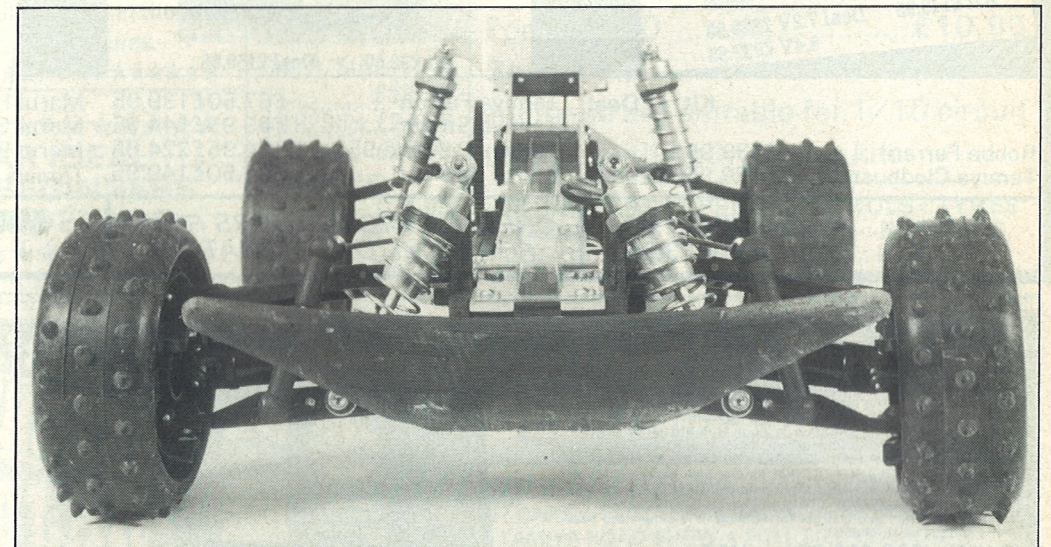
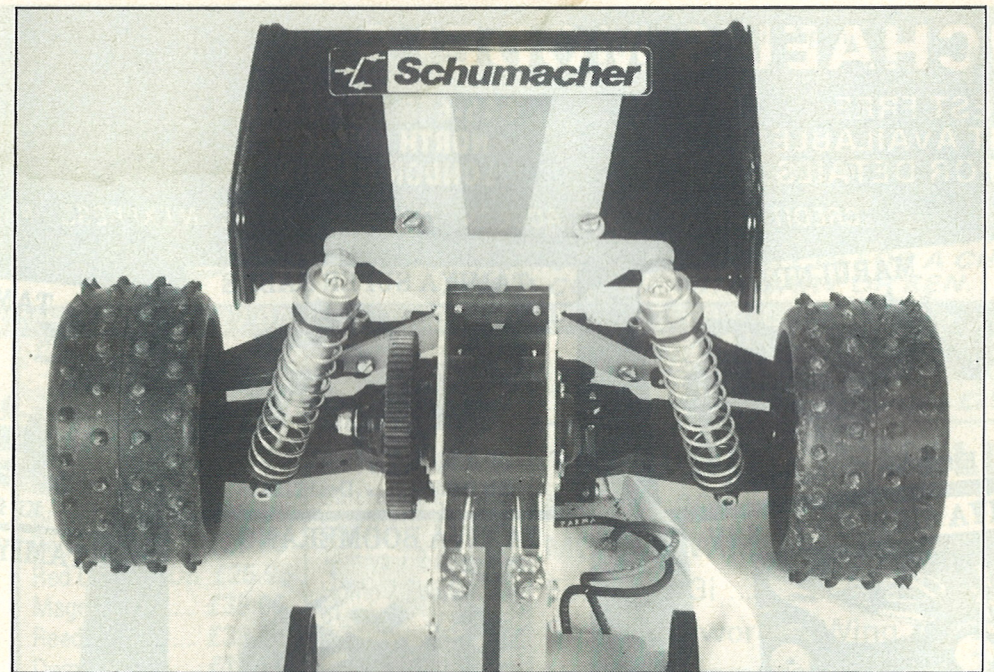
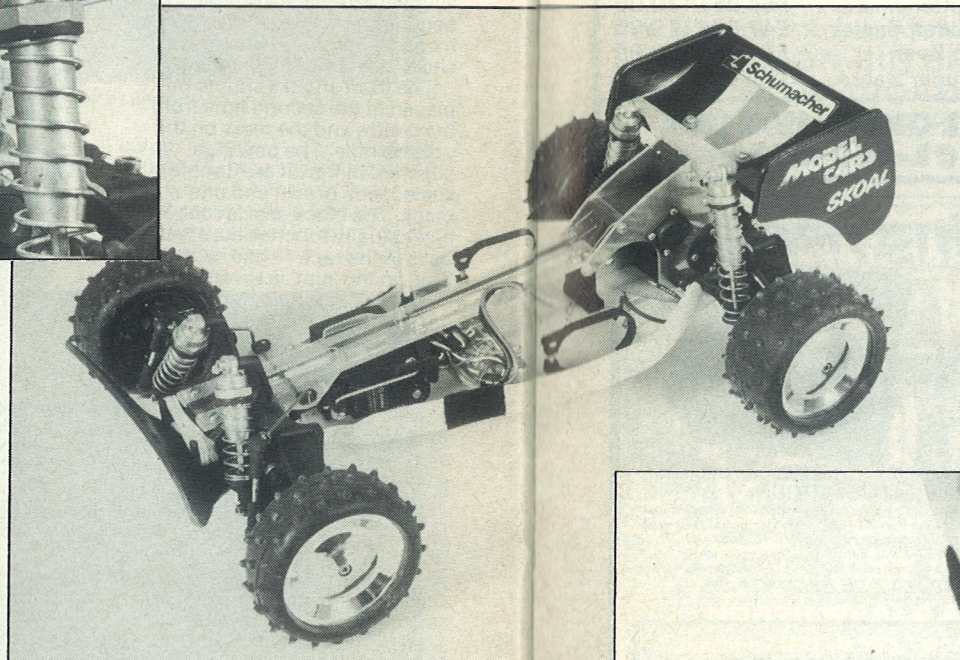
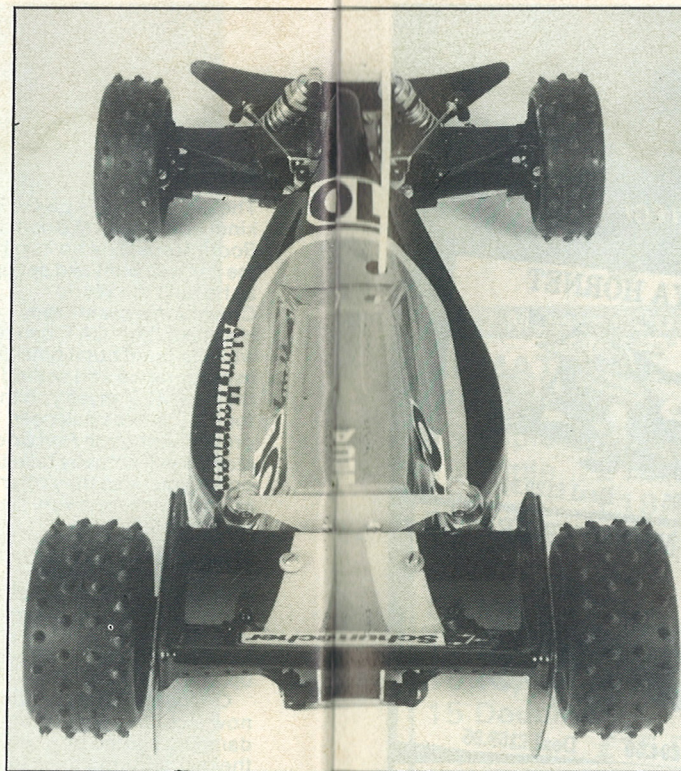
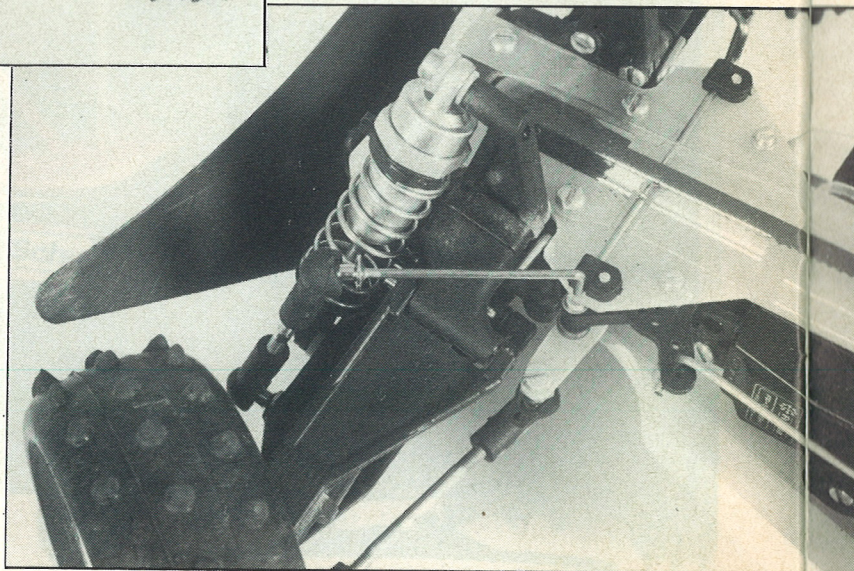
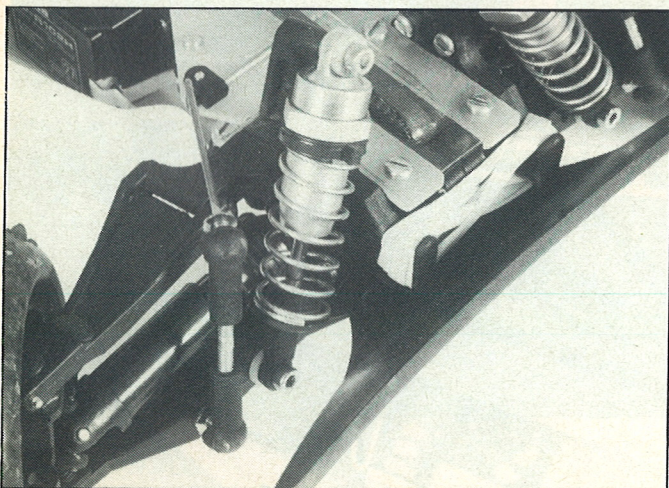
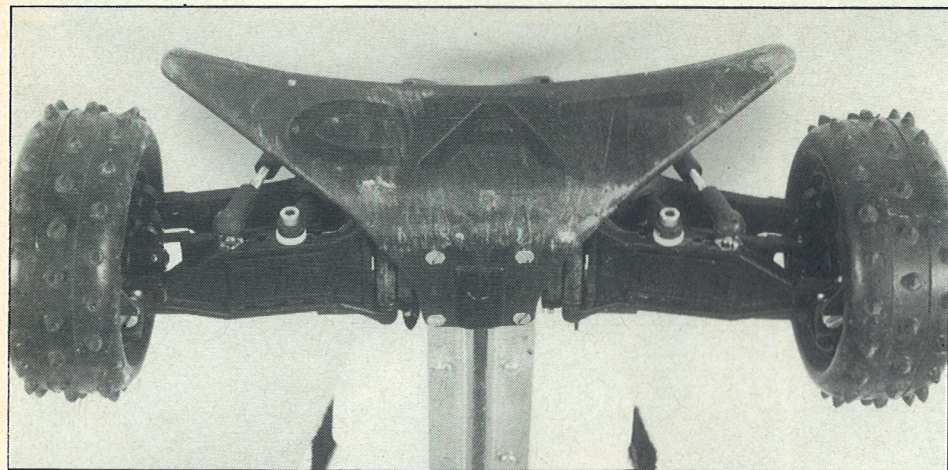
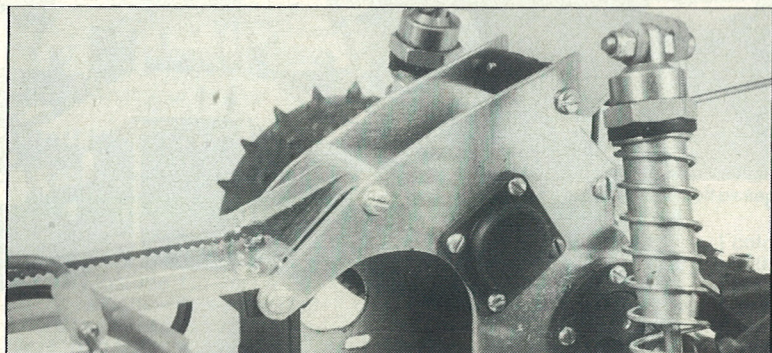




dirt is kept out and the car remains free.

On the track

The RCMC 'XLS' has had two runs to date — both at the Southend Car Club in Essex. Initial impressions were great to say the least. The car seems very quick and efficient on battery power, but the major 'good' point of the car was the turnability. The car has an incredible amount of lock for the slow turns but even at high speed with less lock the car still turns well showing no signs of



Top left: front end is wide — on the maximum and has long travel. Left: new front bumper is moulded in black and is tough. Front anti-roll bar is retained and works well. Above: neat layout — and chrome wheels. Top: Note RCMC wing sides are not included in kit.

understeer. Over the bumps is still yet to come as the Southend track is pretty flat but watch out for the first BRCA meeting.

Conclusion

The new car is obviously an improvement allowing anyone to have the best specification without mountains of work. The car takes time to build although as already said with time and patience it goes together well and builds into a very competitive car.

The instructions are clear with good pictures showing all the necessary articles and a very useful spares list is also supplied giving all the part numbers. Even with all the new cars ready for 1988 I feel the 'CAT' may well still get the cream!

Manufactured by: Schumacher Racing Products, 'Rudge' Harleston Road, Church Brampton, Northampton Building Service, through Phil Booth Models, 54 Valley Drive. Tel: 0793 769323.

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