



Cougar...

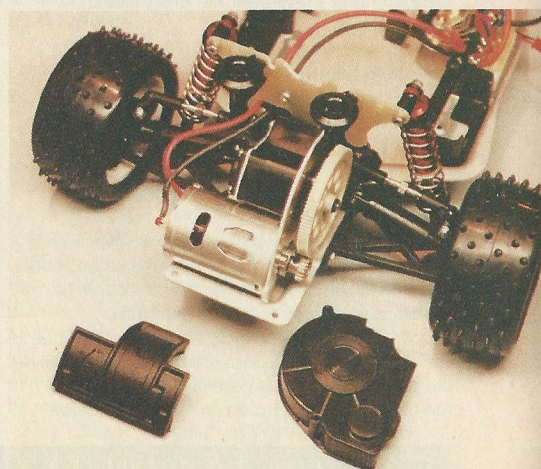


and Storm

Here's My Credentials...

Despite having over 12 years experience as an R/C aeromodeller, I must class myself as a rank beginner when it comes to R/C cars. I've found there's little comparison between throwing an aircraft round an empty sky and throwing a car round a twisty track; not to mention the differences in dynamics and model technology. I'm definitely starting at the bottom again!! You can imagine my delight when I was offered the chance to test both of Schumacher's new 'Club 10' cars.

The pre wired 540 as supplied.



Presentation

The snazzy full-colour box lid was raised to reveal carefully packed contents. The big bits were obvious, but it was the mountain of polybags crammed with masses of moulded plastic and metal components which looked rather daunting. Good Grief! All this, and not a sheet of balsa in sight to make me feel at home!! My eyes and hands alighted on a large, glossy, 24-page 'Instruction Manual'. Time for a cup of coffee and a leisurely read before going any further....

REVIEW BY MIKE RIMMER

SCHUMACHER CLUB 10 Cougar and Storm Truck

The name may sound foreign, but Schumacher are Britain's foremost R/C racing car manufacturers. The mainstay of their off-road 2WD range is the excellent Cougar '2' series of buggies, all of which have been developed from the original Cougar design introduced some time back.

As a direct follow-on from such top-level success, Schumacher are now targeting the first-

time racer with their new 'Club 10' series of 2WD cars. There are two to choose from: the 'Club 10' Cougar buggy and 'Club 10' Storm truck, both specifically designed with the newcomer in mind. Each car utilises an updated version of the original Cougar chassis, now complete with 540 motor and mechanical speed controller, and differ only in wheels, tyres, and body.

Making a Start

The instruction manual is high in diagrams, but low in text. Construction is split into separate stages — transmission, suspension, shocks, electrics, etc. — with each section explained using a logical sequence of clearly detailed 'exploded' 3-D drawings. Major components are shown fullsize to aid identification. Each different stage relates directly to the contents of a similarly

labelled bag of hardware in the kit box. So, after studying the manual at length, it was time to grasp the nettle.

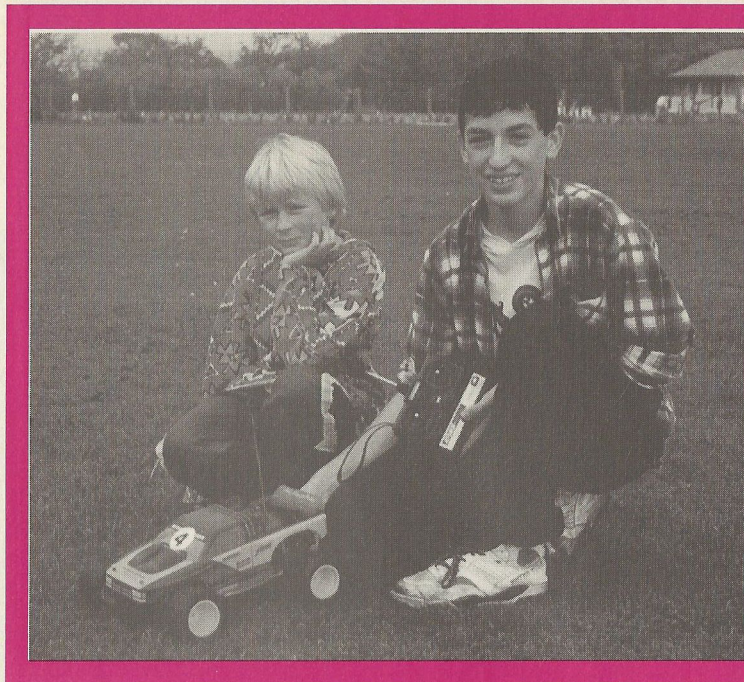
Transmission

I opened the bag marked 'Transmission' and placed all the components in the separate compartments of a fishing tackle tray, so nothing would get lost. It all looked very complicated at first, but as each successive part slotted together my fears about the complexity started to melt with the realisation that I was handling a highly engineered product. In fact, things were going so well that I'd almost finished the transmission section before I remembered that I should be taking photos!

By the way, trust 'Diagram 10' and install the adjustable Eccentric Bearing Housing on the setting shown. I thought the drive belt was a bit tight in this position but loosening to the next hole only resulted in early belt-slipping.

Suspension

Flushed with the success of my progress so far, I opened the bag marked 'Rear Suspension', and again filled the fishing tackle tray. A couple of mistakes in my instruction manual were discovered. Firstly, the diagrams on pages 6 and 7 had been transposed. Also, Step 1 showed fitting the rear pivot blocks before inserting the pivot rod in Step 2. In fact you can't do this because



Mathew and John, the two test drivers.

With the shock absorbers assembled, the rolling chassis was almost complete and things were starting to look very business-like.

A Lick of Paint

Final job was to snip round the vac-formed body shell and spray inside with appropriate paint. Die-cut self-adhesive shapes are provided to mask-out the clear windows; they're not a perfect fit, but are a damn good start and save a lot of messing about.

A Testing Time

Assembly had taken just about a week. Now it's the Saturday evening before race day, and time for shake-down trials in the back-garden. Both the drive belt (already mentioned) and the differential soon started slipping, showing that I'd been too cautious about not overtightening them. Happily, these were easily adjusted, the belt tension setting shown in the diagrams would have been just right, and the differential check on the track settings pages could have avoided the slipping diff. You live and learn! I'd also allowed two wires to touch, and the insulation had melted resulting in a short and a blown resistor. The wiring was quickly repaired and the basic problem solved: but how to replace the damaged component at 7.00 p.m. on Saturday evening? A call to Christine, proprietor of The Formby Model Shop, and she assures me that a replacement resistor will be waiting at the club

SCHUMACHER CLUB 10

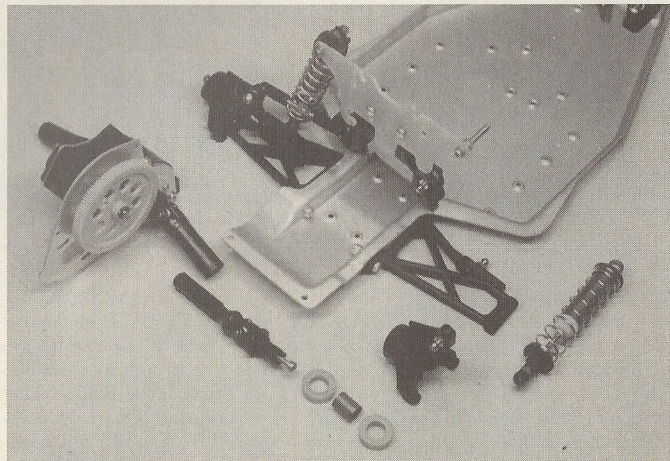
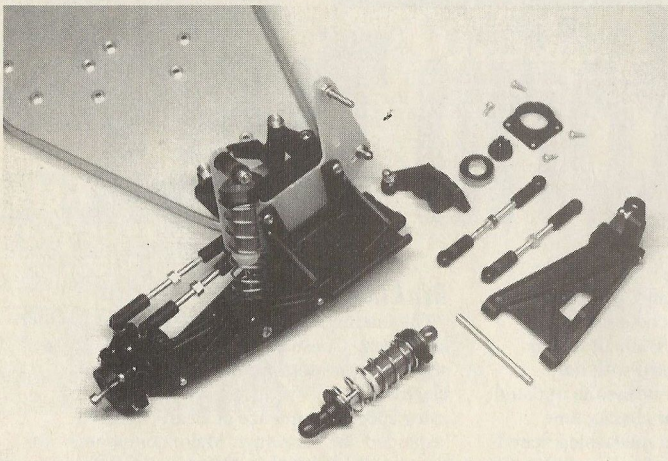
Cougar and Storm Truck

the bolt through the pivot block needs to locate in a key-way at the end of the pivot rod. Schumacher says that these errors had already been noticed, and corrections will be made when the manual is re-printed.

The rest of the back end went together smoothly, with only minor easing of the plastic components needed for friction-free movement. Moving to the Front Suspension, progress continued at a good pace. Inserting spacers allows the rake angle of the front suspension to be altered to three different positions, but there is no recommendation on which to start with, or what affect each position will have on steering.

Radio Gear and Electrics

The mechanical Speed Controller comes ready-assembled and wired, with all plugs and connectors soldered in place — even the motor! The pressed aluminium chassis plate is pre-drilled to accept the various moulded plastic brackets which will hold the radio and electrical equipment in place. Again, the diagrams in the manual are clear, and fitting should be straight forward, although I'd advise raw beginners to have the completed installation checked over at their local Model Shop before introducing any electric current.



track in the morning. The moral? Support your local model shop!!

Race Day Cometh

Sunday dawns fine. Down at the track in time for practice. New resistor fitted. Let's go! The car kept going out of control on the back section of the track. Someone points out that the motor has not been fitted with a suppressor, and this is causing radio interference. The only spare suppressor I can locate is already fixed to a motor belonging to club mate John Eccles. He says I can borrow both, but only if he can help with the test driving. Bribery? Of course, but I feel like I could do with some help!

Having sorted the car in its Cougar guise, the wheels and body shell were swapped to affect a metamorphosis into the Storm truck, which has a slight edge in straight-line speed over the Cougar by virtue of larger diameter drive wheels. The large front wheels also revealed another of my mistakes, where the spring in the steering servo saver had been incorrectly tensioned. The Storm body shell fits less snugly than the Cougar allowing dirt to be thrown onto the radio gear, so consider buying a Chassis Dirt Cover No.U1030K. By the end of the day all the moving parts had bedded-in nicely, with just one more tweak required on the differential adjustment.

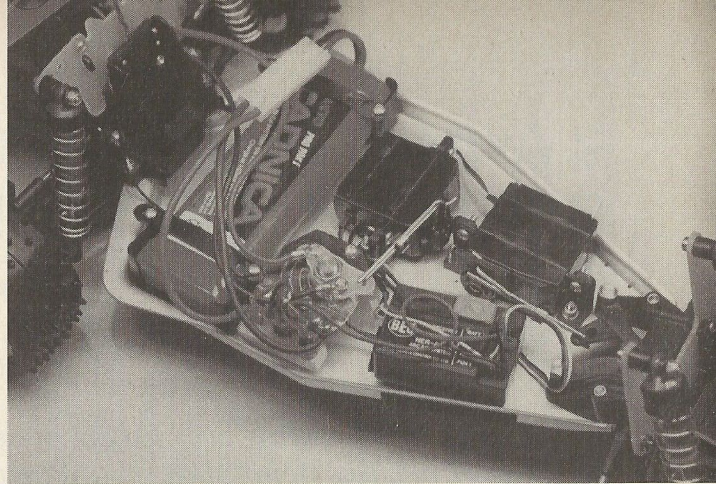
Having ironed-out all the initial 'bugs', the following weekends' racing was much more enjoyable. The 540 motor supplied is quite sedate and understandably well off competition pace, but gives green-horns like me every chance to polish steering skills before considering any go-faster bits; more on this later.

In Conclusion

The 'Club 10' Cougar and Storm are quality products and should be treated with respect. Unless you're completely ham-fisted, construction will present few problems, although I'd have appreciated more explanatory text in the Instruction Manual. Tim Walden at Schumacher explained their policy on instructions is biased towards diagrams because experience shows how few modellers bother reading pages of text. It also eases the task of translation into other languages. Point taken! I've just received a copy of the new manual and can confirm that significant improvements have been made.

Most of the problems mentioned in the foregoing were of my own making, caused by inexperience. Other beginners would be well advised to give any new car a very thorough testing before going racing. Trying to sort-out teething troubles' in the heat of a race day can be extremely stressful for all concerned!

Compared to other entry-level kits on the market, the Club 10 may appear a bit more expensive and complex to purchase and maintain, but there are two very important factors to bear in mind. Firstly, as with any highly-engineered product, they're built to take punishment, but not abuse; careful maintenance will reduce running costs. Secondly, given their pedigree the 'Club 10' cars provide an excellent start and can be progressively up-graded as your skills improve. Your first step may be to purchase an electronic speed controller and faster motor, but after that the full range of 'Speed Secrets' and Cougar '2'



Neat installation of pre-wired speed controller.

parts can be interchanged to modify any part of the car up to top level.

In fact, some of those options for up-grading will be the subject of a future follow-on article to this kit review, when I shall be examining many of the parts on offer and commenting on how they can help me to reduce my lap times. Watch this space for further developments.

Finally, special thanks to: Christine, Steve, and Ian, at the Formby Model & Hobby Scene for their help and advice; John Eccles, and my son Mathew, for assistance in test driving; and the officials at the Southport Radio Car Club for tolerating any disruption to proceedings caused by my fumbblings.

The 'Club 10' Cougar buggy and Storm truck are manufactured by: Schumacher Racing Products Ltd. Hanson Business Park, 71-73 Tenter Road, Moulton Park, Northampton NN3 1AX. Available from all good model shops.