

KIT REVIEW

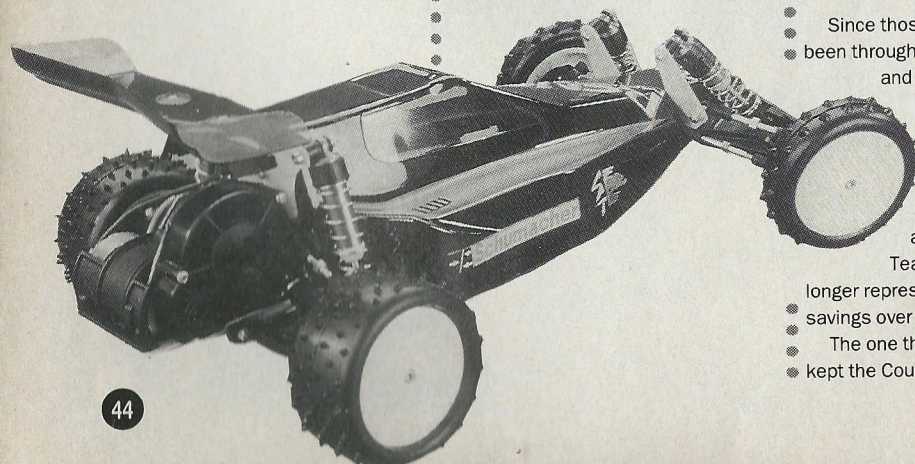
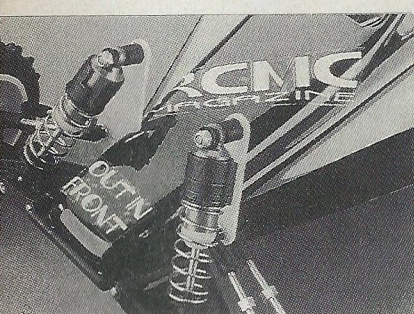
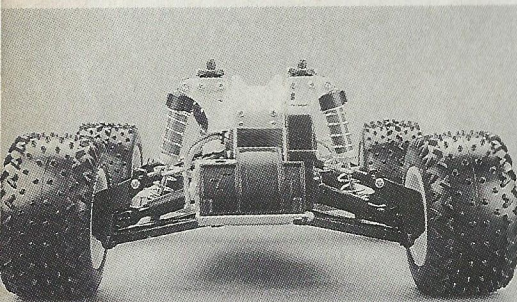
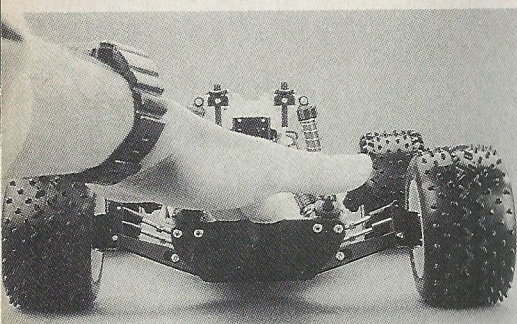
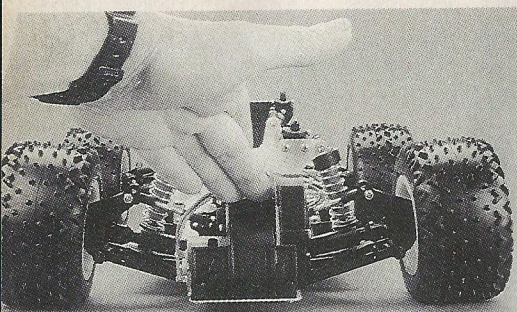
The Schumacher range of model cars seems to be expanding and diversifying more rapidly than a single cell splits itself into two and then four and so on. Only four years ago did the company produce its first

competitive two wheel drive buggy to complement the one other buggy in its range but a lot of water has run under the proverbial bridge since those heady days of the TOPCAT and the CAT XLS / PROCAT.

Schumacher can now offer the beginner a true starter kit, it can also be converted from car to truck in no time at all...

Join the
CLUB!





Most of the Club components have been seen before, just a few small mods and the speed controller are new. Remember if you want to join the Club consider a set of ballraces.

The TOPCAT, after a year where it became European Champion and 7th in the World Championships, grew itself a more conventional front suspension set up and became the COUGAR.

Whilst the TOPCAT had been successful, some doubted the car's ability against other cars such as the RC10 but, with the introduction of the COUGAR, most of these doubts were washed away. The Cougar quickly became the choice of many drivers from club level up to National and International level and many of today's superstars cut their teeth as it were on a Cougar.

The car had many attractive features but one of the major attractions was the fact that it was a good seventy five pounds cheaper than anything else on the competition market.

Back in those days, two wheel drive was a bit of a rarity, especially at club level and the Schumacher car offered excellent value for money at a price that was right. Sure, the car had its faults but, at such a budget price, the pro's far outweighed the cons. The car was cheap to buy, fairly easy to build, easy to set up and drive, offered excellent performance and was easy to maintain.

mainstream market occupied predominantly by Tamiya and Kyosho is the need for the car to have an Electronic speed control and neither this or a motor has ever been included in the Cougar kit before now.

Enter the Club 10 concept...

Schumacher Club 10 is a concept which envelops the first time buyer market. The cars are lower spec than their competition counterparts but include a mechanical three step speed control and a standard motor. The instructions have also been made more bullet proof and the total package is designed to encourage first time buyers to enter the club racing scene at a low initial cost but with what is essentially a fully upgradeable car.

The Club 10 Cougar makes use of the older front suspension set up and gearbox and is virtually the same as the original Cougar 1. Add to this a Storm racing truck bodyshell, some truck wheels and tyres and a body mount kit and you've immediately got a racing truck as well as a 2WD buggy. Seems too good to be true.

Since those days, the Cougar has been through many phases of its life and now has evolved into the COUGAR 2 which is available at different specification levels. Unfortunately however, the price has also evolved and the Team spec Cougar 2 no longer represents any great financial savings over any of its rivals.

The one thing that has always kept the Cougar slightly above the

Assembly

One thing that has always characterised the Japanese mainstream manufacturers is the clarity of their instructions and, I'm glad to say, that the team at Schumacher have adopted this type of principal and applied it throughout their own range of model cars. Good quality instructions are really a must if the car is aimed at the first time buyer market such as the Club 10 concept. The manual shows you

what parts are required and how many screws are needed and where to grease or oil the components. However, the instruction booklet that came with our car did in fact have a couple of pages set back to front (i.e. instruction steps 1, 2 and 3 for the rear suspension followed on after steps 4, 5 and 6!!). This was somewhat confusing initially but was quickly overcome but hopefully, our's was a one off case and other booklets will be correct.

Another aspect of the Japanese cars is the quality of fit of the components. I have yet to hear of anybody having difficulty in making a Tamiya kit work assuming that they have followed the instructions word for word. However, The Schumacher car did require a little bit of work in order to make some of the parts work more smoothly. In most instances, the instructions did point out a possible pit-fall but, in other areas, some of the components fell definitely into the 'tight fit' category!! This does mean that the car will not be prone to becoming sloppy very quickly which is a good thing but it does mean that some skill is required in order to obtain the best results. This is fine at the competition end of the market but, at this level, some of the components should go together

more easily than they actually did. The car comes with two ballraces for the front wheels and the rest of the car (the gearbox and rear wheels) are bushed. The bushes themselves seem to be a sintered bronze which is infinitely more preferable than the plastic bushes but not anywhere as good as the ballraces which are optional. As the ballraces can be bought as a complete set of eight for under fifteen quid, it is well worth spending the extra immediately and leaving the bronze bushes in the box. Do be warned however that, after a while, if the ball race becomes excessively dirty, it can seize up and will cause more damage than a normal bush. Therefore, if you decide to ballrace the car, a little bit of preventive maintenance (cleaning in other words) will far extend the life of all the components on the car.

The shock absorbers are the normal Schumacher adjustable damping items and are red anodised rather than teflon coated. The instructions recommend a 10 wt oil be used but this is not supplied and will have to be purchased separately. The shocks themselves go together fairly easily but, on this particular kit, the pistons were extremely tight in the barrel of the damper. Previous examples that I

have built have not been this tight and I can only assume that this was a one off.

The gearbox is the well proven belt drive and it contains a ball differential. This type of differential is much better than a geared diff although it requires more maintenance and attention. The gearbox is mated to the motor via a 48dp spur gear and pinion.

The motor is pre wired to the

speed controller which means that there is no soldering required in order to build and run this car. The speed controller is a mechanical three stage version and includes a three pole resistor (like the Tamiya versions). This type of speed control is not as efficient as an electronic one but is a lot cheaper and, in certain cases, can be more robust whilst learning to drive the car.

Conclusions

It is good to see the competition orientated manufacturers beginning to take more of an active interest at club racing levels. Without a constant stream of club racers, the sport would very soon die out and become too elitist.

The Club 10 concept is a good idea but, in order for it to become a great success, Schumacher must ensure that the cars virtually fail together with the minimum of fuss. It is ironic that this short fall is due to the fact that the car uses the mouldings of the older Cougar 1 which made it one of the most durable cars on the market.

There is no doubt in my mind that the Club 10 cars will prove to

be utterly reliable and extremely durable IF they are assembled precisely and correctly which, for the first time buyer will not be as easy to do as some other cars which probably won't be as durable.

It is a shame that without these minor problems, the car could be, in my opinion, the best entry level car of its type on the market for anyone who is interested in going 2WD club racing on a restrictive budget.

So, in summing up therefore, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend this concept to anybody who has an understanding of how things SHOULD work and fit together as without this knowledge, I fear that the car could not be used to its full potential both enjoyably and competitively.



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