

PHIL BOOTH

The fruits of our labours -
The Fireblade USA

TEAM talk



THE ANSWERS - DIRECT FROM THE WORKS

New developments at Schumacher - The Fireblade USA

Schumacher's development team have been very busy with the latest Fireblade modifications, these were based on the knowledge gained from last years very successful season, together with input from Schumacher's team drivers all over the world.

When we put all the various minor changes together we almost ended up with a new car! Its amazing how many small detail modifications the team can come up with on a car that is basically only one year old.

To make the car more suitable for the American market we designed a new set of shock mounting brackets to allow the shocks to be set in a more vertical fashion both at the front and the rear of the Fireblade. This increases the performance of the car on the American style tracks, and the increasingly demanding British and European circuits.

But of course nothing is that simple, to keep the suspension travel the same as the previous brackets, new holes were needed in the wishbones, and as usual one thing leads to another, so we took this opportunity to design new front and rear roll bars. We also added some new roll bar positions to both sets of wishbones along with the revised shock absorber mounting holes.

The new rear shock bracket now also carries the rear link mount, so instead of the Fireblade having two separate brackets at the rear it now only has one. The link mount itself has also undergone some changes with the addition of extra holes to

alter the rear roll centre geometry.

One of the most common problems with 2wd cars is power on understeer, the design team at Schumachers have always wanted to move the weight forward slightly to reduce this problem, but with the steering servo in its present position this was never going to be possible.

In the brainstorming session that followed we came up with the idea of mounting the servo in a vertical position, this would now allow one full cell movement forward of the ni-cads, and after all they are the single heaviest moveable item in the car.

This now gave the Fireblade U.S.A. a new seven cell chassis with the option of having all the cells forward, all the cells rearward or even three in the forward position and three in the rearward position with one cell gap in the middle. We are now very happy that this will give most of our drivers all the options they need to find a suitable balance with the car. So as a result of these small changes we ended up with new shock brackets, new wishbones front and rear, new chassis with a matching top deck, new anti roll bars and the gearbox in a different position.

The final modification that we decided to make was to reduce the front overhang, this enables the car to cope with landing off jumps with its nose down much better, and to achieve this a new combined front pivot bracket and bumper moulding was conceived.

The Team

Team Schumacher have taken a slightly different approach to team drivers for the 1998 season. Our

intention is to work very closely with our young up and coming drivers, and help them to reach the very limit of their individual ability and hopefully even improve on it.

Jon Leonard will head Schumachers British Nationals off road team, alongside Ian Joyce, Steven Pole, Richard Barton, Stuart Joyce, Paul Bartlett and Nolan Mcconnell. We also have an equally strong team of young drivers competing in the 1998 BRCA regional series.

Steven Pole will also lead the increasingly important Touring Car team, supported by the current BTCC series champion Chris Wilkinson, Darren Foy, Gerald Page, Kevin Hard and Mark Burgess.

In Europe, Schumacher Racing and their respective distributors also run teams of drivers in both off and on road events.

In France we have had a very strong team for many years, with drivers like current French off road champion Sebastien Wartelle, French on road champion Arnaud

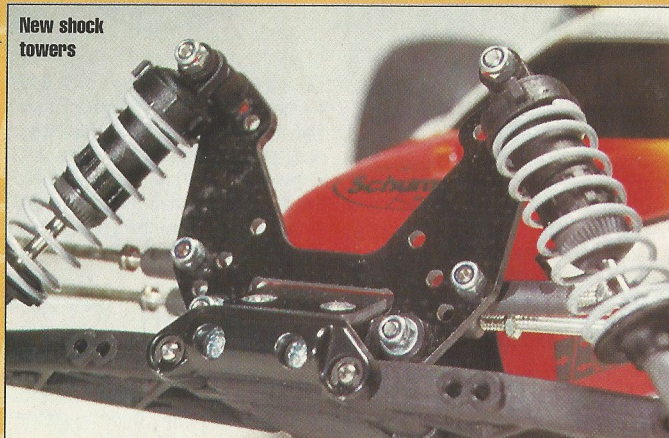
Choquet and Vincent Heligoïn who finished third in the 1997 two wheel drive European Championships.

Schumacher Belgium team driver Fabien Gourmet is champion in both off road and on road classes in that country. We are also delighted to have Marcus Mober from Germany and Oscar Jansen from Holland driving our touring cars at selected high profile race meetings in Europe.

And finally Teemu Leino from Finland who should need no introduction to most readers, having won one leg of the A final and finished in a fantastic third place at the 1997 off road World Championships in California driving a CAT 2000.

Teemu also plays a major role in the testing and development of all new products, and together with the rest of the team help to improve the performance of the cars, but that is were we came in! More from the Schumacher team soon. **RRCI**

New shock
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More changes
here

