

"It is quite some time since Tamiya released an Off-road car"

RRCI

FORMULA for fun

TAMIYA BLAZING STAR

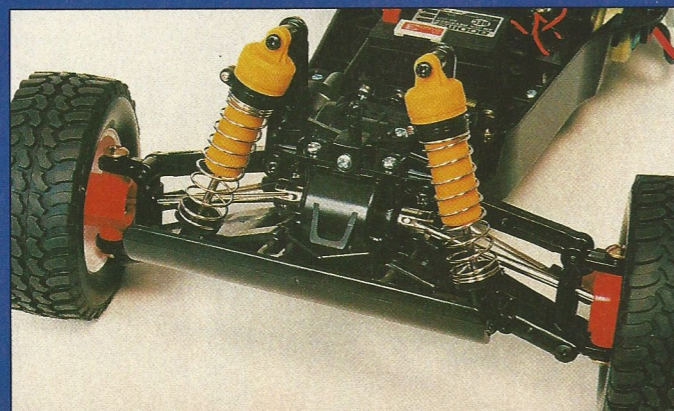
this car's the star

Those Rally Block pattern tyres gave a surprising amount of grip, they surprised me anyway!

with a standard Touring Car type wheel, a smart, white, five spoke affair. The tyres, instead of being ultra soft mini pin or ribbed type are a very high profile, rather hard, Rally 'Block' tread pattern. The lack of sponge inners was also a surprise. The tyres reminded me of the 'Winter' tyres my Dad used to fit to the rear of his Austin Cambridge* each Autumn. Now why anybody would want to give up the tenuous grip on the road offered by the then state of the art Dunlop SP radial in favour of the rock hard, totally grip-less compound of a 'Winter' tyre - just when you need all the help you can get (Winter) - is totally beyond me. Any how back to these tall Tamiya Tyres, would they grip?

*For our younger readers this was a saloon car of the early Edwardian period of pre-history.

The simple and robust front suspension



Build up

When I build up a kit I tend to make notes of problems or innovative ideas in the margins of the manual. When I came to write up the Blazing Star I found that my only comments in the manual were 'standard diff', no surprises' and that was that! From the first item of build onwards nothing got a mention.

What this means is that the Blazing Star is a typical Tamiya, with all of the good - and bad - points that make us such fans of the product. Everything fitted first time. The level of moulding 'flash' on the components is low. The instructions are first rate. The safety precautions outlined in the manual could be a model saver. Other manufacturers are catching up but for Scale/Sport/Fun enthusiasts Tamiya are hard to beat. The downside? Loose, sloppy suspension and steering links. The more expensive models really should be ballraced as standard. 'Hop Up' parts, some of



4WD chassis common to many of the Tamiya range. A quick flip through the 'Tamiya Radio Control Guide Book' will identify the 'Manta Ray' and 'Dirt Thrasher' as identical twins with many of the Rally and Touring cars using the same mechanics in narrow track, short shocker form.

NOT that this is a criticism, far from it. The basic shaft drive 4WD chassis is a tough, easily repaired, hard working bit of kit that responds well to the addition of Mr Tamiya's many 'Hop Up' options. The different angle that the Blazing Star brings to the party is the wheel/tyre option selected for it.

By referring to the Blazing Star as a 4WD Trail Racer Tamiya appear to have positioned this model out of the mainstream of current buggy design and firmly in the 'Sport' or serious 'Fun' category. So, right up my street then!

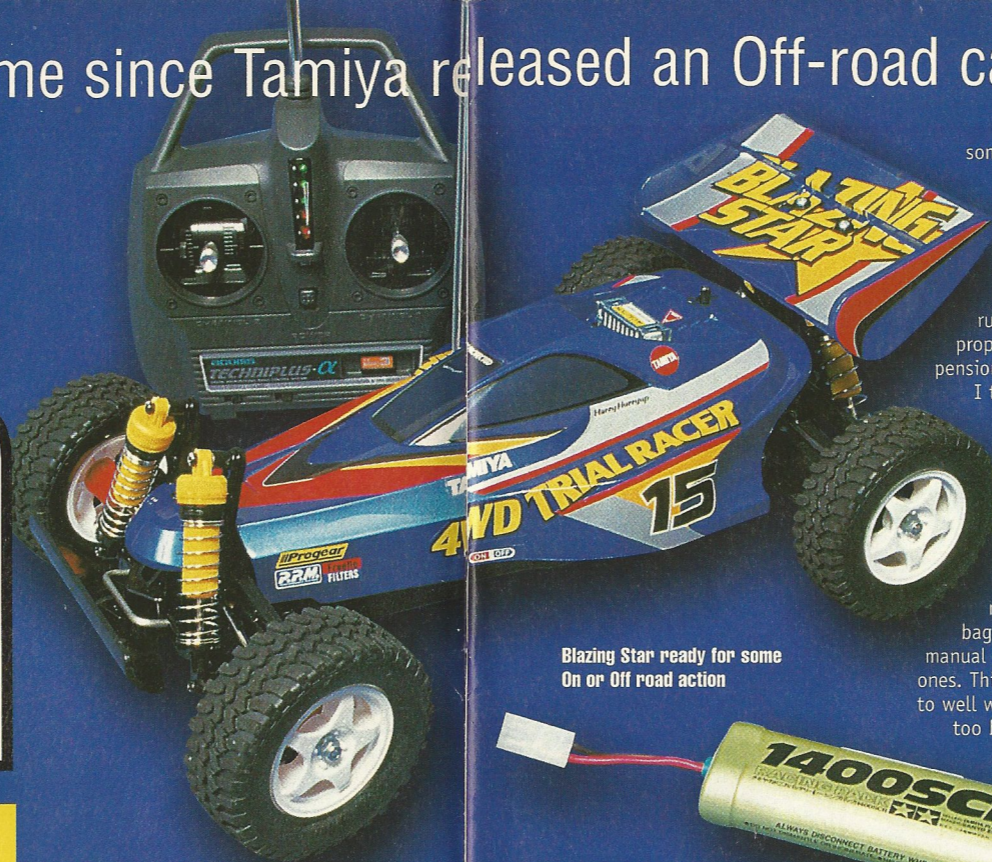
Different Boots

The wheels and tyres are the major change from the 'Manta Ray' and 'Dirt Thrasher'. No Mini pin or ribbed tyres here. The Blazing Star is fitted not with a standard 'buggy' wheel but

It is quite some time since Tamiya released an Off-road car. The recent issue of the 2WD 'Fighter' added a starter model to the Tamiya range that was ideal for raw beginners who wanted a 'real' R/C Car. At RRCI we feel that the 'Fighter' would make the basis of a 'Cadeet' class for off-road cars to let the under 10's have a go for an outlay of around £100, what do you think? Answers please to 'Readers Writes!'. The 'Fighter' will shortly gain a half-brother called the 'Mad Bull', a two wheel drive buggy but with Monster Truck style wheels and tyres - it should be fun.

Recognise an old friend?

The Blazing Star utilises the familiar and well proven shaft drive,



Blazing Star ready for some On or Off road action



some time over. The pistons will need the little bit of 'flash' cleaning up. The lower spacer will also benefit from a bit of work with an emery board and make sure the rubber 'O' rings are seated properly. I initially set the suspension to 'full soft' all round but I tightened up the rear shockers a wee bit later to reduce the under-steer and this seemed to work OK.

When you get to section 28 you need to remove the supplementary instructions from the mechanical speed controller bag and flip between the main manual and the speed controller ones. This sounds a pain but thanks to well written instructions it is not too bad at all.

I mounted my radio receiver high up on top of the steering servo but the Acoms A-201 receiver is pretty compact

so I did not have any clearance problems with the shell. My radio tends to lead a pretty hard life leaping from car to car, you never have enough servos and receivers in this business! DO power up your servos and centre your trims on the transmitter.

The build - In detail

When you are building the differentials use plenty of grease, I used up one and a half tubes during the build of Blazing Star. Your local model shop will have something suitable and the Tamiya tube of grease is barely enough and the 'differentials' should have as much as possible. The Pinion alignment tool is a neat idea to ensure that you don't push the pinion too far down the motor shaft, nifty. Fitting alternative gear ratios is painless thanks to the numbers marked on the motor mount, match the number of teeth on the pinion to the holes in the mount and the alignment will be OK.

When you have assembled the front and rear suspension onto the diff carriers and before you fit the shockers make sure that the suspension falls under its own weight. Now is the time to investigate any binding or striction in the assembly. Time spent making sure the suspension is free will pay off in the performance of the car. After all just because it is a sport model nobody said it couldn't be the fastest Sport model on the block huh?

The Shockers are worth taking

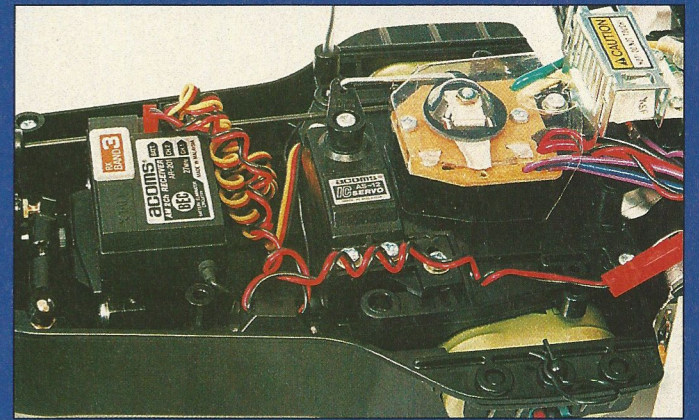
beginners tip

The steering servo is fairly inaccessible down in the 'tub' of the chassis and if the servo is not centred it could be a bit annoying finding yourself unable to 'trim out' full right-hand lock! Read section 33 carefully. When you are fitting the wheels and tyres together PLEASE use eye protection if the tyre should slip out of your hand the superglue could splash - not recommended for your eyes...

Once you have screwed the front and rear suspension onto the chassis 'Tub' it is all downhill from here. The bodyshell is simple to cut out and trim. Take care to mask off the outside, Tamiya normally provide a coating on the outside of the bodyshell to protect against overspray - but not this time. I used a



Neat little guard for the rear diff



I mounted the Acoms receiver on top of the servo for easy access

supermarket carrier bag which I tape to the outside of the shell with masking tape, well worth the time and effort. The holes for the aerial and bodyposts are already punched in the right places, thank you Tamiya, tape over the holes on the outside so that overspray does not ruin your masterpiece.

Finally, read ALL of the safety recommendations - you know they make sense! Check that your servos are operating in the direction you expect, life is difficult enough without having the steering and throttle controls back to front.

Driving a Star

The Blazing Star was a big surprise. With a freshly charged Tamiya 1400 Cell Pack, note that, a mere 1400. The Blazing Star belted around at a reasonable lick. This is not after all a Losi/Schumacher/Tenth Tech/Yokomo competitor this is a sport model. It has enough ground clearance and suspension travel to whizz off 'Table top' type jumps (or Kerbs onto tarmac!) with impunity, landing smoothly with no bounce. It handles Tarmac and rougher stuff with equal aplomb. The overpowering driving characteristic is one of gentle, benign, understeer and if you give it more power it just runs wide, ease up and it tightens its line. Frustrating for the racer but Oh so safe for the car park and waste ground racing it is destined for. Upping the amount of pre-load in the rear shockers went a long way towards balancing this out. The tyres were a major

surprise giving quite acceptable levels of grip and able to handle quite rough going.

Star quality?

Yep, we think the Blazing Star has it. Sensible cost, Tamiya's famously good quality and a simple build adds up to an excellent fun car, recommended. RRCI

Quick Spec

1:10th Scale On and Off-Road Sport model
Shaft drive 4WD system with two geared differentials
269 mm Wheelbase
Lexan 'Buggy' style body with large Lexan rear wing
Fully independent suspension with double wishbones
Oil filled coil over shocks with adjustable spring platforms
Mechanical speed controller and 540 type Mabuchi motor

Testers Kit

Tamiya 1400 Battery Pack
Acoms Techniplus Alpha 27 Meg radio system
Acoms As-12 servos (x2)
Garden, Car park

Likes:

Quality
Easy Build
Friendly handling
Go anywhere capability

Dislikes:

Strange look of high profile tyres
'Slop' in steering