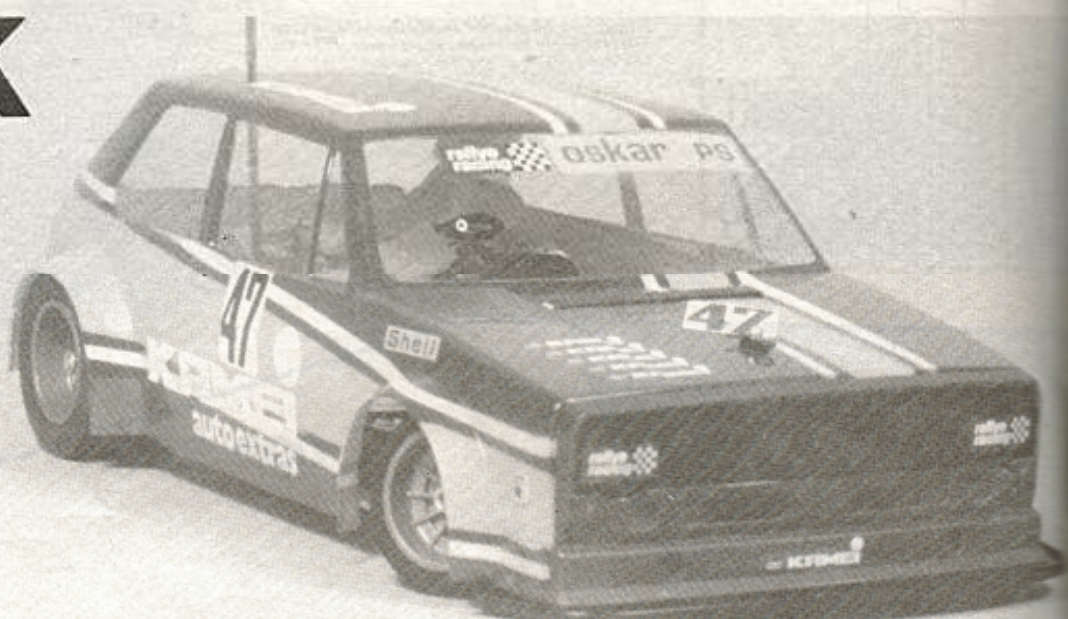


Track Test



COMPETITION SPECIAL VW GOLF RACING

BY JOHN BICKNELL

AFTER HAVING SEEN the performance of the new Lexan fold up cars and even having the opportunity to drive one, it was with some reservation that I first looked at the Tamiya 'Golf' as a potential race winner.

On opening the box, it was immediately obvious that Tamiya had taken their usual care in packaging the product, most of the major items are on blister cards clearly labelled and the small parts in polythene bags with identification cards attached. Also contained in the box was a clear Lexan body, additional injection moulded body parts, mechanism plate, GRP chassis, decals and an impressive instruction manual.

Construction

The first move was to read through the instructions, mainly to find out if any preparation is required so that such items

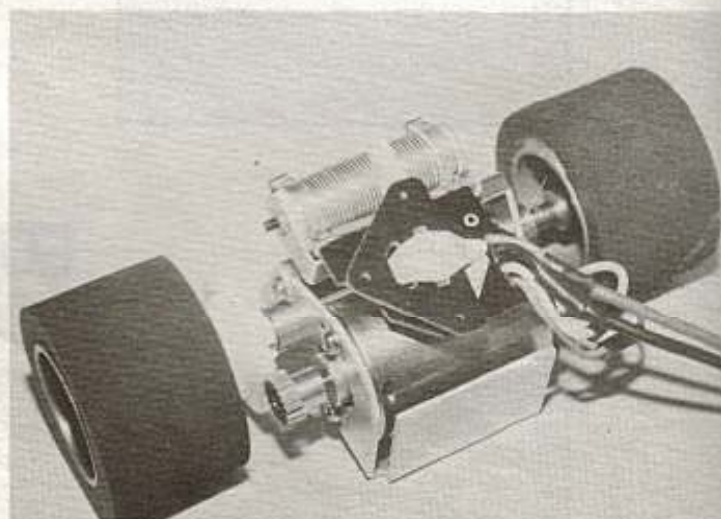
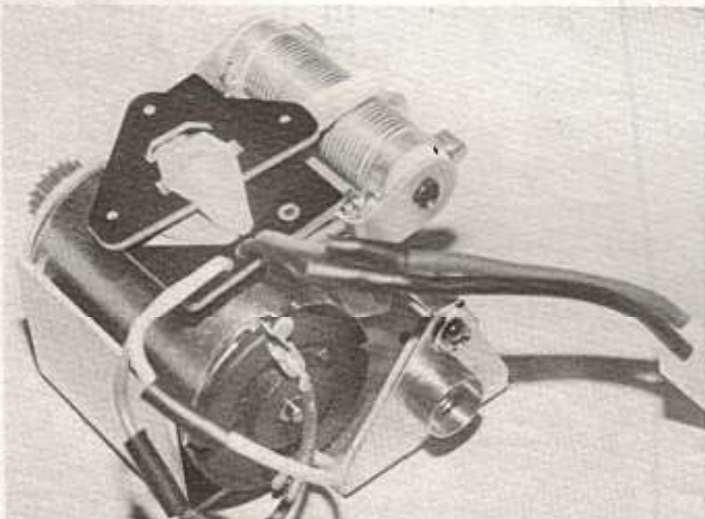
could be drying while the main assembly is going on, but no, so back to page one of the assembly instructions. One has to start with the installation of the motor. As usual Tamiya supply a Mabuchi 540 in the kit. A choice of motor pinion is supplied and to start with I fitted the 15-tooth, a gear ratio of about 4:1 to find this, count the teeth on the differential spur gear and divide by the pinion teeth. Putting the speed controller together was again a simple operation. A soldering iron is necessary to complete this section of the assembly.

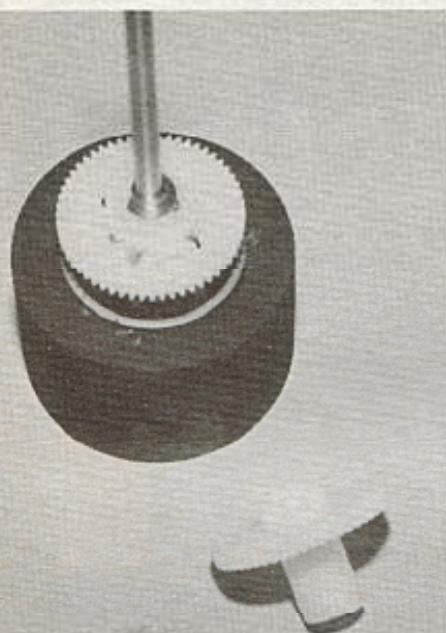
Tyre and wheel construction came next in the programme. As I knew that I would be testing the car at my local club's indoor circuit, I chose to change the tyres supplied

and fitted medium hard on the front and soft neoprene on the rear; these were siliconed. The actual kit tyres seemed a little too hard for indoor work so were given the chance to prove themselves at the local car park. A decision has to be made at this point, whether to go for a solid direct drive or use the differential supplied. As most indoor circuits demand a tight turning circle, I decided to fit the differential. This involves fitting various bushes and gears on to the back axle, followed by one wheel, the whole unit is then fitted into the motor mounting. Attention should be paid to the adjustment of play in the gear assembly; too loose a mesh will cause severe damage of the gears, too tight and the motor will be overloaded.

Having completed this, the motor and axle assembly is mounted to both the alloy mechanism plate and the GRP chassis.

Below left: motor fitted to speed controller, some shortening of wires necessary; note the sleeving over the joints. Below right: completed rear drive assembly including differential. Good gear mesh pays dividends in performance.



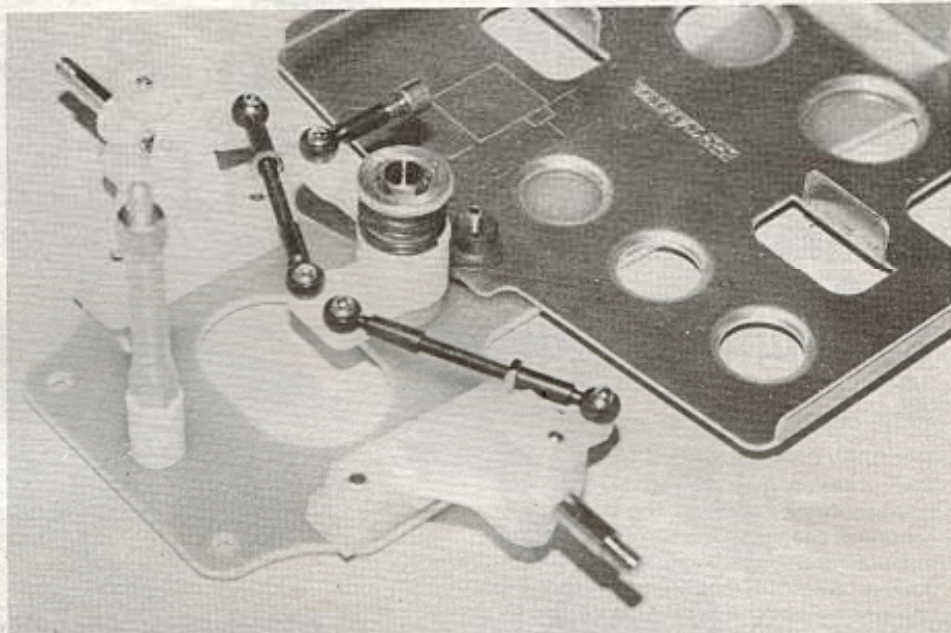


Rubber mountings are used to separate the plate from the chassis.

Turning to the front end. Front suspension arm assembly presents no problems if the instructions are followed properly. *Tamiya* seem to have developed the 'knack' of writing instructions so that short cuts are not necessary, just follow them carefully, and surprise, surprise, it works. The servo saver was installed and rod end distances on the tie rods were set as per instructions. Front bumpers and wheels were fitted (a point to note again is that ball races are supplied in the kit) and the rolling chassis is complete.

Radio installation

Double-sided tape is used to secure servos and receiver, but first make sure both surfaces are clean and grease free. A wipe over with a drop of methylated spirit will ensure good adhesion. After making a couple of minor adjustments and fitting the battery, I used a 7.2 volt and not a 6 volt as shown, all was ready for the body.



Above left: assembled differential with alternative fixed gear alongside. Above right: very nice substantial track-rod and adjustable servo saver. High castor angle front-end follows fashion.

Body work

The Lexan body shell is of very high quality and its scale appearance is further improved by addition of an injection moulded front apron and heater grill. These items are fitted after spraying the body. It was particularly nice to find that the wheel arch areas were already cut out of the Lexan shell.

Running the Golf

A quick check that all was in order and lubricated and off I went to the local indoor 1/12th club. Great interest was shown in the car, as people tend to look upon some of the *Tamiya* range as somewhat akin to toys. A 20-minute charge saw the car ready for some testing.

Results were surprising, the car was quick and very responsive to the steering. A

Below left: underside view showing flexible-waisted GRP chassis. Below right: all equipment installed, several small tie-wraps used to tidy up the wiring.

straight line was hard to maintain, so a little more toe-in was dialled in. Another try and perfect, ready for the first race.

Up to the start line. Lexans to the left, Lexans to the right, sniggers on the rostrum. Off went the hooter, off went the pack followed cautiously by my 'Golf'. The first main point I noticed is that when bumped and jostled it holds its line well and even after being driven into the wall (a momentary lapse of concentration) no ill-effects were suffered. The car has proven to be remarkably competitive at club level; handling is good and it takes the knocks with no ill effects.

Conclusion

An ideal car for the clubman, it has proved to be reliable and strong. For the enthusiast, a few modifications can be made to improve performance i.e. a voltage regulator so that receiver batteries can be dispensed with.

Yes, a good car to put you on the 'right tracks' in 1/12th racing.

Price: £59.99.

