BANG ON TARGET!

Some two years ago *Tamiya* revolutionised the 1/10th off-road market with the 'Hotshot'. In those days modified 'Hotshots' could certainly hold their own against any of the 'competition based' cars and soon grew into one of the most popular cars in the U.K.

One of the major modifications to the old cars was a two-piece 'fibreglass chassis' this was mainly carried out to aid in the maintenance of the cars internals, as radio equipment and speed-controllers were to say the least, difficult to get at!

This is where *Tamiya's* latest, the 'Hotshot II' comes in. Over the past two years *Tamiya* have developed the car to give what looks like a very competitive and easy to maintain model.

As *Tamiya* kits are some of the most simple and pleasurable cars to build, I won't go through the steps of construction, but I shall point out the improvements.

Suspension Improvements

On the suspension side the car appears to look the same, but don't be fooled; apart from the obvious double rear shocks, various other mods have taken place.

On the rear new suspension arms are linked to new hub carriers, these are now angled to give increased 'caster' and are positioned to give greater 'camber change' during depression. This coupled to two of *Tamiya's* excellent dampers completes the rear-end changes.

On the front end another damper sits on new extension brackets, forming the 'mono shock' action which worked so well on the old 'Hotshot'. The overall feel of the car with the standard kit oil feels very smooth, and with one spring tensioner fitted to the 'mono shock' ride height seems to be adequate.

The Drive Train

The transmission of the car has been greatly improved. Firstly the centre drive shaft (remember mending that on the old car) is now a one-piece piano wire shaft which is so simple, one wonders why it wasn't used years ago!

The gears in the kit now are of a tough glass-fitted nylon which should prove even more reliable than the old ones. Finally the drive-shafts are now the universal one-piece steel units which have proved themselves in other *Tamiya* kits.

Yet More Improvements!

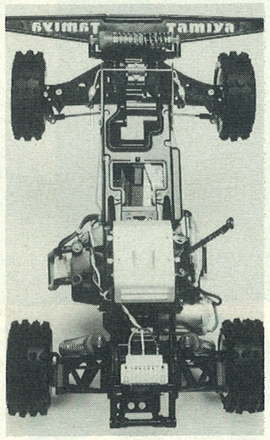
In the main radio-chassis box is now . . . wait for it, an inspection hatch 'hooray' I hear you cry. Yes, now crystal changing causes no problems and even the speed controller board can be inspected.

External improvements include a smoother undertray which protects the steering servo and batteries. This should hopefully keep out the mud too! A new bodyshell and larger wing which begs for a custom paint job, crowns the car and gives it a mean and nasty look.

On and Off the Road

The performance of the car with the standard kit supplied motor is really excellent, up and down the road outside the house the car certainly seems to be quick for what is a non-ballraced non-run-in car and certainly seems promising for when the 'tune-up' parts are to be added.

The old 'Hotshot' suffered from a large degree of 'bumpsteer', this it was felt was the answer to the understeer problem, but the 'Hotshot II' even with the same steering set-up seems not to suffer. The car has initial good turn-in followed by a slight power on understeer which certainly



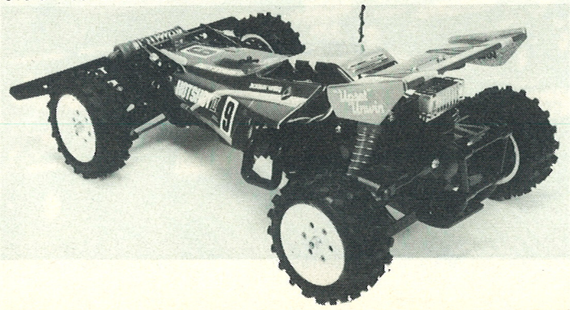
doesn't hinder the car, but in fact makes it a pleasure to drive quickly. Duration with the standard set-up was approximately seven minutes, according to how many accidents I had (oops!), which I'm sure will increase as the car loosens up during use. Ride over bumpy surfaces seems very good, but 'competition' is really the only way to see if the car bears up to the present standard.

Conclusion

The kit was an absolute pleasure to build and caused no trouble at all. The instructions were simple to follow and at no point incorrect, which can be the case with some kits.

As a car, I'm sure it will prove popular, especially at club level if only old 'Hotshot' owners buy one! The car is certainly competitive and is a definite improvement on the Mark I. Well done, Tamiya.

Available at all *Tamiya* stockists price approx. £107.00.



Above: layout of the car showing inspection hatch. Left: ready for the track.