

It had to happen, of course – someone had to go and spoil the fun didn't they?

I mean, all us monster truck fans were quite happy trying to make our ordinary kit cars more competitive weren't we? We didn't mind having to fix them after each race heat. We didn't mind having a nervous breakdown worrying if the car would make it to the finishing line without conking out.

In short, *who the heck asked us if we wanted a real monster truck racer...* Eh?

Life will just not be the same again.

To be honest, however, the monster trucks we have been thrashing around hastily prepared obstacle courses have not exactly been designed for the punishment they get.

This is not their fault because they were never built as out and out racers anyway, they were fun cars which could cope with most off-road situations but not the rigours of some tracks devised by over-ambitious racers.

Up til now we have made do, but now the answer to the prayers for a truly competitive monster truck racer may be with us. It should come as no surprise to learn that Tamiya, the manufacturer behind the whole thing in the first place, have introduced the King Cab, a truly competitive racing machine.

Tamiya think the King Cab is the answer to the

problem particularly in the USA where monster truck racing is light years advanced from the scene over here.

By all accounts, racing over there is highly organised and ultra competitive. In fact, the most successful R/C car racing manufacturer ever, Associated of California, have taken time out from winning yet another World Championships to produce a monster truck conversion kit for their two-wheel drive RC10.

They are not the only ones, however, as the Ranch Pit Shop run by Gil Losi have also produced a

country that spawned the full-size cars in the first place, model monster truck racing is big, big business, with manufacturers rushing out special tune-up parts to cope with the rough, tough racing scene.

Not surprisingly the Americans also have permanent purpose-built tracks (probably with floodlights – so they can race at night) sited right next a model shop. Hah! that sort of thing might be

all very well in the States but we certainly don't want it here do we... do we?... We do?... you sure?... s'pose we do really.

Anyway, Tamiya got to hear about their monster trucks being stomped over

on the West Coast and decided to do something about it. "We can't have our drivers complaining about things breaking all over the place: we can't let

#### Gearbox

This is one of the most important aspects of the car since with monster trucks, the extra large wheels and tyres exert massive forces on the gearbox.

To get round the problem of standard gearboxes

Another surprise is the inclusion of a ball differential rather than the normal geared type. The reason for this must be the type of track conditions the King Cab will ultimately be raced on. A ball differential should deal with the side forces exerted on the gearbox by the larger

King Cab can be literally thrown into the corners and spun round on the throttle.

The gearbox is fully sealed to keep the dust out and includes ball races for the minimum amount of friction. Only the wheels use ordinary oilite bearings and these could be replaced to achieve maximum efficiency.

Another useful feature is that the gearbox can be removed from the rest of the car quickly and simply because the whole sub-assembly bolts to a GRP plate which in turn bolts to the chassis. Maintenance and, if required, repair can be carried out without fuss.

#### Chassis

Where would we be without the Tamiya bathtub?

The best thing about this style of chassis is that you can get any size of modern radio gear inside without problem. In the case of the King Cab the chassis has the injection moulded ABS cab and the

mentioned GRP sub-chassis. Tamiya claim that this arrangement minimises flex and provides a rigid base for the suspension to work from.

Up at the front, Tamiya have introduced the bell crank steering system from their other competition cars. This system

reduces bump-steer to minimal levels and makes the steering much more positive. For the truly dedicated racer a tune up part is available using the ball raced steering set from the Avante, this makes any play in the spindle virtually non-existent.

#### Suspension

If anything, this is the feature that will make the King Cab a success. The problem with most monster trucks is that because of the massive ground clearance provided by the super-size wheels and tyres the centre of gravity is long way above the track.



monster version of their JR×2 car to meet the challenge of Associated.

It would seem that in the

**The Ultimate racing monster?  
RCMC investigates . . . . .**

# Top of the Heap!

those Yankees get away with it: quick get on the blower to the design department... they said.

Thus was born the King Cab (well something like that anyway).

At first sight, the King Cab looks fairly similar to most other monster trucks, but underneath the polycarbonate Nissan truck body is a host of competition features.

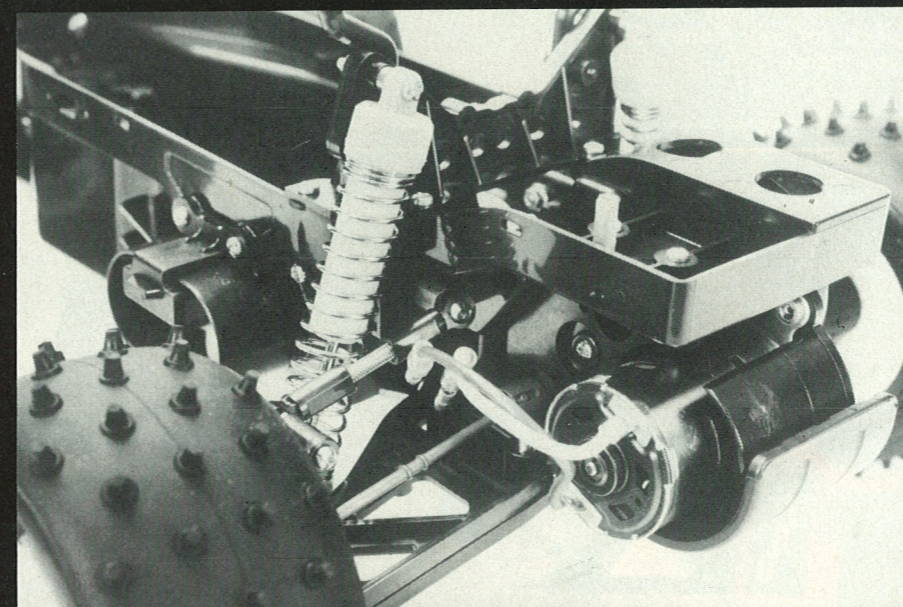
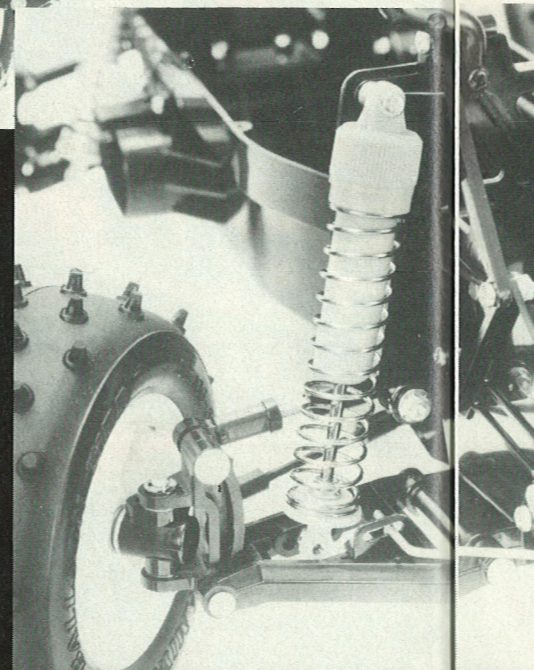
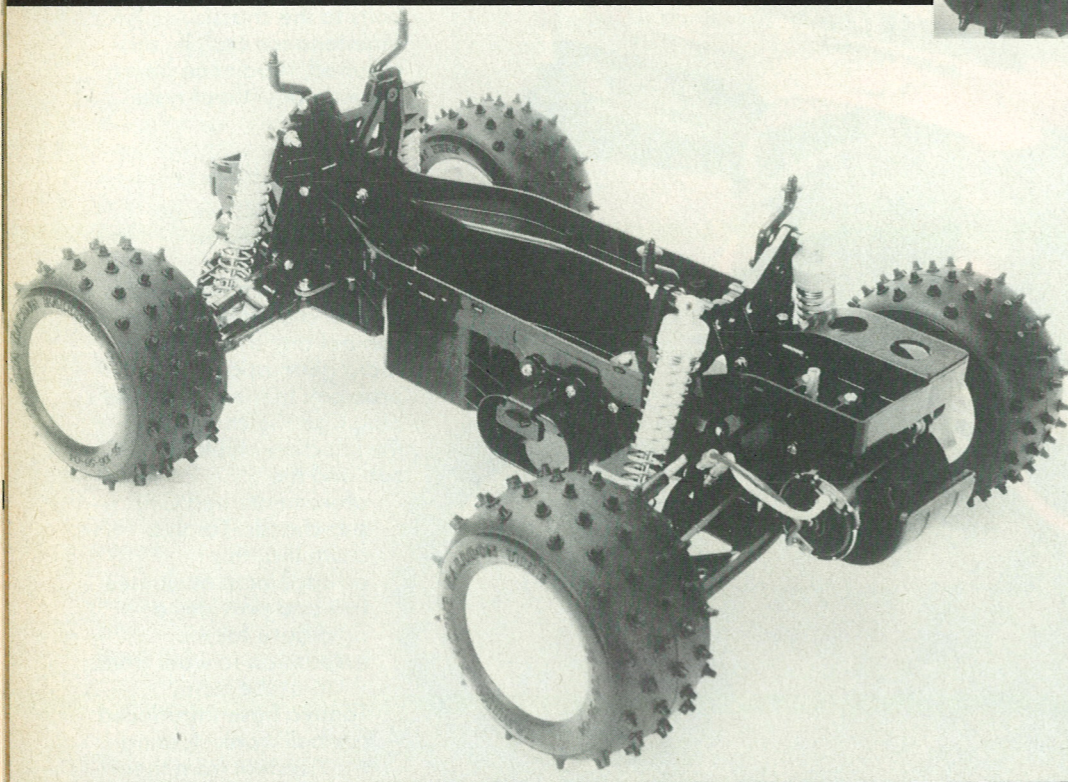
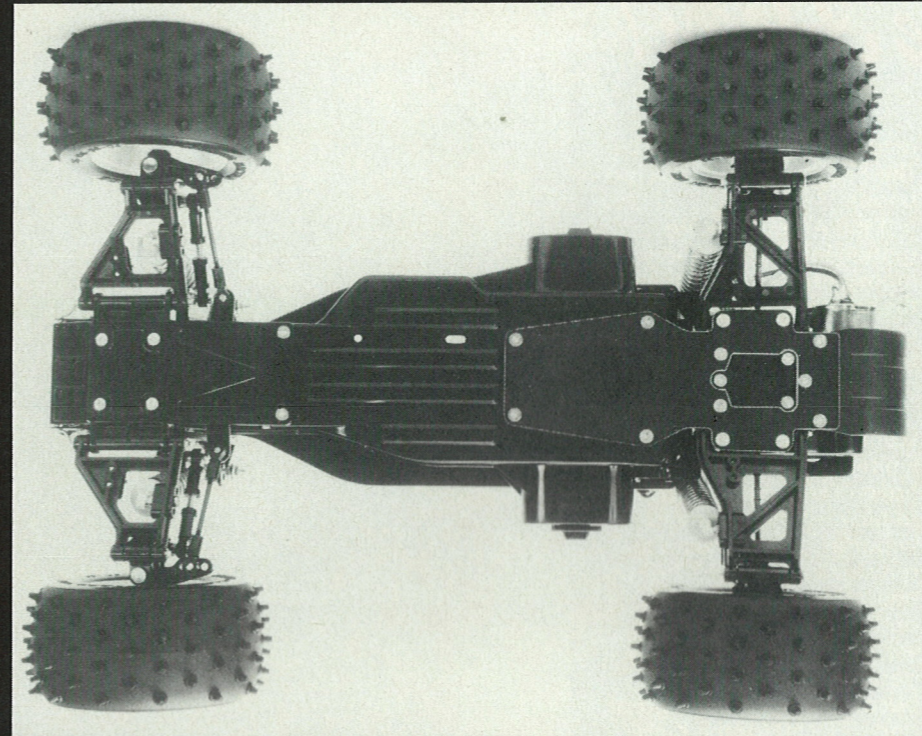
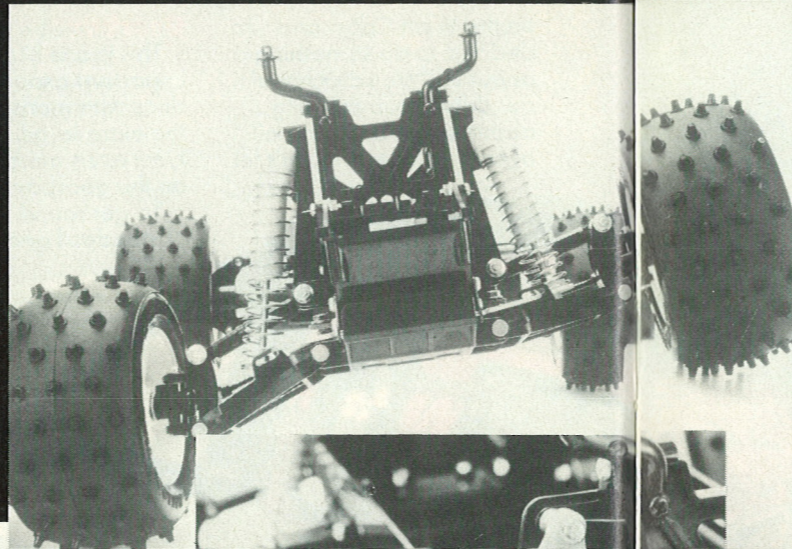
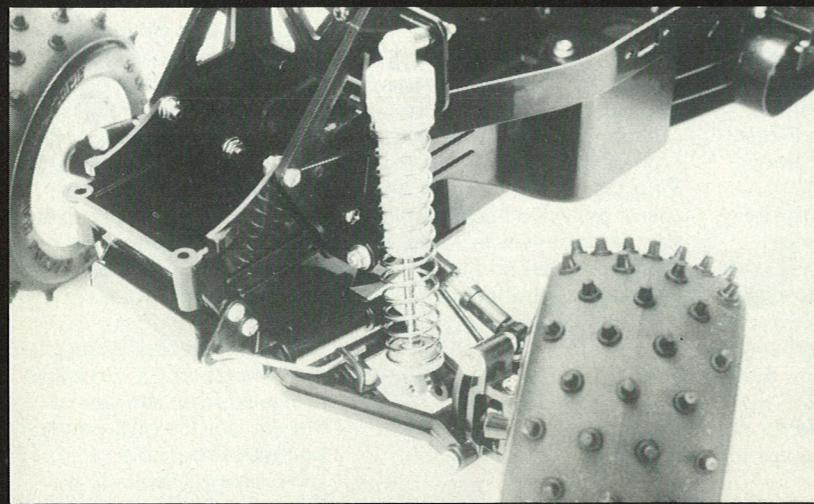
grinding themselves to death and spitting the bits out the back, Tamiya have grafted the gearbox from their two-wheel drive racing buggy, Astute, onto the King Cab.

This is a quality unit and uses Tamiya's beautifully moulded 'white' plastic gears which have served not only the Astute but Tamiya's other 4-wheel drive racing buggies. The tooth size is something peculiar to Tamiya and falls somewhere between standard 32dp and 48dp. Whatever the size, they mesh beautifully and freely.

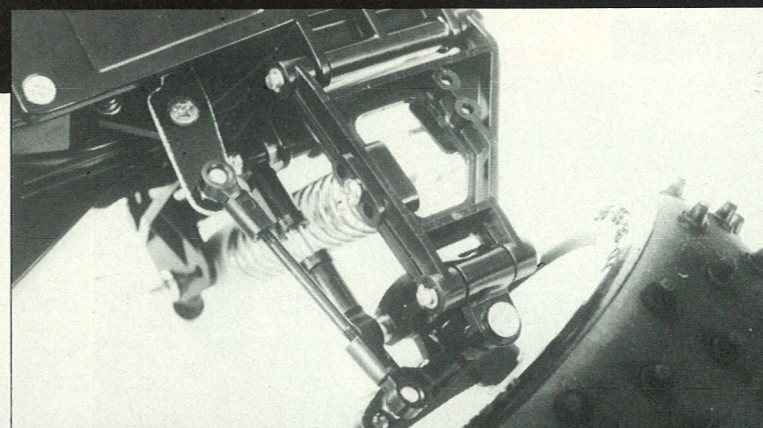
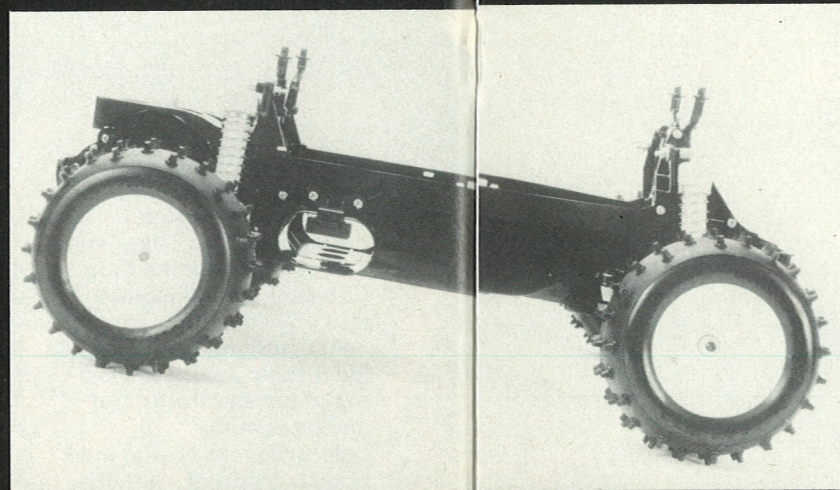
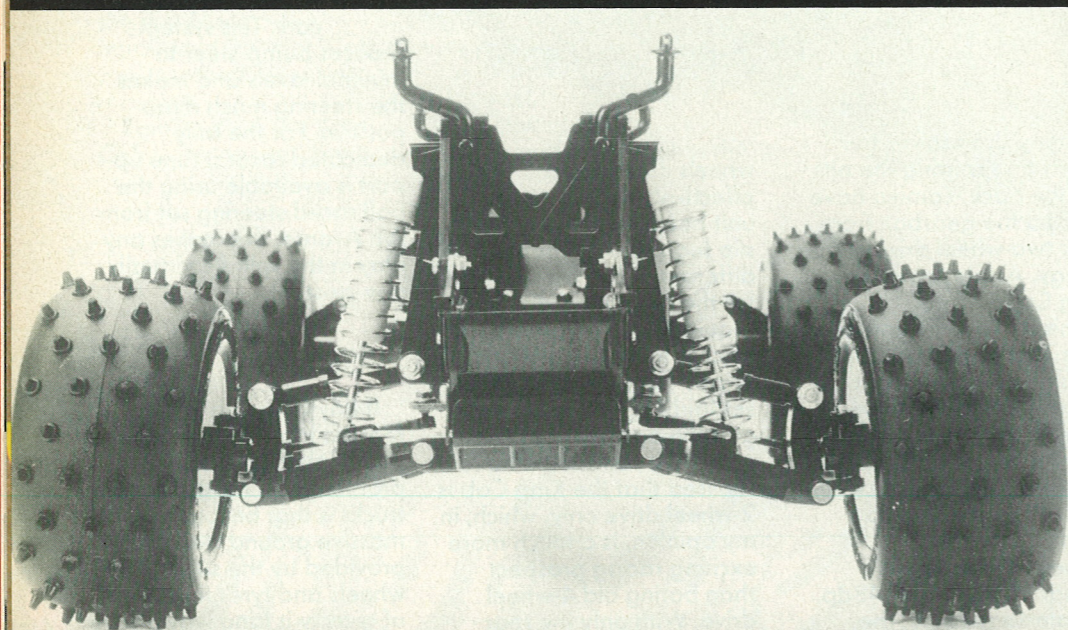
wheels much more effectively than a geared unit because of the limited slip feature. Also the ball differential can be adjusted for the amount of slip required. For instance if the track is fairly smooth and grippy then the diff. can be set fairly tight – with low grip the opposite applies.

By now you should have realised that the King Cab is 2-wheel drive only, which, in my opinion, is a much more exciting racing prospect than boring old 4-wheel drive. With only the rear wheels being driven the





*The King Cab has excellent suspension that actually works! The car handles well with lots of chuckability. The front anti-roll bar keeps the car level during cornering. Bath tub chassis probably has more room for R/C gear than anything we've seen before. Ball diff. and 540 motor add to the performance.*



The result, as I am sure you know, is that under fast cornering the car simply rolls over.

Well, Tamiya have tried to get round that problem in two ways. The first is using a proper suspension system the second is to extend the track of the car. One of the first things you notice about the King Cab is that it is wide – I mean really wide – in fact I am talking WIDE! Matched up against a conventional 2-wheel drive racing buggy and the wheels on the King Cab stick out almost 2in. further.

For monster truck racing this is not a problem, but for standard off-road racing the King Cab is illegal – besides the wheels are too big anyhow.

But the result on the handling of the King Cab is dramatic. Now the car is extremely stable and only severe provocation will force a roll – plus, because of the rear wheel drive the King Cab will more likely slide round the corners.

The suspension uses single wishbones all round with adjustable upper arm links so that camber can be adjusted. Also the front suspension is fitted with an anti-roll bar.

**Dampers**

These are Tamiya's well-known and well-liked CVA shocks moulded in distinctive bright yellow. The largest capacity size are used all round to control the massive amount of suspension travel. It's quite easy to fit different rate springs or grade of oil to change the way the suspension operates.

**Wheels and tyres**

HUGE! Yes, quite big really – massive actually (get the picture?)

The tyres use proper pin spike racing tyres which Tamiya says, "makes high speed rough terrain running a breeze and the spikes

*Top of the Heap!*

# Top of the Heap!

have excellent wear characteristics for real earth kicking traction," Wow! At 114mm diameter and 57mm width, these tyres give the King Cab about 50mm of ground clearance which should be enough to get over the bumps without compromising the handling.

The hubs are lightweight one-piece mouldings.

## Bodyshell

Y'know, every now and then it's nice to have your faith in the bodyshell manufacturers art strengthened by the appearance of a shell combining detail and accuracy with perfect moulding quality.

The Nissan King Cab pick up truck body in this kit is just such an example. Maybe it's because it

actually looks like a real car. The King Cab bodyshell is a beaut.

If the Americans are getting into competition monster truck racing then, in the way of all things, it could spread over to this side of the pond pretty quickly.

At the moment the racing scene in this country is fairly limited perhaps because we haven't had a real machine to play with. UK Tamiya importers are planning to run some events in 1990 as one-off Grand Prix races and monster truck racing will also feature. They deserve to be a success because the cars look great and at £150 for the King Cab you certainly get a lot of car for your money. See you there!

