KING CAB

Gordon Batt reviews this latest 2WD crusher from Tamiya

Aimed at the American market, where the concept of racing 1/10 scale car crushers has become extraordinarily popular, Tamiya's latest kit for this type of fun or sports car carries a high standard of basic equipment. It's a basically straightforward rear wheel drive, front wheel steering model with a jacked up suspension and huge wheels. The gearbox is fully ball-raced with an alloy cased fully enclosed ball diff. unit with an ingenious approach to the problem of adjustment. The diff. unit is supported by the inner sockets for the universal joints, which have sturdy splines for the transmission of torque from diff. to joint. An access plate in the bottom of the gearbox can be swiftly removed, then by unhooking the rear suspension arms the uprights can be folded out to release the dog-bones and then the u/j sockets, then the diff. simply falls out so that it can be disassembled and the number of shim washers changed to alter the pressure of the thrust plates on the differential balls.

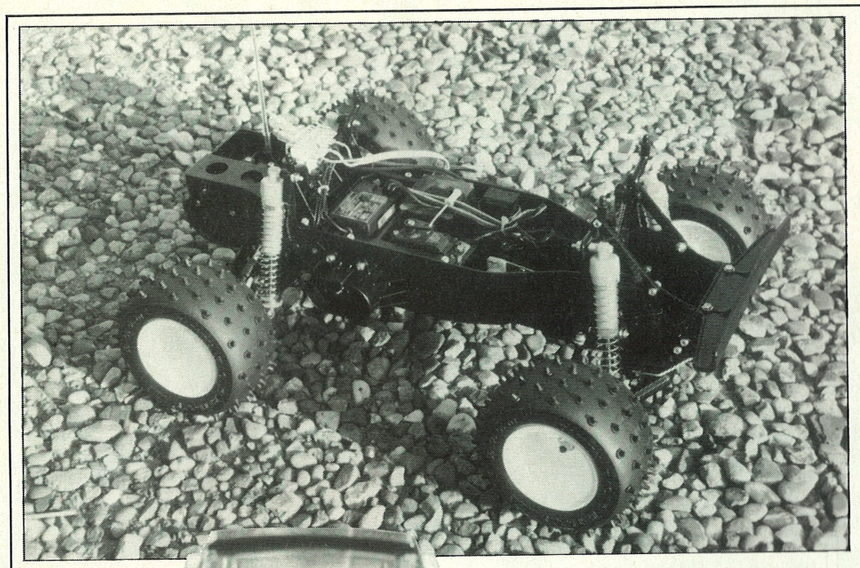
It's pleasantly quick and easy to get access to the diff. unit, but it's a shame the same cannot be said about the actual adjustment process. Losing your balls can be very upsetting, for there aren't any spare supplied in the kit, so the use of a single tension adjusting screw to pull together the pressure plates would be preferred.

As a standard kit, the King Cab uses the standard Tamiya CV suspension units (coil spring over oil filled shocks) which give the completed model what looks like a suspiciously soggy front end, being unable to lift itself back up to full height when at rest. In use as a fun model, however, King Cab behaves in a very responsive and lively manner, so Tamiya obviously know what they're doing. There's nothing fancy about the suspension set-up, just a good solid hardworking arrangement to keep those fat soft monster tyres in contact with the ground.

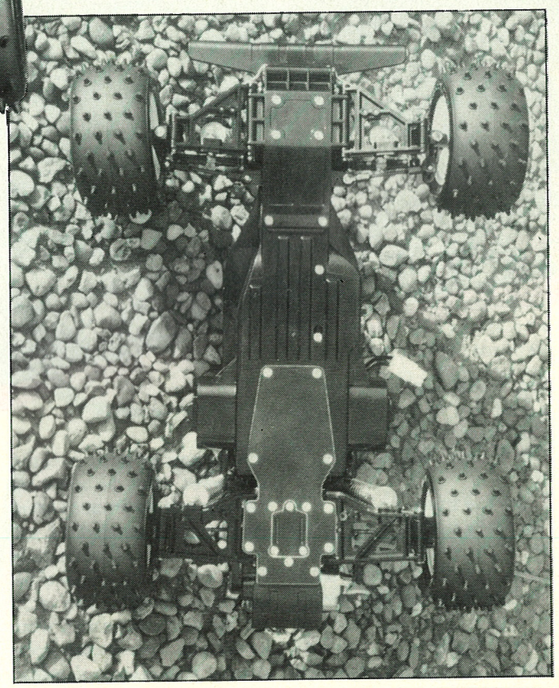
From the front

The front suspension is built up as a unit which is then attached to the main chassis bathtub. A strong braced wishbone forms the lower element, to which is connected a fixed (non-swivelling) upright held in alignment with a single adjustable length upper arm. The kingpin that carries the stub axle swivels within the upright and the track rods are protected behind the mass of the suspension. A well braced plate extends above the chassis line to carry the upper ends of the suspension units, the body posts and the diminutive bumper, which leaves the front wheels totally unprotected, is mounted on top of the chassis tub line. In this position it fits in with the body configuration but does little to protect the suspension, particularly the front wheels or anti-roll bar, or the chassis.

The rear end is also built up as a unit, with a transverse rear motor mount, gearbox and transmission. The lower arms are braced wishbones and once again the rigid upright is held firmly in alignment with a single adjustable upper arm. By releasing this upper arm the upright can be swung out to remove the driveshafts (dog-



Above, the basic bathtub chassis of the King Cab gives plenty of ground clearance. Below, enormous wheel base provides loads of stability, though the spiked tyres give terrific grip even on slippery grass. Below right, layout inside the chassis is pre-determined and demands the use of a BEC system.

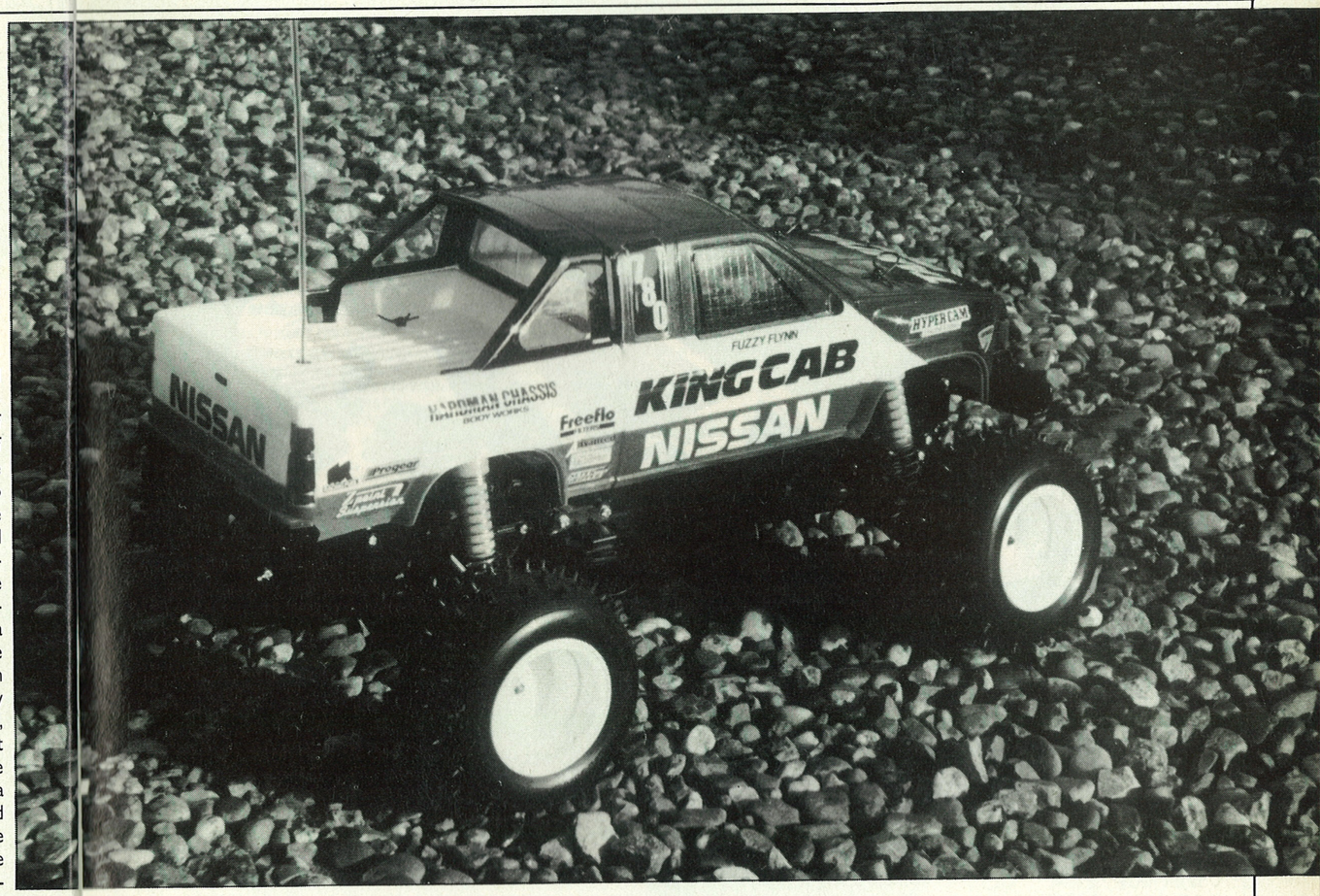


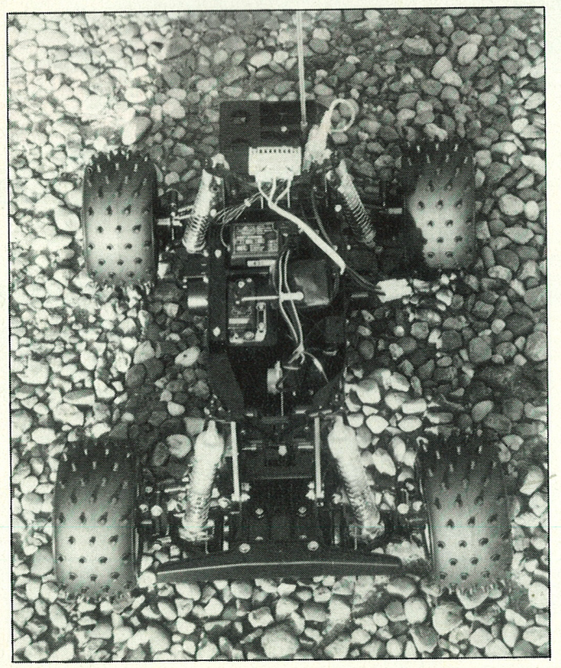
bones) and sockets. Once again a tall upright is fitted to provide a top mounting point for the shockers, the body mounting posts and also the resistor for the mechanical speed controller. Motor replacement and gear changes are well catered for, a single cover having to be removed to give access to gears and motor fixing screws. The motor is exposed in normal use and the rear wheels and suspension is such that they would not have to be removed to allow the motor to drop out. Sideways movement of the shafts is restricted by 'O'-rings carried in the sockets of the u/js.

Between the two units is the moulded bathtub chassis, which provides a secure home for the r/c and carries the 7.2 volt racing pack in a quick release housing across the car. Semi-rigid plastic 'clips' overhang the ends of the battery housing, these are flexed out of the way to allow the pack to be slid out. A three forward, three reverse speed mechanical controller is provided in the kit, this includes the plugs for a BEC r/c system and it must be said that despite the car's size there doesn't seem to be any logical place to fit a separate receiver pack. The speed control servo is carried alongside the switcher board, which is protected by a rubber cap through which the connector ball on the wiper arm projects. The steering servo has its servo saver incorporated in the output device and is securely mounted on two pillars screwed to the bottom of the chassis. The servo linkage from the output connects to an FRP plate that slides from left to right, trapped in its channel by the lower mounting plate for the front suspension. This gives an effective system with, as built exactly according to the instructions, minimal bump steer.

The tyres are a very tight fit onto the one piece hubs and are very secure without any additional work, though the hubs are pierced through at the contact points, presumably for superglue to be used. Fixing is extremely simple, thanks to the hubs' non-slip engagement with the drive shafts which means that holding the tyre still stops the shaft from moving and the securing Nyloc nut can be screwed on.

The Lexan bodyshell is very precisely moulded and features a moulded undercut, which makes painting 'interesting' for the novice, especially if using a spray can. Only by masking off all the exterior surfaces can the painter be completely sure that no oversprayed paint ends up marring the finish. The roll bar structure behind the cab is provided as a Lexan moulding and is fixed into place with double sided tape. A huge sheet of self adhesive transfers is supplied and have a notable feature in the form of large panels to 'tint' the windscreen and sun roof. These have to be carefully applied if bubbles are to be avoided, for they are very obvious. The secret of simple transfer sticking is to have a bowl of water handy, with just a drop or two of washing up liquid added. The usual method is to lift the backing paper so that one end of the transfer can be applied, and then remove the paper gradually as the tranfer is firmly rubbed down, but it's suprisingly easy if the whole transfer is removed from its backing sheet, taking care that it doesn't fold onto itself, and is dunked into the soap solution. While good and wet, it can be manoeuvred into position and then carefully pressed down from the centre out to force out the water. Until the final pressing down, the transfer can be lifted away and re-wetted before repositioning without any difficulty.





Completed, the body shell is fixed into place with no less than four posts and clips, two on the bonnet and two on the rear. This is very secure and the model can be carried by the roll bar, though this shouldn't be acquired as a habit.

Field test

We treated the King Cab as an ideal model for fun use, so tried it out on a playing field rather than a close cut off road track. The acceleration was very swift, the transition from a standstill to full speed seeming instantaneous, and grip was excellent, the model cornering without any sign of skidding. This might indicate, considering the height of the model, that it was prone to rolling over, but nothing could be further from the truth — it's as steady as the proverbial rock. Turning circle was commendably tight and straight line stability also good, though we anticipated some wavering with the apparent bump steer.

Construction took a single, albeit intensive, evening, much more time being needed for the body painting with its three basic colours plus lights and stickers.

The committed competitor will no doubt appreciate the ability to increase the model's specification with Tamiya's own go-faster items; motors, shocks, ball races (for outer drive shafts and front wheel hubs), battery packs and lightweight screw sets, and will also find ways of fine tuning the King Cab for extra performance. As a fun car though, it's certainly more than a prince of crushers. ○