



RRC reviews the latest and quite different Tamiya kit.

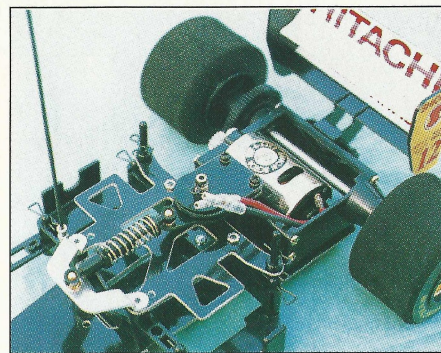
# The Tamiya Lotus Ford 107b.

At first sight, you might well be forgiven for thinking that the Lotus Ford 107B is merely a 'cosmetic' new car, with a new bodyshell covering Tamiya's well established and proven chassis and running gear, but closer examination will reveal a great number of changes made by the research and development department at Tamiya. As a result of these new features the kit is very much 'all new,' and not many parts are interchangeable with the previous models in the range.

Tamiya had to consider very carefully the effect on existing owners of their F1 cars of bringing out a completely new car, and their decision to offer all the latest bits in the standard kit is much to be commended. If you want to take advantage of the latest upgrades, all you need to spend is the cost of the kit, and not a whole lot of 'hop-up options'. So, lets look at the car, starting at the front end.

## The Front Wing

This assembly is a one piece moulding in black plastic and, of course, is modelled to respect the Lotus Ford 107B's style. By a happy coincidence the full size car has a very large wing area and, together with the side fences, it offers the model racer a greater potential for downforce in an area where the understeer characteristic of the earlier cars using standard tyres without additives is quite a noticeable feature (that's polite for a 'pain!').



The rear end completely assembled ready to go. The aerial support wire is offset well to the right to clear the new shock absorber assembly.

## The Wheels

Well, at least these are common with the earlier kits, so if you have a stock of them fitted with your favorite tyres which are known to work on a particular circuit or surface, you will be able to use them on the new car.

## The Front Wishbones

The Lotus features a completely new moulding, much narrower and with only two central fixing bolts. The lower wishbone is almost completely solid, with a flat filler panel stiffening the arms,

which offers plenty of strength as with the older spec cars, whilst the height of the block which traps the stub axles is also reduced. This is because the new captive kingpins have the springs situated underneath the wishbones, held in place by small circlips. We think the springing is now slightly softer than before, but of course this can be adjusted by changing the springs, and this operation is now made much easier with their new location.

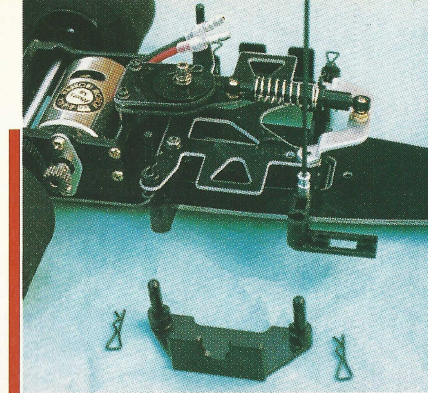
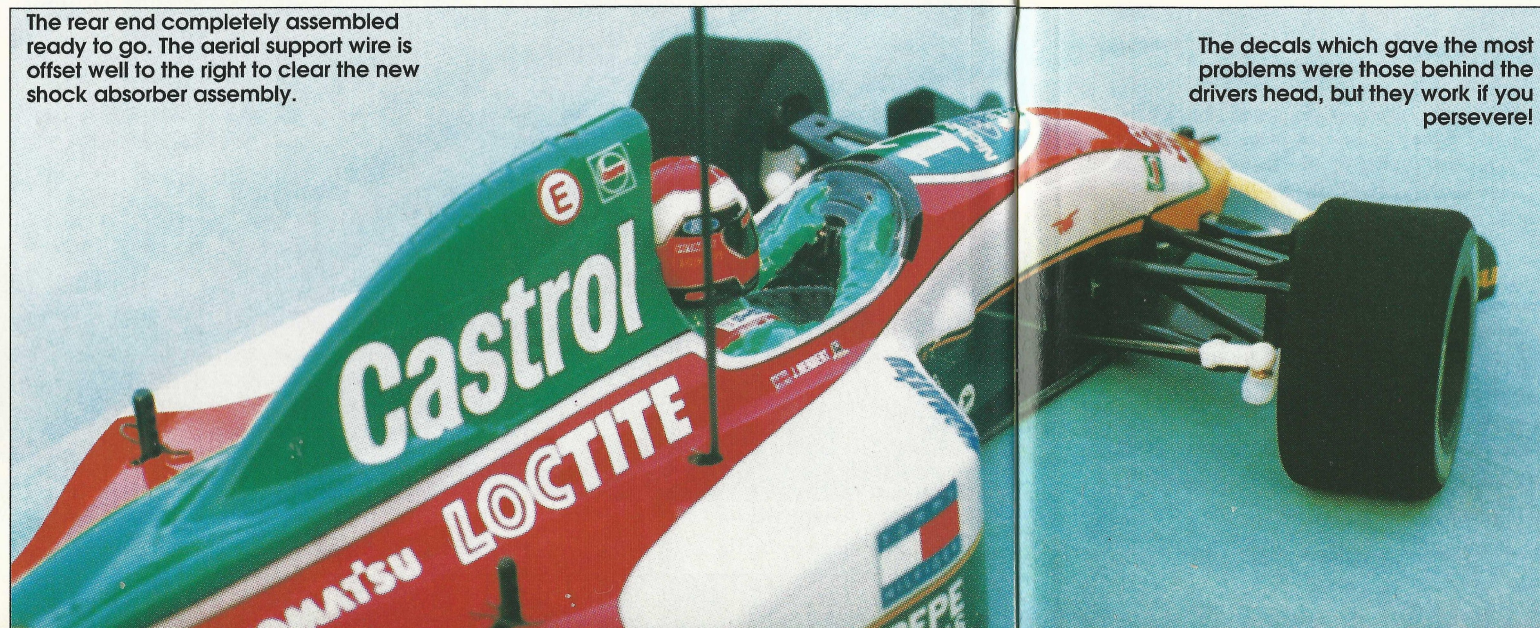
The front wing is very large, as can be seen. Offset aerial position is new.



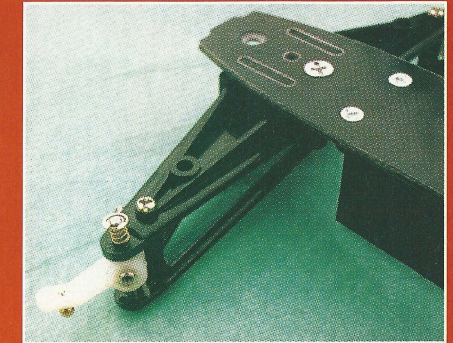
## The Steering Servo Mounting

In order to enclose a standard sized servo within the narrow nosed Lotus Ford 107B bodyshell, Tamiya have changed from their old method of mounting the servo horizontally onto pillars, and adopted a vertical mounting position onto a moulded flange. This solves the problem of the servo fitting within the width of the shell, but you do have to cut the lugs off the servo before putting it in place. The kits instructions suggest the use of the usual servo tape, and this is certainly quite adequate for general running, but some cars have been seen already using fibreglass reinforced tape to assist the servo tape as an

The decals which gave the most problems were those behind the drivers head, but they work if you persevere!

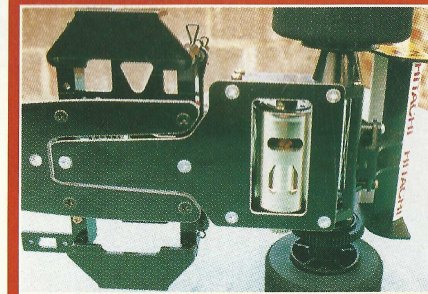


The new kingpin fixings, showing the springs located beneath the wishbone, retained by a circlip.



The front end laid out for assembly. Notice the narrower chassis and the vertical steering servo mounting flange.

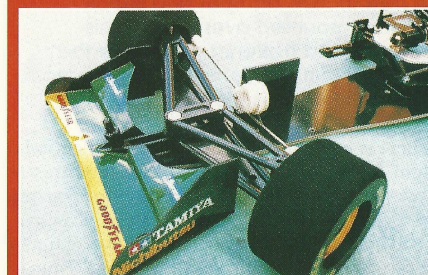
The chassis from the right hand side, with the battery box end cap removed, and the monoshock mounted on the alternative alloy bracket. The flatter angle of the shock absorber is marginally less effective, but allows more room for the ESC.



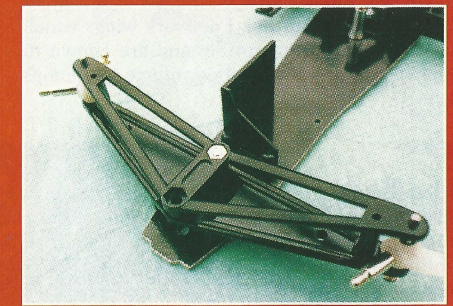
Lower view of the rear chassis. Regular F1 racers will notice the many new parts.



The kit wheels are the familiar five spoke items common to the last four Tamiya F1 cars.



The assembled front end, complete with servo saver. The body post is mounted right at the front.



example of 'belt and braces insurance'. Your final method of installation will, of course, depend on the servo you use, but for the 'cost concious', a standard Futaba S148 does fit within the confines of the new car!

## The Narrow Chassis

The main chassis plate has once again been made narrower than before, the benefits being a slight loss of weight, and it also fits the profile of the bodyshell much better.

The location of the receiver and electronic speed controller by servo tape is accomplished as before, although the narrower waisted chassis offers a bit less weather protection, and one or two 'budget priced' speedos may be a bit of a squeeze across the narrow chassis.

## New Rear Damper Unit

There is a completely new rear damper and shock absorber arrangement used on the Lotus compared to the old chassis, and it can be seen from the photos that it is similar to that used on many 1/12 cars, with a friction taking care of the damping in roll, and the fore and aft damping accomplished by a centrally mounted shock absorber. This shock absorber has two alternative

mounting points, one giving a better angle of operation but taking up space where the ESC is likely to be situated, and the other uses a metal flange plate which holds the shock absorber ballend above the battery level, but is slightly less effective in angle.

## New Battery Box

The 'stick' battery pack is located laterally across the chassis, much in the same way as the previous models, but in place of the two flexible cableties which locked the pack in place, the latest kit now has a demountable plastic 'cap' as a retainer, which is fixed with large bodyclips into two large lateral plastic bodybraces. This makes for a far more effective and user friendly holder for standard packs fitted with flexible cables to a Tamiya plug, but may require a bit of thought for those of you used to using Corally type connectors soldered to the ends of the pack. Saddlepacks stress the ends of the battery box and are definitely too tight a fit!

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## New Diff Parts

Once again, subtle changes have been made to the mouldings, mainly to ease use, but they are based on the same mechanical principles, and will not offer anyone used to the usual Tamiya ball diff system any surprises!

The 63T spur gear supplied in the kit now has flanges around the diff rings in the same way as those seen on the previous 'Hop-up' parts to keep dirt and grit from the diff balls, a very useful modification similar to that seen on most of the current Pro 10/1/12 gears on sale.

## Rear Wing

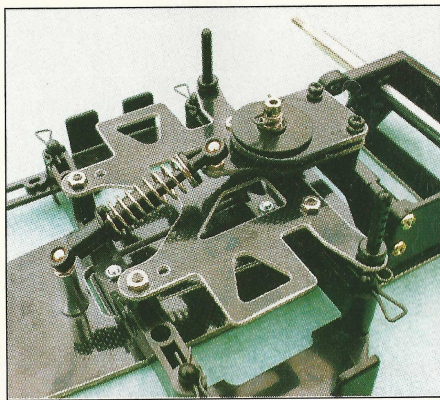
The rear wing is once again styled on that of the full size car, as used at a particular race or occasion (the F1 teams have wings to suit different tracks and conditions), and not only has it a pretty large area but a fairly large angle moulded into it. This is, of course, to scale, and it compliments nicely the very fine bodyshell provided for the Lotus Ford 107B.

As the main problem with all of the Tamiya F1 range has been a tendency for the cars to understeer, we are already tempted to substitute the earlier Benetton or Footwork wings which have a much flatter profile, and are known to offer slightly less rear end downforce for serious racing!

## The Body Shell and Stickers

The shell has to be trimmed and then painted internally, in this case in the single colour of white. After this fairly easy task, which only requires the protection of the shell's edges against overspray and any holes against paint creep, comes the more difficult task of applying the array of colourful decals.

It can be done well (with a bit of patience), as the photos show, but the area of compound curves on the airbox behind the driver's head proved a bit of a headache for our reviewer!!!



**The new friction damper and shock absorber mounted over the chassis members and battery box. Notice the lower mounting option which uses a post fixed to the chassis plate.**

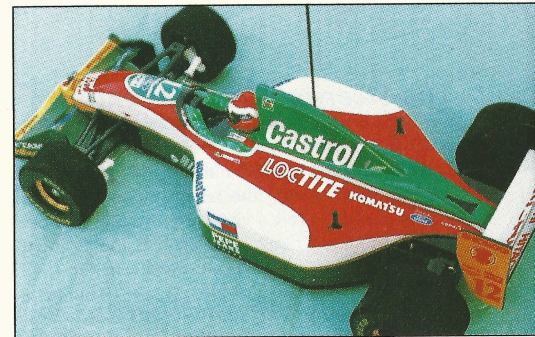
There is no doubt that for many modellers, who might have only limited painting facilities at home, that the extensive decal sheets offer the most practical way to attain a scale appearance, but the downside is that only the very minimum amount of actual racing causes a bit of fraying at the edges, leading to the car starting to look 'battle scarred' quite quickly. The only alternative would be to paint the lexan from the inside using masking pre-prepared for the main colour areas. This would leave only the smaller sponsor stickers to suffer, and perhaps it is technically possible to offer these prepared to be stuck to the shell internally? Maybe Tamiya will consider offering this as a 'Hop up' package for those of us with spraying equipment?

## Performance

Well, down to the nitty gritty! The final test for this very popular class of racing car is to find out exactly how it performs in comparison to the earlier examples, and we were not disappointed with our first efforts. In the hands of an experienced Tamiya F1 racer, the car was tested on a dry track using the kit tyres and run exactly in the kit spec, except for the addition of a front wheel ballrace kit.

The Lotus felt good during its first few laps whilst it had the track to itself, the turn-in appeared slightly improved, possibly because of the new rear damping arrangement and the large front wing, and altogether the car was fine.

At its first race outing, a well attended club meeting, with twenty two F1 entries on a freezing cold but dry Winter's day, the Lotus held TQ spot after two heats of qualifying and heading for an A Final place. Our test driver ended up really well pleased with the car, and the day's results proved that the new chassis will prove every bit as effective as Tamiya have hoped it would be. A little tweaking and the odd 'hopup' parts may just provide the edge in the 1994 Tamiya Eurocup. We shall see!!



**Tamiya's Lotus Ford 107B complete and ready to race, exactly as supplied in the kit. No hidden extras, just incredible value for money!!**

## A Final Note

We know that the great majority of our readers want to know from our test reports the kind of package they can expect straight out of the box, without having to resort to instant 'conversion kits' and other expensive 'add on' extras. With On Road F1 style racing becoming ever more popular, partly because of the controlled specification as defined by Tamiya, we have ensured we tested a bog standard production car, with no frills and no extras (bar the ballraced front wheels). Once again, Tamiya have come up with a car which should please scale model freaks and racers alike, and at a really affordable price. What you see is what you get!

Tamiya products are imported and distributed by: Richard Kohnstam Ltd, 13-15a High Street, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP1 3AD.



**The righthand rear corner, with revised mouldings for the spur gear and pod sideplates.**