

Unknown to most readers, in our November issue we reported on the 1:10th European Championships and how Jamie Booth had attained an excellent 5th place with his modified Tamiya Egress, this

was at the time what we were asked to do by the Tamiya UK importers. The car Jamie was actually driving is the subject of this review, the all new and now available 4WD Manta Ray.

The kit consists of a completely new chassis with a

plastic tub configuration, there is new suspension, new gearbox internals and lots of neat and innovative ideas.

A Sound Base

The whole car is based around the plastic tub, this has a unique "honeycomb" structure which is very light and incredibly strong. The tub also has a number of strategically placed ribs within the moulding that give the tub

an incredibly stiff feel and provide a good strong mounting for the suspension.

The suspension arms are moulded in two parts, these are screwed together with self tapers and when together feel pretty strong, although why these were moulded in separate parts we don't know.

The front suspension arms

are held in place on the front of the car by a neat "U" shaped piece of piano wire, this keeps the arms nicely taught and is also easy and quick to remove in the event of a strip down.

The rear suspension arms are held in place with the Tamiya self tapping spindles, these screw into the

suspension arms and make the suspension pivot on the gearbox slot, this gives a small amount of play which is not to bad but could have been removed at the design stage.

On both the front and rear suspension the top link is formed of a solid plastic length, this is held in place by a special Tamiya self

tapping screw which has a shoulder on which the link pivots.

Gearbox Time

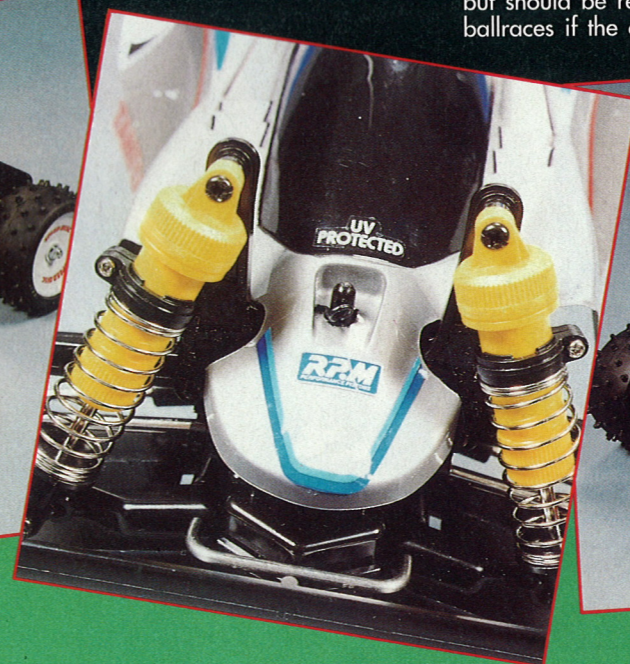
The standard Manta Ray is supplied with geared diffs, these are quick to assemble and are very free when assembled. The kit is supplied with plastic bearings which when well greased are fine but should be replaced with ballraces if the car is to be

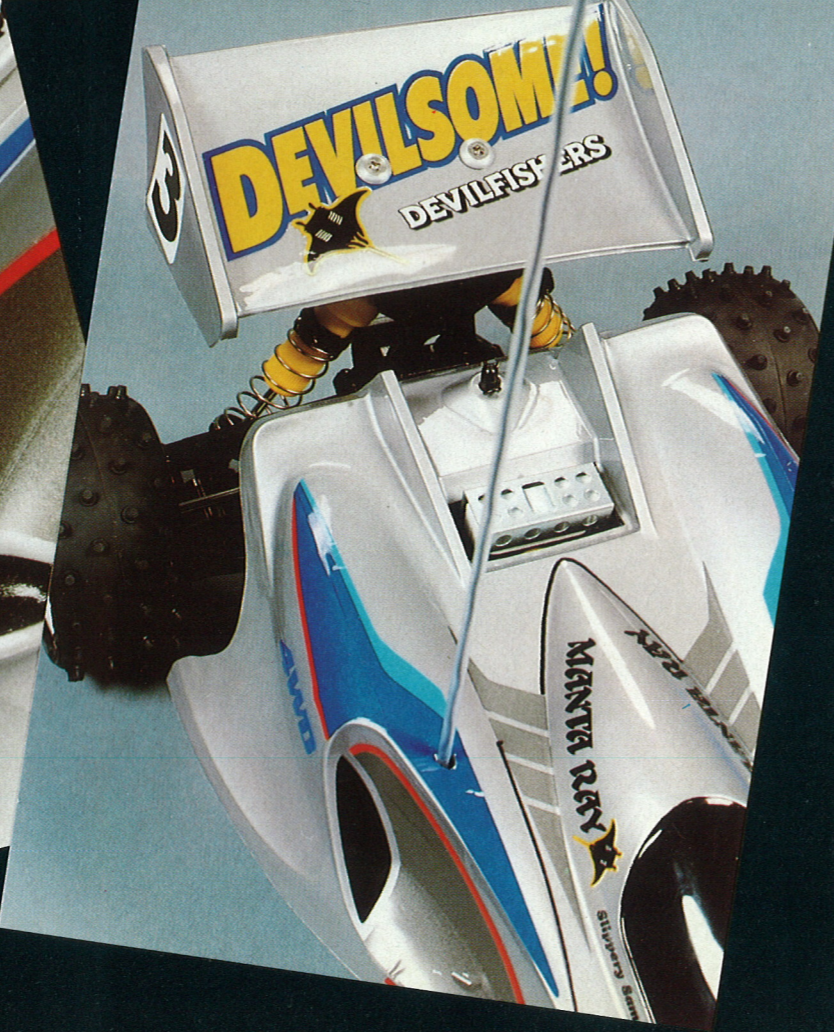
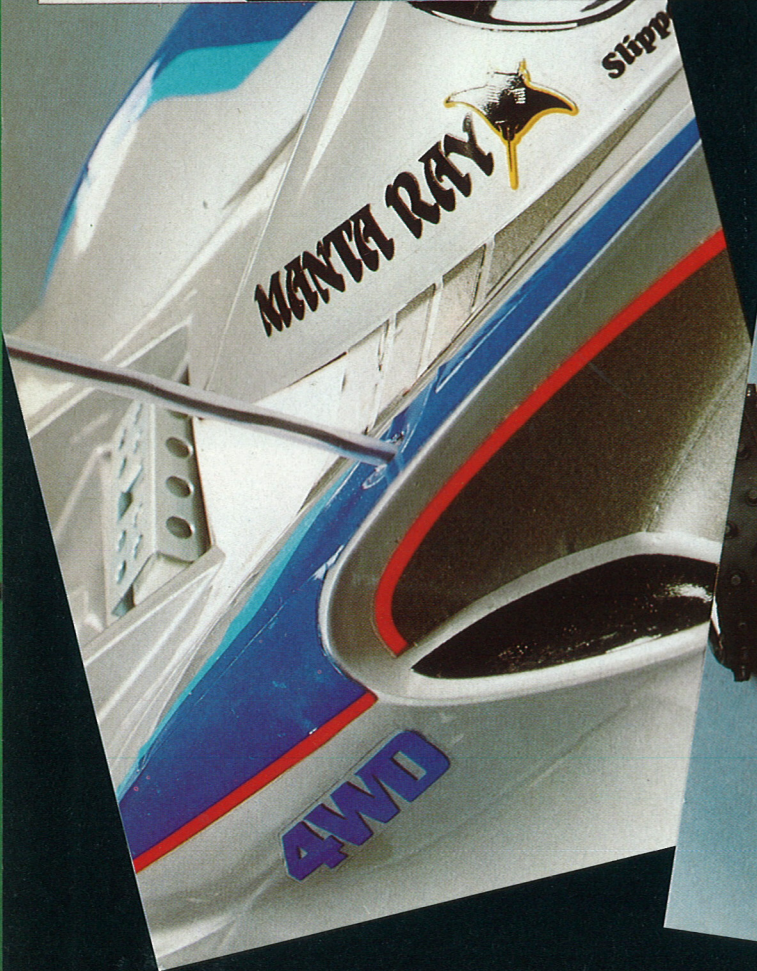
raced in anger! At the rear of the car the drive is passed through a number of nicely moulded gears, these should be well greased to stop wear.

The really clever part of the gearbox is that the diffs can be removed without a major stripdown, a small cover can be removed from the underside of the chassis and the diff removed in a matter of minutes.

Model Cars reviews Tamiya's latest kit with a surprising sting in it's tail

on the road to Manta Ray



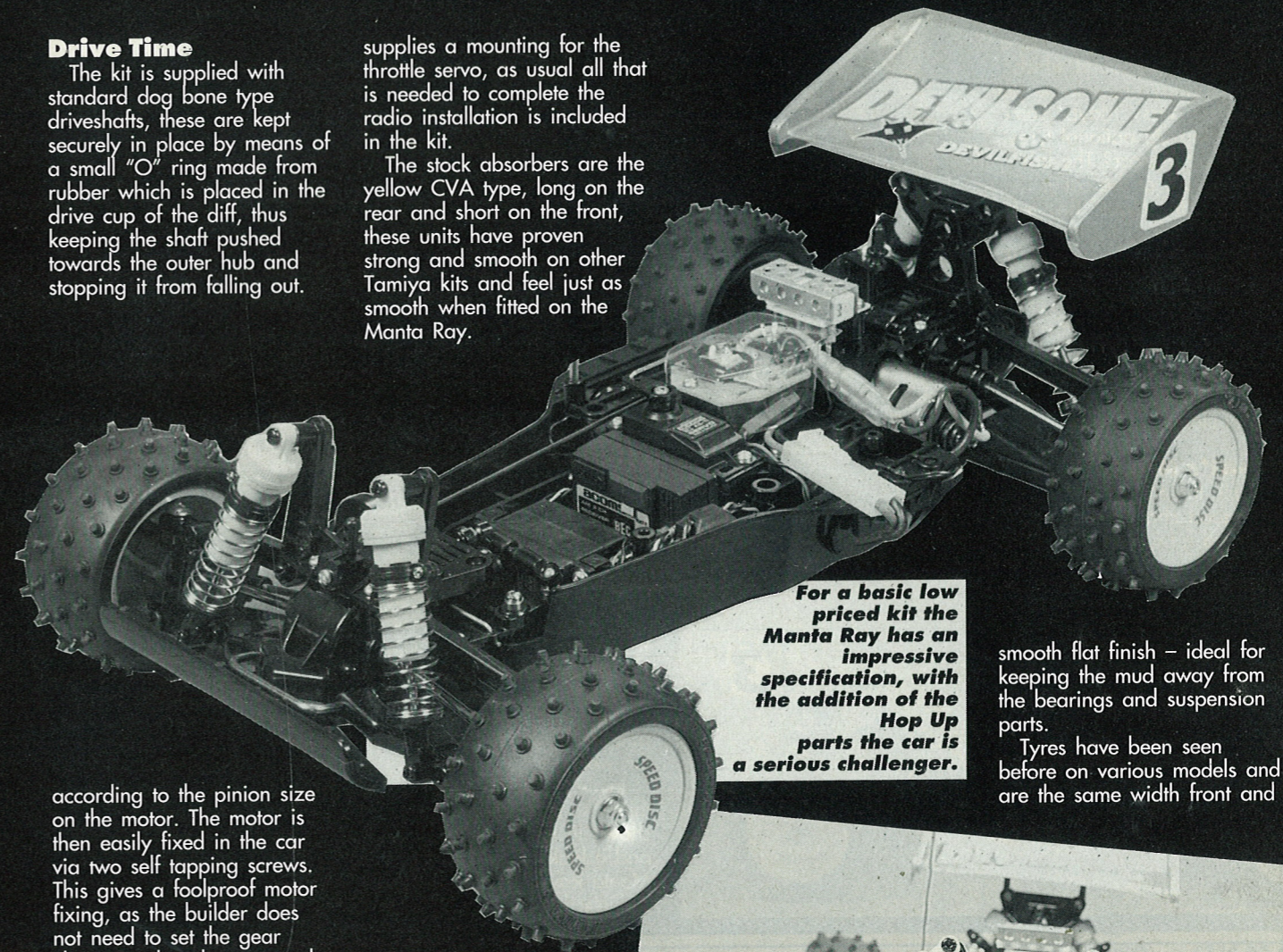


Drive Time

The kit is supplied with standard dog bone type driveshafts, these are kept securely in place by means of a small "O" ring made from rubber which is placed in the drive cup of the diff, thus keeping the shaft pushed towards the outer hub and stopping it from falling out.

supplies a mounting for the throttle servo, as usual all that is needed to complete the radio installation is included in the kit.

The stock absorbers are the yellow CVA type, long on the rear and short on the front, these units have proven strong and smooth on other Tamiya kits and feel just as smooth when fitted on the Manta Ray.

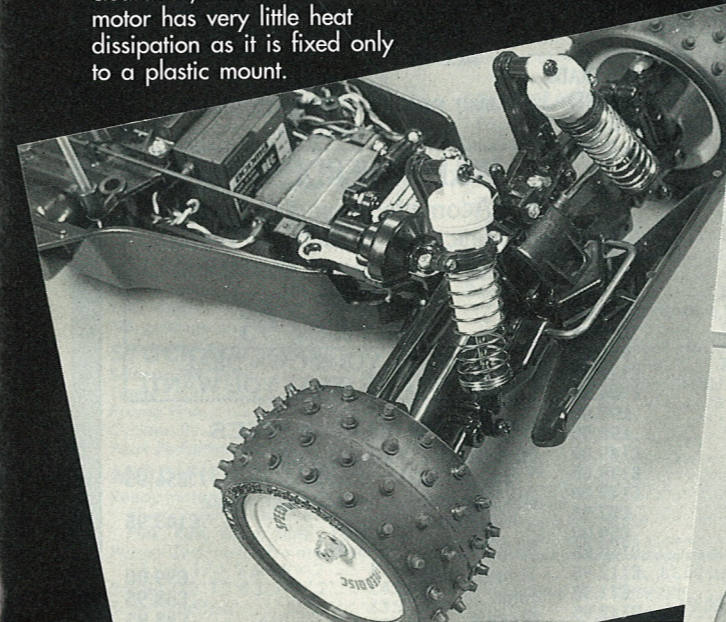


For a basic low priced kit the Manta Ray has an impressive specification, with the addition of the Hop Up parts the car is a serious challenger.

smooth flat finish – ideal for keeping the mud away from the bearings and suspension parts.

Tyres have been seen before on various models and are the same width front and

according to the pinion size on the motor. The motor is then easily fixed in the car via two self tapping screws. This gives a foolproof motor fixing, as the builder does not need to set the gear clearance, but does mean the motor has very little heat dissipation as it is fixed only to a plastic mount.



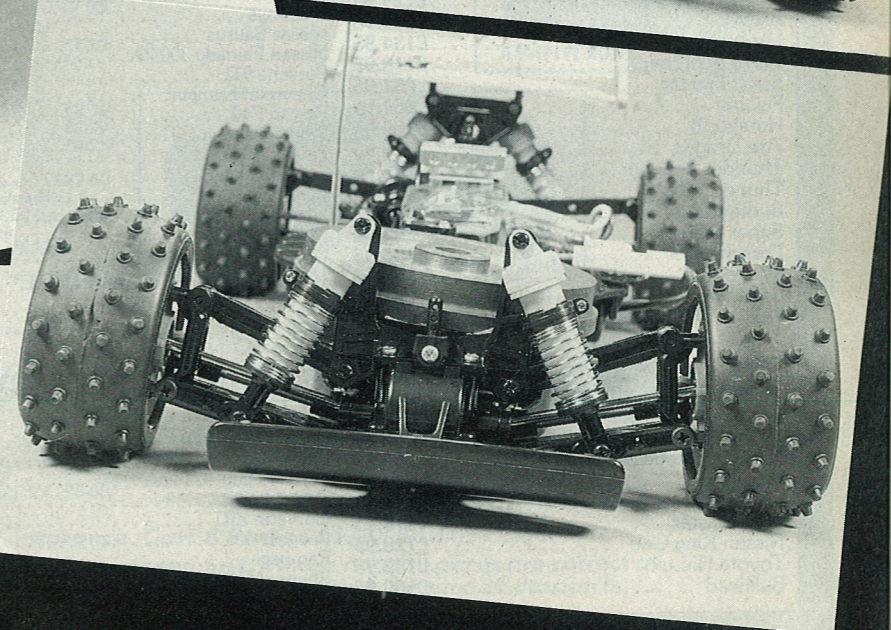
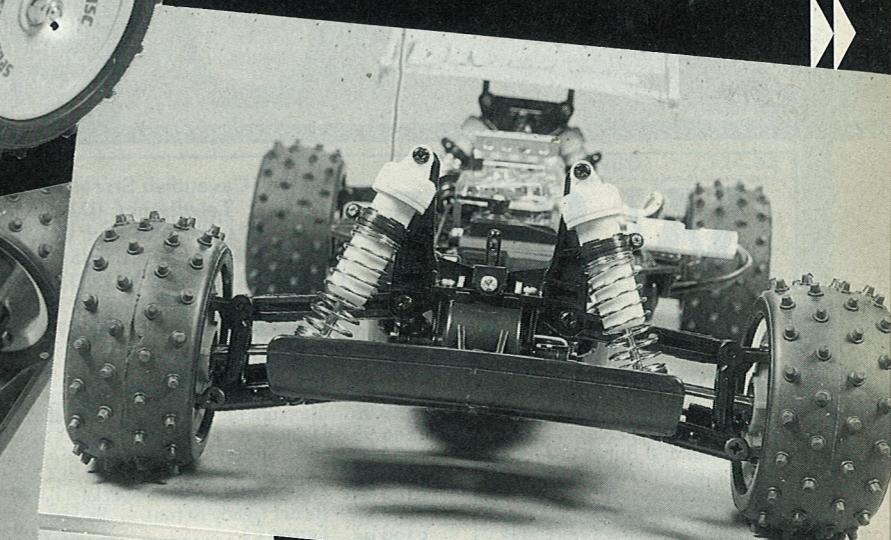
Manta Ray chassis has a very tough feel and is very stiff. Above: yellow CVA shocks work well and are very smooth, kit springs are also of the correct tension.

Radio Installation

After the steering servo is simply bolted in (which takes next to no time) a plastic tray is fitted to hold in the speed controller, this stiffens up the chassis even more and

Wheel Fun

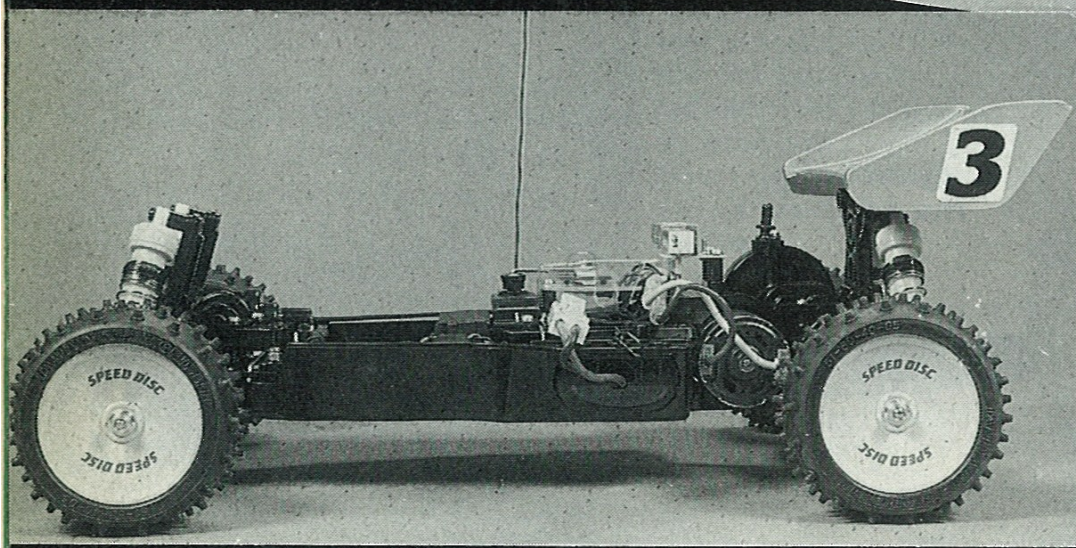
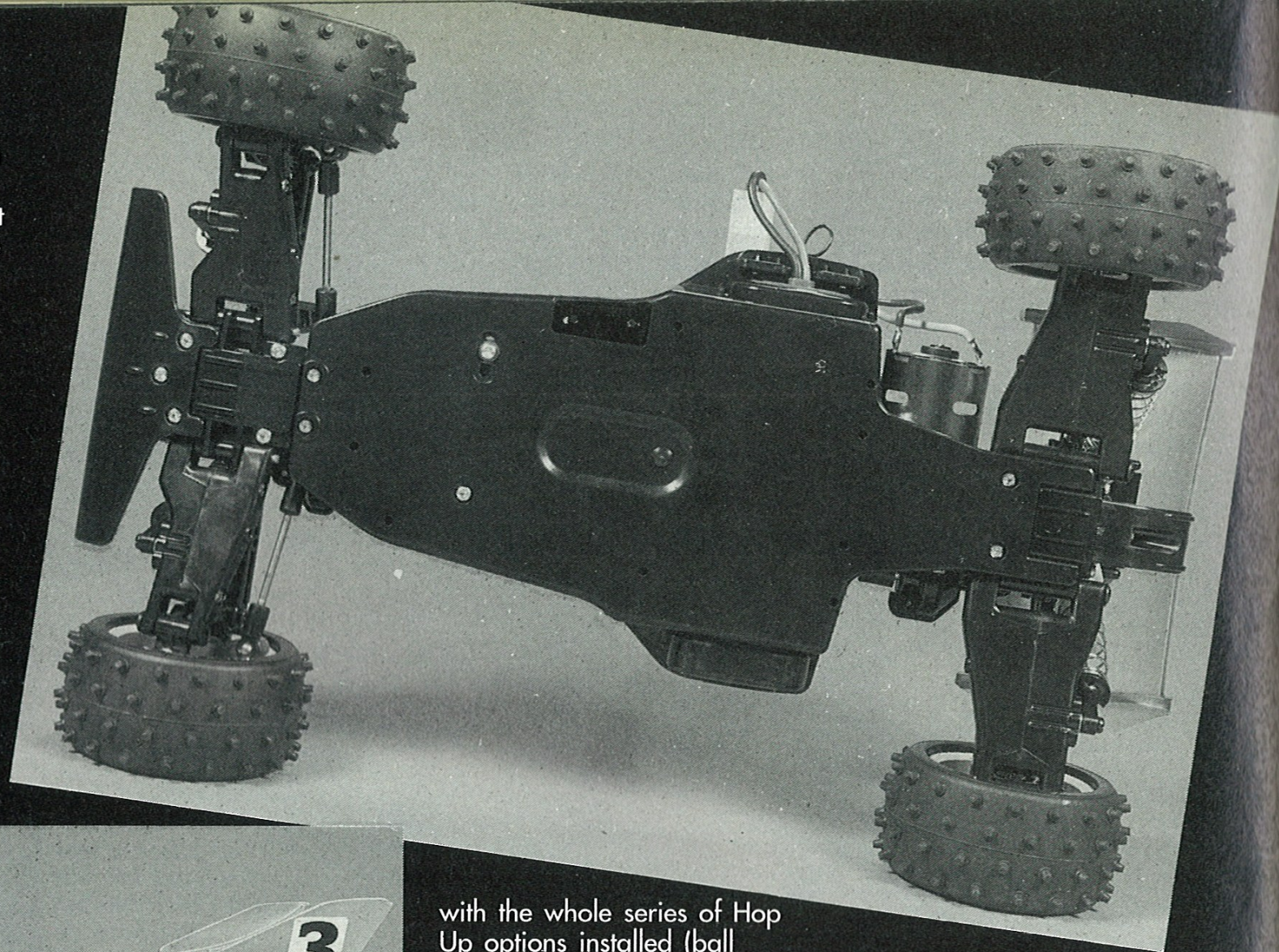
The Manta Ray has a set of plastic dish wheels that Tamiya call Speed Discs, these are moulded with a



rear and are moulded from a soft rubber compound which is very grippy on concrete but not so on grass. Maybe some of the Hop Up optional tyres would suit the car? The last main feature of the car is based on the Manta Ray fish and the result of the bodyshell styling is somewhat strange with a very wide flat appearance. Of course I'm sure some of you out there will love it but we don't think it's up to the usual Tamiya standard, although of course the moulding is superb.

What's Next?

Well, the Manta Ray is a very good chassis even in standard form, but of course



with the whole series of Hop Up options installed (ball diffs, one-way shaft, UJ shafts and shocks) the car is potentially one of the best in the world.

Jamie Booth obviously thinks so as he has already shown in the Eurochamps, and it looks likely that the Manta Ray will also be Jamie's mount for the world

championships. That's just about all there is to say about the car as in standard form it isn't aimed at top level, but watch out! We'll soon be bringing you a complete update on the Manta Ray and how to add all the Tamiya Hop Up goodies!