

The PREDATOR International

RRC Looks Over The Latest 'Evolution' Version Of TTech's 4wd Contender

Presentation Is Everything!

Or so I was told before my first job interview (or was it my first date?!). The new kit's packaging and general presentation is actually very similar in its style to that of those well known products from the Far East, but with an added touch of European style that gives it an exciting and very appealing look. The glossy box top features a large colour picture of the car and some sectioned drawings of the shocks, whilst inside, the machined and anodised parts are rather nicely displayed in a clear blister pack. The slightly remodelled bodyshell and awesome new 'Integral Moulded Chassis' are easily to hand inside the box, more about this later!

The instruction book, or 'Owner's Manual,' follows TTech's usual 'Step by Step' procedure (where the parts are packaged in small groups according to their constructional 'step' numbers) and like the rest of the kit, the well illustrated Manual is purposeful and well presented.

Down to Business...

Putting it all together is a very simple business, which just goes to show how the Predator's development has hinged upon making the car easier to build, and, to a lesser degree, easier to drive. For those interested, you can allow just 3

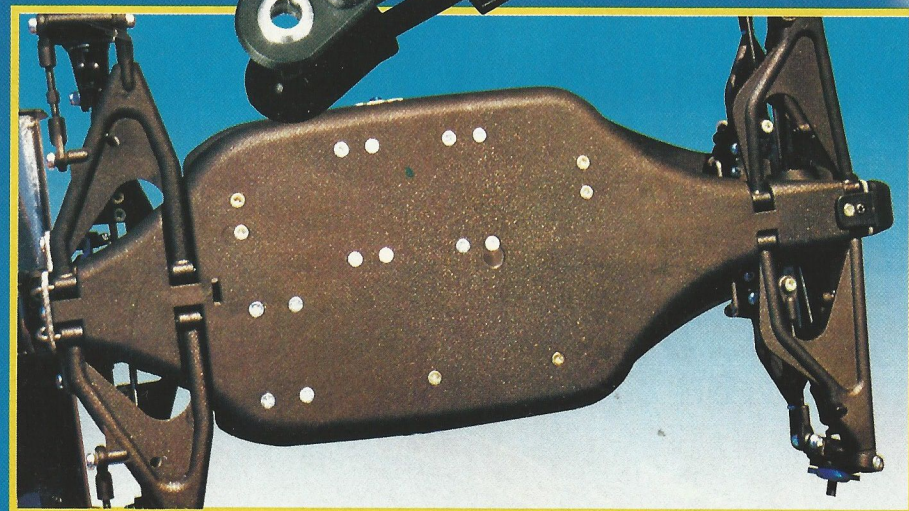
or 4 hours to assemble the complete rolling chassis. This is a big improvement on the earlier versions, which have previously taken some folks about 8 hours to put together to their complete satisfaction. This has been made possible in part by the new 'Integral Moulded Chassis' which forms the backbone of the whole car. The original carbon fibre tub on which both of the Predator's earlier versions were based, although in itself a beautiful piece of work, has now been superseded by just about the best looking moulding I've ever seen! The lower halves of both the front and rear gearboxes are now integral with the main chassis tub, and the revised diff casings make it very much easier to achieve a slop free and efficient drive system. It is truly a work of art, made from a specially developed composite material, and is very, very rigid indeed (just as a chassis should be). For those looking to save a little more weight, listed amongst TTech's 'Leading Edge' tune-up parts there is a chassis moulded with carbon fibre added to the composite material, saving about 1oz but with even greater rigidity!

All of the other parts are elegantly simple and beautifully made. As for their 'fit', they go together perfectly, making the car rewarding to build and an important contributing factor in making the car easy to assemble.

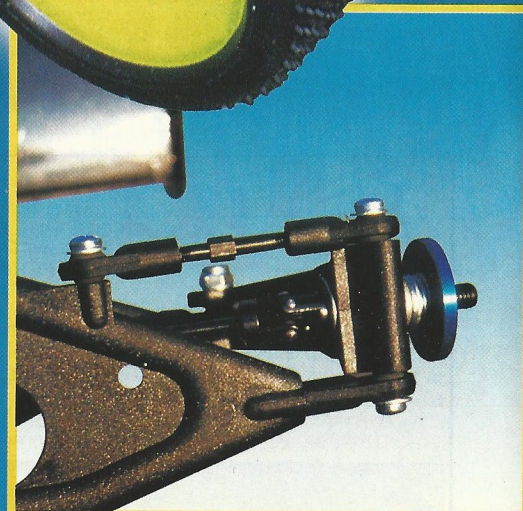
When any major manufacturer on the model car racing scene announces a new car, it's always an exciting and significant event for racing enthusiasts.

RRC is pleased to be able to bring you, as usual, the first official look at the brand new Predator 'International.' This is the latest evolutionary version of Tenth Technology's BRCA Championship winning 4wd electric competition car, and one of the very first production examples 'off the line' was the subject of the review seen here.

The hard anodised, teflon coated shocks, seen in cut-away section. Firm volume compensating diaphragms allow the use of thinner oils for really smooth operation.



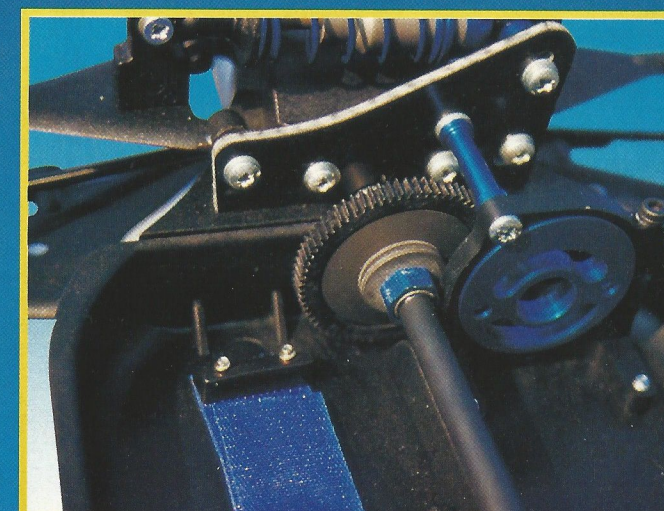
The super smooth underside of the moulded chassis. The bodyshell 'clips' to the lip around the upper edge.



Setting the amount of rear toe-in is simple thanks to the short turnbuckle.



The inboard rear suspension set-up. By raising or lowering the shock's outer pick-up point on the wishbone's 'tower,' the damping/springing can be altered. Neat and accessible.



TTech's new slipper clutch sits alongside the alloy motor mounting 'cam.' Rotating the cam allows easy gear mesh setting.



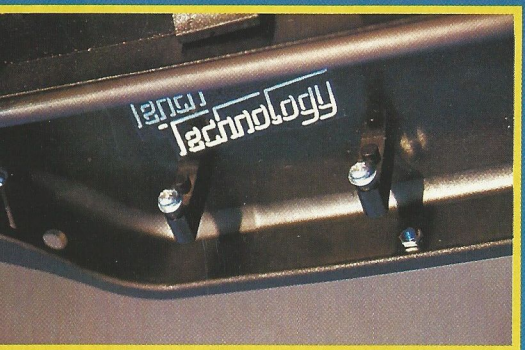
The front end is as adjustable as the rear, three alternative positions on the rocker cranks allowing the driver to dial in understeer or oversteer at will.



'Digging-in' when landing off a jump is now a thing of the past, thanks to the new, shorter, rounded off nose cone.



The kingpin's lower balljoint housing is now an integral part of the lower wishbones. The camber angle is now adjusted at the top only.



Servo mounting posts are now moulded into the chassis, spaced nicely to suit the popular Off Road servos.

All New Transmission

The transmission is new, and due to a rethink by Richard Weatherley, the brains behind the TTech range, is now stronger and easier to set up than before. Whilst it follows the unique direct gear drive format as used on previous Predators, new pinions and crown wheels have made all the difference. The new gears have a different tooth profile which gives each tooth a much wider root dimension (in other words they're thicker at the bottom). This endows each tooth with more strength and enables the employment of an injection moulded composite material. The new gears are very smooth in operation, and according to TTech, who tested them thoroughly before their release, have a long life.

The International comes with TTech's lightweight slipper clutch as standard, plus a one way roller clutch to the front diff, also a standard fitment.

Other New Bits...

Every component looks purposeful and strong, from the thick supports for the wings to the new, one piece lower front wishbones. The new front uprights are thicker, and are revised to carry a smaller outer ballrace to reduce both the rotating mass and unsprung weight. New lower rear wishbones accept TTech's heavy duty ball joints, have larger bracing webs and a moulded-in hole for fixing the optional rear anti-roll bar. The front of the car is now fitted with a shorter nose cone with a large radius to its underside, which now allows the car to land off a jump nose down without digging into the ground, and also provides a more simple mounting for the front wing.

The Finished Article

I sat the car on my bench with the wheels on, ready for its final setting up. I then sat back to admire my handiwork. Before I'd had time to settle back in the chair, my brand new rolling chassis did just that, and rolled right off the end of the bench. Wow, this transmission is just so free!

The suspension is smooth, although care must be taken to ensure there isn't any air in the shocks, and, as usual with Tenth Technology cars, there is no slop whatsoever in the suspension, pivot pins etc. All of the parts of the International are either Blue, Black or Silver, and I must say the finished item really does look awesome.

Carefully adhering to the information on the set-up sheet, I put the finishing touches to all of the settings and installed my motor and radio gear.

Track Test

The most exciting part about building any new car is that feeling of anticipation when you're finally ready to run it!

It was with eager anticipation that I accelerated away for the first time. The Predator's rate of acceleration never fails to astonish me, and the International simply squats down and vanishes. The new car is very sharp, with high levels of grip always available, and with an LRP Diablo motor fitted, I had more than enough power to maintain a power slide when past the limit. I found the new car actually very predictable though, as it transmitted plenty of warning signs before getting well out of shape.

The Predator's handling has always been ultra responsive and therefore just the job for those with cat-like reactions, but has, I feel, been worthy of



The moulded chassis isn't the only new feature on the International - the integral transmission casings house redesigned differentials using much beefier, moulded gears with larger, stronger teeth.

criticism for its 'nervous' feel (O.K. if you're Kevin Moore, but somewhat less than desirable for mere mortals like me!). The new International condemns any such notions to the history books, and makes the Predator a very fast car indeed, whether for one lap or twenty-one. The sharpness is still there, but the nervousness has gone.

The optional 'Grand Prix' front rocker cranks, which improve the car's stability over rough ground and jumps by changing the rising rate effect of the front suspension, are so called because they were first used at the British Grand Prix by TTech Team drivers Kevin Moore and William Mitcham to take 1st, 2nd and TQ, are a good idea. They work well, in fact on the rougher parts of the test track, they transformed the International into the best car I've ever driven there (which isn't something that I could have said about the previous versions). The International is entertaining and controllable, and its high grip and simply ballistic acceleration combine well to give very fast lap times!

The Conclusion?

With such a superbly moulded, ultra rigid chassis, and the much improved transmission, I honestly can't find anything to say about this car which isn't complimentary! The International now has the solidity and touch of maturity that the Predator has hitherto been crying out for, and looks more than likely to maintain TTech's claim of being the 'Unfair Advantage' in 1996.

The Predator International is manufactured and distributed by Tenth Technology, 'Shornebury', Pear Tree Lane, Shorne, Kent, England. Tel (01474) 824444. Fax (01474) 824445.

