

HAWK 2



The Traxxas Hawk was a very popular and wise choice for truck racing, Traxxas have now improved the Hawk and in the best American traditions have named it 'Hawk 2'



What actually separates a 'competition' kit from a 'recreational' one? Initially, I thought that the two were like chalk and cheese but now I'm not so sure. Now, I think that they're more like brother and sister - That they both share a common ancestry but are still quite different. The reasoning behind my change of opinion is the latest offering from TRAXXAS - the HAWK 2.

The HAWK 2 is essentially a two wheel drive, electric powered, 1/10th off road recreational monster truck which has been derived from its very close relative - the RAD 2, but the way that it goes about it's business leaves you thinking that it was really intended for more.

TRAXXAS are really, in my opinion, knocking on the doors of the likes of TAMIYA who have produced more 'recreational' kits than any other R/C manufacturer with the HAWK 2. It has the same ingredients as most kits of this ilk (i.e Mechanical speed controller, standard motor, bushes instead of bearings etc) but, at the same time, those ingredients have been subtly altered and spiced up to make things more interesting. The addition of items like a slipper clutch, turnbuckles, multi shock position mounts and telescopic driveshafts really do give a true indication that the kit's origins are far from 'recreational'.

Maybe I'm getting old (most of the racers in the Home counties will agree with that one), but I was always led to believe that it was impossible to successfully combine a fun vehicle with a competition car - A grasshopper or a Bearhawk will never be an Associated RC10 or a Lazer ZX-R but now it seems, you can have the best of both worlds - You can now have your proverbial cake AND eat it!

Assembly Guide

Those of you who have experienced the art of instruction booklets 'a la Tamiya' will be slightly shocked to find that this booklet doesn't follow those rules. Those of you who have followed any American derived instruction booklets will find that these are of

the same quality. In a way, they remind me of the early Schumacher instructions and, instead of have big, helpful exploded diagrams, they have small black and white photographs with paragraphs of text down one side of the page. If, like you should, you actually read these instructions instead of just looking at the photo's, you will find them extremely good and useful.

Throughout the booklet are scattered little hints aptly titled 'RACERS TIPS'. These tips, along with the extensive tuning guide at the back of the booklet really serve as a reminder that TRAXXAS are a competition biased company.

The gearbox is the standard Traxxas 'box which contains 48dp gears. Drive from the motor is transmitted through a spur gear (a choice of 2 sizes) which is located onto a slipper clutch. Many of you will know about the advantages of the slipper clutch as it is a competition feature which is found on just about every competition based kit on the market today. Basically, the slipper clutch is two metal plates (one either side of the spur gear). The pressure between the plates and the gear can be adjusted via the spring and the lock nut on the end of the idler shaft. The idea being that as you accelerate, dependant on the amount of force acting on the spur gear, the gear will slip slightly, thus preventing wheelspin or wheelie-popping off the line. From the slipper clutch, drive is taken down through 2 gears to the differential gear. This is a geared diff which will last much longer than the competition ball differentials

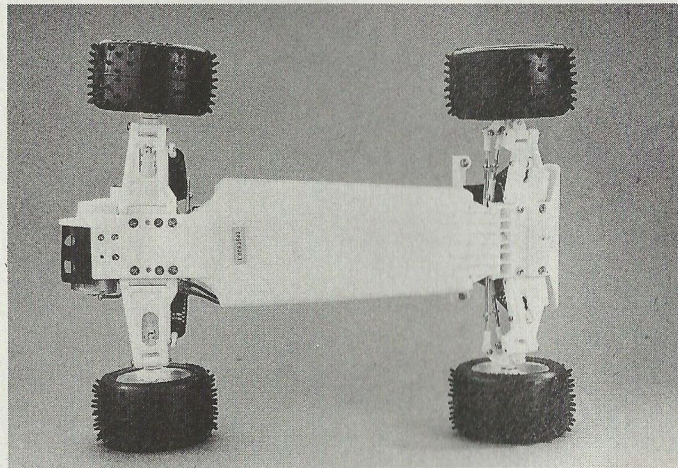
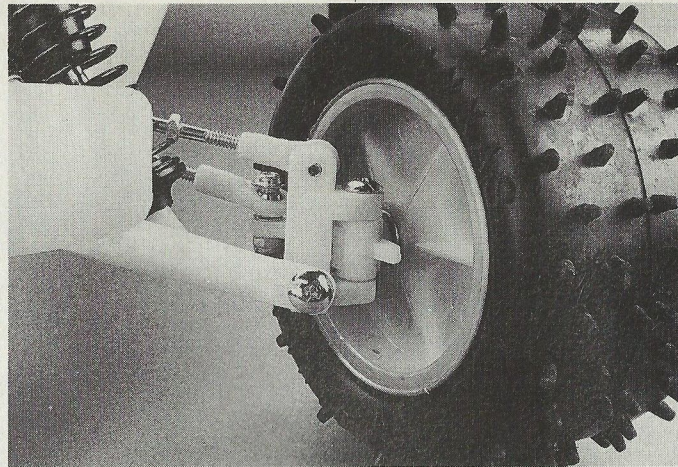
without much maintenance. If, however, you want to upgrade your truck, then the TRX-1 competition ball diff will slot in very nicely. Drive from the diff gear is taken to the rear wheels via telescopic drive shafts which come virtually ready assembled.

Geometry Lesson

The suspension geometry is, once again, based on competition experience and consists of a single wishbone and an adjustable top link to fine tune the camber settings of the wheels. Lengths for the top links are given in the instruction booklet and I found that the ruler printed at the bottom of each page, was of great help not only for the links but also for identifying the different screw sizes.

The suspension geometry can be further changed by utilising many of the optional competition parts which are NOT included in the kit but are listed in the tuning guide. It is little bits like these that really sets this kit apart from the run of the mill type of monster trucks.

The shock mounts are made from GRP which should prove to be very resilient. They also provide different location holes for the shock absorbers which, once again, hints at



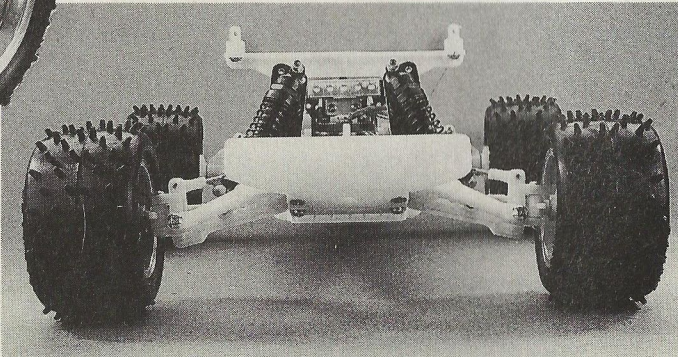
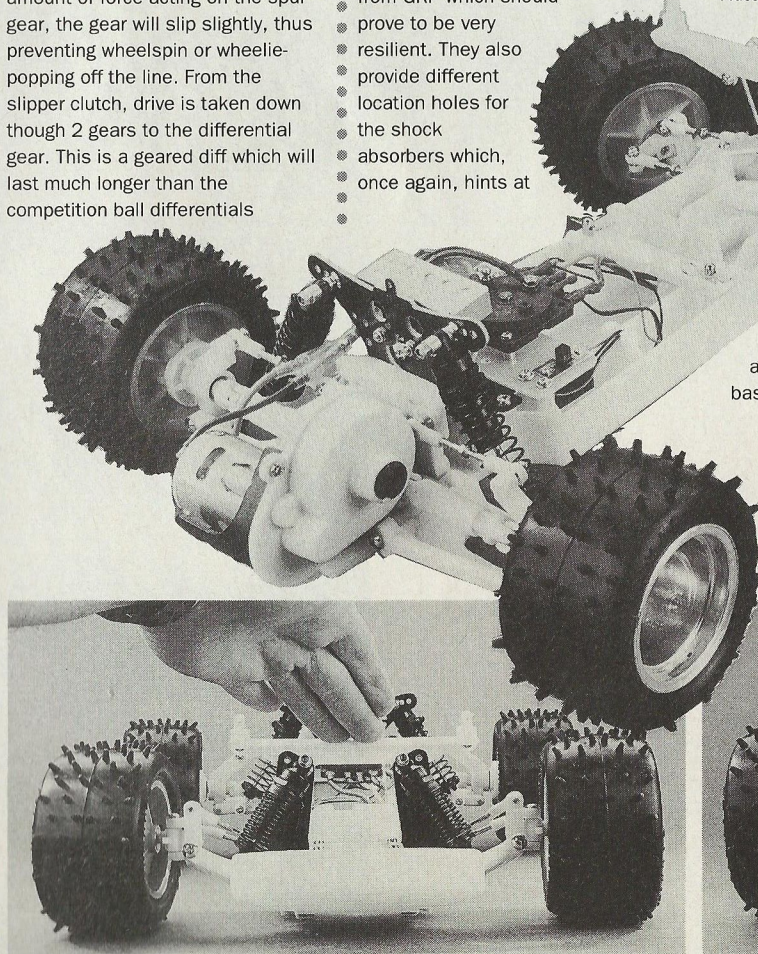
Plastic tub chassis is neatly moulded to give strength and protection whilst being very light.

straight to the servo saver rather than being transferred through a bellcrank system as favoured by competition kits. The kit also includes an interesting fibreglass gearbox bracket which, if you read the EXTRA instructions, must be fitted between the gearbox and the chassis. Apparently, this is an item that has been manufactured by TRAXXAS UK in order to reduce the risk of damage to the chassis at

what could potentially be a weak point. Being of a bathtub nature, the chassis also provides quite a reasonable amount of traditional British weather protection. Whilst it isn't waterproof or enclosed, the R/C equipment should be fairly well protected by

a competition based origin.

The chassis is a moulded tub which is very rigid and provides a good location for the nicad batteries and the R/C equipment. The steering geometry is located



the sides of the chassis (unlike a flat plate or space-frame type of chassis).

As stated earlier, the kit also includes a standard Mabuchi motor and a mechanical speed controller. The speed controller is a rotary type which looks very durable. It mounts onto a glass fibre plate which straddles the chassis tub and locates via six self tapping screws (4 of which also hold the throttle servo).

The dampers themselves are oil-filled and coil sprung. The bodies and caps are moulded from plastic and they require building up. They seal via twin O-rings and a selection of pistons are included in order to vary the amount of damping provided. Unfortunately, I couldn't make the shock absorbers because the circle ring was not formed on the damper body moulding. Therefore, the seals could not remain in place. This was quite a shock because the rest of the kit had been quite faultless and I would assume that these were rogue items and were one-offs.

Tyres'n'Chrome

Big spiky tyres and chrome plated rims are fitted both front and rear which really enhance the truck's appearance and a Polycarbonate truck body finishes the kit off. As a matter of interest, the kit contains two sets of body mounts - one to mount the body high, and another to mount it low. I chose the low setting as, in my opinion, it makes the truck look more purposeful. The decal sheet is quite comprehensive but the silver bumper and grille detail stickers are really out of place in a kit of this quality. Either the body should have more moulding detail on it or a chrome plated plastic grille and bumper should be included in the kit - not a sticker sheet.

Conclusions

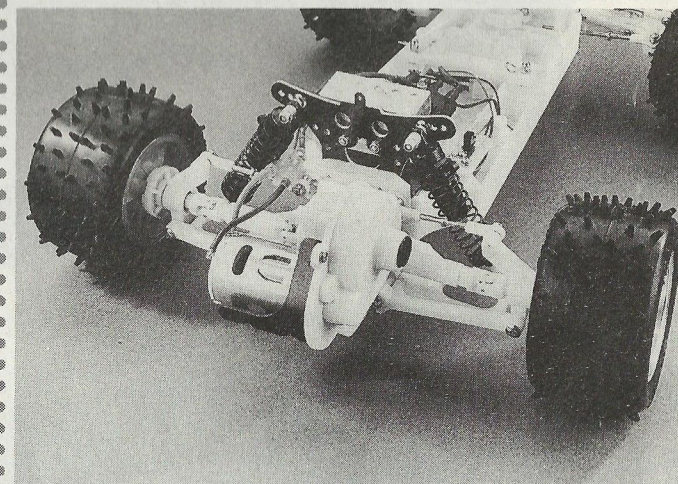
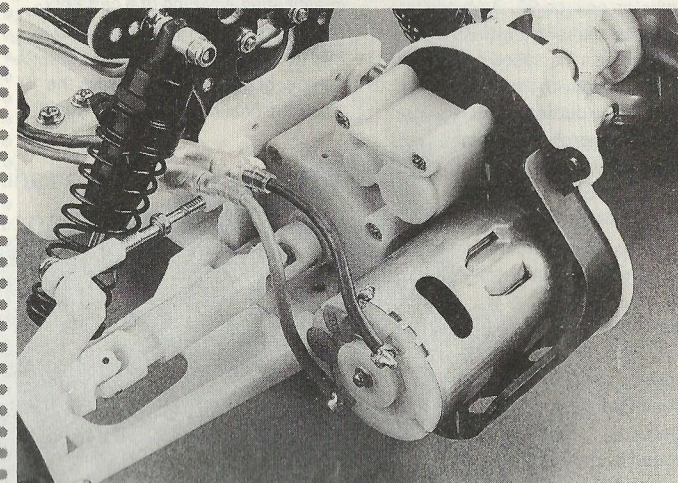
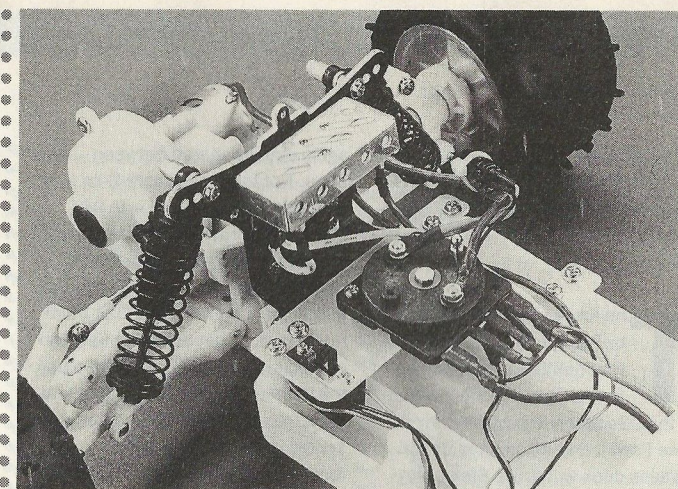
Apart from the faulty shock absorbers and the bumper/grille

stickers, I find it extremely hard to fault this kit at all. As a concept, it's brilliant. As an execution, it is excellent. I've got to say that this is the easiest kit I've built that hasn't been Japanese!. Everything fits snugly, doesn't bind and yet, doesn't have excessive play or slop in it.

Unfortunately, the instruction booklet, in my mind, does its best to slow the construction down. It was very easy to miss points which could have been quite critical. Obviously, I know that I wasn't taking as much notice of the instructions as a novice would, but in order to really compete against the Japanese in this market it would be nice to see the instructions be re-laid out. All of the information is there, but it needs to be easier to follow, especially when extra items and instructions are suddenly put into the kit. The only other criticism is that there seemed to be a million different screw bags. These seemed to be laid out so that each screw bag was relevant to one or two instruction steps wherever possible, but the bags were not labelled. On a plus side, the components were split into bags which were labelled and were referred to as instruction steps which was good - i.e. when you got to the end of instruction step A, you knew that you had finished with bag A.

By incorporating many competition features into a down-graded kit, TRAXXAS has developed a neat niche which could be further exploited. It is nice to see the spin offs of intense competition developments being utilised further down the range, much in the same way as technology in FORMULA 1 and all types of motorsport filter down into standard everyday use cars.

Spares for the HAWK 2 shouldn't be a great problem as the car isn't unique and it shares most, if not all, of it's components with other cars in the TRAXXAS range. Add all that to an extremely reasonable price tag and you've got all the ingredients for a winner.



Wide track and wide wheels give the Hawk 2 the look of being mean and ready for business, standard motor in place at the rear.

