

KIT REVIEW

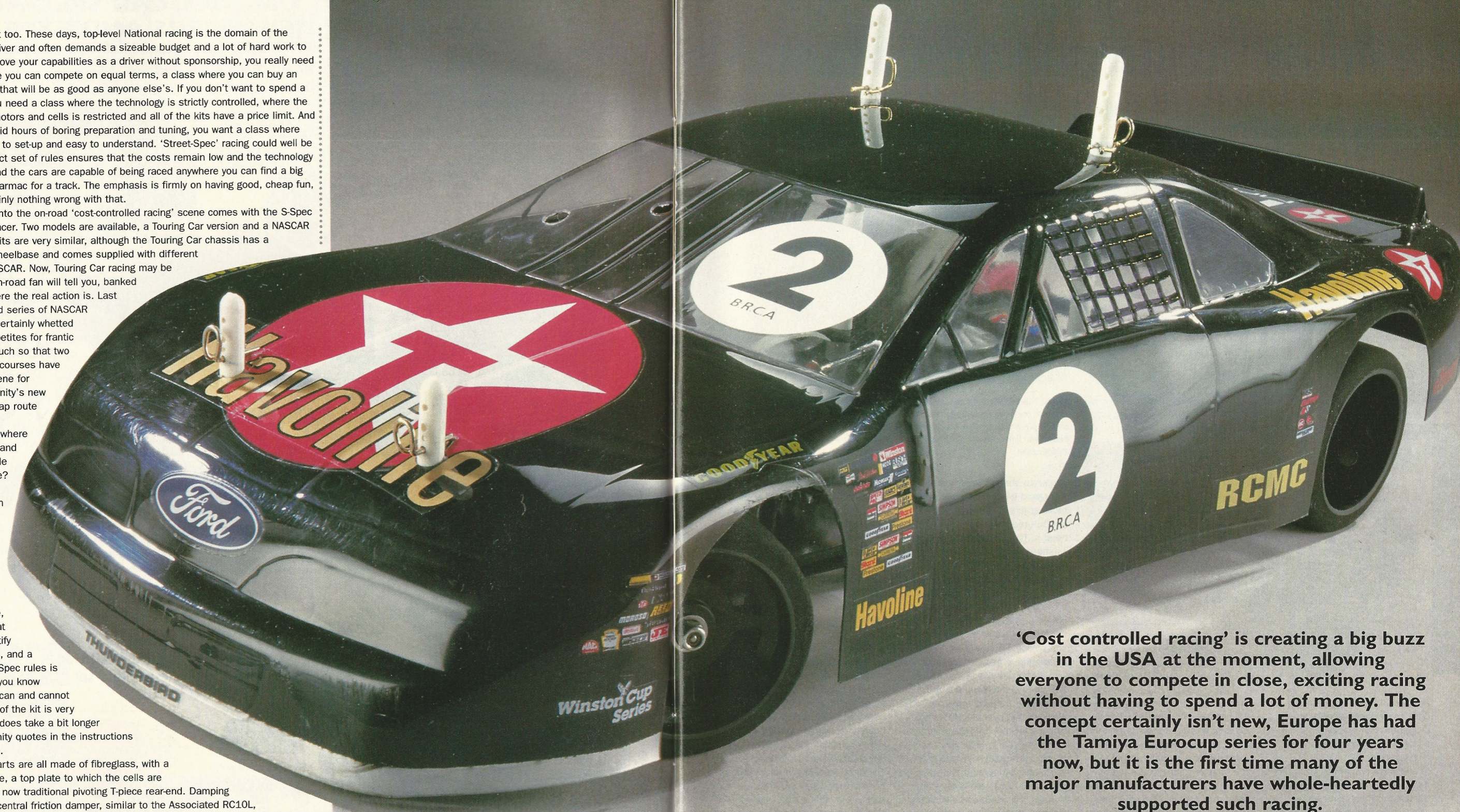
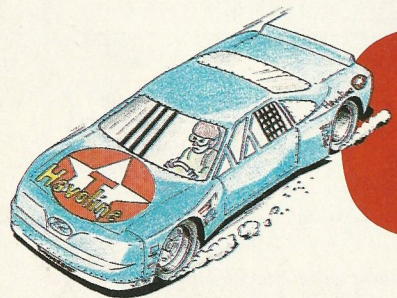
Reviewed by Graham Creasey

It is important too. These days, top-level National racing is the domain of the sponsored driver and often demands a sizeable budget and a lot of hard work to do well. To prove your capabilities as a driver without sponsorship, you really need a class where you can compete on equal terms, a class where you can buy an 'off-the-shelf' car that will be as good as anyone else's. If you don't want to spend a small fortune, you need a class where the technology is strictly controlled, where the choice of tyres, motors and cells is restricted and all of the kits have a price limit. And if you want to avoid hours of boring preparation and tuning, you want a class where the cars are easy to set-up and easy to understand. 'Street-Spec' racing could well be the answer. A strict set of rules ensures that the costs remain low and the technology is kept simple, and the cars are capable of being raced anywhere you can find a big enough piece of tarmac for a track. The emphasis is firmly on having good, cheap fun, and there's certainly nothing wrong with that.

Trinity's entry into the on-road 'cost-controlled racing' scene comes with the S-Spec 10 'parking lot' racer. Two models are available, a Touring Car version and a NASCAR oval racer. Both kits are very similar, although the Touring Car chassis has a slightly shorter wheelbase and comes supplied with different wheels to the NASCAR. Now, Touring Car racing may be fun, but as any on-road fan will tell you, banked oval racing is where the real action is. Last year's three round series of NASCAR races at TEMAC certainly whetted many driver's appetites for frantic oval action, so much so that two new banked oval courses have arrived on the scene for 1995. So, can Trinity's new car provide a cheap route into the world of NASCAR, a world where you turn left only and hold on full throttle for the whole race?

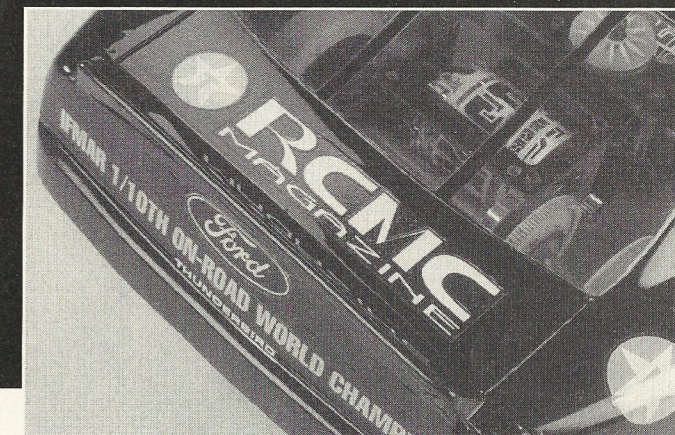
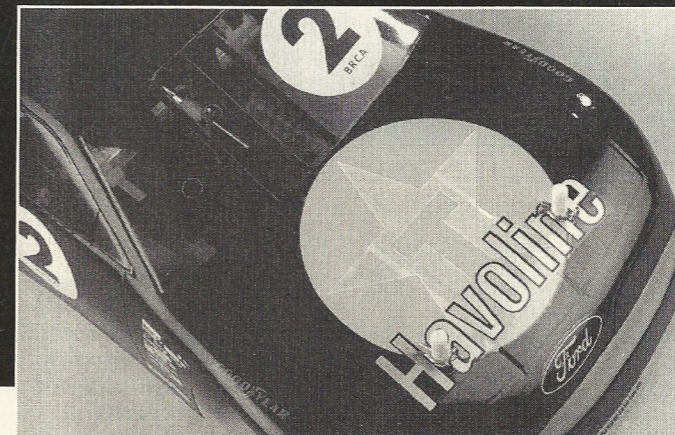
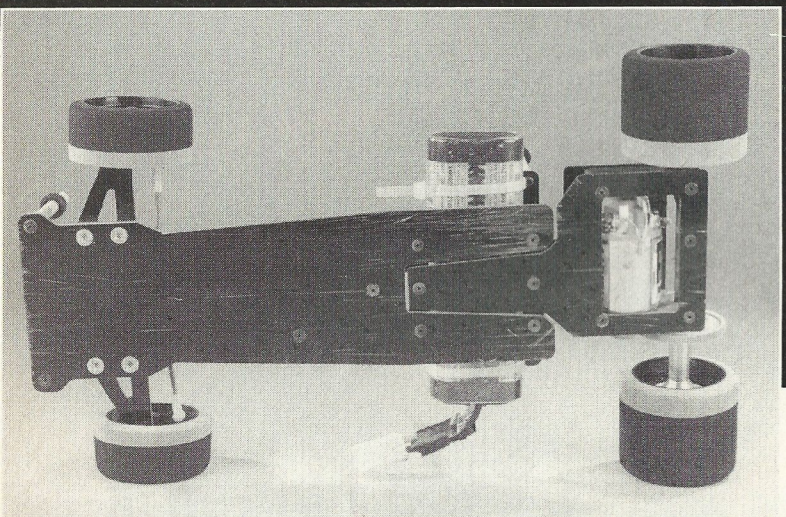
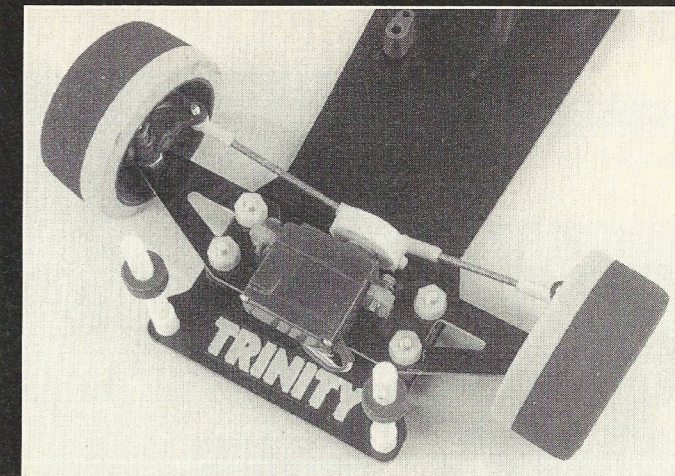
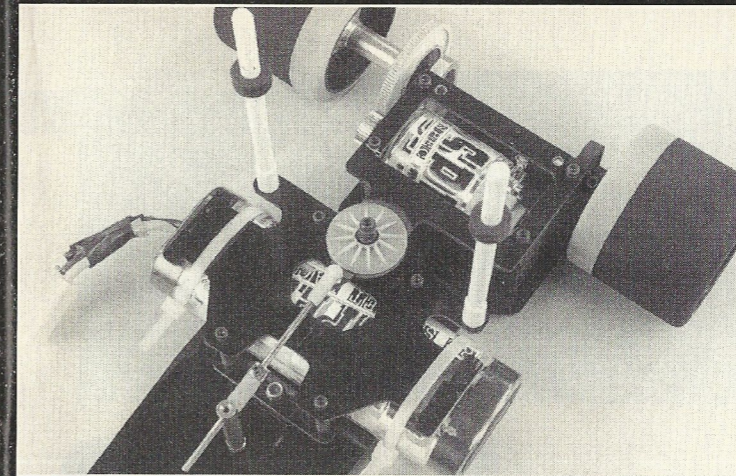
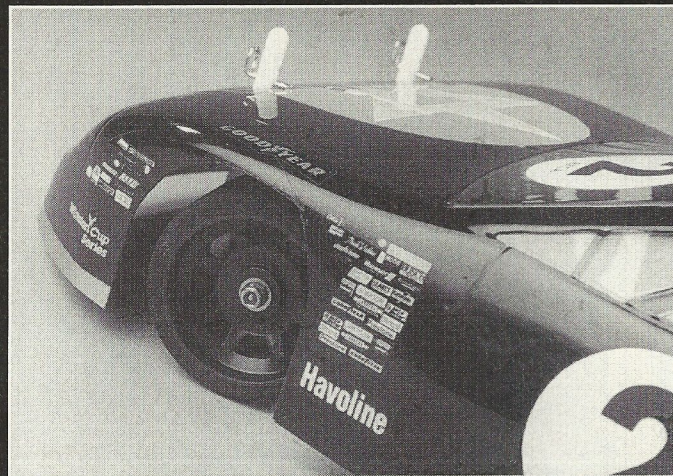
The S-Spec 10 comes supplied in a large and attractive box, with all of the components packaged in plastic bags. The instructions are clear and concise, with diagrams that allow you to identify each of the parts, and a full set of Street-Spec rules is included so that you know exactly what you can and cannot do. Construction of the kit is very easy, although it does take a bit longer than the hour Trinity quotes in the instructions - it took me three.

The chassis parts are all made of fibreglass, with a main bottom plate, a top plate to which the cells are attached and the now traditional pivoting T-piece rear-end. Damping is provided by a central friction damper, similar to the Associated RC10L,



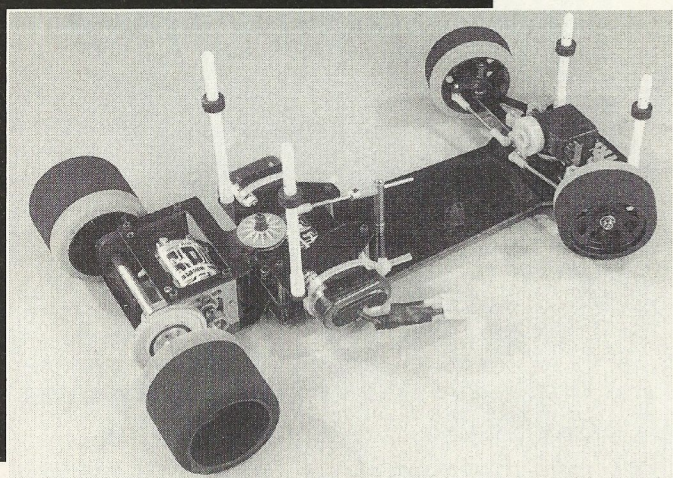
'Cost controlled racing' is creating a big buzz in the USA at the moment, allowing everyone to compete in close, exciting racing without having to spend a lot of money. The concept certainly isn't new, Europe has had the Tamiya Eurocup series for four years now, but it is the first time many of the major manufacturers have whole-heartedly supported such racing.

Cost cutter



Above; The RCMC test Oval Street Spec has been well and truly tested as the scars on the body show. Left; The underside of the car shows the simple chassis and 'T' piece rear suspension system. Below left; Tyres are still the Street Spec versions with white rings for easy identification.

Above; Rear end of the car has the damping controlled by the slipper plate and the spring adjuster. Motor installed is the Street Spec type. Right; Front suspension couldn't be any simpler and easy to set up.



Associated RC10L, with up and down movement controlled by a piece of silicon tubing rather than an oil-filled shock absorber. Low-tech it may be, but the arrangement does work, albeit not as well as a shocker system. The threaded rod that contains the silicon tube doubles as a ride-height adjuster, allowing you to adjust the 'sag' of the chassis by moving a grub-screw secured collar up and down the rod.

The low-tech concept applies equally to the front end of the car. The steering blocks slide up and down on steel kingpins, with small

springs providing some form of suspension, while diff-lube has to be used on the kingpins to provide a degree of dampening. The steering servo mounts on top of the front axle plate, which leaves plenty of room for the rest of the car has no bump-steer. A selection of ride height blocks are provided, as are a set of threaded tie-rods, but you will need to provide your own servo-saver. This set up gives you zero degrees caster which is usually a good starting point, but unfortunately the kit does not provide any adjustable caster

blocks to change this. Since increased caster makes the car more stable in a straight line, it is often required, so you will need to find some suitable washers or invest in some Associated adjustable caster blocks if you want to change the caster angle. No ballraces are provided for the front wheels either, so you may want to purchase a set of these as well.

A smooth, limited slip differential is provided, complete with a hefty steel axle that should easily withstand the rigors of oval racing. Rear axle ballraces are provided that push into the ride height adjusters, and these in turn fit into the rear axle blocks, an aluminium one on the motor side and a plastic one on the other side. Care has to be taken when securing the left-hand wheel hub to the axle as this hub is actually made of plastic and it is incredibly easy to strip the threads when tightening the grub screws.

A full set of glued and trued Street-Spec tyres are included in the box, Blue compound for the front and Green compound for the rear. These are easily recognisable

as Street-Spec tyres thanks to their unique light coloured sections and replacements are available at a very reasonable price, both from Trinity and TRC.

The slightly more expensive kits also come complete with a pack of cells and a motor, so you only need to add your radio gear to go racing. The 1400 mah cells were jointly developed by Trinity and Sanyo especially for this class of racing and are designed to allow repeated charges in one day, without any drop off in performance. They are wrapped in an official 'Ex-Spec RC Street Pack' label and sealed in clear heatshrink, with a standard Tamiya style connector provided to hook them up to your speedcontroller. The motor is a 21-turn stock motor conforming to the U.S. PROCAR rules. This must not be opened and the commutator cannot be trued, but you can change the brushes and clean the commutator with a comm-stick, so it should have a pretty good lifetime. The kit also comes supplied with an excellent Bolink Ford Thunderbird NASCAR 'narrow' bodyshell, which is superbly moulded and really

looks the business when mounted on the car. Make sure you read the Street Spec rules before you cut this out though. Unlike the Pro-10 NASCARs, you are not allowed to cut the rear of the bodyshell out on the Street-Spec car and separate rear wings are only allowed at the race director's discretion.

Track Test

Although designed for 'parking-lot' racing, I couldn't help feeling that a run round the local supermarket car park wouldn't really do the car justice, so I went for the real thing instead, an awesome banked oval on-road circuit. Birmingham Wheels Park was the chosen venue, scene of the first big NASCAR meeting of the year and the location of a large and pretty smooth banked tarmac velodrome. The S-Spec 10 was run in standard kit form, with a Futaba receiver, 9601 steering servo and a Tekin 411G speedcontroller. The cells were secured with tie-wraps and some strapping tape was also added to make sure there was absolutely no way the cells could

come loose in the car. A small dab of Parma damper syrup was added to the rear dampener washers to stiffen the rear-end slightly and a dab of diff-lube was added to each of the front king-pins to ensure these moved up and down smoothly. Then it was time to hit the track for some action!

The surface at Wheels Park is very abrasive so grip proved to be no problem at all, the kit Street-Spec tyres working extremely well. The car proved to be a little tricky to control on the fast sweepers though and was prone to the occasional unpredictable spin. The reason for this was simple. Pro-10 NASCARs always run with a separate rear wing mounted to the rear pod of the car. This is an essential item as rear downforce from a NASCAR bodyshell is almost non-existent and it is the only way to ensure the car remains stable round the flat-out corners. The lack of a rear wing on the Street-Spec NASCAR made the back-end feel rather 'loose'. As a result, the steering was extremely positive and only tiny transmitter stick movements were required to negotiate the quick turns. Adding a

rear-wing does cut down the top speed of the car though, so for the last couple of runs, I decided to try out tyre additives instead. I treated the whole of the rear tyres with Zip-Grip Free, Trinity's new non-Wintergreen tyre additive. This improved matters a lot, allowing a higher entry speed into the corners and the opportunity to pursue some tighter racing lines. The car was still capable of the occasional twitch from the rear-end though, strongly suggesting that a rear-wing or trim-tab was what was really needed, although adding a few degrees of caster may have also improved the stability.

Speeds were actually quite good, particularly for a stock motor. With a 35-tooth pinion and a 112-tooth spur gear fitted, the Street-Spec was lapping the Wheels oval at an average speed of 29mph. This was a lot slower than the awesome Pro-10 NASCARs which were busy blasting round at over 40mph, but was perfectly good enough for some exciting racing and there was absolutely no way the Ex-Spec cells were going to go flat during the race, so you could push the car hard all the time. I charged the same pack of cells six times during the meeting and noticed no change in the top speed at all. The motor commutator

remained completely clean with no hint of any brush wear and the tyres only wore down a few millimetres. In fact, the most demanding piece of maintenance I had to do was to brush the dust off the car between races! An unscheduled strength test came during one run when a sudden radio-glitch sent the car careering at full speed into a very solid concrete barrier. Apart from a few scratches, the Street-Spec emerged unscathed though so it is obviously pretty tough too.

There's no doubt about it, the Trinity S-Spec 10 certainly does the job it was designed for. It is cheap, easy to build, goes really well and requires almost no maintenance; you simply charge the cells, plug them in and go racing! It is absolutely ideal for club level on-road competition and proves that the 'cost control' concept really can produce fun R/C racing. If you are looking for a cheap route into on-road racing, and NASCAR in particular, then the S-Spec 10 is definitely a good choice.

