Big in JAPAN

The Honda NSX has gained a reputation as a user friendly racing car. The new model from Yokomo looks good – we take a closer look.

It seems like the whole world has a love affair with Honda's mid engined sports car, the NSX. First of all it was likened to having Ferrari looks but with the civility of a Civic. Secondly, the world's motoring press have been raving about it and thirdly, Radio Control versions of this loveable exotic sports car have started to appear.

Spurred on by Tamiya's creation, the latest example of this obsession comes from Yokomo, who are more renowned for their efforts in producing top quality off road racing buggies than for producing a Radio Controlled scale sports car.

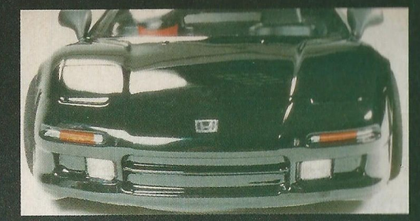
Construction

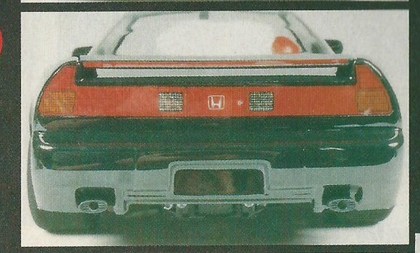
The car is based on a two tier flat plate GRP chasis, is mid engined (like the original) and is only 2WD (also like the original). It incorporates many innovative features not generally found on a kit of this type (or the original!!)

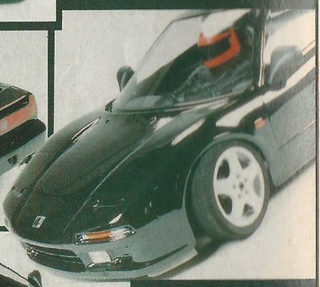
The kit sent to the RCMC offices only contained Japanese instructions and, I must admit to one of my failings being my complete inability to read Japanese!! However, the instructions do contain some useful diagrams which, even without the text, can be followed carefully. This problem, so I am informed, will have been rectified by the time you read this.

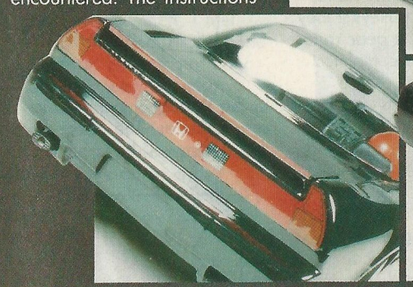
Unlike many kits of this nature, the NSX has 4 oil filled dampers which take care of the suspension. The rear units look like scaled down versions of the Works 91 items, even down to the copper coloured springs which are often used on the 4WD. The front shocks are slightly different. Although they to are oil filled, the springs are tiny and only cover the shafts (they look more like biro springs to me!)

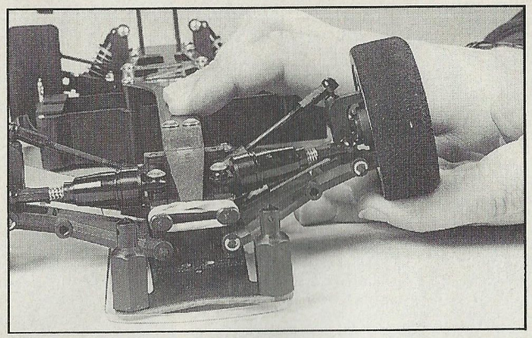
Next to be assembled are the track rods and this is where a problem was encountered. The instructions











Above: Suspension travel is quite generous for a sports car.

do provide useful dimensions to help with the assembly of these links but the rod ends were of very poor quality. Indeed, one of them split upon tightening which would lead us to think that the rod lengths were possibly wrong. In reflection, this could be due to our mis-interpretation of the Japanese instructions and may not actually cause a problem once the English instructions are supplied.

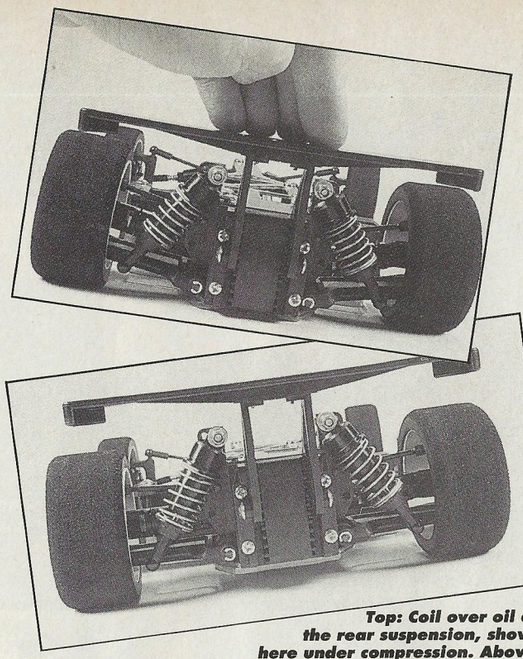
The differential unit is quite interesting. First glances of the built up car would lead you to think that it is the same unit as used in the Works 91 (ball type). This, however, is not the case. The unit is in fact a geared type – not bevel, similar to the type used in Tamiya's original Avante. The main drive pulley does look as if it is taken from the 4WD and both items screw together to complete the unit. Drive to the motor, once installed, is via a short belt. This is somewhat of a departure from the usual direct drive gear method generally used with 'flat track' cars. The advantage with this is that the gear doesn't overhang the chassis which means that the gear is more protected than usual. the main disadvantage is that the car only comes with one size pulley for the motor and that prospective buyers will have to purchase more pulleys if they want to change the gear ratio.

The rear end is completed by the use of Hooke type universal drive shafts similar to the Schumacher and Losi items. These are cleverly held in place at the centre by the use of a long grub screw passed through the gearbox output shaft giving a very positive location. The car is ballraced which will help to give the car real 'supercar' performance.

The camber of both the rear and front wishbones can be altered by changing the length of the upper links on the wishbones which will help to dial the car in on different tracks – This is a car for the real enthusiast!

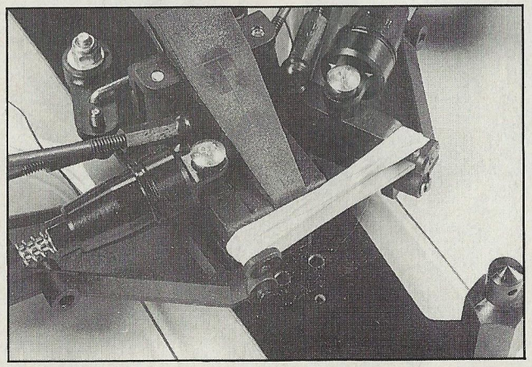
Crash-Back!!

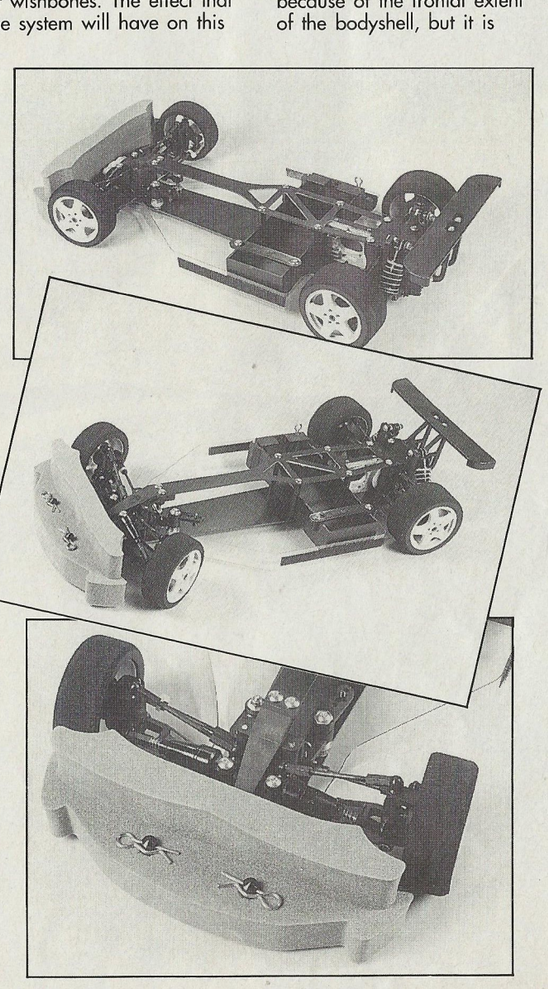
At the front, the wishbones are designed to 'crash-back' in the event of a hefty front collision. This is a method used to great effect on the Schumacher Procat resulting in the saving of many pairs of wishbones. The effect that the system will have on this car must be questioned because of the frontal extent of the bodyshell, but it is never the less, a good idea especially as this chassis will provide the basis for other scale cars yet to be released by Yokomo.



Top: Coil over oil on the rear suspension, shown here under compression. Above: Rear suspension in "resting" state.

Below: The crash backs on the front suspension will save a lot of money on replacement front wishbones!





Steering is taken care of with the use of a double bell-crank system which is also sprung so it acts as a servo saver as well. This system is the same as the one employed in virtually all off road buggies but not in a flat track car.

The chassis is very slim and has no provision for any cell mounting. This is ably taken care of by a nicely moulded tray that sits across the chassis. One end of this tray is hinged and held in place with a body clip. This enables the cells to be slipped in and out easily.

Radio Equipment

The RCMC car wasn't built up initially with any radio control equipment. However, it doesn't take a genius to realise that space is at a premium and that the car is best suited to electronic speed controllers and the receiver is relegated from the chassis plate and has to sit on the top plate next to the motor. Personally, I would like to put the receiver further away from the motor but without having tested the car, it's very hard to say whether the position of the receiver will be critical in terms of interference. The same goes for the antenna which, according to the instructions, should be cabled tied to the top plate so that it doesn't stick through the bodyshell.

Last But Not Least

Having now got a chassis that looks more like a Formula 1 car more than a sports car, its time to put the body on. Firstly, there is an undertray that keeps all the muck and dirt away from the motor and R/C equipment (its amazing just how dirty a car park can be!!!)

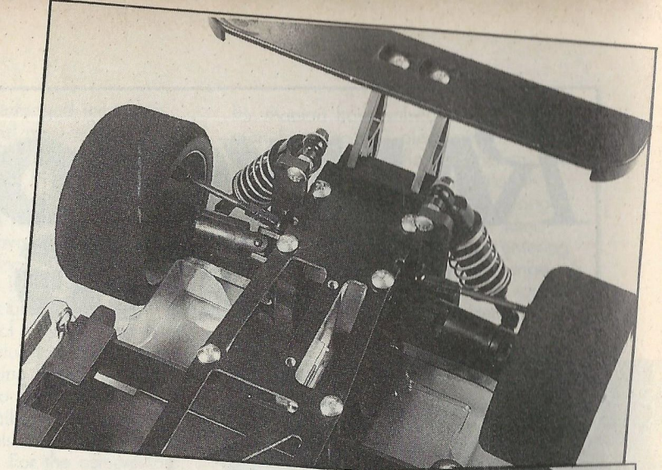
The bodyshell is designed to be attached using velcro and not body clips. This is a great idea as nothing spoils the lines of a scale model more than having four great big bodyposts and clips sticking through it. Velcro is applied down the sides of the undertray and across the back body mount only. This leaves the front end to be attached. Yokomo have designed a body-shaped piece of foam which snugly fits underneath the front of the bodyshell and also acts as protection against creasing the body in a front collision.

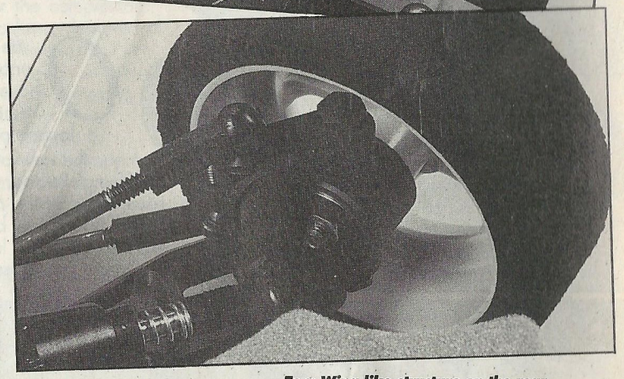
Not contented with a beautiful bodyshell, Yokomo have also provided a Lexan cockpit with a driver figure and instrument detail as well as plasic exhaust pipes and wing mirrors. The rear wing on the bodyshell is also seperate which, once assembled, makes the car look very realistic. Reflective stickers for the light clusters finish off a very attractive car.

Conclusion

In conclusion then, I feel that Yokomo have really gone to town on this car not only in appearances, but also in its technical abilities. All that's needed now is for some clubs to run these scale cars for them to take off in a big way. Along with the Tamiya scale cars such as the Jaguar XJR14 (which incidentally, Yokomo will be producing along with a Ferrari F1) and the NSX, this type of scale racing could be very enjoyable and addictive.

Well, lets be honest, this is the closest many of us will get to driving this type of car and I can't wait!!!





Top: Wing like structure on the rear of the car is actually a body mount. Above: Front wheels are attached to suspension via live axles. Bottom: A nice touch is the undertray which seals out a lot of the dirt. Below: Ingenious battery tray catch is revealed in this shot.