



Hirobo of Japan, has been well known for some time in 1/10 racing circles for its popular and well produced "Rock'n' City" four wheel drive kit.

They have now improved that kit and are marketing it under the name of "Zerda". It still follows the identical four-wheel guise as before, but they have redesigned specific areas to come up with an improved package all round.

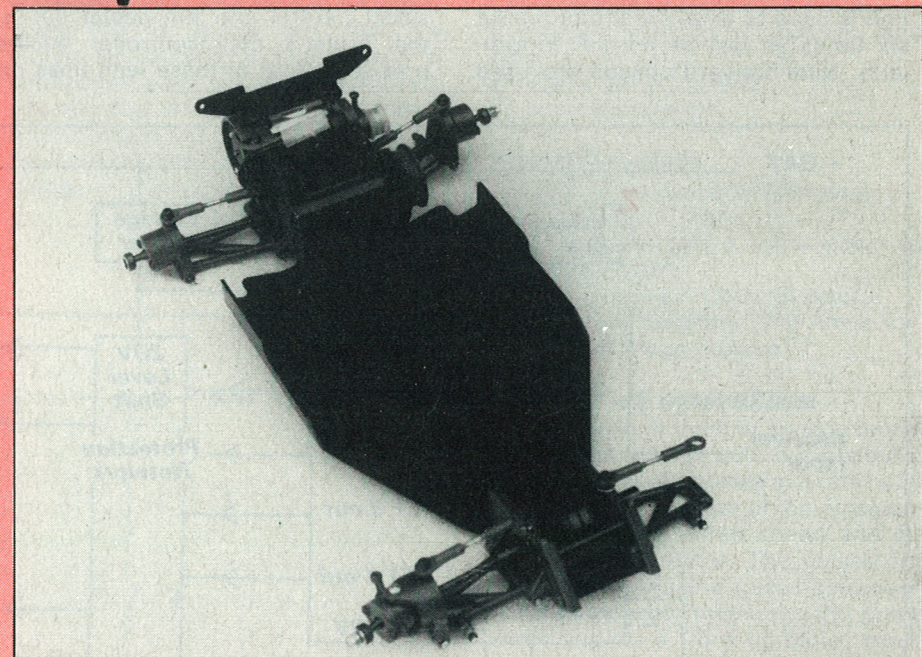
Its outer appearance has been greatly altered and no longer sports the traditional lexan body, but an injection moulded nylon rollcage, screwed to the chassis and to itself at the highest roll point, with snap-on cross members (too many kits like this in 1/10th and some of the lexan body moulders could get upset).

Although I have previously mentioned the "Rock'n' City", there are those amongst our new readers who have not encountered this model and so we will break down the "Zerda", so those interested can see what they get for their money.

Hirobo are so far the only 1/10th kit manufacturer who have followed the principle of utilising rubber toothed belts for all driving principles. Motor to layshaft, and front to rear differential drive.

Out of the box, the kit comes partly built with both front and rear differentials, rear drive train and belt tensioning along with main drive belt assembled on to the main chassis moulding.

Here we note the first major change from the Zerda's predecessor, the narrow alloy chassis being replaced by a

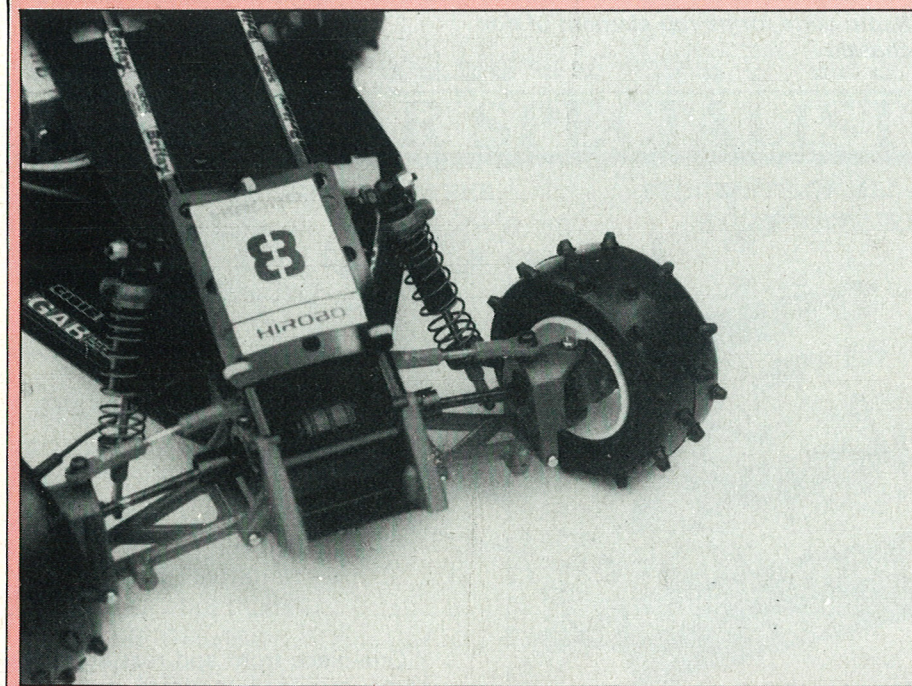


Radio, batteries and drive belt are well protected from dirt by a large skid pan type of chassis.

nylon moulding skid-pan style, protecting all aspects of the car both lengthwise and widthwise.

We have taken the trouble to remove one of the differentials, so that photographs could be taken for those interested in their workings. The photo shows that both diffs. are metal bevel gear style and judging by the very smooth running and no problem operation of those in our "Rock'n' City" kit, the buyer can rest assured that these parts will be the last to fail from harsh treatment.

Suspension both front and rear is by lower wishbone and single adjustable upper arm. Adjustments of these arms giving the driver the choice of negative through to positive camber. All parts are retained from the original kit with the exception of the upper arm ball joints which have been increased in size for greater strength and holding power. Also the king pin support moulding is now a one piece moulding, instead of the former two-piece assembly, which allowed for adjustment of steering castor.



The suspension has a sturdy lower wishbone with an adjustable length upper arm.

Unfortunately this provided a potentially weak area, because a side blow to the front wheel could cause the assembly to burst apart, releasing the drive shaft and turning your car into a Reliant lookalike.

All drive shafts are run in sealed bearings instead of oilite bushes. Incidentally all shafts throughout the kit run in bearings, thus adding to the car's overall performance when raced and help when the buyer is choosing his kit with thoughts towards value for money.

An interesting point to note is that all lower wishbones front and rear are identical mouldings, a plus point when considering replacing spare parts. The same principle applying to the adjustable suspension arms, driveshafts, stub axles and differentials.

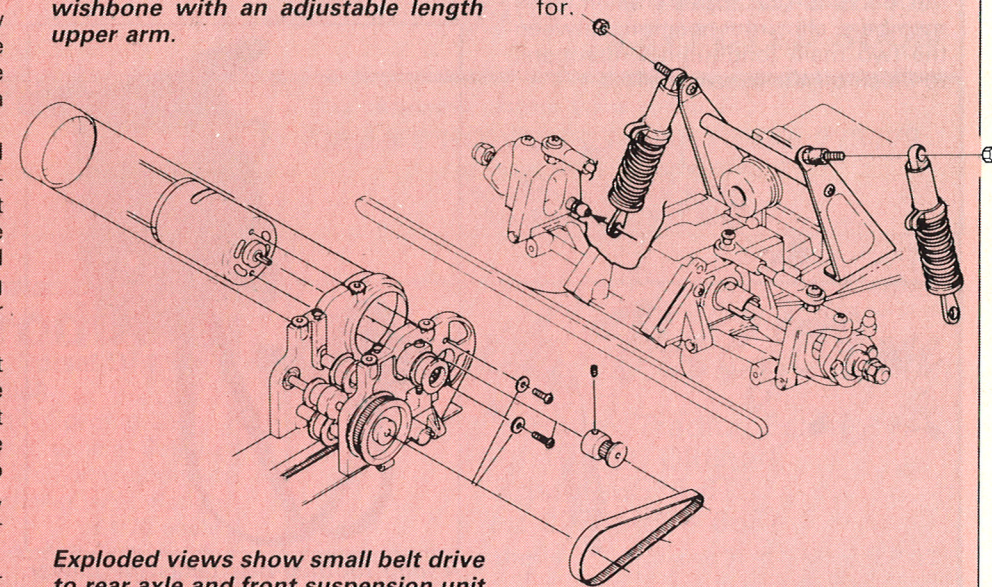
All four corners of the car are supported by oil filled coil over shock absorbers. Suitable shock absorber oil is supplied with the kit, but you can play around with oils to get the damping of your choice.

Spring rates on this kit are higher than its predecessor, and before being run and thus seeing the handling first hand, damping appears to be extremely good.

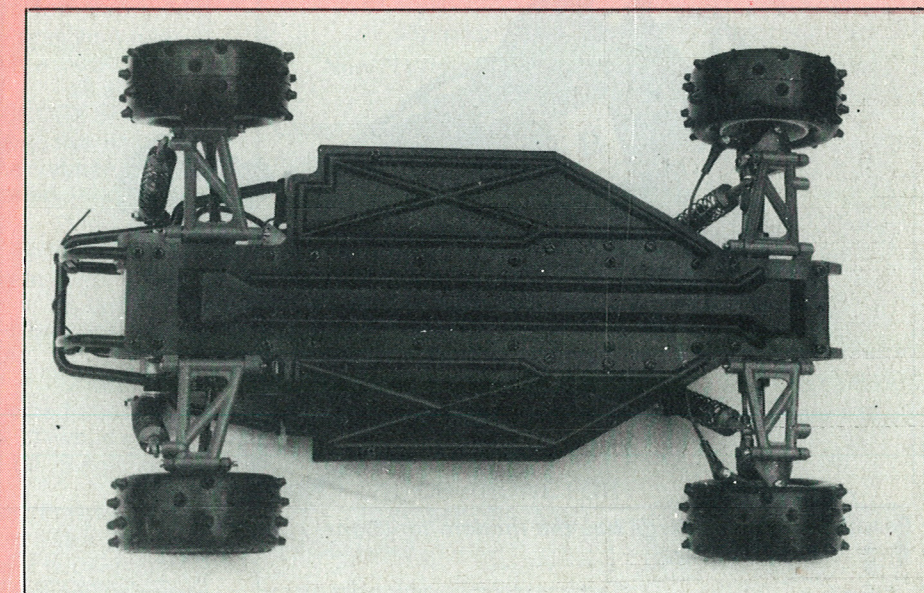
Ball joints screwed into the lower wishbone, act as location for the bottom of the shock absorbers and metal brackets screwed to the chassis and rear motor mount locate the top of the shocks.

To get to this stage of the build, is a relatively quick and simple affair and we can now turn our attention to fitting out all steering and radio gear.

Underside view of the chassis, showing the moulded ribs that give the thin material its rigidity.



Exploded views show small belt drive to rear axle and front suspension unit fitting.



Provided in the kit is a servo saver for direct servo steering. In our case we chose to stick with our Kimbrough servo saver on a Futaba 30M servo, and finish off the steering with adjustable track rods provided.

Breaking from earlier tradition, Hirobo have now slung the batteries transverse on a moulded platform screwed to the chassis, instead of longitudinally in a radio box. How this may affect handling remains to be seen.

A Kydex radio plate fits between front and rear bulkheads, cut outs for servo and switch being provided. Although provided in the kit is a printed circuit speed controller along with full wiring harness, we decided to put into use a new Ashbourne Technology electronic speed controller.

This piece of equipment was shoe horned into the space between batteries and drive train and proved very simple to set up. A discussion with the manufacturers helped define the area of the market Ashbourne are catering for.