

FOCUS ON Radio Control

by Dennis McFarlane

Two Airplanes are Better Than One

A high-wing trainer and a low-wing sport airplane all in one box

The idea of taking a stable high-wing airplane and flipping the fuselage upside down to turn the airplane into a more maneuverable sport aircraft is nothing new. Most likely one of the more popular designs chosen for this kit-bashing was the “stick.” All a modeler had to do to convert a stick was to turn the fuselage upside down and change the location of the landing gear and rudder. This was such a popular conversion that around 1970 Midwest Products took its Sweet Stick, redrew the plans and renamed the aircraft the Sweet & Low Stick, thereby maximizing the company’s initial investment. Recently there have been a few novelty releases available to dealers where a customer could



The Switch is packaged in a molded foam container that prevents parts from shifting and resulting damage.

assemble a couple of different models using the components in one box, but these are aimed primarily at the indoor pilot and experimenter.

The Flyzone Switch is entirely different. Flyzone engineers have designed the airplane so that as a modeler’s flying skills advance all he needs to do to change the airplane design is to “switch” the location of the wing and the style of the canopy. Mounting locations for the wing spar are pre-molded into both the lower half of the fuselage and the high-wing trainer canopy. This is an extremely clever idea that literally provides two completely different looking and flying style in one box.

The Switch is packaged in fairly large, art-deco appearing box. The artwork does not jump out and scream “buy me on impulse” but rather subtly, yet positively, draws the customer’s attention. The front of the box shows two photos of the Switch, both the high-wing trainer version and the



low-wing sport aircraft. The side panels continue with photos of the two configurations along with a further description of the model. The back panel is used to describe the contents. A handle is included, a nice touch a purchaser will appreciate when he needs to carry the airplane to his car.

Upon opening the box the purchaser will find the Switch packaged in what is quickly becoming a standard molded container. The engineers must spend at least as much time developing the container as they do designing the airplane. Each individual component fits snugly into a compartment molded into the container. No movement of the contents is possible during shipping, so any resulting damage will be minimized. Everything needed, except for a screwdriver to attach the landing gear and canopy along with a small wrench to mount the propeller to the motor, is provided.

The Switch is molded out of the company’s Aerocell EP or expanded polystyrene foam. This material has been used on a number of previous Flyzone offerings and is quite durable. With a wingspan of 45 inches and a length of 42 inches, the airplane is a “square” platform, a layout proven over the years to be stable in pitch. Power is supplied by a .10 Super Tiger brushless electric motor that, for the more technical reader, translates into a 35-30-1250 kV power plant. The radio included is a 4-channel Tactic 2.4 GHz system. The transmitter is full-size and features digital trims along stick gimbals that are so smooth they rival many much more expensive systems. Another nice feature of all



The low-wing, sport version of the Switch provides much more performance out of the same airplane.

Tactic transmitters is the wireless trainer system.

The assembly of the Switch couldn't be any easier. The manual is written clearly with a number of photographs to assist the builder. Other than four screws needed to mount the landing gear, a nut that holds the propeller in place on the motor and a screw for the canopy, the entire airplane is held together with carbon fiber spars and rare-earth magnets.

Magnets have been used in any number of applications on model airplanes in the past. Items such as removable canopies and hatches are frequently held in place by rare-earth magnets, but I'm not aware of any previous offerings where the wings and tail empennage are locked in place with magnets. Any apprehensions that may have been felt quickly dissolved, as when the surfaces were slipped onto their respective spars, one could feel a tug and then a reassuring "snap" as the surface seated.

From opening the box until a completed model was in hand required less than 30 minutes. Another benefit of this system of assembly is the removal and replacement of damaged components. Repairs involving parts replacement can be measured in seconds, not hours. Customers need to be informed of the readily available replacement parts and the



The high-wing, trainer version of the Switch is a delight to fly. This setup provides a stable and gentle platform for a new student to learn about R/C flight.

ease of repair. Such information can definitely be used as a selling point for this product.

Initially set up as a high-wing trainer, the Switch is very stable. From the factory, the surface throws are mechanically set to a minimum of deflection. This, along with the pendulum stability offered by the weight of the fuse hanging beneath the wing, makes for good trainer characteristics. By changing the location of the wing spar and the canopy style on top of the fuselage, the air-

plane was switched from a trainer to a sport airframe. The wing is the same, but the pendulum effect of the hanging fuselage is lost and the airplane instantly becomes more maneuverable. I would never suggest this, or any other product, be sold without the recommendation of an instructor pilot, but as a trainer the Switch performed admirably. The same can be said of the Switch in the sport airframe layout. This is airplane is both easy to build and a lot of fun to fly. Plus, it simply looks good, both on the ground and in the air.

From its method of assembly to the two airplanes in the same box packaging, the Flyzone Switch is a unique product that offers your customers a combination of durability, versatility and agility. **HM**

AXETM

CX Nano

Ready-to-Fly Electric
2.4GHz Nano-Sized Helicopter

Amazing value in a palm-sized machine.

With its long list of great features, the Axe CX Nano blows away all other helis in its price range. And no other comparably equipped heli comes close to the Axe CX Nano in affordability. It's the best of both worlds!

- Heading hold gyro for exceptional stability
- Pivoting blade grips for added durability
- Flight times of up to 10 minutes
- 4 exciting colors to choose from

Length: 6.3 in (160 mm) Weight: 1.37 oz (39 g)

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