

FOCUS ON

Radio Control

by Dennis McFarlane

Blitzing the Competition

Taming any track is easy with the Blitz Maxxis' powerful motor and fully adjustable suspension.

Off-road racing has been a widely enjoyed high-speed racing series for decades. The first off-road races were envisioned in the early 1960's with the still-popular Baja 1000 desert race run across the length of the Baja peninsula. What is now referred to as Short Course or SC racing began in 1983 when Mickey Thompson instituted a series of stadium races by converting unused sports arenas into off-road venues. Today, the majority of off-road racing is done on purpose-built



The Blitz chassis is a molded composite design with plenty of extra webbing used in high stress areas for strength and resistance to flexing.

tracks. Many notable drivers have participated in off-road racing over the years. Ivan "the iron man" Stewart, Walker Evans, Parnelli Jones and even the late actor Steve McQueen all had a passion for off-road racing. There are a number of sanctioning bodies for SC racing, but currently the two most dominant are TORC and Lucas Oil.

Whenever there is a full-scale series that is as popular as SC racing, scale radio control vehicles are certain to follow. The Hobby Products International or HPI-Racing Blitz Maxxis is one of the new breed of SC racing trucks.

The Blitz is representative of a 2W Drive truck. Designed in 1/10 scale, the truck is based on a composite tub-style chassis with a molded battery tray. The suspension system is also molded composite that uses extra webbing at the mounting points for additional strength and stiffness. The shocks are oil filled and completely

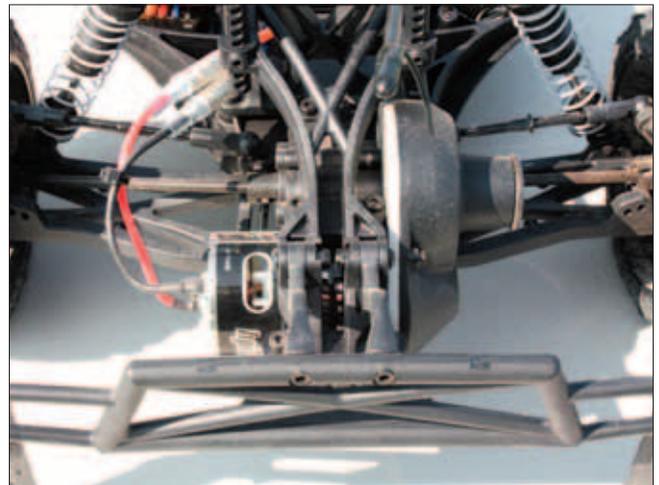


adjustable. Actually, the entire suspension system is adjustable. HPI-Racing states in its manual that the Blitz has the most tunable suspension system currently available on a RTR or Ready-to-Run SC truck.

Power is supplied through the use of a 15-turn brushed electric motor. A slipper clutch transmission keeps things simple while the rear differential uses all metal gears for strength. Ball bearings are used throughout the suspension and drive system. There are no bushings to upgrade at a later time. The tires are unique as they are licensed duplicates of the Maxxis Trepador off-road racing tire. The tread pattern and sidewall markings are scale. These are mounted in turn on satin chrome rims with simulated "clincher" rings.

From the factory the Blitz is set up soft and neutral. These settings are best for the newcomer to radio control vehicles as they allow the most control. Driving with the factory settings is a lot of fun. The vehicle is fast out of the box and completely predictable. On smooth sand, there was a bit of sway in the rear end, but this can easily be adjusted later.

Included with the Blitz is a two-channel wheel style radio system that operates on 27MHz. Also included is a bag containing the tools needed for maintenance and a host of parts that are used to fine tune the vehicle. Items



Power is transferred from the 15-turn motor through a slipper clutch and metal gear differential.

such as valves for the shocks and a variety of spur gears are all part of the package.

Needed beyond the initial purchase is a minimum 3000 MAh 7.4 volt chassis battery, a charger for the chassis battery and eight AA batteries for the transmitter.

There is a whole lot of power available, and your customers' goal is to apply this power to the ground. The first order of business was to set the slipper clutch. The adjustment nut was turned in one quarter turn at a time until application of throttle caused the rear to squat and the front suspension to unload, but with the tires staying in contact with the ground. This gives the best "launch."

Tuning the suspension was next. The manual is printed in five languages and is 47 pages long. It does a complete job of explaining the operation of the Blitz, with six pages devoted to chassis and suspension adjustments and how each adjustment will affect handling characteristics.



Out of the box, on smooth sand, the Blitz wanted to sway a little, but this was easily tuned by using the host of chassis adjustments available for this purpose.

Personally, I prefer a stiff suspension. When I set up a vehicle I set the suspension as tight as possible while still allowing all four tires to stay in contact with the ground. If the truck begins to bounce and hop on bumps, I would loosen the suspension just until this stops. Camber is set to allow the front tires to be in full contact with the road based on the height and stiffness of the suspension set-



The Blitz is capable of jumping over any number of obstacles and landing without damage. The nose down attitude shown here was adjusted by moving the battery from the front to the rear of the battery tray. This made landings after the jump more horizontal.

tings. Caster adjustments are made by taking into consideration track layout and steering response needed. I also set a little toe-in on the front tires. This creates drag thereby reducing speed, but it also stabilizes a vehicle that's a bit sensitive to steering input.

Although there are definite guidelines to tuning a suspension, there are also an infinite number of driving styles. While these settings might be all wrong for another driver, they offer me the most consistent lap times when driving an off-road truck. The Blitz allows adjustment for all styles of driving. As the company states, it is a very tunable truck.

The Blitz is also offered as a build-it-yourself kit. Locally the Blitz ESE #104558 is at least as popular as the RTR version. The ESE comes with many of the available upgrades such as aluminum shocks, but it is up to customers to supply all the electronics and the time and skill necessary to complete the assembly.

HPI-Racing has raised the bar on off-road SC trucks another notch. Out of the box the vehicle is completely controllable, allowing confidence to build as experience is gained. And the fully tunable suspension is proving to be popular with customers both new to radio control vehicles and those who are more experienced. **HM**

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