

QUICK SPEC

Manufacturer Traxxas USA
Type 4WD Brushless Rally Car
Part No TD102004
Price £339.99
www.logicrc.com

Scale 1/16th
Power 4WD Electric
Length 356 mm
Width 185 mm
Weight 964 kg
Wheelbase 206 mm
Gear Ratio 5.04:1
Drive Ratio 8.10:1



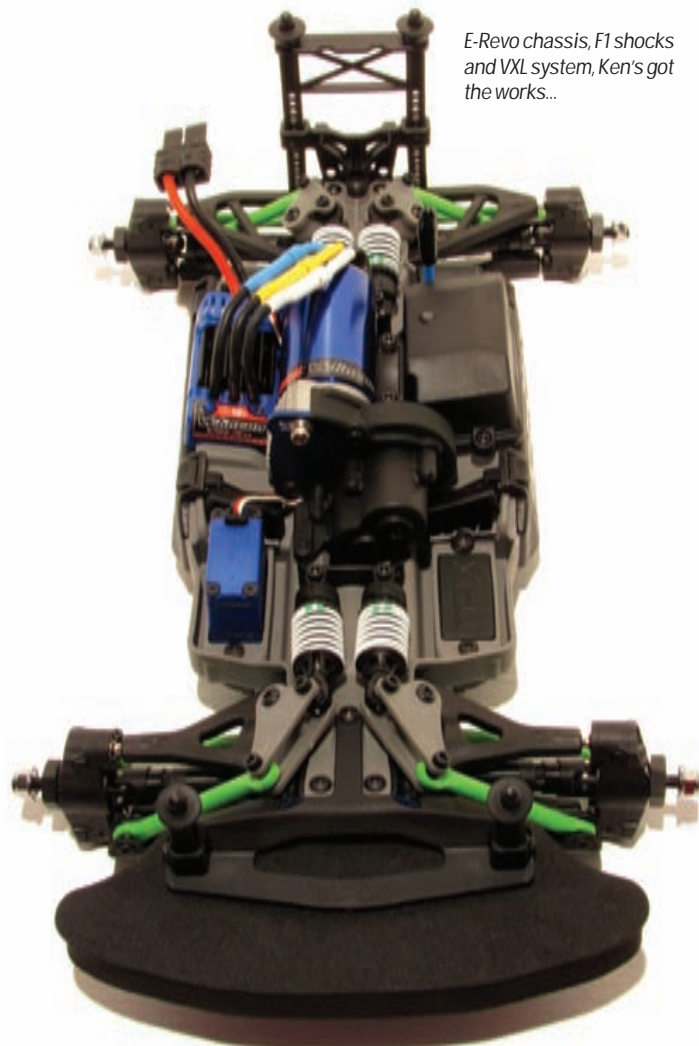
DRIVING LIKE A HOONIGAN!

OK, so if you've read the last two issues of RRCi you may have thought we've gone a little Ken Block Crazy this end... but there is good reason for this and it's not just the amazing new Codemasters Dirt3 game that by the time you read this will be keeping my Xbox 360's laser busy every evening when I'm not putting the mag together!

No, what really got us buzzing wasn't even drinking too much Monster Energy, but a little 1/16th rally car that has a very big attitude...

“It is in fact the first evolution from the stock Traxxas Rally we first reviewed what seems like ages ago for the January issue. If you are familiar with the Gymkhana viral videos on YouTube then you will immediately recognise the car.”





E-Revo chassis, F1 shocks and VXL system, Ken's got the works...

No 43 in a skull? Couldn't be anyone else now could it!

COME IN NO 46 YOUR TIME HAS COME...

It is in fact the first evolution from the stock Traxxas Rally we first reviewed what seems like ages ago for the January issue. If you are familiar with the Gymkhana viral videos on YouTube then you will immediately recognise the car. If what I just said made no sense to you whatsoever, and you don't know who Ken Block is, then you need to watch them now! They are still some of the most talked about videos ever on YouTube and well deserved that fact is.

Brand loyalty is huge in the world of motor sport and the Monster brand is (pun intended) massive! By teaming up and sponsoring some of the most iconic drivers, riders, skaters and surfers in the world of extreme sports they have ensured that they are not seen as just another energy drinks company, they have a brand that the moment you see the logo emblazoned onto any type of vehicle or product you know something really exciting is about to happen.

The original Rally review car is probably our most run review car ever. It's just so much fun to drive and has put a huge smile on the face of anyone that's had a go with it. Whatever the on road surface, it just

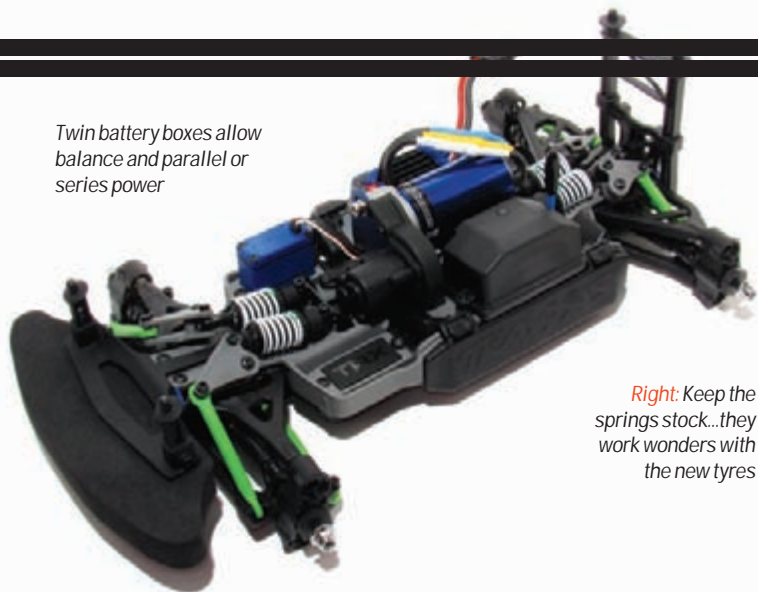
works. The lessons we learnt running the first car have put us in good stead to get the most out of this new Ken Block Edition, and it's also given Traxxas time to add a few extra touches, both cosmetic (in the form of the coolest replica shell I've seen for ages) and bring out some performance and durability enhancing hop ups.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

After running the first car now for almost four months of full on 'Hooning', the first thing I noticed different is the tread and compound of the tyres. Gone are the hard compound almost Drift-Spec items with



Twin battery boxes allow balance and parallel or series power



Right: Keep the springs stock...they work wonders with the new tyres



Right: The side you won't want to see very often...unless you're cleaning it!

"Gone are the hard compound almost Drift-Spec items with their 45 degree angled tread pattern. In comes an almost racing slick looking softer compound that lets you feed more power on in a straight line"

their 45 degree angled tread pattern. In comes an almost racing slick looking softer compound that lets you feed more power on in a straight line, but also break traction and perform a controlled drift at the top of the brakes and by modulating the throttle. Don't forget that this isn't a drift car that's more likely to be driven at relatively lower speeds in a more graceful driving style. This is a full-on, high speed four wheel drive rally experience designed to offer balanced and predictable handling and executed in the words of a certain much missed Colin McRae:

"If In Doubt...Drive Flat Out"

The really nice thing is that Ken was awarded the 'Colin's Crest' award at the rally of Sweden earlier this year for the most impressive jump over that particular crest. It proves that even now he is still influencing the next generation of drivers to go big when it's called for (and even sometimes when it isn't!).

KEEP IT STOCK

In our original review I suggested that a good mod was to add a complete set of the 1/16th E-Revo Spings. These are just a little longer than the ones provided and seemed to make the handling a little more

Paint drips, Monster slashes, DC logos it's a Hoonigan's dream!



responsive both on and off the power. While I do still stand by my past suggestion, if using the original car and its harder tyres with the Ken Block Edition I've found the stock set-up and springs work perfectly together. When I did swap them over to the longer E-Revo items what I experienced was massive under steer on the power and pretty unsettled handling. This proves to me the pre-production testing that this model has gone through really paid off and that all Traxxas have done in reality is refine an already very well thought out original package.

KEEPING THINGS PARALLEL

Another finding from our first review was that the two optional leads that Traxxas offer giving either parallel or series connections to a second cell were both not needed. The parallel lead feeds an ample 7.2 V through the car's VXL brushless system, and believe you me the 30 mph it produces in this configuration, especially for a car of 1/16th is more than ample for most situations. This also has the advantage of in one hit doubling the capacity and run time to in excess of

twenty minutes, and if not being too trigger happy (or if the ESC is set to child friendly 'Training Mode')...possibly over thirty minutes of sideways power sliding fun!

If connected in series, yes I will admit the car does instantly get a bonkers 45 mph+ top speed, and can be geared to go a little higher with the included pinion and run on LiPo cells for speed runs, but in extensive testing I found that in series it had three distinct drawbacks.

Firstly, the run time is reduced significantly as the car is seeing just one smaller capacity pack, just at a much higher voltage and cell count. Secondly, the series connector actually encourages you to 'overdo it' and holding the car in



Rear of the year 2011...it's gonna be hard to beat!

high voltage, full throttle passes does generate lots of heat and eventually lead to the ESC thermalling.

Thirdly and this is perhaps the most important...the car just works perfectly as it is on 7.2 V, and dare I say it in this age of LiPo powered cars I actually prefer the way it drives with the extra weight low down that a pair of stock Traxxas NiMH's bring to the table. Anything above this is just wasted as you can't really utilise all that extra power or put it to good use once in a drift or transition between them.

TWIN SERVOS?

I thought I would try an experiment with the Ken Block and install the optional second steering servo that's become a trademark of some Traxxas models, especially anything derived from a Revo like the Fiesta. So I duly took out the steering servo from the first review car and installed it with the correct linkage to the new car. No 'Y' lead is required as the 2.4 GHz receiver has two steering channel ports as standard!

I powered up the car and immediately felt the steering was more responsive and even felt quicker. Logic dictates that by adding a second servo the loads are shared and so in effect halved, and the torque is in effect doubled. All was well until I hit the second corner marker on my chosen test area for the day. Then the radio dropped out, and it

The sturdy motor mount acts as a passive heat sink too



seemed that power was momentarily lost. The car stopped, the radio came back online, steering re-set itself to neutral and I could continue again. Then three corners later and bang...it did it again! I immediately thought it was a voltage issue and disconnected the second servo again, and removed

The VXL motor is a 380 can and can rev to 50,000 rpm on a 1/16th!



2.4 GHz as standard, note the twin channel 1 ports...for twin steering servos

the linkage. The car worked perfectly again. After running the two stick packs down until they lost punch I brought the car in and tried again with the twin servo set-up. I reduced the endpoints and dual rate to just allow sufficient lock to initiate a controlled drift in either direction without over stressing the servos and drawing more current than necessary. This was much better, and the car ran for far longer, but time after time the radio would drop out when maximum current draw was achieved, something that started to get really annoying!

I swapped to a pair of 2S Orion LiPos designed to fit straight into the car, Traxxas leads and everything. Put together in parallel the more stable and consistent power delivery they offered again seemed to help for a while but...a few corners in it was all stop.

The moral of the story is: if you do intend to run twin steering servos get an external BEC and power the receiver and steering directly from a feed off the main pack/packs. You will need to isolate the power wire from the ESC's receiver connector (something usually done by just pulling the red wire out of the 3 pin style connectors or cutting and insulating it and leaving the black and white intact) This then allows the ESC to be controlled by the receiver without actually powering it directly. It's the lack of Amps that usually affects things so make sure your chosen Battery Elimination Circuit is up for the job with a 5 A minimum limit!

PIVOT-BALL PERFORMANCE UPGRADE

Another item that long term testing has highlighted will benefit from a simple upgrade is the pivot balls' retaining caps. Even the most experienced driver will at some point have an off, hit a barrier, other car or worse possibly a kerb or three and I've found that the original pivot balls and their plastic caps can get loose, and even damaged with time. This has the effect of making the wheels seem baggy and loose and unsettling the handling when driving on the power (especially in a straight line). Traxxas now produce a performance upgrade part#7033X that

Tiny though they are, the planetary gear diffs can still be tuned with silicon oil



The diffs and slipper equipped tranny removed, everything's built tough

Telescopic driveshafts are a Traxxas favourite; they just work...and are as tough as nails!





replaces the plastic caps with Teflon coated and hard anodized metal versions that actually screw into the hub carriers with an included 5.0 mm Allen wrench, instead of being a press in fit plastic item.

Since doing the upgrade two months ago the review Ken Block Edition car has kept its pivot balls 100% stable pack after pack (OK, crash after crash!) whereas our original Rally needs regular TLC and the caps pushing back in with a flat bladed screwdriver! It's not an expensive upgrade and well worth the twenty minutes it takes to fit all eight.

My last and possibly simplest tip is to put some kind of tape inside each of the wheel arches. This is so that when running the car on smoother surface, you can dial off the pre-load, slam the ride height and avoid that lovely paintwork getting rubbed away by the tyres when the shocks compress fully. It's a bit like we do with Short Course shells due to their massive amounts of wheel and suspension travel.

MIMICKING THE MOVES

Now it's one thing having a car that lets you perform high speed drift moves, it's another being able to perform them with precision and around objects at will. At the recent National Indoor 4x4 show the RRCi demo squad put on a display of Trail Rigs, Rock Crawlers and high-flying Short Course action for the crowds.

During a lull between the demo's I took out the Ken Block, put out 8 Monster Energy cans as markers and spent a good twenty minutes 'Hooning Around' for the crowd. We had two massive 4 ft by 5 ft kicker ramps, sets of mini kickers placed 8 ft apart and even a crawl wall I could use as a bridge section and drift under and around. The first thing that someone shouted was 'That's Ken Block's Car!', and even with a crowd full of hardcore 4x4 fans the response was great and proves how many fans Ken has here in the UK.

I could drift with ease around each Monster can, perform figure eights, speed the entire length of the demo area and initiate a high speed sideways flyby for the crowd around each of the end markers. I did double donut burnouts in the square space between each of the mini kickers, linking them together to repeat the move in all four spaces. The most impressive was mimicking the Segway sequence from the Gymkhana video. This meant I had to drift around a moving object, but instead of a buddy on a Segway like Ken's video, I did it around a rock crawler driving slowly down the demo area! When it all went right the crowd loved it.

When it went wrong, or I clipped a ramp, knocked a can over or skidded into the barrier they loved it even more!

SPREAD THE WORD...R/C IS COOL AGAIN!

The car is being run with many others at a dedicated R/C track that RRCi are hosting at this year's Gadget Show Live event. It's intended as a snapshot of current trends and will show the crowds what's hot in 2011. By the time you read this the little Ken Block will have been used solidly for nearly a week. I'm 100% convinced that it will take everything we throw at it in its stride, and other than a little driver error (yes there's bound to be some!) will come out the other side with nothing more than worn tyres, and a bit of rug and barrier rash.

It's a car firmly set to excite a new generation of computer gaming and technology fans, skaters, BMXers and rally fans into the realisation that R/C is cool, and it's always been cool! Brand licensing, celebrity endorsements and replica shell aside, it's a great piece of iconic R/C technology and should be seen as that and not a gimmick.

If you want something fun, different, fast, waterproof and with possibly the coolest shell ever seen on a RTR car look no further. Buying one may be a little harder as they virtually sold out within days after the first drop in the UK, and on their release in the US. Logic RC assure me that another batch should hit the UK about the time this mag hits the shelves... just in time for everyone to practice their moves before this year's XGames!

If anyone out there has re-created the Gymkhana video with one of these beauties then drop us a line...and we can put it on the RRCi website for all the readers to see... I'm off to drink another can of the 'wake up juice' and go practice my skills with Mr Block! **RRCi**

TECHNICAL SPEC

REQUIRED TO COMPLETE

Additional NiMH pack (recommended)
4 x AA batteries for transmitter
Traxxas parallel connector

LIKES

Photorealistic Monster Gymkhana shell and Block livery
Traxxas quality and waterproof electronics
Minimal maintenance with VXL power
Well balanced and poised in use
50 mph capable... 30 mph stock!

DISLIKES

Stock pivot balls get 'baggy' after a crash
Electrics can thermal used hard in series
ESC BEC hates twin servo set-up

CONTACT

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