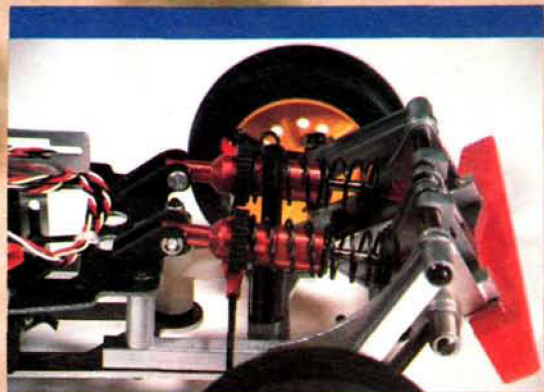
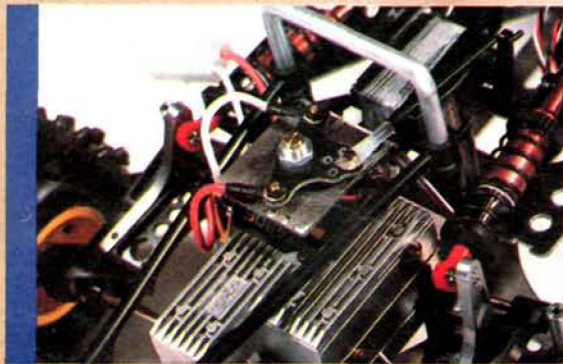


# Track Report

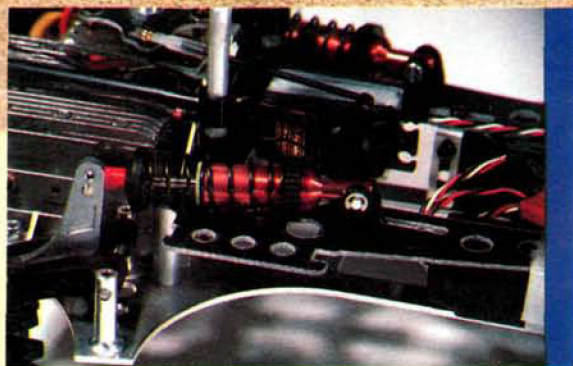
One tough R/C reptile!



Circus Hobbies

# Gator

by RICH HEMSTREET



**T**HERE ARE SO many off-road racers that it's hard to know which one to start with. Well, if you're just entering the sport, you should check out the Gator by AYK and distributed by Circus Hobbies\*. **THE KIT.** The Gator is a 1/10-scale off-road racer. The kit is complete except for a two-channel radio and a 7.2-volt battery pack. The 12-page instruction and assembly manual clearly lists which tools are required for assembly.

A clear Lexan body is included in the kit, along with a colorful decal

sheet for detailing the car after painting. The chassis is made of aluminum. The Gator has fully independent suspension and there are four large coil-over shocks, one at each wheel. Knobby rear tires and grooved front tires are supplied.

An AYK GZ 480B motor is standard with the car. The three-speed controller also has reverse. A sealed gear case protects the differential.

**ASSEMBLY.** When you open the box, you find the Gator almost fully assembled. However, don't stick your radio and battery in the car and run for the dirt. There is a warning attached to the parts diagram: "All screws and nuts are finger tight and should be tightened and secured" with a locking compound. I suggest Pacer's\* Zap Lock. While you should avoid shaking hands with whomever left those screws "finger tight," you can be sure that something will fall off if you skip this step. It takes a while to tighten the many screws, but this is far easier for a beginner than assembling a box full of seemingly-unrelated parts.

The shocks have to be removed from the car and disassembled so you can fill them with oil, which is included in the kit.

The instructions are very clear about installing the radio and hooking up the steering and throttle linkages. Universal brackets are included for mounting the steering servo.

The tires have to be glued to their wheel rims. You have to open the gear case to adjust the meshing of the gears, and you must also lubricate the gears at this time.

The Gator has bushings all around. If you keep them clean and oiled, they will perform almost as well as bearings. If you abuse your bushings, it's likely you would abuse bearings.

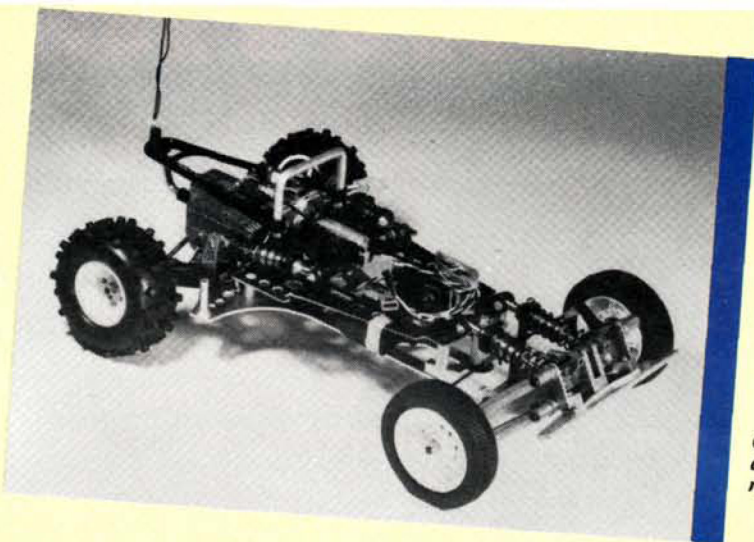
I wired the radio straight to the main power supply. There's no need for a separate receiver pack, which will only weigh the car down. Rather than using the receiver On/Off switch, I just plug the receiver in to turn it on.

The Lexan body was easy to paint and mount. There were plenty of decals to make for a colorful car.

**PERFORMANCE.** The car responds very well to the driver's input. The three-speed rheostat provides a very usable range of control.

The four shocks are all inboard so they are protected from damage and dirt accumulation. Each shock's coil spring rate can be adjusted separately. This is ideal so you can dial-in your handling very carefully.

The ride height in the front is also independently adjustable. If you are running an oval, you can drop the left front of the chassis and stiffen the right



*Gator comes pre-assembled. Note radio installation.*



*Knobby rear tires provided plenty of traction.*

side springs for better tracking through curves. You can also use the ride height adjustment to control oversteer and understeer to counteract changing track conditions, or when racing on different tracks. If you change the front ride height, realign the toe-in of the front tires.

The Gator is a solid car that should give the beginner a good starting point. While the suspension can be dialed in precisely, there are few adjusting points to deal with. The Gator will give you lots of fun for a small investment, as you learn how to tune a car for optimum performance. Speaking of performance, the Gator won't disappoint even a dyed-in-the-wool R/C speed freak. Acceleration is swift and the car is most responsive. It has exceptionally good traction when confronted with all those off-road nasties such as mud and deep sand, plus it handles jumps well.

So, you don't have to go to the Florida Everglades to get a tough 'gator, just order one from Circus!

*\*The following are addresses of companies mentioned: Circus Hobbies, 3132 S. Highland Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89109. Pacer, 1600 Dell Ave., Campbell, CA 95008.*