



*Optima
Custom*

Another LWB
Optima from
Kyosho – but
more Affordable!

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the model shop; just when you thought you knew where you stood; Just when you had made your mind up about what car to buy next. Then along comes Kyosho with another 'Mid'.

At least you can't say there isn't a choice. In fact most people have lost count of the number of different 'Mid' kits that have become available over the past 12 months. Pity the poor old model shop owner who has to figure out just what it is about the latest version that is so different. Imagine him running around the shop slapping the wrong prices on the boxes and selling 'Turbo' kits at 'Economy' prices (you wish).

Or think about the proud driver of a new 'Mid' - one week the talk of the club, the next on the receiving end of total apathy. Perhaps Kyosho could consider stamping a sell-by date on the kits so we know which ones to buy before they go off.

Whatever the solution the fact of the matter is that we have a new 'Mid', the 'Custom', to think about and compare with the major players in the ever-popular 4-wheel drive buggy scene. The 'Custom' is (thank God) an economy car offering a neat range of features but as a lower cost compared to the high-tech, mega buck machines currently destroying a race track near you.

What's included

Basically the 'Custom' is a cheaper version of the celebrated long wheelbase, saddle pack 'Mid' which arrived at the end of last

year. The basic design is common to all 'Mids' and stems from the original car which did not win the 1987 World Championships.

Wow! Here's a thought. Perhaps Kyosho are trying to milk the 'Mid' design for all

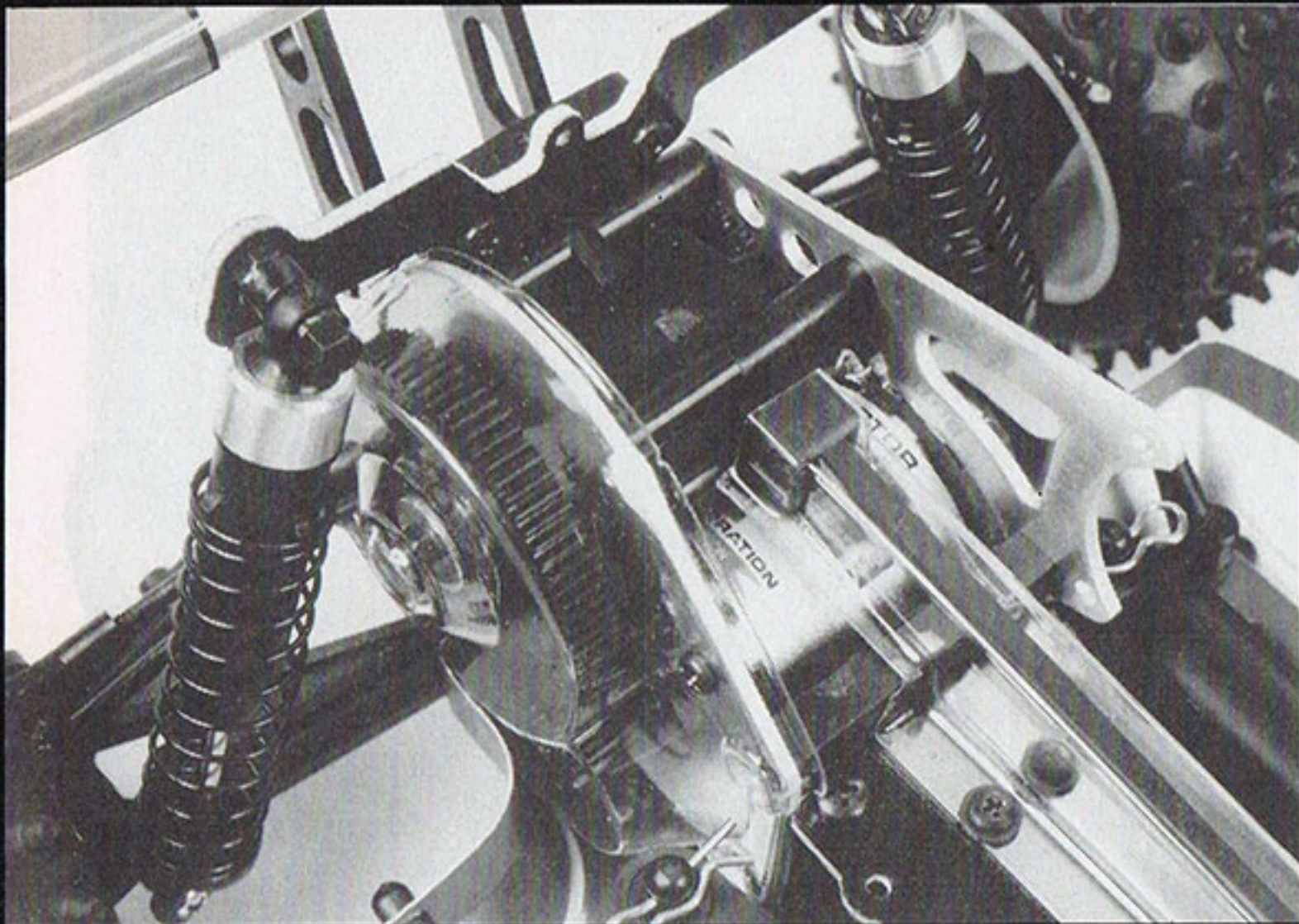
it's worth before they bring out a totally new car to compete at the Australian World Championships being held later on this year, but for now let's look at what we've got.

The 'Custom' has a lot

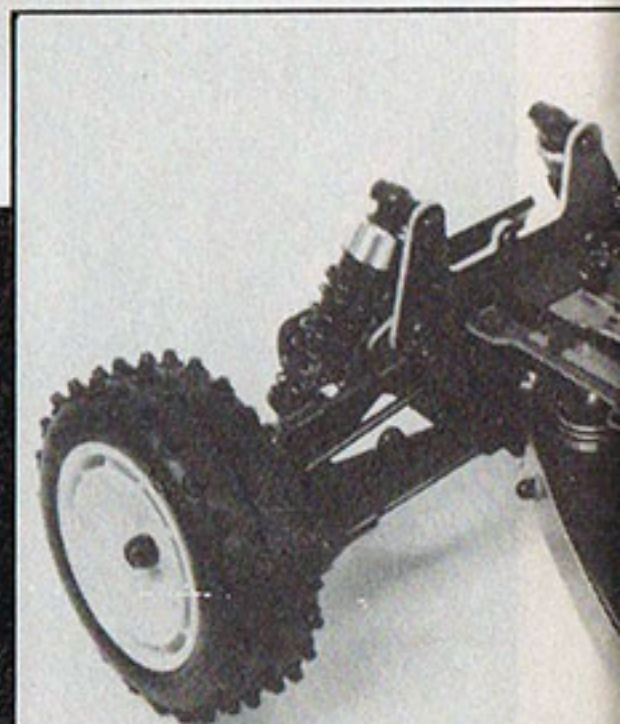
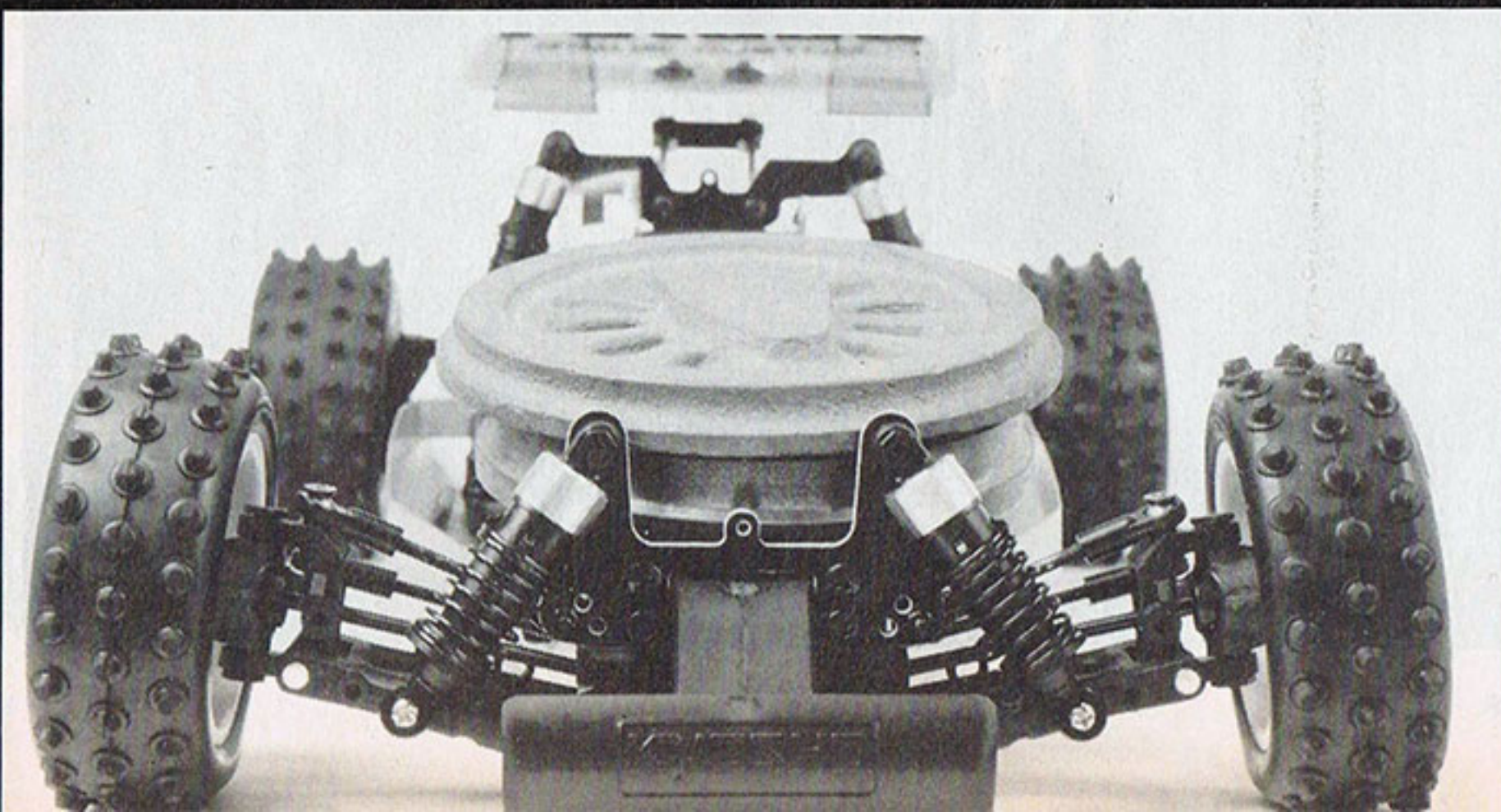
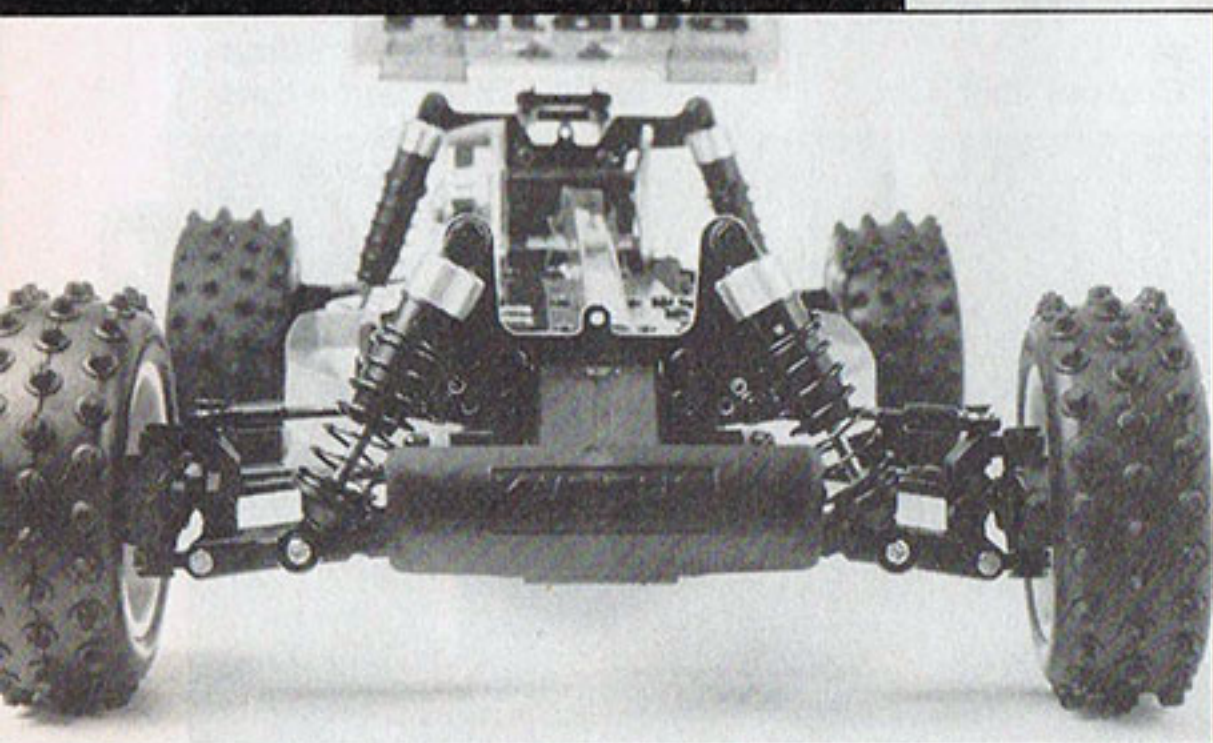
going for it. Just as we said earlier the 'Mid' has been around for some time but that at least means it is a proven design, race-tested and reliable in the extreme. Kyosho have been refining the basic car for some time



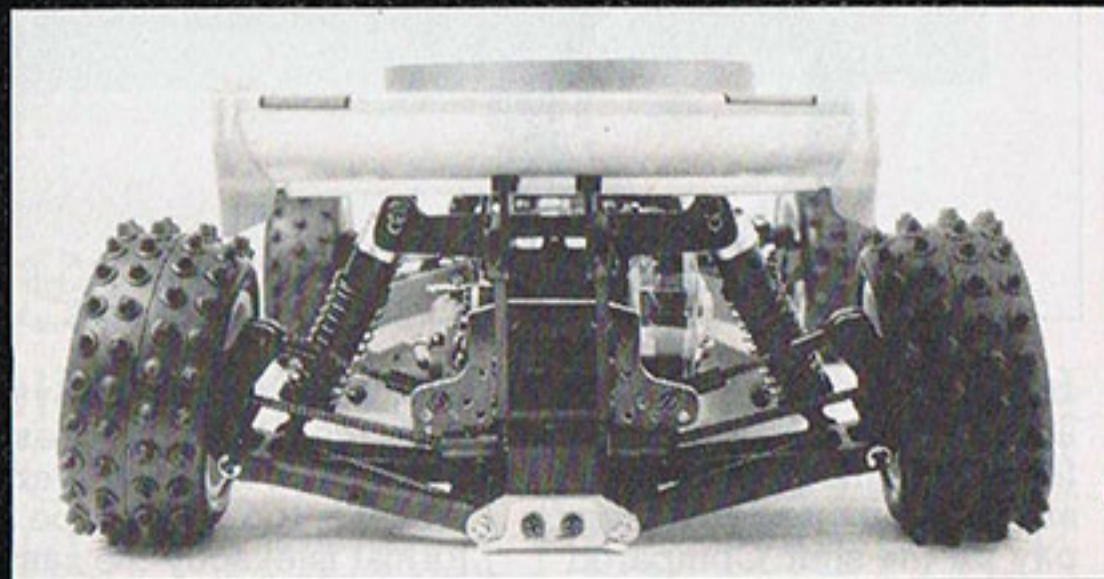
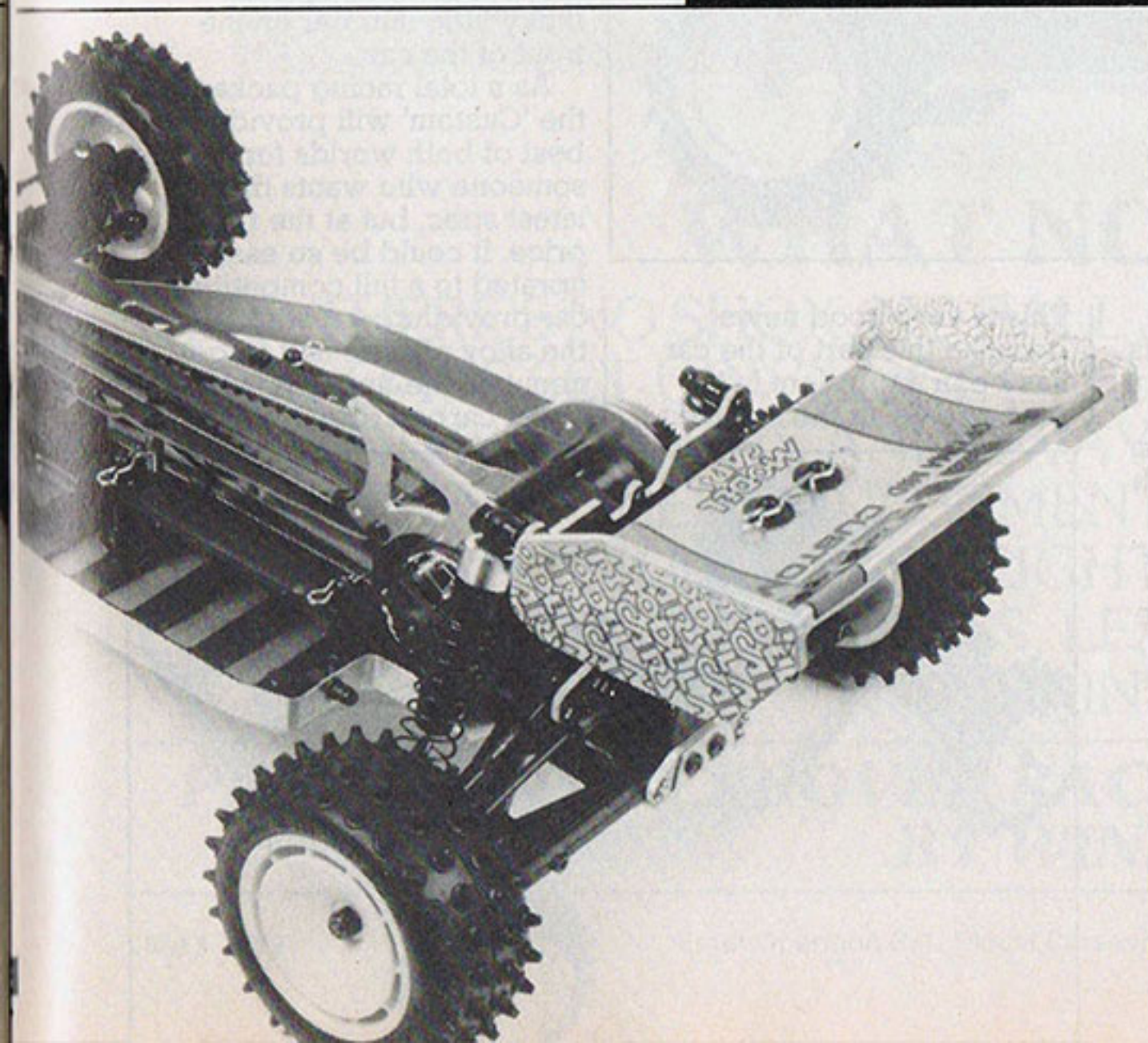
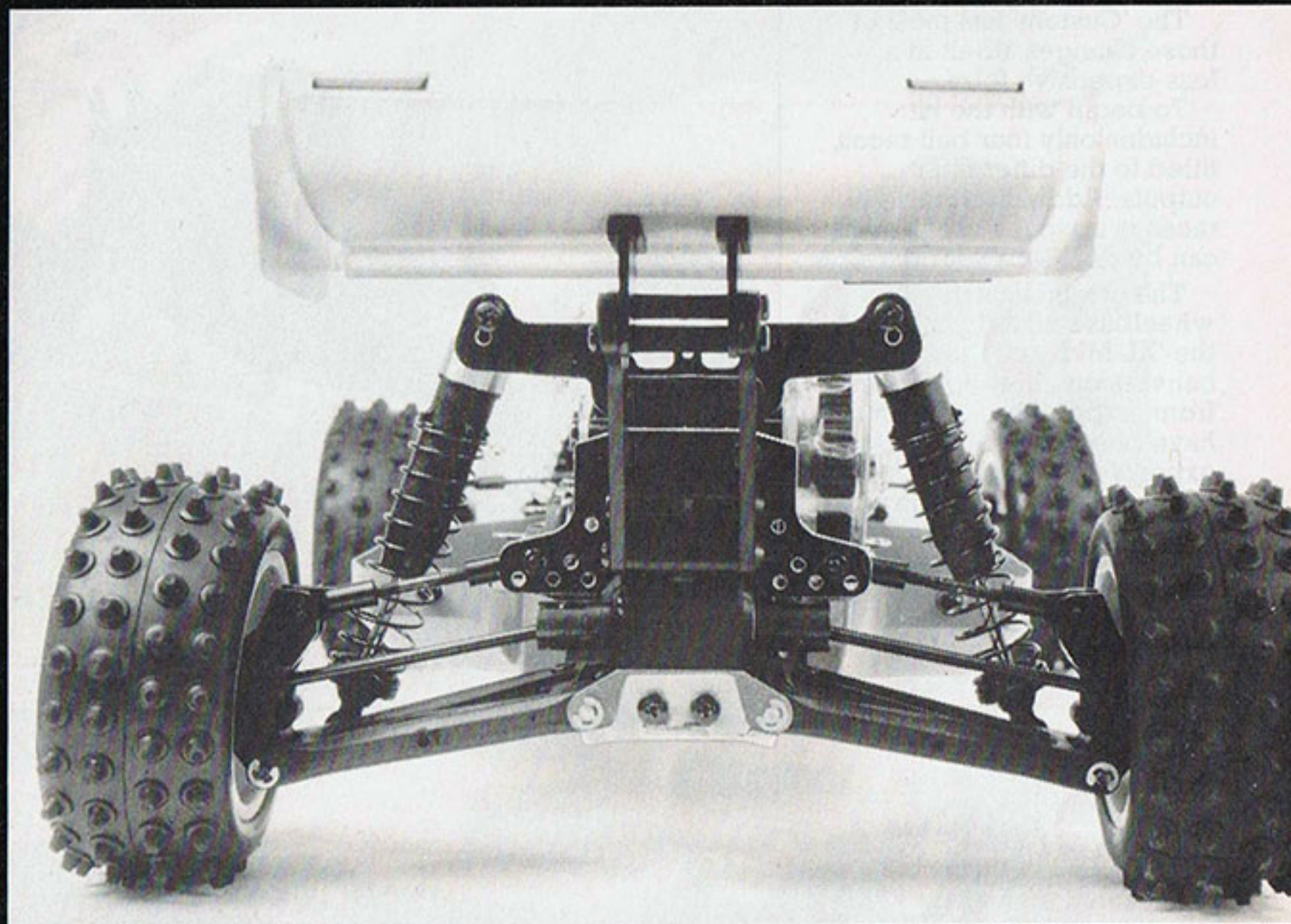
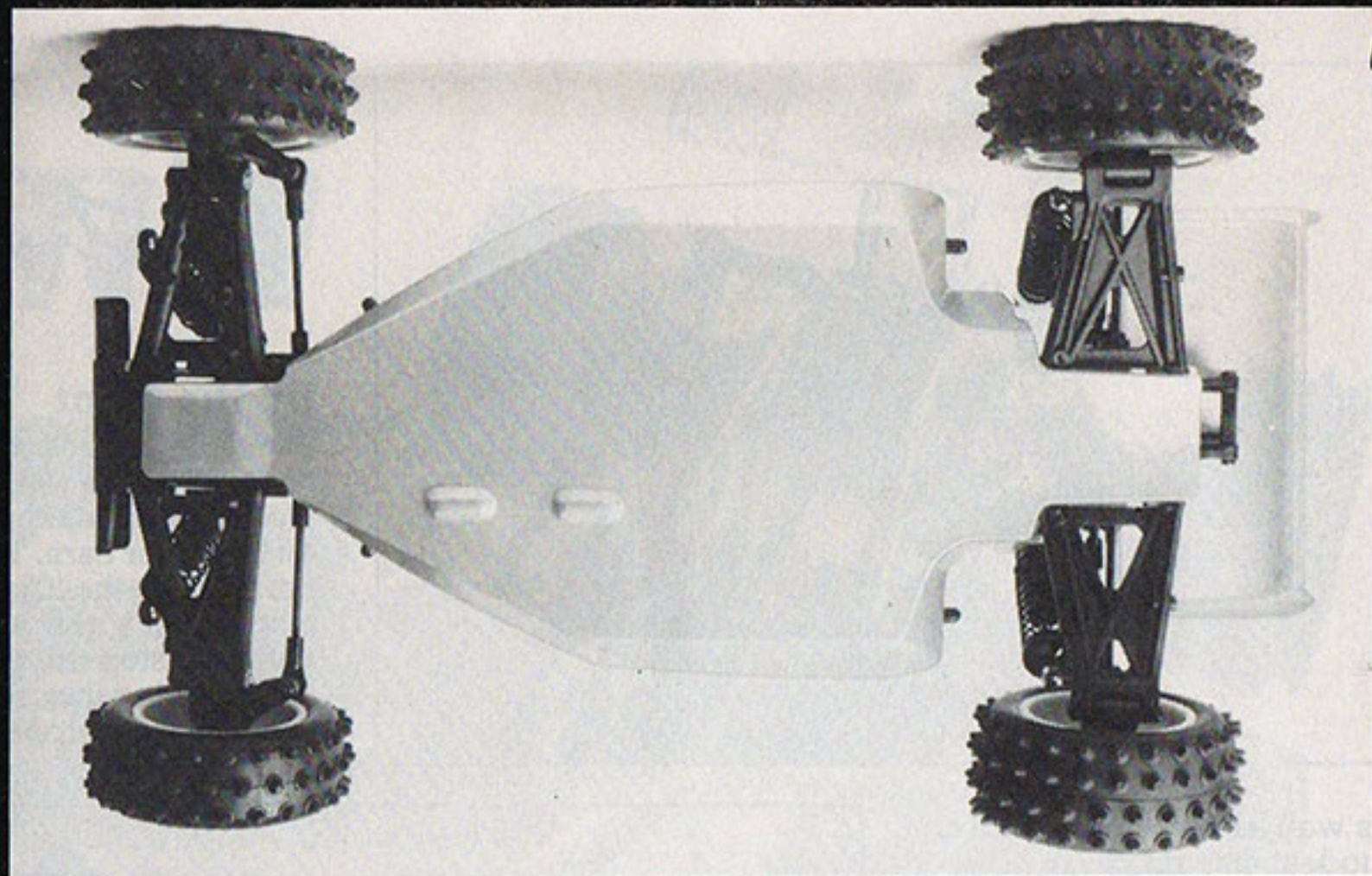
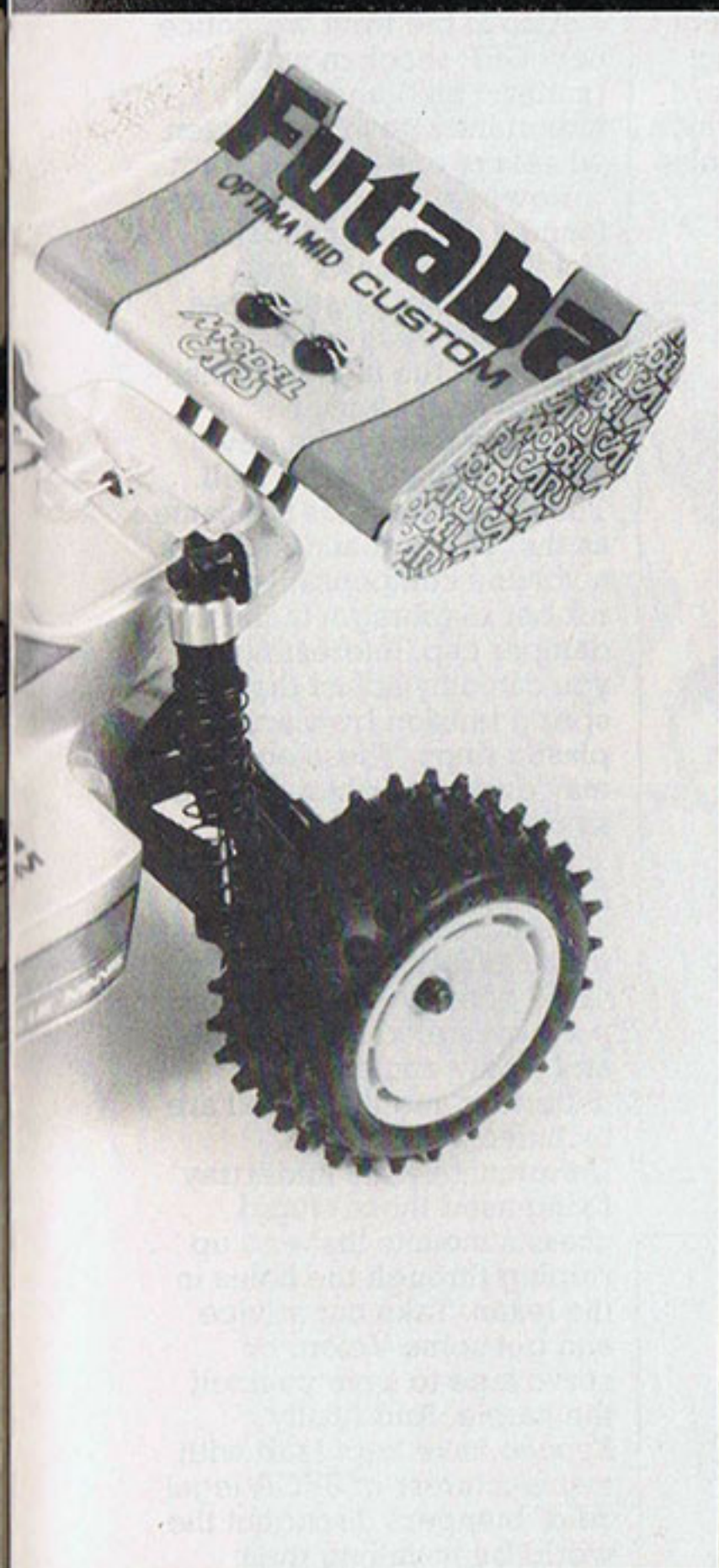
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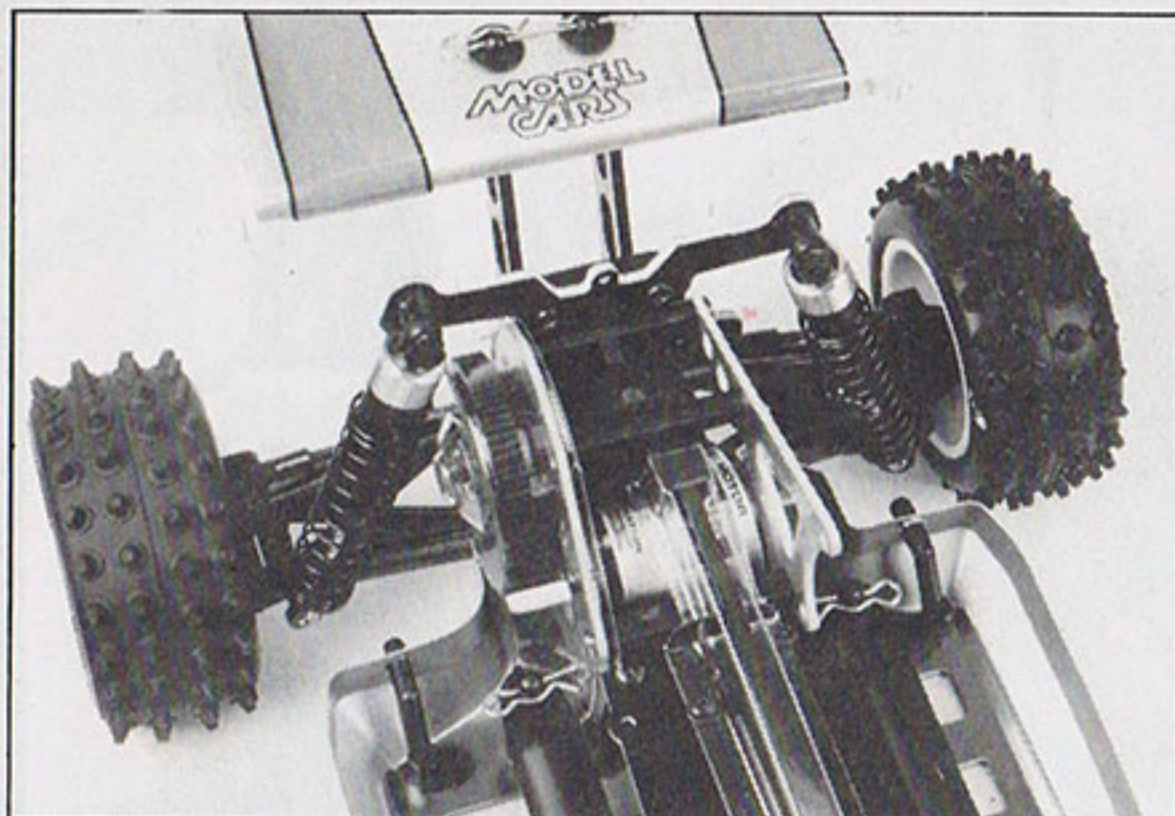
Top: 48 dp gears as standard. Below: The mini-bumper still included works OK but is a bit small. Bottom: Plastic shocks actually work very well but are fiddly to adjust ride height. Centre: Smart bodyshell/undertray combination.



Custom



Top: Smooth underneath of undertray - keeps internals mud free. Centre: Rear suspension has long travel. As can be seen from above. Left: Saddle pack or stick is catered for - note neat wing mount is also included.



Optima Custom

Up the front

Meanwhile, back at the front of the 'Custom' we find a welcome little improvement on the other cars. The front uprights on the 'Custom' are made from a new alloy which will help stop the pivot bolts from coming unscrewed and/or being ripped out.

of the day when after four minutes. 30 seconds have been spent in the lead. If it's better it must be good.

Also at the front we notice new GRP shock mounts (super - eh?) and more importantly new, slim green wheels of one-piece design.

However at both ends are found a change of shocks. Not 'Option House,' not 'Platinum' but plastic types with smart alloy caps.

Despite the fact that these are obviously a main economy feature the new shocks actually work well. The basic design is the same as the 'OH' sort and includes a volume compensating rubber diaphragm in the damper cap. Interestingly you can only adjust the spring tension by placing in plastic rings. These shocks may even be lighter as well as cheaper.

The rest of the 'Custom' package is fairly straightforward. *Le Mans* 540 motor and speed controller, 48DP gears in the gearbox, pre-assembled differentials and a fully enclosed undertray and bodyshell are included as standard. Unfortunately the undertray fixing used those stupid chassis mounts that end up ripping through the holes in the lexan. Take our advice and get some Velcro or servo tape to save yourself the hassle. And finally, Kyosho have kept faith with manufacturers of BRCA legal 'Mid' bumpers throughout the world by installing their dinky little number on the front of the car.

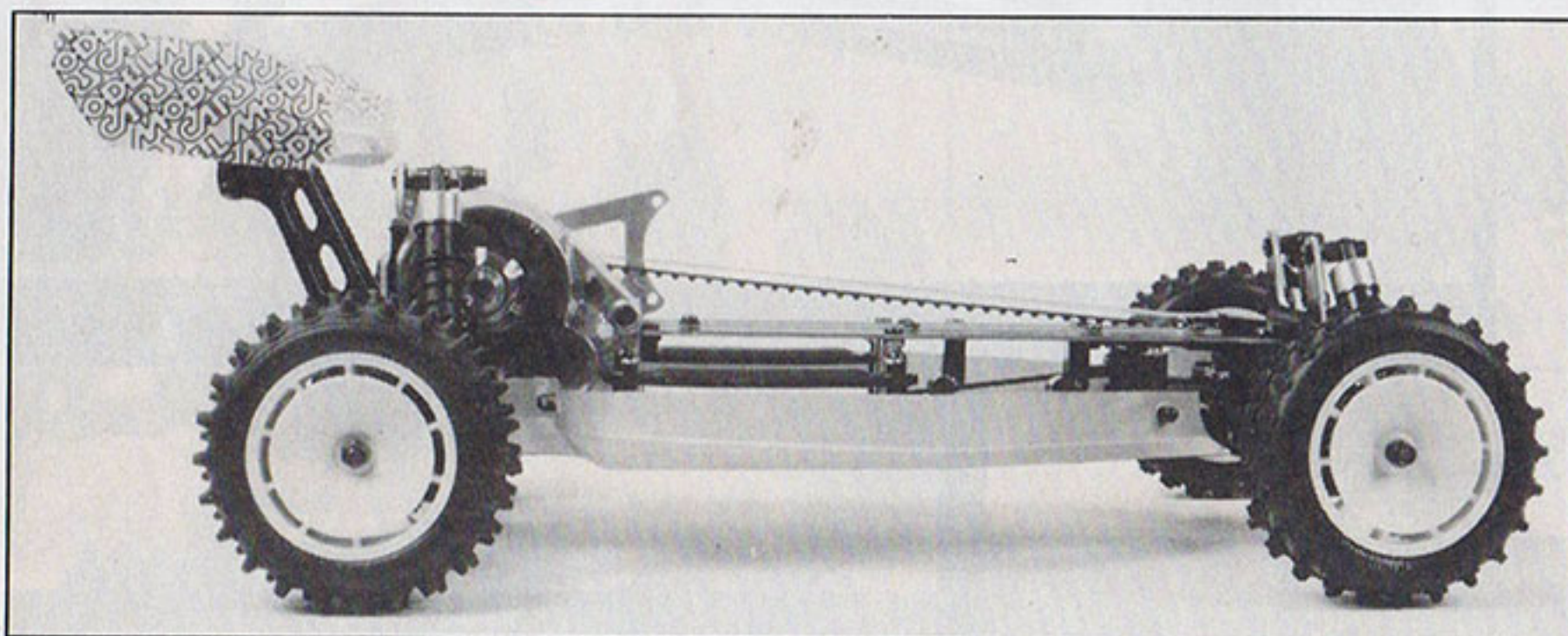
As a total racing package the 'Custom' will provide the best of both worlds for someone who wants the latest spec, but at the right price. It could be so easily uprated to a full competition car providing you stick with the alloy chassis and forget about all the hype spoken about carbon fibre.

as well as coming up with a modest amount of race-winning.

The 'Custom' has most of those changes albeit in a less-expensive form.

To begin with the kit includes only four ball races, fitted to the differential outputs. Adding further ball races is up to the user and can be done at a later date.

The original long wheelbase chassis in both the 'XL Mid' and the conversion kit was produced from carbon fibre. This must have been fiendishly expensive to produce (you'd agree if you bought one) and was probably a pain to boot. Stamping out alloy chassis is a much simpler, cleaner and cheaper operation than drilling out carbon fibre



blanks. In any case the argument for carbon fibre is far outweighed by the amount of money you have to pay for the stuff. Compared against good quality alloy there is no discernible benefit in performance, all you get is a load of hype and

a sick bank balance. By the way, the 'Custom's' chassis is made from alloy and very nice it is too. The shape and format is exactly the same as the carbon fibre version with two sets of slots either side of the drive spine for the saddle pack batteries.

On one side an incomplete fourth slot is featured, presumably for the use of an 8.4v, seven-cell battery pack. If you decide to use it however the slot must be filed out because it forms part of the battery pack mount.

This is very good news because this part of the car has been a problem in the past, usually in the last heat



Top: *Le Mans* 540 motor and controller are also included. Above: 4WD belt can be clearly seen and is a coarse tooth type. Right: Ready for the off! An excellent club car from Kyosho.