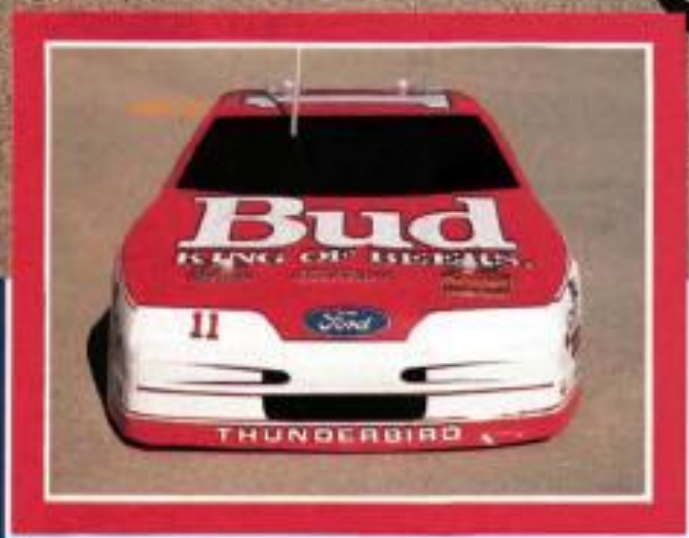


TRACK REPORT

THIS ONE'S FOR YOU!

by FRED L. BEAVER

JUNIOR JOHNSON HAS been involved in NASCAR racing for nearly four decades: first as a driver, then as a car builder, owner and crew chief. It has been over 20 years since he hung up his helmet, but he's still listed in 7th place in total victories. From 1971 up through last season, Junior had been campaigning cars exclusively from General Motors. In 1988, driving a Chevy Monte Carlo, driver Terry Labonte took the team to a respectable



4th-place finish in the standings.

On October 9, 1988, just before the start of the Oakwood Homes 500 at Charlotte Motor Speedway, a covered car was mysteriously rolled out to the start/finish line. With the assistance of Ford's Special Vehicle Operations (SVO) Director, Michael Kranefuss, owner Junior Johnson removed the cover. There, before a stunned crowd, rested the new No. 11 Budweiser stock car, but it wasn't a Chevy, or even a Pontiac, an Olds or a Buick. After 18 seasons

with GM, Junior had switched to a *Ford!*

Junior knows a good thing when he sees it, and the swoopy lines of the new Thunderbird promised to be the hot ticket for '89. Model Racing Products* apparently know a good thing when they see it, too, for

within weeks of the unveiling of Junior's new car, the company had introduced a very accurate 1/10-scale version. Believe it or not, this is an official product of Anheuser-Busch, the makers of Budweiser. Like MRP's



MRP

BUDWEISER

S T O C K C A R

offerings, NASCAR racing and Budweiser beer are home-bred and home-brewed, and to reinforce the point, MRP puts a "Born in the USA" sticker on each kit's box.

THE KIT: MRP offers two versions of this car: one complete and ready to run with Aristo-Craft* Challenger radio gear, and the other *without* radio gear. Those who elect to install their own radio gear (using the supplied double-sided tape) can easily complete the car in a short time by following the very thorough, yet simple, instructions. You'll need to know how to do light soldering if you elect to use the stock speed controller to provide power for the receiver with a Ni-Cd battery pack; otherwise, no special tools or skills are needed. You'll find that some tie-wraps and additional double-sided tape will come in handy during assembly.

ASSEMBLY: The Thunderbird body is already painted red with the wheel wells cut out and the holes for the body mounts and antenna pre-drilled. To help you complete the detailing, a very large sheet of multi-colored pressure-sensitive decals is supplied. When it's finished, no other off-the-shelf, on-road car can beat this one in the looks department. For those who already own an on-road car and are green with envy, the body and decals *can* be bought *separately*, and if you can justify the expense, a set of after-market aluminum mags would make the car look even better.

The chassis is a stripped-down MRP GP-10 fiberglass version con-

Above: All decked out in Bud colors, the MRP Stock Car looks like it came straight from the Daytona 500.

Left: The MRP Budweiser Stock Car is almost ready to run out of the box. You don't even have to paint the car, just apply the decals.



MODEL RACING PRODUCTS

BUDWEISER STOCK CAR

Type: On-road racer
Scale: 1/10
Sug. retail price: \$169.95
(w/o radio)

DIMENSIONS:

Overall Length: 18 inches
Width: 9 inches
Height: 4.5 inches
Wheelbase: 10.25 inches
Front Track: 7.75 inches
Rear Track: 6.80 inches

WEIGHT:

Gross (w/bat.): 47 ounces

BODY:

Type: '89 Ford Thunderbird
Material: Polycarbonate

CHASSIS:

Type: Pan w/T-plate
Material: Fiberglass

DRIVE TRAIN:

Type (pri./sec.): Pinion/Spur gear
Differential(s): Ball type

SUSPENSION:

Front: Type: A-arms
Dampening: None
Rear: Type: T-plate
Dampening: None

WHEELS:

Front: Type: Nylon spoked
Dimensions: (DxW) 2x1
inch
Rear: Type: Nylon spoked
Dimensions: (DxW) 2x2
inches

TIRES:

Front: Sponge rubber
Rear: Sponge rubber

ELECTRICS:

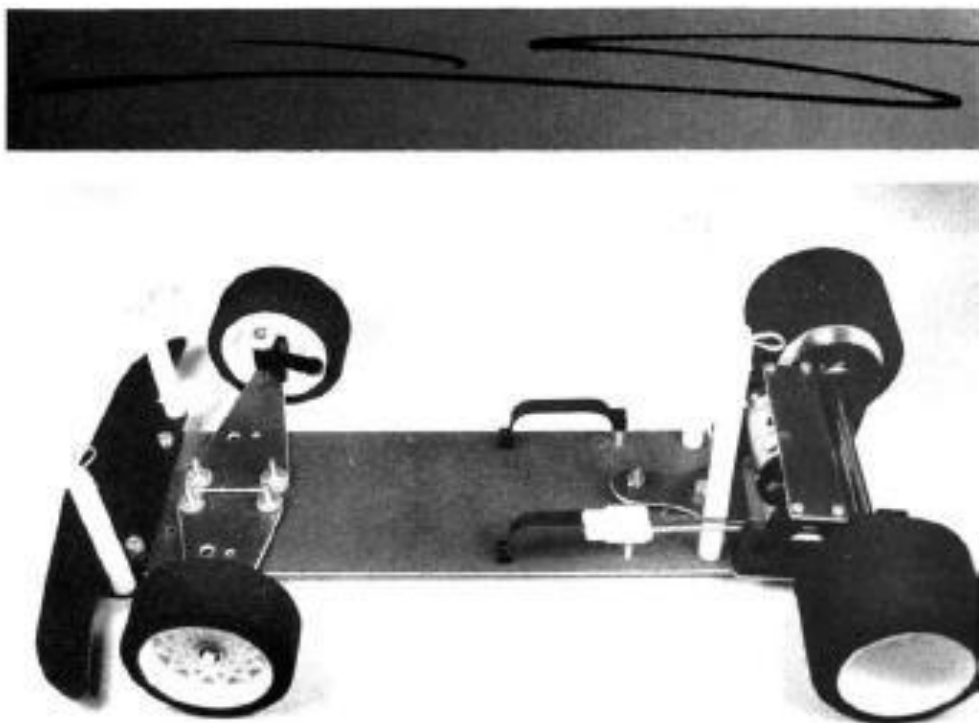
Motor: Mabuchi 540
Battery Req'd.: 6-cell stick pack
Speed Controller: Wound resistor

OPTIONS AS TESTED:

Futaba Magnum Junior with two FP-S148 servos

COMMENTS:

Since the chassis comes almost assembled, the MRP Budweiser Stock Car can be up and running in just a short time. This is strictly an entry-level kit, and it will require major hop-ups for serious racing.



They don't get much more basic than this, and that's why it doesn't take long to get the car running.

sisting of a single pan with the drive train mounted on a T-plate. The front end utilizes metal kingpins and plastic spindles mounted on fiberglass lower A-arms. Both the T-plate and the A-arms are isolated at their attachment points by rubber washers.

There are no coil springs or shock absorbers, and dampening is accomplished primarily by the flexing of the chassis components. This is about as basic a chassis and suspension system as you can get! Don't be fooled by its simplicity, though, as the chassis can be set up to handle well under most conditions. Up front, the camber, caster and toe-in settings can all be adjusted. Camber can be added by loosening the shoulder nuts at the end of the A-arms, or taken out by tightening them. Caster can be added by placing additional washers under the front of the A-arms. Note that changes in either of these settings will affect the ride height. Toe-in can be *decreased* by using a pair of needle-nose pliers to kink the piano wire that connects the spindles. You should set up the car so that there's little, if any, toe-in. In the rear, the nuts for attaching the T-plate can be tightened or loosened to decrease or increase flex and change the ride height. Using a spacer of a different size under the forward T-plate attachment screw will also lower or raise the ride height.

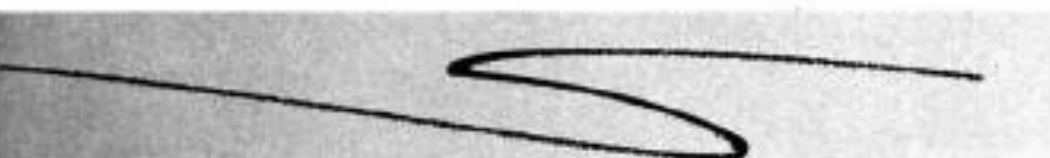
Ideally, to keep the center of gravity down, the chassis should sit as low as

possible without bottoming out or adversely affecting the handling. Getting the body close to the track also keeps aerodynamic drag to a minimum. The body can be lowered by removing the mounting posts and filing the ends a little at a time until the car starts to scrape the track on bumps, or to interfere with the tire clearance.

MRP offers an optional chassis upgrade kit that includes an upper radio tray, front springs, and aluminum hydraulic monoshocks for the front and rear. Also of-



A wound resistor speed control sits above the 6-cell battery pack. This system works well for an entry-level car.



ferred are a ball-bearing kit and adjustable tie-rods. These upgrades are highly recommended if you're entertaining any thoughts of seriously racing this car.

The Mabuchi 540 motor and steel rear axle are attached to the T-plate with two plastic uprights. An 11-tooth metal pinion gear turns a hard plastic 56-tooth differential spur gear to get the power to the ground. In the ball differential, slip is adjusted by tightening or loosening the nut holding the right rear wheel on the axle.

On-road cars must be run on smooth, hard, surfaces like concrete or asphalt, and these cars are *really* at home on specially designed tracks, e.g., the Spring Cove Speedway near Florence, AL, where the test sessions were held for this article. The track is patterned after the full-size tri-oval Talladega International Speedway. Its outside perimeter is over 360 feet, and it has a 90-foot front straight. The corners and back stretch are steeply banked for maximum speed. Since the track is tucked away several miles off the nearest main highway, first-time visitors should contact the owners, Chuck and Lyda Sypolt, at (205) 757-5998 for specific directions.

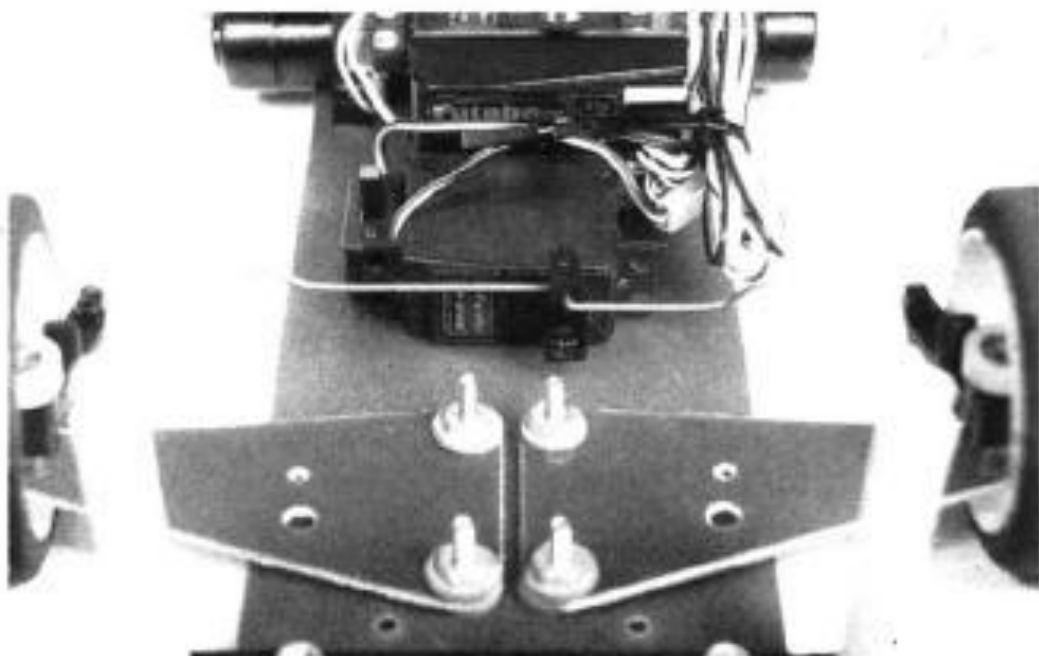
PERFORMANCE: When run straight out of the box, with no adjustments except a decrease in toe-in, the car exhibited mild, but controllable, oversteer in the corners. On the straights, the car tended to wander slightly, with looseness in the front end being the culprit—a problem

curable by the installation of ball bearings. Although it's a very good unit for its type, the stock-wound resistor speed controller would drop the power rather abruptly any time the throttle was lifted, and this made smooth transitions from the straights to the corners difficult. Speed, though fast compared to a stock off-road car, and more than enough for a novice driver, is way *below* that which a full-bore competition car requires. A gear change would add speed, but the suspension would then be pushed to its limits. In addition to the upgrades mentioned earlier, anyone who wants to race this car will need, at the very minimum, a hotter motor, an electronic speed controller and an assortment of different pinion gears.

With the basic kit, MRP starts you off with a great-looking up-to-date aerodynamic body mated to an uncomplicated chassis and also a good motor and speed controller. You can add any radio gear and beef up the car with optional parts and a faster motor if you want to. This way, the car appeals to both beginners and experienced drivers. One thing's for sure: No matter what your skill level, taking the MRP Budweiser stock car out for a spin is sure to brew up some excitement!

**Here are the addresses of the companies mentioned in this article:*

MRP, 18676 142 Ave. NE, Woodinville, WA 98072.
Aristo-Craft, 396 Bergen Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07304. ■



Don't make this mistake: Always use a servo-saver to protect your steering servo, unless you enjoy replacing tiny gears.