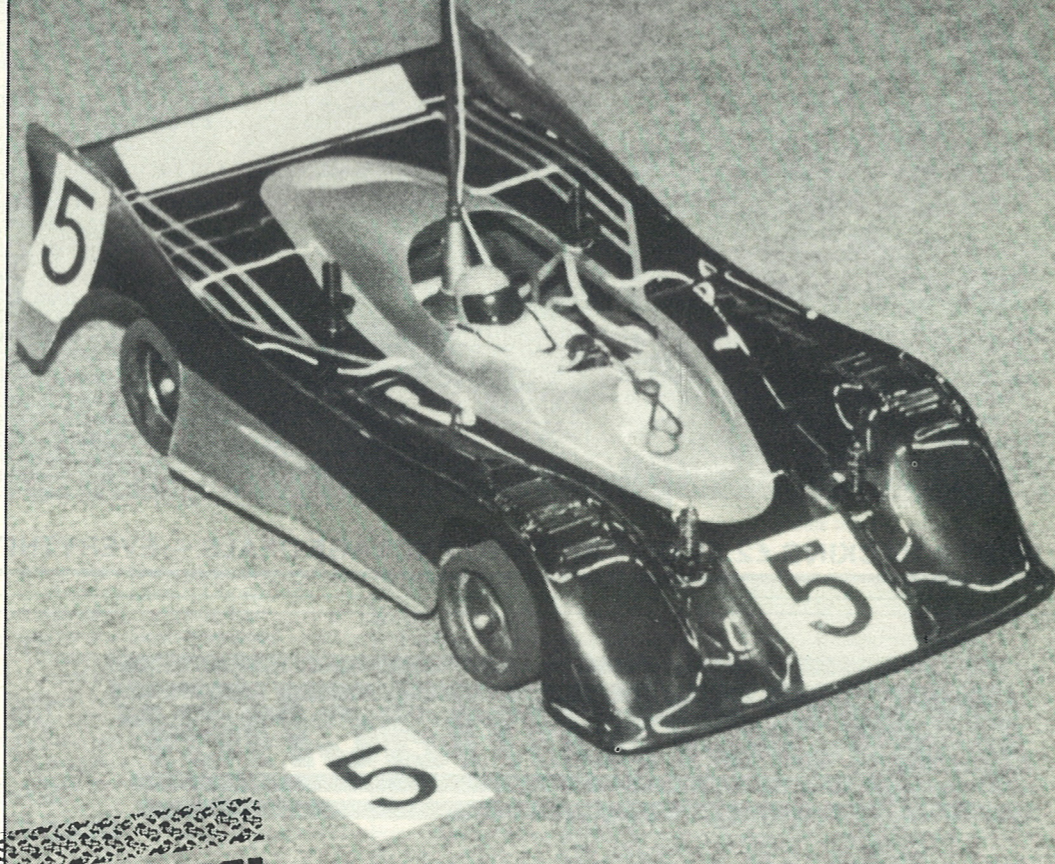


CORALLY

PK

Although a rare item on British 1/12th scale race tracks the PK Products 'Corally' from Holland has gone down a storm on the Continent. Pete Winton, resourceful as ever, was able to get behind the sticks and conduct this road test of the Dutch flyer



TRACK TEST

Every once in a while, a car arrives on the scene with a bang. The *Associated* '12i' and the *Demon* 'MF83' spring to mind, being immediate successes on their launch. More often cars steal quietly onto the scene and take some time to be accepted. Such was the case for the *Jomac* 'Lightning' and the *Schumacher* 'C-Car'. Whether the PK 'Corally' fits the latter mould is debateable since it is going great guns on the Continent. As of today there is only one in the UK, and some confusion as to where the next one will come from. Official PK importers *Schumacher* are not pushing the car (I do not wonder why!), but will obtain one on request.

The car was developed by PK

Products in Holland, funded by a Dutch businessman who I believe has a family involvement in 1/12th. The car oozes quality from first sight. From the rear axle tube to the front body posts no expense has been spared to use the best materials and tools. On its International debut in Holland, four of the first eight cars in qualifying were 'Corally's', and they eventually finished 2nd, 4th, 7th and 11th. This is impressive by any standard.

The differential components are all new, although follow the *Schumacher* ball and thrust race principle. The working parts of the diff are fully enclosed to prevent the ingress of dirt. The quick change wheels are fully supported at

both ends by an ingenious system of wheel carriers and rather superfluous ballraces. Once placed in position, small 1/8in. id O rings secure the wheels to the fibre axle, much the same as the pioneering *Schumacher* live front axle.

The diff tension is set using a knurled plastic wheel on a large metric thread which is accessed by removing the right hand wheel. Spur gears are the normal 32 DP type currently in use, and sizes from 44 to 50 teeth are available.

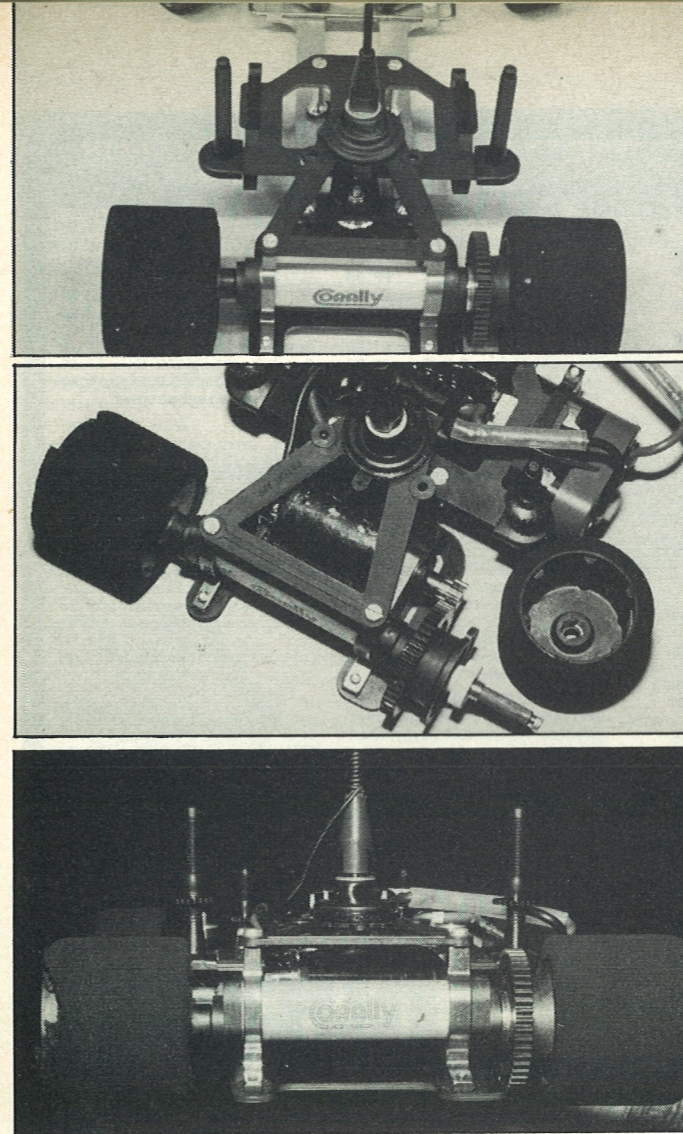
Supporting the axle is an oval extruded aluminium tube with plastic end caps. These end caps contain the axle bearings, and a range of three is available to adjust the ride height. The axle is removed to access the caps, which are simply unclipped and replaced with another type to raise and lower the axle. This very simple method removes the need to dismantle the rear-end of the car to change the ride height.

Holding the axle tube are two aluminium blocks screwed to a

fibreglass T piece. Atop the block is a plastic moulding which reaches forward to the aerial post/damper. The damper is fully enclosed with rubber gaiters concealing PTFE washers which act against the moulding. The radio tray is fibreglass mounted on four posts in the traditional manner.

The chassis is where the expense starts, and possibly ends. Made from aluminium with what appears to be a laminate in the middle, this chassis is light but tremendously strong. Anyone who bends one is going to have to replace it for sure, but I don't think bending it will be a matter of just hitting something. At the front, the now mandatory wishbones are also made from aluminium, a nice anodised red with a superb finish.

A single front pick-up point serves both wishbones, held together with a very Heath Robinson looking piece of wire. Cushioned on the pivot by an O ring, the suspension sweeps back to rear pivots, one for each



Top: 'Corally' rear-end showing the aerial/damper post. Above centre: quick release rear wheel fixing. Above: rear axle supported by aluminium tube. End caps alter the ride height. Above right: front suspension. Above centre right: overall view of the 'Corally.' Right: underside of the ally chassis.

wishbone. The servo is mounted offset to the right, and an anti-roll bar connects both sides, mounted to the rear. Damping and springing are performed by a massive front spring/damper assembly on the lines of the *Schumacher*.

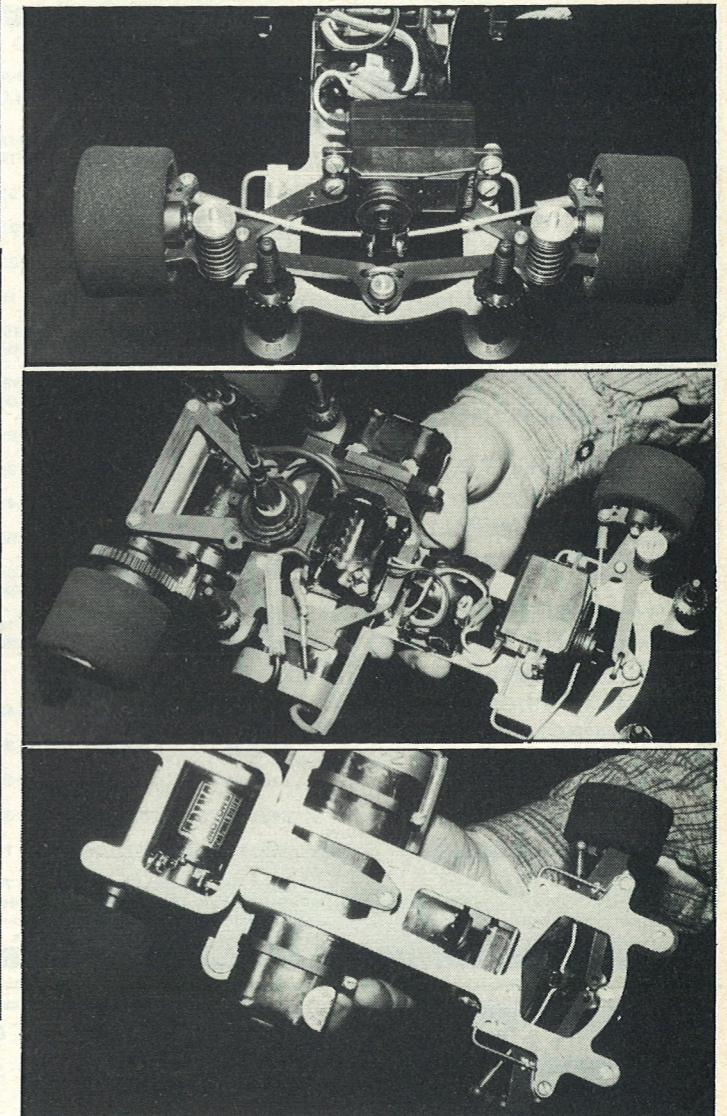
Mounted on a fixed thread, the spring tension is controlled by a knurled nut at the top of the assembly. With the spring is a damper assembly using O rings and gaiters to provide the damping. The whole assembly moves up and down on a single screw to provide limited ride height adjustment and 'tweak' control. The drawback to this system is that the camber angle alters when the ride height is changed, considerably changing the handling. There is a range of about 5mm of tyre size which gives optimum handling, hardly the best feature for a cost-conscious club racer. If only they had swallowed their pride and copied the *Associated/Schumacher* system of ride height adjustment on the front as well as the rear, things would have been OK.

The front wheels sit on live axles, the bearings for which run in the steering block, and not the wheel hub as is usual.

This means that the offset of the axle to kingpin is greater than .0625in., our current norm. This may go some way to explaining the lower castor angle.

The name 'Corally' comes from the material used, and is a synonym of the maker and the material, hence COR-ALLY, geddit? PK Products are the main Dutch dealer in 1/12th, and have connections via MG Model Products and *Schumacher* with the UK. They sponsor Dutch driver Constant Paul using a PK (what else!) and PK motors, cells, and tyres.

Matthew Ford went to Holland because he felt like it, or to be more accurate father John felt like it. Not in his wildest dreams did he think he would come second in the event, nor that this would lead to a sponsored drive from PK. Jan van Kooij, sent across a new car and a bucketfull of spares for Matt to contest all rounds of the National Championship. PK must be delighted that Matt is performing well in the BRCA National Championships. The rest of us are not amused that this car looked superb on the Washington bumps, and turns in like a ferret down a rabbit hole given only a look at a corner!



Enough of the boring details, what is it like to drive you ask? Well... let me put it this way, when you have your hands on the best equipment, doing any job is easy and a pleasure. I recently spoke to Jeff Lindstrom after he had driven a 4WD *Serpent* for the first time. He was extolling the virtues of four-wheel drive since despite its complexity and expense, it makes driving a pleasure. Such it is with the 'Corally'. Having had the privilege to drive Andy Dobson's Championship winning car, there is precious little difference in overall terms. It is the crisp turn in and precise steering that marks this car out for special recommendation. Almost irrespective of the abuse one deals out to the car, that chassis takes it all in its stride and goes in the direction commanded.

Acceleration off the line is no different from any other car, but come the first corner, in it turns. On to the power and the line is held with a trace of understeer, but once the steering is straightened, the car runs straight to the next corner and so on. Its strength is in the tight turns where that precise turn-in reaps dividends. On fast turns there is some understeer, perhaps due to the way Matt

likes his cars set-up. Short sharp chicanes are not so good, due I felt to the lower castor angle than normally practised in the UK. Overall it is as good as any 'C-Car' or *Associated*, with that added bonus of metal chassis and wishbones making for a very stiff package.

Would I buy one? Not yet, and at an approximate price of £160 for the rolling chassis not ever on my budget. But, like the *Associated* 'RC10', this high entry price is more than offset by the low running costs. Matt may be good, but he is not immune to the odd 'hefty' prang. To date this has not damaged the car at all in the expensive areas, but the body posts are inclined to break where the thread meets the tapered shoulder. These could easily be replaced by *Associated* or *Schumacher* posts, but this is not advisable since the 'Corally' post has a moulded cover to protect the front-end of the chassis.

This car will find many friends eventually, and I came to the conclusion that like the 'Lightning' and the 'C-Car', it will take some time to gain acceptance. My grateful thanks to Matt and John Ford for the opportunity to drive this unique car.