

Our Holiday Give-A-Way Issue

SLOT CAR MODS

EVERYBODY'S SLOT CAR MAGAZINE



HO Drag Bikes

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Lola MKIII Review

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MODIFYING
THE
PANCAKE
CHASSIS



Dave West builds a '34 Ford Coupe

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Premise

At my analog club, we run a classic sports class in stock standard form. This class sees a mix of NSR (mainly P68) and Slot.it classics.

To be honest, I hate this class! I have not found a car that really suits my (lack of) driving style. I started with a Porsche 917, but it was never a happy dog. Then I moved to a P68 that was better than the 917 but not on the same pace as the others. At that point, I decided to move to slot.it. Mike D had got a Matra that was running really nice so I decided to get one as well. I prepped that Matra going through my usual setup but nothing I did make it goes as smoothly as Mike's car. Finally, I had a go at the Alfa 33/3. I managed to set it up pretty good and has been my weapon of choice for this class. It is stable and consistent and quite fast.

Our wood track has copper tape and is around 25 meters and very technical. A good lap with this class is around 4.4 seconds. An extremely good lap on the yellow lane is 4.25 seconds.

The Very First Time

Dave West is quite a good friend with our Kiwi dealer for Thunderslot and NSR. A while ago, he got some samples from Giovanni and Dave prepared one using his standard NSR setup (more on this later). I tested the car on our track and I was really impressed. I do not know which tyres Dave had fitted but the car was quite well-planted although I found the motor quite snappy in delivering its power in the technical bits. I do not recall the times I was doing but it must have been there with some of the good cars (maybe around 4.4 seconds).

My Lola

Since then, I have been considering getting a whitekit for a while but I have been busy with other builds and events. Plus, I had heard that early models were missing the brackets for the rear anchor points in the pod. But things were moving in the right direction.

Then one Friday, I went to visit a new hobby store in Auckland. The owner, Peter, has been doing slotcars for a while and some of the other members of the club were quite impressed with the shop. So I decided to pay a visit.

To be honest, I was a bit surprised to find the Lola whitekit there and on top of that at a good price too: I could not resist.

Went home, got the shell primed on Friday afternoon. Then Saturday, after my digital race, I sprayed the white stripe. Sunday morning, I played with the masking tape a bit and down went a misty layer of Tamiya Metallic Blue. 20 minutes later I went for another misty layer, followed by a wet layer. After another 10 minutes, I removed the masking tape and laid down a clear coat.

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This sticker available at <http://slotcarmods.com/support.html>



Between different coats, I started working on the interiors and preparing other parts. The kit has a very nice detailed engine bay so I spent a bit of time playing with different shades of ally paint.

Putting together the car is quite easy once you have figure out where the different parts go. I didn't use manual, just looked at other models and pictures of the real car did for me. I decided to take inspiration from a real "modern" racer that had also some sponsor logos of the period.



The Chassis

The first thing that you will notice is how flexible the chassis and the pod are. I was not really too convinced about the chassis as for wood racing I prefer to have a rather rigid platform. On the plus side, after stripping down all the components, the chassis/pod were really flat. NSR chassis can be a pain in the back if they are not flat because if you bake them they usually get even worse.

A couple of considerations while I was working on the chassis and wheel setup:

The white kits come without any screws to attach the body to the chassis. This is a well-known fact I am not sure why Thunderslot has not rectified this yet. For me, it was not a big deal as I have plenty of BA torx screws.

The front hubs are really soft and flimsy. I mean you can squeeze them between your fingers to give them an oval shape. I normally true and cone my front tyres. So to do this on this car, I had to put inserts so that the sanding pad (I use the Razor) would not bend the hubs resulting in wobbly front wheels. To be honest they turned out to be quite ok but be aware of this.

To true the front tyres, I had to superglue the hubs to the axle because the plastic is so soft that after a couple of dry tests the wheels would come off too easily. For sure they would spin freely if I had applied any pressure while sanding the tyres.

Same to put back the front wheels back on the car. I have to use superglue to fix them. To be honest I do not like this at all. I really wish that Giovanni would use harder plastic for the front wheels or going the whole way and have proper alu wheels with grub screws. After all these cars are priced as much as an NSR.

The guide has grub screw to fix the motor wires. Mine had also eyelets. I thought that it was really nice. But after I removed the grub screws, the eyelets were squashed flat. So to remove the motor from the chassis to run it in, I had to take away the eyelets from the wires because otherwise the wires could not go through the holes in the chassis used to route the wires under the front axle. Not a big deal but the eyelets are now pretty useless. It seems who put this car together screwed the grub screw too tight resulting in a bit of material stress on the guide (you can see white marks around the screws holes) and squashed eyelets.

After removing the motor from the pod, I let it run at 5 v for 30 minutes. Then I inverted the polarity and let it run in for another 30 minutes. In the meantime, I prepared the front tyres: glue them on the hubs and then cone them such that the external edge of the tyres is larger than the inside. To cone them means also removing the threads such that the tyres surface will be really smooth. When done

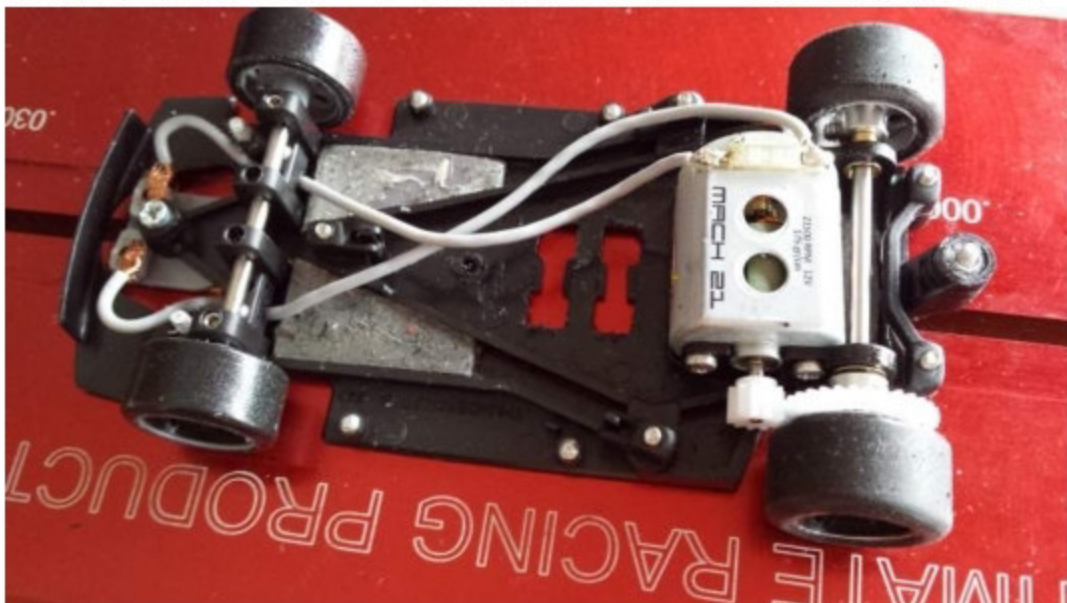
with the sanding, I cover the tyres with several layers of CA and give another light skim to make them really smooth.

Moving to the rear tyres, I decided to leave the air-system. Usually, at our club we do not use the NSR air-system and prefer to have the rear tyres to sit firmly on the hubs. For this build I decided to give it a go. I glued the tyres with UHU glue on the original rims and let sit there for some an hour or so (the time to get our dogs out for their avro walk).

The rear tyres that came with the kit have a thread pattern so you have to sand quite a bit to get rid of it. Moreover, in one of the edges there is the moulding spot typical of NSR tyres: you want to get rid of it as well. Bottom line is that you have to keep truing for a while...and with as air-system wheel there is always the risk of the tyre getting some weird shape. But I took it slow and steady and I have to say the tyres came out quite ok. Then I put them on my treatment machine and put a couple of drops of NSR tyre oil for 30 min.

While the tyres were spinning in oil, I went to work on the pod. I took my dremel and removed all the plastic bits where the magnet should be locked to. There are 6 of them: 4 in front of the motor and 2 at the back under the rear axle. With these bits out of the way, I put 1.8 gr of lead under the rear axle. To tame the motor, I decided to put some lead also in the middle-front section of the chassis. However, instead of filling in the motor pod, I went for the chassis: on both side of the pod there are two symmetrical "triangles" that can be easily filled with lead! I cut to shape 7 gr of lead and used double-side tape to hold them in position. I made sure that here was enough space for the pod to move.

Overall Weight: 72.97 gr Body Weight: 16.18 gr Chassis Weight: 56.79



Spinning the Wheels

The axle material is quite soft and get dented pretty easily by the external edges of brass bushes: this makes the fitting of wheels and gear a bit of a pain. The axle spins smoothly inside the bushes when the rear train is in position. Instead of the plastic spacers I used NSR brass ones: 0,25 mm on the gear side, and 2mm on the right side.

I put the chassis on my testing block to let meshing up the pinion and gear. After a while of spinning I check the RPM at the wheel at 12 v: my tachy was reading 7640 RMP which means with the stock gear ratio the motor was spinning at 22.2K RPPM. Not bad for a 21.5K motor!



On the Track

After two days the car was ready for its debut night at the Oraki track. However, that night only 4 of us showed up so we didn't have a proper race. Nevertheless, I tried to test the car and put it through its paces.

First off: when I fitted the stock wheels and tyres there was not much clearance. This has been reported here as well. To overcome any issue with the bottom of the chassis touching the track, I decided to put on 17" NSR wheels with 5212. But I took the stock wheels/tyres just in case.



With the 17" wheels the car was quite nice to drive. Consistent at low 4.4 seconds and if I got all things right I could push it down to mid/high 4.3 seconds.

Then I decided to test it with the stock tyres: WOW! What a difference! The car stuck to the corners like it was on rails. Now it was easy to go mid/low 4.3 without even trying it. The best lap I manage to pull was 4.28 and I think there was still more there. Taking the crown

There has been a bit of discussion about how this car has taken the crown over the P68. For many racers, the P68 has been the weapon of choice for the classic sports. However, the Lola completely outpaces this veteran of many tracks.

Some have indicated that the Lola clear advantage is a lower CoG due to the smaller rear wheels. However I have measured the wheels of both the Lola and the P68 to find out if there is any substantial difference. The Lola tyres are quite new and are 19.58 mm in diameter while my P68 stock tyres have been used for some times and are 19.15 mm. The P68 is quite stable and laps quite happily at 4.5 second on our track.

One important thing to note is that the P68 has a stock 20K NSR motor which means that is a bit underpowered. One test that I have promised to do is to move the Thunderslot motor and rear wheels onto the P68 to see what it can achieve. Unfortunately, by the time I will have some results this article will be already published.

Conclusions

So, although I must admit I was a bit sceptical about the soft chassis, the air-system hubs, and the small wheels/tyres the actual numbers proved me wrong.

This car is very stable and hangs on corners like it has magnets! It is easy to driver and the motor has plenty of brake force so you should really pull back on your brake dial to let it flows through corners. AT 4.28 seconds, this is one of the fastest classic cars. Only two other classics have dropped below the 4.3 barrier: both of them Slot.it McLaren driven by JMac and Dave West (far better drivers than me). Really curious what this car could do in their hands (or finger).

Well done GM!



HOT OFF THE PRESSES

The SCM ThunderSlot Lola MkIII conquers the prestigious GVSCC Targa Florio 2 Proxy and brings home second place in a field of 19 cars and a 7 race series. We finished, 2nd, 2nd, 4th, 1st, 3rd, 2nd, and 1st. The most amazing part of this accomplishment is the fact that this car was essentially un-touched, stock. The only change was the addition of Paul Gage tires and three little O-rings on the stock rims to allow the tires to fit properly. There was no chassis change or tune, just mind-blowing out-of-the box performance.





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