





Team Losi's first entry in the dirt wars is headed for the Winner's Circle

BY VERNON LEWIS

The long-awaited JR-X2 from Team Losi is here. The Team Losi crew have been racing and winning with the prototype(s) of this car for well over two years, making the JR-X2 a hot commodity even before it was on sale!

Although Team Losi is well-known for their high-quality modified racing motors, machine cut gears, and other racing accessories, this is their first effort in manufacturing a complete kit. The JR-X2 comes factory sealed in clear plastic to minimize missing parts. Upon opening the box you are greeted by a neatly packed kit with sub-packaged component bags alphabetically marked. An extremely comprehensive and easy to follow instruction booklet that calls out each bag to open for each area of assembly should be read thoroughly before beginning. Bag (A) is the basic chassis components, bag (B) is the transmission bag, and so on until completion of your JR-X2.

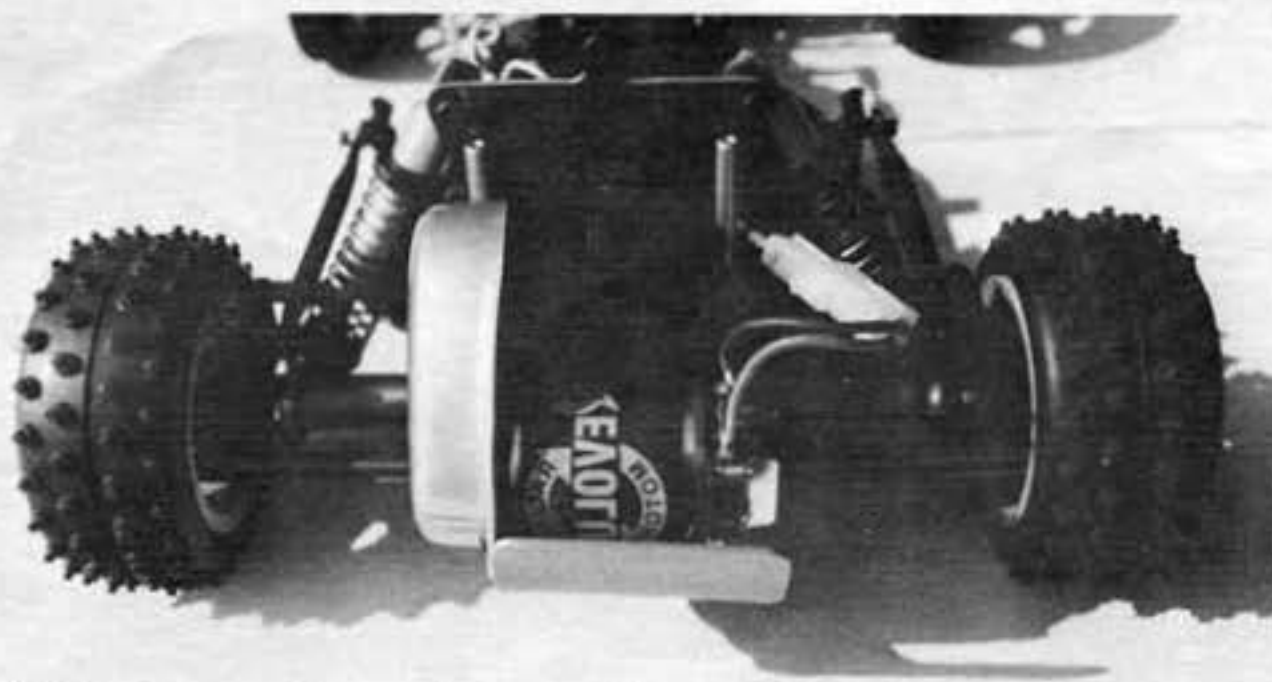
Each component bag, (A through G), builds in sequence. Each part needed to complete each segment of assembly is in-

cluded in its own bag. This makes assembly easier and eliminates the possibility of confusion over what length bolts or parts to use.

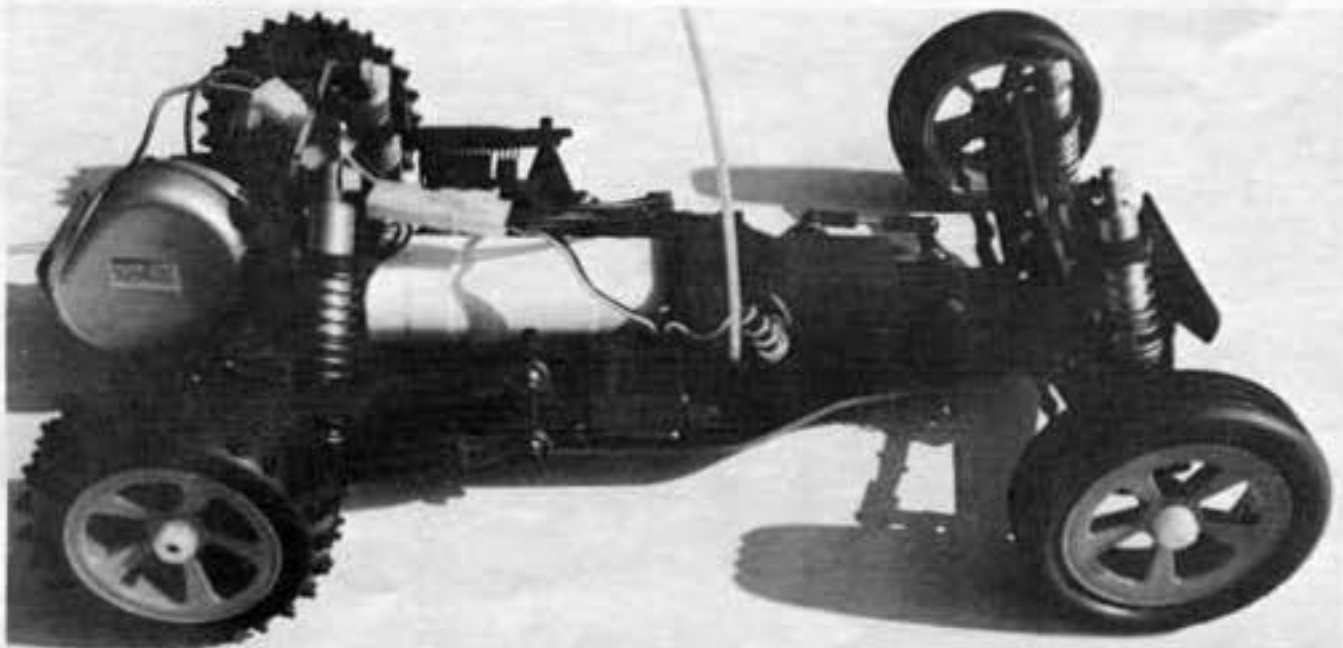
Bag (A) is the basic chassis components. This includes both the front and rear bulkhead/shock mounts, the side link mounts and the battery cup. The battery cup offers the unique feature of two self-locking stays and a hinged top/cover that eliminates the need for straps or clips. I was impressed with the high-tech graphite chassis and the quality anodized aluminum screws used in many places. (Pay special attention to the length screw used for each area in this section.)

Bag (B) was opened with fear in my heart as this is the dreaded transmission bag! This is usually where you run into problems and time-consuming head scratching as you try to figure out where you went wrong. Boy was I surprised! The parts all fit nicely. There was no pounding or pressing. (Be careful inserting the bearings as they will slip in easy if they are aligned straight with the holes.) The toughest part was stacking the small, coned washers in the proper sequence and wiping





The JR-X2's rear suspension uses five individual links, two trailing, two lower side, and one adjustable upper side/camber links. This setup offers strength and flexibility, as well as ample travel without binding.



The stick-type battery pack sits longitudinally in the chassis, resulting in a narrower chassis with good balance and low center of gravity.

the grease off my hands. When finished, I could not believe how free and smooth the transmission felt. The double row of 48-pitch molded gears meshed perfectly with no tight spots or noise. The assembly of the universals was also easier than anticipated.

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The JR-X2 does not use "dog bone"-type driveshafts but rather a splined sliding shaft with full U-joints at either end. After finishing the first one, the rest went quite quickly. The Team Losi wrench included in the kit made installing the finished subassemblies a snap.

Bag (C) was the rear suspension which is one of the really unique features of the JR-X2. There are five individual links, two trailing, two lower side and one adjustable upper side/camber link. All links are ball- or shaft-mounted for smooth movement. It appears this configuration offers extreme strength and flexibility as well as a tremendous amount of travel without binding.

Upon the final assembly of this rear suspension I noticed another unexpected

touch. The adjustable upper rear camber/link was a left/right threaded turnbuckle unit. This was later found to be true of all the adjustable linkages! I found the easiest way to thread the heavy-duty rod ends on the shafts was to just start them, snap them into their already installed balls and use the wrench included in the kit to "adjust" them to length.

Bag (E) is the shock bag, probably the second most worrisome part to assemble on any car. The shocks used on the JR-X2 are incredibly simple. Instead of a bunch of O-rings, spacers, tiny washers, and cups, the folks at Team Losi have pre-assembled all the necessary parts into a simple factory-welded cartridge. This cartridge also houses a spring and piston that allows for the volume compensation as the piston and the shock shaft move into the oil-filled body of the shock. At first I noticed a bit of leakage at the shaft but this soon subsided. In a subsequent conversation with Gary Kyes at Team Losi, I found this was due to overfilling. It seems that excess shock fluid bleeds out through the compensation chamber. I was also advised to make sure that the cartridge was tightened up extra tight, then backed off and tightened normally. This allows the two mating surfaces to seat correctly and minimizes any leakage around the threads.

Bag (F) was the wheels and tires. Both front and rear tires are real rubber racing tires and as I found out later are excellent for most offroad race tracks. The wheels are

bright orange in color. Deep grooves locate the tire on the rim, and then it is glued in place. I had been warned about the front wheels cracking around the bearings. The Team Losi customer service man explained that if I washed out the front bearings and re-oiled them I wouldn't have a problem. He was right. I was also told that this would not have to be done in future kits.

Bag (G) is the wing and items needed for final assembly. I was really intrigued with the neat wing mounts. By turning them 90 degrees you can adjust the wing fore and aft then lock it in position by rotating the locks back to their original position. Another nice touch is the pre-bent wing wire. I can't tell you how much wire and time I have wasted trying to bend a wing wire. It was little touches like this that made assembly enjoyable.

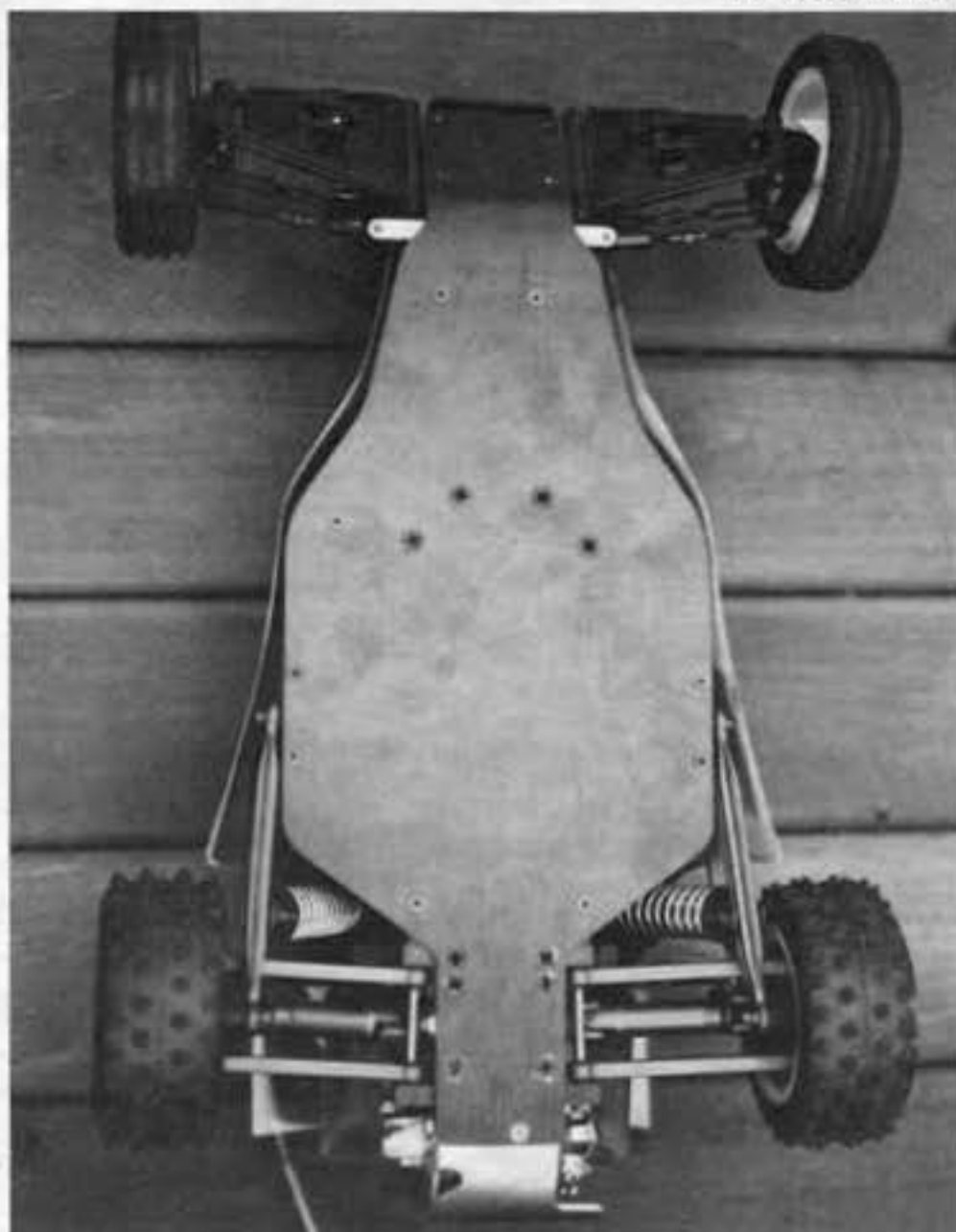
The JR-X2 body is made of clear lexan which is standard in R/C racing. I used Pactra lexan paint to finish mine. (Be sure to look at the *How To Paint* articles by Mike Ogle for tips that will put you ahead of the concours competition at your track.) The radio installation is very simple. The steering servo and receiver mount with double-sided sticky tape included in the kit. I used a Novak NER-2X receiver one of the smallest on the market today and, with Bob Novak's experience behind it, one of the best. I also used a Novak NES-C-T4 speed control and a Novak NES-1A servo with one of the fastest transit times of any servo. A motor is not included in the kit so I picked up a 05 stock Team Losi motor. The extremely small Novak receiver speed control and servo made radio installation a snap as was the adjustment of the speed control.

Another extra touch that most of you will appreciate is the antenna mount. After the radio is installed you can remove the antenna mast by snapping a plastic ring which releases the mast from its base. This keeps the mast from getting bent or destroyed in transit. I used a piece of 1/16 inch spring steel and some Hot Stuff Super T (CA) and glued the antenna wire to the end of the spring steel and pushed it through the tube. Works like a charm.

Before running my JR-X2 I once again read the comprehensive section on tuning tips by Gil Losi Jr., the designer of the car.

Using the handy illustrations, I made several adjustments prior to running that I am sure helped achieve the fantastic results I saw. The car accelerated straight and extremely quick. The cornering was solid and very predictable. I was really surprised at how forgiving the 5-link suspension was as it handled jumps, chop and varying track conditions with ease. In short, it made me look good.

The bottom line is the JR-X2 is a complete package for an out of the box race car. The quality is excellent every thing is drilled correctly. All the parts are there. The parts are bagged and lettered to coincide with each section of the instructions which makes for simpler assembly and fewer lost parts. The instructions are great and the helpful technical/setup information from Gil Losi Jr., one of the most experienced and winning racers today, make it hard to beat. Now if I were the only racer out there with one I could really clean up!



Above, the steering mechanism uses a pivot-supported aluminum rack that minimizes bump steer, making the car track well on uneven terrain. At right, the smooth underbelly of the JR-X2 is clean and unhindered. Below, the JR-X2 during a shakedown run after assembly. The ground clearance is a real plus on the JR-X2.



PHOTO: JERRY ADLER