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If you think the M10T is cool, wait until you see the Nitro 18T!



Xray M18T

Words: Dave Palacios ■ Photos: Jason Yu

The first luxury mini-truck?

A few days ago we received a package from Xray, wrapped in its brown paper and tied with twine, and I knew something cool was in that box. Any kit that comes out of the Xray factory is sure to be of high quality and packed with features, and that is exactly the case with the M18T. Seeing as I was the one who reviewed Xray's first venture into the micro class, the M18, I claimed this one as my pick for review. Upon opening the package, there it was, the shiny new box with its colorful and high tech looking graphics. I immediately opened it up and began building the kit.

Obviously Dave really enjoys opening boxes.



Xray M18T

• 1/18-SCALE 4WD STADIUM TRUCK • 1/18-SCALE 4WD STADIUM TRUCK • 1/18-S

VEHICLE FEATURES

The M18T shares very few similarities with Xray's first micro car, the M18. This time around Xray designers went all out and packed the M18T full of cool features. Things such as full ball bearings, 6-cell stick pack compatibility, and a single bellcrank steering system are all standard on the M18T. There is also already a long list of optional hop-up parts are available separately from Xray.

OIL-FILLED SHOCKS

What luxury race car would be complete without oil-filled coil over shocks? The M18T shocks use a slotted piston design instead of pistons with holes. This doesn't do much for the performance, it's just easier to manufacturer when making small parts such as these. The shocks came ready to build with the shock seals pre-installed. All you have to do is lube up the shock shaft and seals, then assemble and fill the shocks. Once built, these shocks were surprisingly smooth for plastic bodies. The only thing these shocks are missing are threaded bodies and collars.



PRE-ASSEMBLED BALL DIFFS

Unlike the M18, which came with gear diffs, this kit comes equipped with high performance adjustable ball differentials. Not only does it come with ball diffs, they come pre-assembled! This cuts down somewhat on assembly time, but before continuing your build, attention should be taken to ensure that the diffs are assembled correctly and are in operating condition. When I was building my kit, the diffs were set on the loose side and required adjustment. This isn't uncommon for pre-assembled diffs. A few twists of the included diff tool and I was ready to continue the assembly.



BUILDING AND INSTRUCTIONS

As usual, Xray's instructions are some of the best, bar none! These full color 3D-rendered instructions are easy to follow with clear and detailed images. As I was building the kit, I didn't find any errors or inconsistencies throughout the entire manual. Other manufacturers should take note: these are what instructions should be like. As for building the kit, everything fit like it should.

Sure, there were a few pieces that fit a tad bit snug, but they weren't things that would cause problems in the future. The assembly of the M18T went flawlessly and smooth.



SWAY BARS

To help with suspension tuning, Xray includes a set of front and rear sway bars. These sway bars are identical to the ones you would expect to find on larger scale RC vehicles. They're each held on with two screws and slip right into corresponding slots on the front and rear diff housings. Optional sway bars are available if the stock units don't suit your tuning needs.





“...a simple and efficient drive train
that results in
**LONGER RUN TIMES AND
COOLER MOTORS.**”

▶ ULTRA FREE DRIVE TRAIN

The design of the M18T's drive train is very similar to the M18. It's a shaft-driven 4WD system supported by metal-shielded ball bearings. This setup provides an ultra free drive train that is capable of handling quite a bit of power—can you say brushless? The 54-tooth spur gear is mounted to the rear input shaft. An aluminum drive shaft is inserted into that input shaft and runs the length of the chassis to the front input shaft. These input shafts drive the front and rear differentials, which in turn rotate the truck's wheels. It's a simple and efficient drive train that results in longer run times and cooler motors.



▶ ELECTRONICS

Xray offers two kits for the M18T, one with electronics (#380591) and one without (#380500). What's included in the electronics package? Well, you get Xray's XMC 300R micro speed controller, a 300-sized motor, an XM501 MG micro servo and a 1100mAh NiMH 7.2V battery pack. Of course you can get the kit without the electronics and substitute them with pieces of your own choosing. The M18T will accept most popular brands of micro-sized electronics. Just keep in mind that there isn't much room on the chassis, so when choosing your electronics, think small.



TESTING

Since the M18T is a small truck, I decided to try it out in the office first. After chasing Jason's dog Wilson for a while, I figured it was time to hit the dirt. If you're a regular reader of Xtreme RC, you've probably guessed by now that Revelation Raceway is our default track of choice for off-road vehicles. Well, that still holds true today. After the photo shoot I took the M18T around the track, over the jumps and around the turns.

Acceleration and Speed • This is where the shaft-driven system gets to show why its efficient free spinning design works perfectly for small-scale RC cars. With the 300-size motor and 6-cell battery pack that are included in the power pack, the M18T is pretty quick. It's not mind-blowing fast, but for indoor use it's fast enough. The drive system does an excellent job of transferring the power to the tires with minimum power loss. The stock gearing on the truck makes it feel pretty torquey off the line and provided a decent top speed to make driving fun. However, by playing with the gearing and perhaps investing in a faster motor and matched batteries, the M18T could easily be made faster.

Rating: 9/8.5

Braking • The truck itself handles pretty well under braking. It works exceptionally well on the high-traction office carpet! In the dirt it's a little tough, but

that could be due to the ESC. The Xray XMC 300R speed controller doesn't really have brakes. It's more of a "slam it into reverse" type of deal. Of course because of its forward momentum, the truck doesn't immediately go into reverse, but as soon as the truck comes to a stop, it's a-reversin' we will go! This makes it a little difficult to stop in the dirt. Because the wheels can break loose, the wheels start to go in reverse as the truck begins to slide going forward. This combination can be a handful to handle, and especially on loose, dry dirt like what we found this time around at Revelation Raceway. Once in a while I would hit the brakes and the tires would break loose, then the truck would unexpectedly gain traction and start heading in the reverse direction. It takes a little getting used to and can be handled with a little practice. But if you plan to race the M18T, you might want to opt for the no reverse ESC.

Rating: 7

OUR TEST GEAR



Radio: Airtronics M11, 90270TXFM75, \$250



Receiver: Airtronics 3ch Micro Receiver, 92836Z, \$85



Servo(s): Xray XM501 MG, 389170, \$52



Motor: Xray 300, 389162, \$33



Speed Control: Xray XMC300R, 389182, \$69



Battery: Xray 6-cell 1100mAh NiMH, 389123, \$35

CONNECT

TEAM XRAY

(Dist. by RC America)

ph: 800.519.7221

web: www.teamxray.com

Low-Speed Handling • During the photo shoot I had the opportunity to try out the M18T under low-speed conditions. With the stock suspension setup it was a little bouncy in the dirt, but overall it wasn't that bad. The truck was very responsive, so much so that I needed to turn down the dual-rate. Actually the dual-rate was set at 125% so I simply turned it down to 100% and everything was fine. The M18T was still a little touchy, but still drivable. Besides, I could always turn the dual-rate or steering speed down a little as needed.

Rating: 9.5

High-Speed Handling • During high-speed driving, the touchiness of the truck became more apparent. During hard turns the truck would hook and break loose. All I needed to do was remove the rear sway bar and turn down the dual-rate a tad. After those couple of adjustments, things

Most of the test gear listed is also available as a Power Package with the truck.

were fine. I was tearing around the track with ease. On the office floor (carpet) it was a different story. The truck was very responsive, but in complete control. It was like driving an on-road car on a carpet track. Just turn the wheel and you were going in that direction with no hesitation.

Rating: 8.5

Rough-Track Handling • As mentioned earlier the stock suspension setup was a little light. It really didn't feel like it had oil in the shocks at all. Because of this the M18T had a tough time absorbing the bumps. The chassis bottomed out easily and bounced around a bit. It wasn't hard to drive, it just didn't absorb the bumps too well. With a little time messing around with oil weights and included optional pistons, I'm sure the perfect setup could be found.

Rating: 7

Jumping • Even though most of the jumps at Revelation were a bit too big for the M18T, it was still fun trying to get the truck airborne. On the smaller jumps I could hit the upslope at full speed and launch the truck into the air. Sure, it didn't go very far, but the distance it did cover was covered well. The landings, however, were a little bouncy and resulted in the chassis slapping hard against the dirt. Again this was due to the lack of damping in the shocks. Adjusting the attitude of the truck mid-flight was easy. To bring the nose down I just needed to tap the brakes. To keep the nose up, I just stayed on the throttle a little longer.

Rating: 8.5

Wrenching

Maintenance • Working on the M18T is just like working on a larger scale truck. To access the differentials the entire top plate with shock towers needs to be removed. Then the upper arms and differential

housing upper halves need to be removed before you can pull the diffs out. Luckily I didn't need to do this. Actually, I didn't need to do much to the truck other than adjust the radio slightly.

Rating: 10

Wear and Tear • With as much punishment as I put this truck through, I'm truly surprised that I didn't break anything. I did get a small rock jammed in the spur gear, which I caught just in time before it ate up the gears. Other than that the truck held up very well. Because the M18T doesn't have a gear cover, I'd be very careful when driving the truck in the dirt. I just kept an ear out for any odd noises coming from the truck and checked the gears whenever I did hear something.

Rating: 9

Tuning • As soon as the truck was released it wasn't long before Xray put out a multitude of optional parts for it—not that they are all needed. The M18T comes with a wide range of adjustments to tune the suspension to your driving needs. Optional shock mounting positions, oils and pistons can all be used to tame any terrain or living room. The only thing it is lacking in are camber adjustments. But if you're like me and like to hop up your ride, you can choose from everything such as a blue, silver or traditional black carbon fiber chassis, aluminum front hubs, motor mount, and shock towers just to name a few. For a full list of option parts visit Xray's website at www.teamxray.com.

Rating: 9.5

SCORECARD

SCALE RATINGS: 1=POOR • 10=EXCELLENT

10	INSTRUCTIONS
10	PARTS QUALITY/FIT
9	DURABILITY
9.5	TUNABILITY
9	OVERALL PERFORMANCE
8	VALUE

+ HITS

- Small scale that can be run indoors and outdoors in small areas
- Drive train is highly efficient
- Available Power Pack makes choosing electronics easy

- MISSES

- No gear cover for pinion and spur gears, which leaves them vulnerable to debris
- Uses its own method for attaching the wheels so you can only use Xray rims

Conclusion

As usual, Xray has put out yet another quality product. The parts are well made, everything fits together as it should and it looks cool. In other words, this little race truck is ready to go. I had a lot of fun driving the M18T both in the dirt and at the office. But to me it doesn't make sense to drive a truck this small on a track made for 1/10-scale or larger vehicles. So if you have space in your basement, living room or backyard, this is perfect. Just grab a few friends, build a scaled-down off-road track in the backyard and hold the first annual neighborhood off-road champs at your house. But with a price tag of about \$231 (with power pack; \$137 without), it cost almost the same as a larger scale race truck. That may cause more than one person to ask if it's still worth it. ○

