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Reviews**

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**FIRST TEST**

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waiting for! Page 54

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## FAST TRACK REVIEW

Text by Erich Reichert

Photos by Walter Sidas



XRAY

XBB TO

BY THE RACER, FOR THE RACER



**T**he development of RC vehicles seems to move faster as the years pass; new vehicles become obsolete almost as fast as they can be shipped out, as newer, "better" vehicles take over the spotlight in this country. Across the pond in Europe things happen a little differently however. Much like the full-scale car industry, vehicles are refined and honed, improving on an already established platform. When XRAY tore into the off-road world last year with the release of the XB8 nitro buggy, it was like no other in its class. Its level of craftsmanship and level of adjustment made it a top performer and a prizefighter. Set on conquering the 1/8 off-road world, XRAY continued the development of the XB8 far after its release. Initially, it was the XRB, then along came a handful of option parts. Now, with the "all new" refined version of the original buggy, comes the XB8TQ.



#### FAST FACTS

**MANUFACTURER:** XRAY

**VEHICLE:** XB8TQ

**CLASS:** 1/8 Nitro Buggy

**DRIVER:** Intermediate to advanced nitro racer

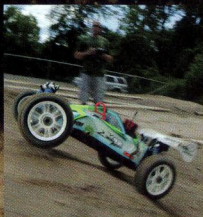
**PRICE:** \$589.95

**SPEED:** 46.39 mph

Acceleration: 5.25 sec. @  
46.39 mph in 240.16 ft.

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS NEEDED:**

.21 nitro engine, radio, receiver pack, 8-AA batteries, nitro fuel, glow starter, starter box, paint, tires, and tire glue.





XRAY XB8TQ





## THE RUNDOWN

More meat than filler, the TQ not only includes all available option parts but also has been massaged and reconfigured to offer even more adjustability to the original buggy. Nearly all adjustment options have been increased significantly, taking a buggy capable of on-road levels of adjustment and design to an entirely new level. To get things started the laundry list of options is packed full of go-fast goodies. Add in all the aluminum hop-ups, a few totally new parts, top it off with a new body and you have one very refined buggy.

## SUSPENSION

All-new suspension geometry is the biggest change to the TQ; longer arms, more down travel, adjustable weight distribution, increased caster, front kick-up, and rear squat adjustment all work in symphony to improve the handling on a wider variety of tracks. 8mm thick aluminum suspension holders can be found on both ends of the vehicle as well as stronger turnbuckles and a new shock piston material that increase the XB8's indestructibility factor. To finish off the suspension changes, a new rear shock tower lifts the mounting holes higher and adds more choices allowing the suspension to use more of the shocks travel when the arms are set lower.

On the track, the car was very softly damped. The kits' oil was a bit on the lighter side over the plus sized jumps at Wolcott Hobbies in Wolcott, CT. Raising the ride height helped keep the chassis up off the dirt a little bit, but a heavier shock package (oil and piston) than the manual's setup is in order for tracks with large jumps. On power, the car is very steady in a straight line, but had a very strong understeer around the track. After switching out the diff oil to a lighter setup (3k front and middle, 5k rear), and a quick visit to XRAY's online setup section, the TQ was turning better. Out of the box, the buggy is setup for more "European" style tracks with flowing corners and smaller jumps. The plus side of all this, however, is that XRAY's website has an unprecedented amount of setup help and racer info.

## CHASSIS

The kit includes both aluminum and composite braces and plates that allow the flex in the chassis to be adjusted to control forward bite and acceleration. The revised rear suspension allows the rear arms to move fore and aft to change the weight distribution of the buggy via small c-clips that are quick and easy to remove with a clip removal tool.

What can I say? The aluminum parts are simply stunning. Sure there are plenty of companies out there that will machine parts and anodize them in the era's "in color" but XRAY's metal work is on a whole other plane. Material is removed strategically to keep the parts as light as possible without sacrificing strength, the backs of the upper shock mounts are inset so the screw heads are flush with the piece and all parts are angle cut for a silver accent...nice touch. The supplemental instructions call for the aluminum chassis braces front and rear, but the composite front brace definitely softened up the front end, allowing it to steer more. Off jumps, the chassis was well balanced and very easy to control; it's nice to know that it can be changed should it ever need to be.



## DRIVETRAIN

On the drivetrain side of things, the XB8TQ has new, longer front outrives to accommodate the longer suspension arms. The clutch bell and spur gear are made of Hudy Spring Steel for Gears, which is designed specifically for gears and increased lifespan. Speaking of the clutch, a hard coated T6 aluminum flywheel keeps the installed pins in place under severe loads and keeps the shoes aligned.

Finally, lightweight aluminum clutch shoes are more durable and engage with more strength for a more solid throttle feel.

The front bones are comfortably inside of the outrives and there isn't a doubt in my mind that they'd stay in there no matter how the suspension is set. I can't say that I've ever worn out a 1/8 buggy's clutch/spur, but after two solid years of use of my XB8, I can say that they are a little sloppy. It will be interesting to see how much longer these gears last. The original kit came with two sets of clutch springs so you could tailor the feel to the track, the new clutch shoes only include one set and the combo causes the clutch to engage a little later than I like. My years of driving electric cars have given me a throttle finger that isn't very well suited to this setup, so I swapped the springs out for a lighter set to get a more linear throttle response. The Radical R/C .21 used in the test has an explosive amount of top end and with a more reactive clutch setup, the TQ could be a real powerhouse.

## STEERING

One last big point of interest in the XB8TQ is in the buggy's steering setup. Starting from the servo, the TQ utilizes XRAY's new stronger composite for the servo horn, increasing both durability and feel. Just past the horn, one of the TQ's improved turnbuckles (which feature a stronger core designed specifically for off-road use) mounts to the standard crank-type steering with built-in adjustable servo saver. Finally, putting the steering input outward through more of the super strong turnbuckles is an all new aluminum steering rack with three Ackerman adjustments.

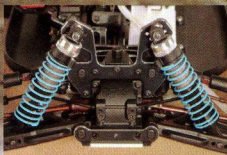
The TQ's initial lack of sharp, concise steering is in the suspension. With a setup better suited for the test track, the buggy had a more substantial feel; yet it was very controllable with a sure foot on the ground.

## ON THE TRACK

Internet RC's line of Radical race engines offers a solid amount of power, but the TQ's clutch setup and significantly improved rear bite made it extremely easy to control even if you jumped on the throttle too hard. The manuals' settings provide the driver with a buggy that is almost so easy to keep under control that virtually anyone could get the XB8TQ around the track, however, the underside of the car's chassis will be absolutely punished. Having reviewed the original buggy and run it for two years, I had a shock and diff setup that worked fairly well for my driving style. When incorporated with the TQ's new adjustments and online help, I had the TQ running and turning better than my XB8 ever did. With the new shock settings in place, the buggy still jumped very well and took landings much better.



## XRAY XB8TQ



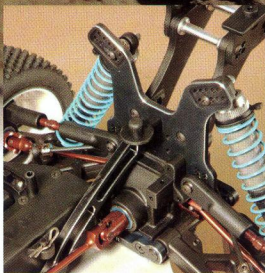
A swaybar set sits just in front of new, longer outrdrives that ensure the dogbone won't escape under full extension.



The TQ's all new steering is beefed up with improved turnbuckles that have a more durable core to stay straighter longer.



Aluminum shoes and a hardened flywheel are among the drive-train improvements that increase durability and make the buggy easy to drive.



Attached to the rear brace is a completely new and higher rear shock tower that has more shock and camber link holes.



Previously available as option parts, the XB8TQ comes with an aluminum radio tray and chassis braces. Composite chassis braces are also included so you can tailor the buggy's flex to track conditions.

Longer suspension arms help improve the TQ's overall handling.





Paint by Kolors by Kroy  
Photographed at RC Madness, Enfield, CT

## TECH SPECS

### CHASSIS

<b>MATERIAL</b>	Machined aluminum
<b>TYPE</b>	Plate-type with angled edges
<b>LENGTH</b>	19 in. (482mm)
<b>WIDTH</b>	12 in. (306mm)
<b>WHEELBASE</b>	12.6 in. (321mm) to 12.9 in. (327mm)
<b>WEIGHT</b>	118 oz. (3350g)

**AUTHOR'S OPINION:** The machine work that goes into each and every XRAY part is exceptional right down to its finish. I felt a little guilty marring it up on those hard landings.

**RATING-9**

### SUSPENSION

<b>MATERIAL</b>	Molded composite
<b>TYPE</b>	Fully independent with adjustable upper control link

**AUTHOR'S OPINION:** The longer arms and improved suspension work well once setup to your track conditions. Having that much adjustment can be a little intimidating initially but empowering once you learn how to use it.

**RATING-8**

### DRIVETRAIN

<b>TYPE</b>	Shaft driven
<b>DIFFERENTIALS</b>	Fluid filled, 6-gear type
<b>BEARINGS</b>	Metal shielded bearings
<b>DRIVESHAFTS</b>	XRAY CV style axles

**AUTHOR'S OPINION:** The XB8TQ utilizes the same basic drivetrain of its predecessor, but stays in line with the entire approach to the TQ kit. The clutch engages later than I'd like and may be suited better for other drivers; if not, lighter springs are a quick fix.

**RATING-8**

### ENGINE

<b>TYPE</b>	Radical Racing
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**AUTHOR'S OPINION:** For a newer brand in the US, I was very impressed with the top end speed. Bottom end is strong, but appeared to be a little less than usual due to the clutch setup. Nothing a good tune up couldn't fix.

**RATING-9**

### DURABILITY

**AUTHOR'S OPINION:** In general, 1/8 buggies are very durable, but the XRAY is exceptionally strong. Improvements throughout further development strengthen TQ making it one incredibly durable car. The TQ is as simple or complicated as you make it. While there are enough adjustments for even a factory level driver, the buggy can also be kept to simple changes and be very responsive. XRAY has put a lot of time into developing a strong online community based on other owners' experiences. Setup help and sheets are abundant from local tracks to Worlds setups.

**RATING-9**

### ITEMS USED



**GRP** Jelly tires:  
GM09A, \$19.99



**RADICAL RC**  
621P Engine:  
\$349.99



**O'DONNELL**  
30% Fuel:  
ODOP3330,  
\$10.99



**SPEKTRUM**  
DSM System:  
SPM1003,  
\$169.99

## WHAT WE LIKED

- Most adaptable buggy to date.
- An option packed kit that is already loaded with options to start.
- Online support is second to none.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Factory setup is very soft.
- Supplemental instructions should be incorporated into a new manual.
- A second spring option for shocks and clutch would be nice.

## CONCLUSION

To design a vehicle that is truly universal is impossible; in the USA alone, tracks vary to drastic measures. Having a buggy that has enough options and adjustments to be suited to anywhere you race is a true definition of luxury. In a lot of cases, one track may be better suited for a specific vehicle vs. another, but the XB8TQ is totally adaptable to any track—with some setup work and a little help from a friend or friends, [www.teamxray.com](http://www.teamxray.com), that is. I've said it before, but owning an XRAY vehicle is truly a privilege. And the tight knit community formed by their

owners can be an invaluable tool to learning how to unlock all that your XB8TQ has to offer. When you can hit the setup right, the TQ can be unstoppable and its worldwide racing record is proof positive. ●

### Links

**JR Racing**, distributed by Horizon Hobby, [www.horizonhobby.com](http://www.horizonhobby.com), (217) 355-9511

**Kolors by Kroy**, [www.kolorsbykroy.com](http://www.kolorsbykroy.com)

**Spektrum**, distributed by Horizon Hobby Inc., [www.spektrumrc.com](http://www.spektrumrc.com), (800) 338-4639

**XRAY**, distributed by XRAY USA, contact RC America, [www.teamxray.com](http://www.teamxray.com), (800) 519-7221

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 193.