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OCTOBER 2006 ISSUE 34

\$4.99US \$6.99CAN



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FAST TRACK REVIEW

Text by David Baker

Photos by Walter Sidas

TEAM XRAY

NT18T

FAST FACTS

MANUFACTURER: Team Xray

VEHICLE: NT18T

CLASS: 1/18-scale Nitro Truck

DRIVER: Intermediate nitro or micro enthusiast

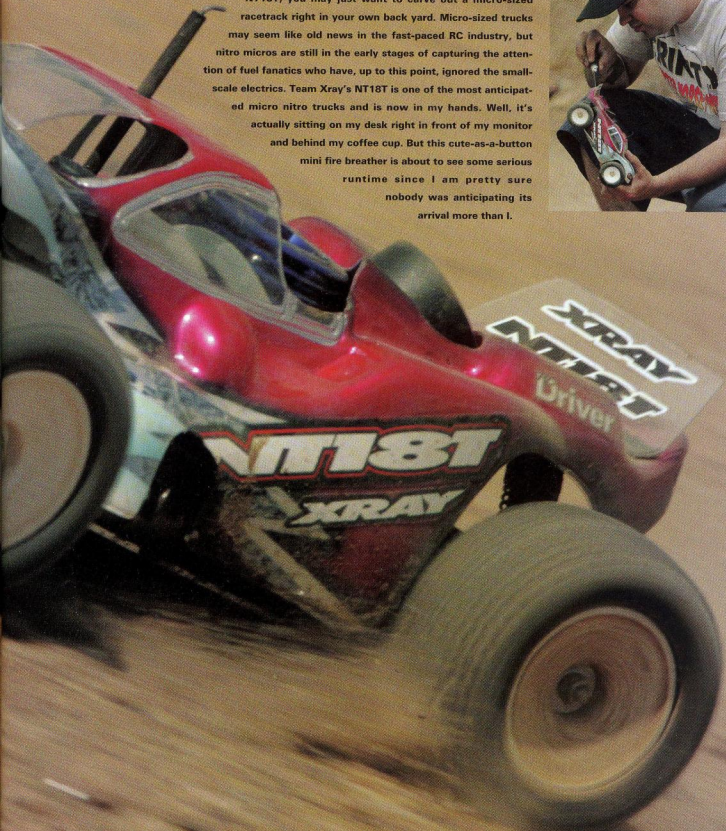
PRICE: \$289.75 (kit only); \$356.50
(kit with Electric Pack)

SPEED: 24.78 mph

ACCELERATION: 3.177 sec. @ 24.78 mph in 90.19 ft.

PEE-WEE POWERHOUSE

Grab your rakes, grab your shovels, and break out the grass and weed killer because as soon as you get a load of Team Xray's nitro pee-wee powerhouse, the NT18T, you may just want to carve out a micro-sized racetrack right in your own back yard. Micro-sized trucks may seem like old news in the fast-paced RC industry, but nitro micros are still in the early stages of capturing the attention of fuel fanatics who have, up to this point, ignored the small-scale electrics. Team Xray's NT18T is one of the most anticipated micro nitro trucks and is now in my hands. Well, it's actually sitting on my desk right in front of my monitor and behind my coffee cup. But this cute-as-a-button mini fire breather is about to see some serious runtime since I am pretty sure nobody was anticipating its arrival more than I.





THE RUNDOWN

CHASSIS AND DRIVETRAIN—At about eight inches in length, the NT18T looks like a toy, but under the Lexan shell sits a host of components that are anything but toy-like. The wide chassis is machined from T6 7075 aluminum and has very little unused space after all the electronics are installed. The shock towers are mounted to a plastic upper brace that spans from front to back and is secured to the diff housings. A radio tray, which can be removed with just a few screws, contains all electronics and is mounted on the right side of the chassis and the .08cc engine, and thimble-sized, 30cc fuel tanks takes up the space on the left. The 54t spur gear is supported at the rear of the aluminum center driveshaft that carries power to the front and rear ball diffs. These diffs are factory assembled (thank goodness) but require a break-in period. The adjustable ball diffs need to be

tightened a little at a time and require running the truck for a while between adjustments to allow the diff balls to create the necessary “groove” in the diff plates. Composite driveshafts and axles use a ball joint at the axles and a drive pin on the inside. Ball bearings support the axles and diffs. A 16t clutch bell is paired up to the steel spur gear. Stopping is courtesy of a steel brake disc and Ferodo brake pads.

ENGINE—The NT18T is powered by a .08cc engine with a dual needle slide carb and a blue aluminum heatsink head that's not much larger in diameter than a quarter. A T6 aluminum flywheel and a two-shoe aluminum clutch come standard. The polished aluminum pipe sings a tune that sounds like a horde of angry mosquitoes and provides a balance of torque and speed for the lightweight truck. A fuel with 30 percent nitro content is recommended.

SUSPENSION AND STEERING

Composite suspension arms ride on pivot balls at three points on each arm. Two shock-mounting options are available on the lower arms, and three choices are available on the shock towers. Coil-over, oil-filled shocks with composite bodies use plastic clips for preload. The included springs are on the softer side and want more preload than the included spacers provide. A zip tie on each works well. Front and rear sway bars are included to help keep the short truck stable through tight turns. The steering linkages pivot from a point about a third of the way back on the center upper brace and connect to the servo saver directly on the steering servo. Adjustability of the suspension components is limited to shock position and front toe-in.

ELECTRONICS—The NT18T comes as a kit without electronics just in case you pre-



fer to choose your own or already have something on hand. It is also available with Team Xray's Micro Nitro Electronic Pack. This pack includes a rechargeable receiver battery pack and two XMS01 micro servos that feature metal gears. Also included is a pre-wired on/off switch harness with cables. You will need to provide a receiver such as the Spektrum SR3000, which is what I used.

BODY, WHEELS AND TIRES—This little truck body has more curves than Jessica Simpson. Its unusual style looks as though a buggy and a truck body collided at high speeds and fused into one. It's a squatty truck body that works well and fits like a glove. It does, however, limit you to the stock Xray body as it may be difficult to find another 1/18-scale body to fit it properly. Wheels are the now standard dish style with mini pins for tire choice.

PERFORMANCE—Against my better judgment, I took the truck to our local off-road track that was designed, for the most part, for monster trucks and truggies. I tried my best not to have any preconceived notions of how the NT18T would handle. When it fired right up on the Hudy starter box, I couldn't get it to the dirt quick enough. I immediately learned that it handled nothing at all like the 10-pound trucks I was used to. The surface was loose, silty dirt, and upon full throttle acceleration, the truck's rear end spun around in the first five feet or so. With more controlled throttle input, it headed down the straight bouncing a bit over the rough surface left by recent torrential rains. Over the first small jump, it front-flipped onto its lid. The poor track conditions and short wheelbase contribute to the performance I was experiencing up to this point. But I found a large area of the track that was still intact and discovered the type of terrain the NT prefers. Handling

was much more predictable on the semi-smooth surface with rolling jumps instead of ramp-like jumps. Within a couple of tanks of fuel, I was able to successfully complete flights from some of the smaller jumps on the track. Approach was the key as the short wheelbase and light weight of the truck made in-flight corrections a little tricky. Steering was too quick, making it necessary to adjust the exponential on my M8. On about the fourth tank of fuel (a tank lasts about five minutes), the NT18T settled into a groove and found its comfort zone. To truly get the best performance from Xray's nitro micro truck, you will want to run it on a track that is scaled down to fit it. Big air was not welcome, but performance on the ground was a blast once I got used to the feel of a truck that seems to weigh almost nothing.

TEAM XRAY NT18T



An aluminum two-shoe clutch is included to engage the steel 16t clutchbell. A starter box is required to spin the small aluminum flywheel.



Driveshafts are made of a composite plastic with steel drive pins on the inside and U-joints on the axle.

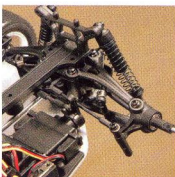


The steel spur gear is mounted directly in front of the rear diff. A single steel disc is used for braking. The Ferodo pads showed no signs of fade after many tanks of fuel. The center driveshaft is made from aluminum and distributes power from the .08cc engine evenly to the front and rear. You can also see the engine's low speed needle—yes, it has a dual-needle carb.

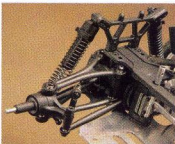
The NT18T's ball differentials are pre-assembled, which means no disappearing steel balls. They require a break-in period before optimum performance is realized. Ball bearings keep rotating



parts operating smoothly. The steel, silver-dollar-sized spur gear mounts to the pinion gear for the rear diff shown here.



Instead of the more common wheel hex, the NT18T uses a composite axle with flat spots on two sides to accept the wheels. This eliminates the possibility of using wheels from other 1/18-scale vehicles. The post that drops down from the steering knuckle may look a bit unusual, but it keeps the steering from going too far throughout the arm's full range of motion.



The suspension setup used pivot balls—three on each of the upper and lower arms. An occasional blast with a cleaner will keep them operating smoothly. The oil-filled shocks are made of plastic and use a preloaded spacer to compress the soft springs. A stiffer spring may be needed, depending on driving style and location.

What We Liked—

- Reliable engine
- Fits right in a pit box
- Fast right out of the box

What could be improved—

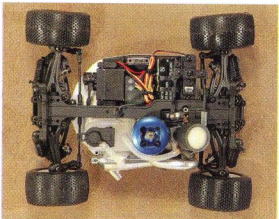
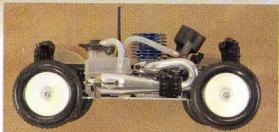
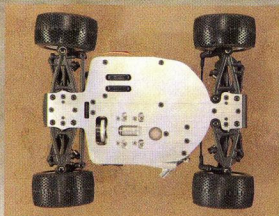
- Longer wheelbase would help with stability
- Lacks the ability to use aftermarket wheels and bodies

TECH SPECS

CHASSIS	MATERIAL:	T6 7075 aluminum
	TYPE:	Plate
	SPECIAL FEATURES:	N/A
	LENGTH:	8.2 in. (208mm)
SUSPENSION	WIDTH:	7 in. (178mm)
	WEIGHT:	1.5 lbs (690g)
	RIDE HEIGHT:	.43 in. (10.92mm)
	AUTHOR'S OPINION:	The chassis is wide to accommodate all the necessary components and keeps them in a tight, little package. However, it limits the choices for bodies to the stock one.
DRIVETRAIN	RATING—9	
	MATERIAL:	Composite plastic
	TYPE:	Four wheel-independent
	SHOCK TRAVEL:	1 in. (25mm)
MOTOR	WHEELS:	White dish
	TIRES:	Mini pin spikes
	AUTHOR'S OPINION:	Stock springs are a bit soft. Pivot ball joints work well but require frequent cleaning to keep them operating smoothly.
	RATING—7.5	
ELECTRONICS	TYPE:	Shaft drive
	DIFFERENTIALS:	Front and rear ball diffs
	BEARINGS:	Full bearings throughout
	BRAKES:	Steel brake disk with Ferodo brake pads
	DRIVESHAFTS:	Composite units with U-joints
	AUTHOR'S OPINION:	After I adjusted the ball diffs per the instruction manual, the drivetrain worked very consistently with a smooth operation.
	RATING—10	
	TYPE:	Nitro
	SIZE:	.08cc
	PINION SPUR:	16/54
	AUTHOR'S OPINION:	This tiny little mite of an engine fired up every time without hesitation and provided enough speed to keep the "go-fast" guys happy. It's one of the best performing engines of the micro nitros we've seen.
	RATING—10	
	TYPE:	Team Xray Micro Electronic Pack
	SERVOs:	XMS01 micro servos w/metal gears
	RECEIVER:	Not included, but a Spektrum system was used
	AUTHOR'S OPINION:	This pack includes servos, a rechargeable receiver pack and a switch. My Spektrum receiver made it complete. The servos had plenty of power for their purposes and gave me no issues whatsoever.
	RATING—10	



TEAM XRAY NT18T



Team Xray's Micro Electronic Pack includes the two micro servos, a receiver battery pack and the on/off switch. Those and the receiver all mount nicely to the radio tray that is removed as a single unit for ease of maintenance.

CONCLUSION

Some may see the nitro micro scene as simply a novelty that will eventually wear off. I suppose that is always a possibility with any hot, new item, but as long as companies with reputations for producing high-quality products – like Xray – keep putting out vehicles like the NT18T, then these little guys have a chance at long term survival. ●

Links

Hudy Special Products, distributed by Hudy USA, contact RC America, www.hudy.net, (800) 519-7221

Xray, www.teamxray.com, (800) 519-7221

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

ADDITIONAL ITEMS NEEDED:

Receiver and transmitter, glow igniter, fuel, paint for the body, starter box