

KYOSHO ULTIMA RT5

REVIVING THE CLASS, OR
THE BEST OF A DYING
BREED?

BY STEPHEN BESS > Back in Japan at the Kyosho world headquarters, racing is serious business. Dozens of IFMAR World Championships have been won with Kyosho vehicles, in both nitro and electric classes. You'd be hard-pressed to find a hotter electric off-road vehicle lineup at the moment than Kyosho's, with the Lazer ZX-5 SP four-wheel-drive buggy (winner of the *R/C Car* 4WD shootout) and popular RB5 two-wheel-drive buggy. But what about electric stadium trucks? The electric stadium truck class, once a tent pole for major electric races, has seen its popularity dwindle over recent years. Designed from the ground up as a pure racing truck, Kyosho hopes the RT5 will bring attention back to a fading class.





KIT FEATURES

23mm longer chassis. Although the RT5 is based upon Kyosho's RB5 buggy, the RT5 uses a chassis that's 23mm longer than the buggy chassis. The extra length increases the truck's wheelbase, making the truck more stable as well as more realistic-looking. Molded from a carbon fiber composite, the chassis is virtually flex-proof. Most standard-size 2S LiPo batteries fit, as well as all six- and seven-cell stick and matched battery packs.

Floating axles and quick-release hubs. Electric 1/10-scale vehicles traditionally use front stub axles with ball bearings inserted into the front wheels. The RT5 tosses this design in favor of a more advanced "floating axle," which positions the bearings inside the steering knuckles rather than inside the

wheels. This position reduces unsprung weight (moving the bearing weight further inside on the arm), and reduces the stress on the bearings themselves.

The RT5's quick-release front and rear hubs, which eliminate wheel nuts, are also all-new. Just push the wheel onto the axle, and it clicks into place. Typically used for quick tire swaps mid-race, the RT5 will likely never race more than five minutes at a time; instead, the quick-release hubs come in handy when briefly testing tires before a main or quick maintenance. Another bonus is that the front and rear hubs are identical; you no longer need to purchase different front and rear wheels.

Captured hinge pins and velvet shocks. Gone are the days of microscopic E-clips shooting off into Neverland. The RT5 uses fully captured

hinge pins, eliminating all E-clips on the suspension while increasing the truck's durability. The RT5's oil shocks are as good as they get, with threaded shock bodies and Kyosho's exclusive (and expensive) "Velvet" hard-anodized coating for buttery smooth operation.

Heavy-duty transmission. Kyosho designed the RT5's transmission with ultra-high-power electric motors and LiPo batteries in mind. To bulletproof the transmission, Kyosho equips the RT5 with a hard-anodized slipper plate assembly, optional tungsten-carbide diff balls, and a heavy duty "SP" idler gear. These option parts are included in the box and allow the RT5 to handle the hottest modified motors and the most powerful LiPo batteries with ease.



PERFORMANCE TESTING

After installing Jared Tebo's Hot Rod shootout-winning setup, I tested the RT5 over several Tuesday and Saturday races at—where else—Hot Rods. Equipped with Orion's Vortex 5.5 brushless motor and ProTek's 3800 30C battery, the RT5 has absurd power that gobbles up the largest off-road tracks. But forget about drag racing and top speed; an off-road vehicle's capabilities are judged by its composure, balance and infield steering strengths. Agility, stability and controllability are the "ilities" we care about.

Even on a bumpy track that should upset a lightweight two-wheel-drive vehicle, the RT5 feels glued to the track. Jab the throttle, and the RT5 hunkers down and accelerates away—even

wheelies, given enough traction—in a blur. Dive into high-speed sweepers, and the truck demonstrates a reassuring slight push (aren't these trucks supposed to snap oversteer?). Slow down a few clicks, and the RT5 dives into corners and steers with precision that feels more like a 2WD buggy than a truck with large tires. Wanna play Ken Block for a moment and jump a huge triple? The RT5 does that, too, and lands from high altitudes as though it were mere inches off the ground. Plush, baby. Barring a 30 mph headwind, the RT5 jumps level and true. After a dozen laps, I had forgotten how frustrating a skittish, nervous, two-wheel electric vehicle could be, and instead I was pushing the RT5 as though it were an 1/8-scale buggy.

After several weeks of testing, the RT5 came away unscathed except for two of the rear camber link long rod ends, which were tweaked slightly and bent, but not broken. Take care landing hard on the rear wheels, or you also may bend or break the upper camber link. It was the only liability I could find, and I crashed our RT5 harder and more often than Lindsay Lohan crashes Mercedes SL's on Rodeo Drive.

WHAT DID WE LIKE?

The RT5's grippy rear traction, plush suspension and forgiving handling add up to produce a world-class stadium truck. We like the RT5's long wheelbase, high-traction chassis because it allows us to drive the truck aggressively without swapping ends in corners. You

won't smoke a four-wheel-drive buggy in an acceleration contest, but you'll come pretty close. I also like the RT5's quick-release hubs, although I must admit finding them laughable initially. You'll never race longer than five minutes in competition, but the quick-release hubs will spoil you during between-round maintenance, and when purchasing wheels, you only need to carry one wheel in your pit box to fit the front or rear. Finally, I thoroughly enjoyed

building the RT5 due to its parts quality, and its fit and finish. The truck's instructions, on the other hand...(see below).

WHAT WOULD WE CHANGE?

Although the truck is excellent when set up properly (only the rear tie-rod bent), getting it set up properly is a challenge. I'm dumbfounded with Kyosho's bland instruction manual and complete lack of online support. For a vehicle that's a pure race

truck made for racers, Kyosho's online support fails to meet both the truck's excellent performance potential and any of its competitors. Major deductions go to the lack of gearing suggestions or internal gear ratio chart in the manual ("install the pinion gear"...*crickets*), zero suspension tuning suggestions, explanations or details, no included setup sheet or setup suggestions for various tracks in the kit, and absolutely zero setup resources online

ON THE OTHER HAND...

Aaron: I grew up racing electric off-road, so the RT5 release was quite near to my heart. This truck is the first all-new release into the 1/10-scale 2WD truck category in over half a decade, and Kyosho took their time (almost two years since we first saw the truck in prototype form) to get it right. Boy did they ever. Even when equipped with modified-class brushless power, the truck feels stable and manageable on all sorts of track conditions, and inspires confidence when trying to push the truck for faster lap times. I've always felt that Kyosho's reentry into the electric off-road scene, first with the RB5 and ZX5 buggies and now the RT5 truck, was a bit of a gamble considering the fickle buying habits of the racing public and the dominance of nitro over the last few years, but with good-handling and solid kits like the RT5, there's no dice throwing involved.

Jason: The new RT5 is a refined, incredibly well handling new truck that will definitely help Kyosho stay on top of the 2WD electric truck class. But the bigger question is, why release this now? With the short course class growing to be as big as it currently is, and the 2WD truck class shrinking, why produce this truck now? My guess is that they needed a solid platform for the short course truck. If that's the case, the RT5 is a really good truck to go off of.



at the time of this article. When set up properly, the RT5 shines like a star, but finding that setup may be virtually impossible. After mentioning these knocks to Kyosho America, they informed me that they plan to publish these resources in part or in full soon. In the meantime, visit our website at www.rc-car.com and download our test setup sheet, which is Jared Tebo's Hot Rod Shootout-winning setup.

CONCLUSION

Kyosho made has released some of the best electric 1/10-scale off-road vehicles over the last few years. The Lazer ZX-5 SP won our 1/10-scale 4WD shootout last year, the RB5 buggy has grown in popularity since its release, and now the RT5 has established itself as a worthy adversary in a class with only a few real competitors. We hear feedback from readers who say they've made the swap to the RT5 with great results, and our testing offers no reason to believe otherwise. The truck is fast, durable (in 1/10-scale terms, it's very durable), and has loads of rear traction. If Kyosho can button up its online support and instruction manual woes, the RT5 will be the complete package. *R/TG*

THE FINAL CALL

Highs: Excellent fit and finish, designed and engineered as a true race truck, posh suspension, rear traction aplenty, produces fast lap times.

Lows: Worst instruction manual among its peers, virtually nonexistent online support; tie-rods and rod ends are the only weak spot on the truck we could find.

The Final Call: The high-performance new kid on the block that delivers on the track.

SOURCES

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www.amainhobbies.com

Spektrum DSM, distributed by
Horizon Hobby Distributors Inc., 4105
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SPECS

Vehicle:Kyosho Ultima RT5
Type:1/10-scale electric 2wd truck
Street price:\$280
Class rivals:.....Team Associated T4, Team Losi XXX-T CR

TEST EQUIPMENT

Radio:Spektrum DX3R, #SPM3100, \$319
Servo:Team Orion Vortex 1009, #68003, \$85
Motor:Team Orion Vortex 5.5T Brushless, #28130, \$85
Battery:.....Protek Supreme Power 3800 30C 2S LiPo, #3800-2S30, \$75
Body:Kyosho RT5 w/Upgrade R/C body skin, \$35
Tires:Pro-Line Holeshot M3, #8192-02, \$20/pair



TEST SETUP

Setup we used: To download our test setup, drop by www.rc-car.com and click on "Tech," then click "Setup Sheets." You'll find our RT5 setup sheet there, in PDF downloadable format.

Test track:Hot Rod Hobbies, Saugus, California
Track conditions:.....Hardpacked, semi-blue groove, medium-traction dirt.

DIMENSIONS

Width:12.99 in. (330mm)
Wheelbase:11.25 in. (286mm)
Length:15.94 in. (405mm)
Weight:3.86 lb. (1750 g)
Chassis:Molded composite tub
Suspension:Four-wheel independent
Damping:“Velvet” coated aluminum threaded body oil shocks
Sway bars:.....None
Drivetrain:Rear two-wheel drive
Pinion/spur:18/86 (pinion not included)
Final gear ratio:12.42:1
Differentials:Ball differential with carbide diff balls
Bearings:Teflon and metal sealed ball bearings

PERFORMANCE DATA

0-100 ft: 2.83 seconds
0-top speed: 6.5 seconds
Stalker ATS verified top speed:..... 41.15 mph

