

# SLIP SLIDING AWAY

There are times that during the review process and testing of our cars, that certain aspects of this job take over your life. I don't mean this in a bad way at all, quite the contrary... occasionally a car comes along that you just can't wait to write about, strip, photograph and go out and run. Then because it's that much fun to drive, you want to do that last part over and over again!

With the 1/16th E-Revo's crazy top speed and durability still fresh in my head, I was sent one of the new Traxxas 1/16th VXL Rally cars to review. Now I'm a huge Ken Block Gymkhana fan, and ever since I first saw the promotional video for the Rally I knew it was destiny that I would get to rag one of these little puppies around and mimic my idol... the rest as they say is history. Two bodysells, and three sets of the BF Goodrich licensed tyres later, and the Rally is still in one piece having been the most used, abused and run car that I have ever owned.

## WHAT IS IT?

It's a true hybrid design that utilises the same chassis as the 1/16th E-Revo and 1/16th 4x4 Slash but with a cool rally car bodysell and livery. It's a generic looking shape and is a cross between the new Ford Fiesta and say a Renault. The Rally boasts the same award-winning F1 inspired, rocker-actuated suspension system and 2.4 GHz radio gear. It has however been modified for 1/16th Gymkhana driving with touches such as shorter wishbones and suspension arms, oil-filled, threaded-body GTR shocks with rally-tuned progressive-rate springs. Being based on an off road car has its advantages if you do fancy hitting the rough stuff. The stock 12 mm hex's mean that within reason any 1/10th touring car or even buggy wheel will fit as long as the circumference of the chosen wheel and tyre fit inside the arches. This opens up a myriad of possibilities and by scouring my wheel and tyre collection so far I've run the Rally on tarmac, grass, gravel and even a BMX track with great success. It even handles jumps far better than I expected and is (as most are) waterproof!

## HOW DOES IT DO THAT?

I have though left the best tyre choice until last. The supplied BF Goodrich licensed tyres are (and yes I'm gonna use that word again!) a drift 'hybrid' design. They are unusual in that they tend to generate just enough grip in a straight line perfectly well, but are just hard enough to lose traction when the brake is tapped. This just like the real thing unsettles the car's handling on purpose and then you can turn in, apply the power and in true Ken Block style, drift the car around the apex counter steering if required. It's great fun and definitely true to the way a rally car drives visually. The compound is weird, it does have a rubberized feel, but it's not as hard as a true drift car. There is a cavity inside, as they will compress a little if pressed.

The tread all goes at 45-degree angles on the tyre's surface and this may also aid the sudo-drifting characteristics they offer. One thing I have noticed is that as these tyres wear they generate less and less grip. The tread does have an affect on the way they work and the control they can offer... too much grip and you can't initiate the drift, too little and you

can't control it! Don't forget as well that all this is done with fully functioning diff's. Now I have never yet built or reviewed a drift car that worked like the Rally does. They tend to fall into one camp or the other, grip or drift. The Rally is a true jack of all trades and feels just at home with high grip tyres doing fast circuits on a track as it is going sideways with the supplied boots!

## SERIES OR PARALLEL?

At the heart of the Rally is the VXL-3m speed control and matching sensorless Velineon 380 motor. Out of the box, the Rally is fast, very fast for a car of this size. With 30+ mph on tap with the included 6-cell NiMH battery the drifting action is easy to initiate and then control. By installing an optional, second 6-cell battery in series using the correct Traxxas connector you can if you wish run the car with the Velineon system's full might. Speeds then jump to way over 50 mph with these affordable NiMH packs. It's never been so easy to go so fast!

For anyone wanting to go LiPo, the ESC is fully compatible with low-voltage detection for both 2 and 3S packs. Whatever your power source, the Velineon system offers good throttle control and a top speed that will impress even the most cynical of you out there! You also have the option of running the cells (with again the correct Traxxas connector) in parallel. This will at one go double your run time and believe you me even in 30 mph mode it's more than fast enough for most situations.

## TRAINING DAY

Now if you are a parent that likes the idea of the size of the Rally but may be put off by the speed, even just in one cell 30 mph mode don't worry. The Patent-pending Training Mode lets new drivers hone their skills by offering just 50% throttle. This allows new drivers of any age to develop their control skills before eventually being able to use the full 50+ mph speed with another touch of the ESC's EZ-Set button.

One claim to fame is that the Rally carries the largest motor in its size category and the Velineon 380 features high-speed ball bearings, Sintered rotor, Neodymium magnets, and gold plated 3.5 mm connectors. That's 50,000 rpm of pure power at your fingertips, not bad for a 1/16th car!







#### QUICK SPEC

**Manufacturer** Traxxas USA  
**Type** Brushless Electric Rally Car  
**Price** £324.99 RRP  
[www.logicrc.com](http://www.logicrc.com)

**Scale** 1/16th  
**Power** 4WD VXL Electric  
**Length** 356 mm  
**Width** 185 mm  
**Height** 114 mm  
**Wheelbase** 209 mm  
**Ground Clearance** 15 mm

*Below:* The radio box is O-ring sealed to stop moisture and dust damaging the 2.4 GHz receiver





The 4WD system spins on full ball bearings and delivers smooth, efficient power through the torque control slipper clutch, planetary gear differentials, and Traxxas U-joint telescopic driveshafts. The suspension and driveline are fully integrated into the compact chassis and it is kept safely away from harm, dirt and debris under a plastic transmission tunnel. This isn't the only thing that's protected, as the waterproof high torque servo and O-ring sealed receiver box make sure that the 2.4 GHz Traxxas Link receiver is kept sealed away from whatever the UK weather may throw at you.

## POWER DRIFTING

After taking the car to bits to shoot and compare the differences with the E-Revo I then re-assembled it and decided to take it with me during an indoor session testing and setting up touring cars. In between the semi-serious races I charged up two packs and used the parallel connector to link the cells to the ESC and pressed the button to fire the Rally car up. Initially the car was quite twitchy on the power and swapped ends very easily when gunning the throttle. I would charge a corner, tap the brake, get the car sideways and it would then swap ends when the power was fed in. After a few attempts I found that by dialling down the dual-rate to match the corners far better I could tame this tendency and the Rally would slide beautifully around corner apexes without wanting to swap ends so easily.

It actually felt great to do and looked just as spectacular! Another thing I did do to help with the controlled drifting was to fit a set of red E-Revo springs that are harder and slightly longer than the white ones supplied. I could then wind off all pre-load, and the Rally still felt stiffer all round. This again improved things even more and I was soon doing lap after lap and getting completely sideways at speed on every apex I could find. The only way I can describe the experience is 'Power Drifting' and it feels good!

With practice you can also do more elaborate moves and even a complete 360 drift around an object, straighten the car up and burn off into the distance! The weight distribution of the Rally makes J-turns a breeze and other manoeuvres like the high speed 180 going forwards and even good old fashioned doughnuts!



Above: Tiny gear diffs could be fine-tuned with grease or silicon oil



Above: A 380 motor in a 1/16th car? Only Traxxas would dare!

Now you can see why and how I've used so many sets of tyres in the three weeks I've had the car. It has been run almost every day so far in one form or another and on every surface you can imagine. So far even with multiple high-speed crashes under its bumper I've broken nothing! One thing that I have noticed though is that through repeated rear wheel impact of barriers during my drift manoeuvres the rear pivot ball on one side has become baggy in its socket. The arms themselves are cheap enough to replace and upon removing the offending item it's purely down to wear and tear and more importantly user error! I would far rather an arm do this after a high-speed sideways shunt than the arm itself break.

## SO YOU WANT TO ACTUALLY BE MR BLOCK?

Well now you have a chance! Traxxas have just announced a fully licensed Ken Block Edition of the Rally with fully liveried Monster Energy, DC Shoes Ford Fiesta shell! Having run the Rally for the weeks I have this news just made my day. So much so that I've pre-ordered myself one as an Xmas present to myself. It's due into the UK and on the shelves on the 20th December and if it hits that date, this will sell like hot cakes. From what I hear it's already causing a real feeding frenzy over in the US. If not then, the vast range of colour options of the standard car will I'm sure appeal just as much.

Whatever option you decide is best for you, the Rally is a great fun and versatile car. It will be with me wherever I go for RRCi and in any spare time I get will be used to practice my Gymkhana skills. Who knows, the Rally could spawn a whole new form of sudo-drift based competition, and I'm sure will be run around loads at Gadget Show Live next year, in the R/C demo area. I might even put on a set of off road tyres and give some of the other cars a run for their money on the off road track!

Hey, it's only Xmas once a year and this is the ideal present for any self-respecting rally car fan, Ken Block fan or if you are anything like me... big kid that just loves to have fun and do something different with the hobby. You may find it difficult at first, but getting the Rally dialled is easy and loads of fun once achieved. If you crave a car you can get sideways and still goes like a rocket then look no further than the Traxxas Rally... I may even give you a go with the review car if you can prize the TQ radio out of my hands or distract me in some way!!! [RRCi](#)



Above: The missing link... well it can be found when you take the radio box lid off!



Above: The supplied white springs left and the harder red E-Revo ones I fitted right





**Above:** Transmission, diffs and props are so small they fit in the palm of your hand!



**Above:** The chassis looks cool on its own! Again great design content from Traxxas



**Right:** BF Goodrich licensed tyres, let you grip a little, and drift a lot!



**TECHNICAL SPEC**

**REQUIRED TO RUN**  
4 x AA batteries for TQ transmitter

**LIKES**  
It's Gymkhana in a box!  
Series or parallel use  
Capable of 50 mph!  
Tyres are clever  
Waterproof

**DISLIKES**  
Needs stiffer springs  
Wear rate of tyres

**CONTACT**  
[www.logicrc.com](http://www.logicrc.com)