

O'DONNELL Z01-T

■ KIT ■ NITRO ■ OFF-ROAD

STEVE O'DONNELL BUILDS HIS DREAM MACHINE TRUGGY

WORDS MARK RONGE
PHOTOS HOPE MCCALL

O'DONNELL RACING is a relatively recent contender in the 1/8-scale off-road market. Following the Z01-B buggy, O'Donnell has now released the highly anticipated truggy version, the Z01-T. O'Donnell has been at it long and hard to give us one of the finest quality racing kits you can buy. Couple this with some of the highest-quality components, and you have a world-class racer. The Z01-T has already proven itself at the national level. Not only did the Z01-T win the 2008 National Championship at the 2008 RC Pro Series, it also TQ'd and led every lap of the A-main in the expert truggy class. Up against such high-caliber machinery, that is impressive. With plenty of special features and the best materials, O'Donnell has crafted a recipe for success in the off-road truggy world.

SPECIFICATIONS

Type 1/8-scale 4WD nitro truggy kit
Price \$580 (varies with dealer)
Top speed 44mph (varies, based on engine used)
Wheelbase 14.5 in. (368mm)
Width 16.5 in. (419mm)
Weight, as tested 9.6 lb. (4,354g)
Spur/pinion Planetary 13T/48T
Chassis Machined 7075 T6 hard-anodized aluminum
Differentials Planetary gear with sintered metal gears
Suspension Pivot-system arm, captured hinge pins
Shocks Oversize, 4mm shaft; threaded aluminum shocks



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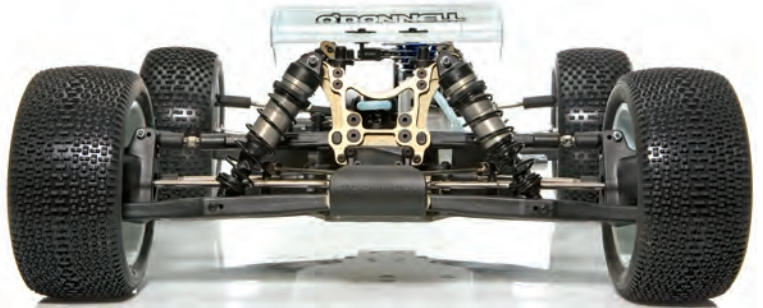
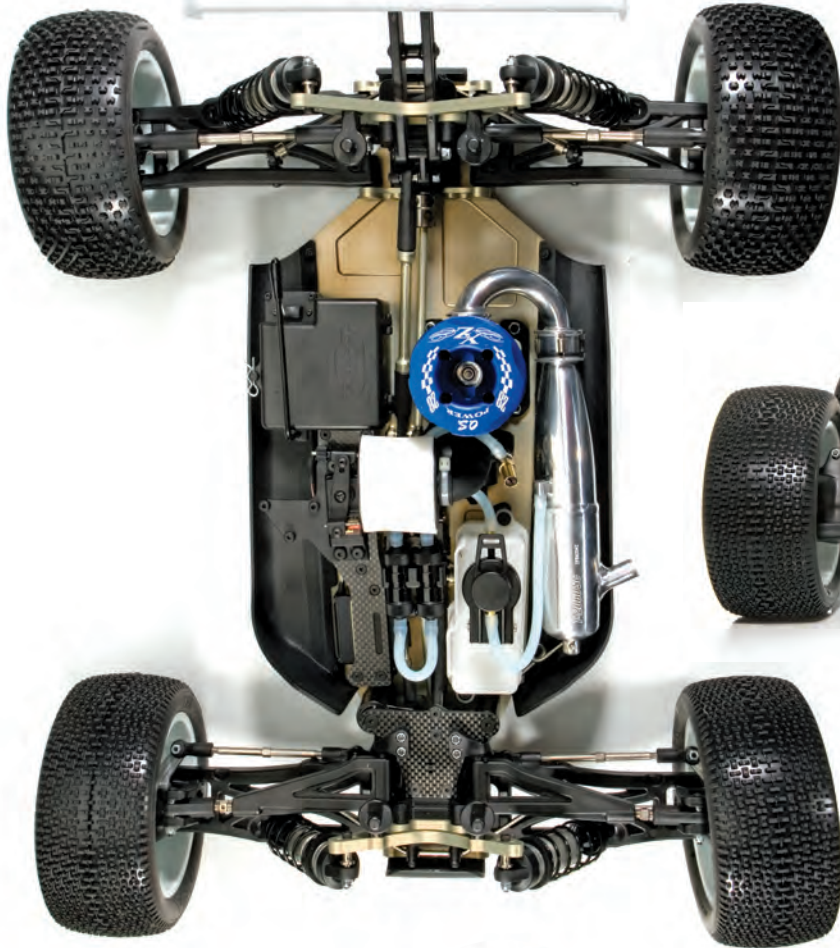


**“THE BUILD WAS SUPER SMOOTH,
BUT THE ON-TRACK PERFORMANCE
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O'DONNELL
Z01-T

O'DONNELL
RACING



O'DONNELL HAS THOUGHT OF EVERYTHING TO MAKE THIS TRUGGY USER FRIENDLY AND A WORLD-CLASS RACER.

ONLINE EXTRA

CHECK OUT BUILDING AND SETUP TIPS FROM STEVE O'DONNELL ALONG WITH A 360 VIEW AND WALLPAPER AT RCCARACTION.COM/MO



FEATURES

ASSEMBLY. Assembly of the O'Donnell Z01-T went smoothly. The instructions are some of the best I've seen, with clear drawings and helpful text to guide you through any difficult areas. The parts are organized by bags that pertain to different steps in the build process. The coolest thing is there are hardly any parts trees. Everything has already been removed from any excess plastic, with none left over to trim.

FINISH. While assembling the truggy, I quickly noticed the quality of the materials. The plastic is some of the highest quality I have seen, and different parts like the A-arms are super tough, and the bumpers have a little more give to them. O'Donnell really put a lot of thought into these design elements. The aluminum pieces are light, while still providing maximum durability. The CNC aluminum shock towers have plenty of tuning options with three shock-mounting positions.

SUSPENSION. The included shocks are beefy, with 4mm shafts that will take any abuse you throw at it. The lightweight, hard-anodized aluminum shock bodies look and perform great. The shocks are very smooth and with the extra volume soak up the bumps and ruts.

STEERING. The steering setup is spectacular—very important for truggies. Plenty of steering throw is on tap, with no apparent slop. Everything is smooth and precise. There is hardly any noticeable bump

steer, when adding the included washers.

DRIVETRAIN. The drivetrain is a full-time 4WD shaft-driven drivetrain with nickel-plated steel components for durability and weight reduction. The front and rear have CV-driveshafts, and the outdrives are lightened for better performance while at the same time maintaining a low CG. The front and rear differentials are made with sintered planetary gears for maximum durability.



PERFORMANCE

Wolcott Hobby and Raceway in Wolcott, CT was the perfect place to test the O'Donnell Z01-T. The track is well kept, and a perfect mix of technical areas with huge air allowed me to test every aspect of the truggy, from its durability to tight handling characteristics. The O.S. 28XZ engine fired up right away, and tuning was a breeze. O.S. Engines are known for their reliable and amazingly powerful engines, and the .28 is no exception. The 28XZ came with two carb inserts, and for the first run I used the more restrictive of the two (8mm; a 9mm carb insert is also supplied). Immediately with the pull of the trigger, the Z01-T accelerated smoothly and tracked very straight. The O.S. 28XZ had plenty of power. It was nice having the extra power available to get out of trouble during a race. I ran the stock setup that proved to be a perfect starting point. Many people will be successful using this setup, and only minor tweaks were necessary to make the truggy suit my driving style. There is a slight push under acceleration while cornering, but much less than on most other truggies I've run. This was remedied by tinkering with the setup and using lighter diff fluids, which I prefer for racing. Off-power steering was extremely precise, and the speed at which the truggy rotates is incredible. The turn-in speed was fast and consistent, and some of this can be attributed to the strong Futaba BLS352 brushless servo. This setup just flat out works perfectly with this truggy; I wouldn't recommend anything else. With the diff fluids I started with, I was able to get on the throttle pretty darn early when exiting turns, and as I became more comfortable with the truggy, I could apply the throttle earlier and earlier, and my lap times dropped as a result. Again, the truggy performed consistent and never had any nasty tendencies. As long as my brain told my hands the correct motions, the O'Donnell followed. On the flipside, braking is great. I noticed no fading after long test sessions, and the Futaba brushless servo was extra responsive. After I set some rear brake bias, I was able to swing around the rear of the truggy and make some super tight turns. The stock shock setup was perfect for the track: not too soft or too hard. It soaked up the landings with ease and was ready for the next one in a moment's notice. Midair corrections were very easy and responsive. Every time I hit a jump, I left at the same angle, which helped me set up for the next obstacle very quickly, shaving off precious time. Rhythm sections were a breeze, and the large-volume shocks helped me get through without losing much speed. Tire choice will vary with conditions, but I had the pleasure of testing a brand-new set of AKA Racing tires, City Block up front and I-Beam in the rear. The truggy never struggled for any grip, and I was able to rotate well through the corners thanks to the tread design. After a couple of testing days, wear was minimal, and I was impressed. I plan to use these tires for the rest of the racing season. After a few testing days, there was no breakage on the truggy. As I built this truggy, I was telling people I thought this was one of the most durable truggies on the market today. The quality of materials is perfect; I suspect it will be quite some time before any of the parts need replacing.

Read the review of the Z01-B buggy in the December 2008 issue of RC Car Action.

CHASSIS. You can tell that O'Donnell did its homework with the layout of the Z01-T. Everything is well thought out and positioned for maximum efficiency and minimal hassle. The chassis is made out of lightweight, machined 7075 T6 hard-anodized aluminum. The servo tray, front plate and center diff top plate are cut from carbon fiber to reduce weight. The servos are laid as low as possible to reduce CG and improve performance. The servo's outputs are positioned inwards to prevent breakage

from accidental hits. The radio box is huge; it has plenty of room for a standard 5-cell NiMH hump pack or larger packs.

RUNNING GEAR. The Futaba brushless servos I choose are a perfect match for the truggy, and power the steering and throttle/brake setup with ease. These servos will last very long (thanks to the brushless motors). I selected the O.S. 28XZ; this engine provides the truggy with more torque than you will ever need, along with a

killer top end. A 3-shoe clutch is included with the O'Donnell kit, and the stock springs work great for a balance of power on tap and smooth power delivery. Motor maintenance is a breeze; the four bolts holding the engine are very easy to get to and remove. AKA provided us with its new line of truggy tires. I ran a combination of I-Beam in the rear and City Block up front. I run on a fairly tight track, and this combination helps me rotate at hairpin turns. A full set of wheels is included; however, no stock tires come in



In a race vehicle of this caliber, I chose Futaba's flagship radio, the 4PK, to keep my truggy under control.

PLUS/MINUS



- » Fit and finish
- » Quality of materials
- » On-track performance



- » Only offered as a kit

VERDICT

O'Donnell hit a home run with the Z01-T truggy. I was impressed during the build process with the quality of materials, instructions and overall completeness of the kit. It seems like O'Donnell has thought of everything to make this truggy user friendly and a world-class racer. The build was super smooth, but the on-track performance was even better. The Futaba radio gear and O.S. engine proved to be a killer combo. My laps were more consistent than ever, and my confidence with pushing this truggy to its limits grew, without any hiccup from the truggy. This truggy isn't for everyone—just those who want to win races!

SOURCES

AKA raceaka.com
 Futaba futaba-rc.com
 O'Donnell odonnellracing.com
 O.S. Engines osengines.com
 Protek amainhobbies.com
 Zegers R/C Grafixx zegersrcgrafixx.com

this kit. The body and wing finish off the truggy. Bill Zegers laid down a killer paint scheme that makes the truggy look fast just sitting there. I like how the body hugs the shock towers, and the lines look great.