

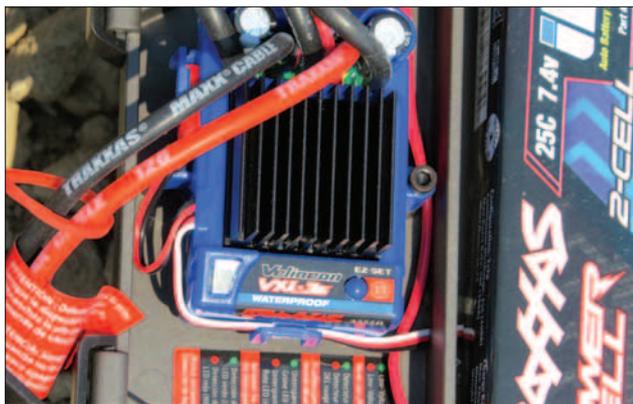
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## Traxxas Slash with On-Board Sound and TSM

*TSM doesn't control the driving experience, but it does enhance it.*

Traxxas doesn't just hang out enjoying its success, but rather it continues to innovate. A couple of issues back [March 15 HM - Ed] we reviewed the OBS (On-Board Sound) system for the 2WD (Two-Wheel Drive) Slash Pro. Now Traxxas has taken the 2WD Slash and added both its OBS and its new TSM, or Traxxas Stability Management system. And Traxxas did not stop with those features. Additionally it added the Low CG Chassis and its water-proof electronics package as standard equipment.

Dealers that attended this past spring's NRHSA show were witness to the Traxxas boys showcasing the TSM



*To give the Slash its go, a Velineon brushless motor is paired to a VXL-3s speed control.*

system on the showroom floor and again outside during the demos. Traxxas also had a great video of this vehicle being driven on ice, and with every pun intended, it was really cool!

But a lot of products can be made to look good in videos; the real test for dealers is to see what happens in the real world when the truck is run to the extreme, not by a factory driver, but by a real person. Alas, I'm getting ahead of myself, so let's see what we get in the box first.

Like all Traxxas packaging the box art is colorful and immediately draws the consumer's attention. Provided in the box is a great looking Mark Jenkins edition VXL powered 2WD Slash. A standard 3-ch TQ pistol grip transmitter is included, along with a 7-cell 3300mAh NiMH battery with ID connector system and a bag full of decals and suspension adjustment rings. Also provided for the customer is a rather rudimentary 12V DC only high current NiMH charger, and to complete the package, a



basic set of maintenance tools and a lower ratio pinion gear if using higher voltage batteries.

To add to the driving fun is the Traxxas OBS. As mentioned in the previous review, OBS provides authentic 900hp sounds that are matched to the throttle. It doesn't require any setup on the end user's part. All you have to do is turn it on. Nailing the throttle just brings a huge smile to your face.

Used to give the Slash its go is a Velineon brushless motor is paired with the VXL-3s Speed controller and the aforementioned 3300mAh Nickel chemistry battery. The VXL-3 is an excellent speed control as it offers three modes of operation. Training allows 50 percent forward/braking/50 percent reverse, and this keeps younger and inexperienced drivers out of trouble. Sport provides 100 percent throttle/braking/100 percent reverse. And for all-out performance, Race mode pushes the maximum amount of voltage through the ESC, allowing full forward throttle and braking, but no reverse. For a little extra get up and go we also used a 2S 7.4V 7600mAh



*Adding even more excitement to the package is the OSB module that provides full-scale sound.*

lithium pack. The Slash can even handle a 3S 11.1V LiPo pack by utilizing the provided smaller pinion gear.

As usual, to get started we must read the directions. For the ultimate in time management, this is done while the batteries are charging. There's nothing wrong with the included charger, but it's pretty basic and it wasn't used. Since it was on-hand and a terrific add-on sale item, out came the Traxxas EZ-Peak Dual ID Charger.

The ID charger has been covered in detail, but it's worth mentioning again. To put the ID charger in opera-

tion, simply connect any ID equipped battery and watch the charger select the proper battery chemistry and optimum current. Once the information has been verified, press the blue start button and have a seat in the easy chair. All that's left is to get acquainted with the vehicle and its operation.

As described, the TSM system is customized and tuned specifically for use in the Slash and its power system. It's done this way to get the best driving experience out of the box instead of a generic module that either works pretty good or requires tuning by the purchaser. The TSM system is part of the 4-ch Traxxas receiver (TRA6533). Even though this system, in this setup, is tuned to the Slash, should a customer want to try TSM in other vehicles all that



*The Velineon brushless motor applies a whole lot of power to the two-wheel drive chassis.*

is required is an iPhone or iPad and a compatible TQ transmitter. The phone/pad will provide access to the Traxxas app that allows the system to be tuned as required.

The TSM system is designed to work in the background. The idea is to enhance the driving experience, not control the vehicle, or your fun. How it works is to make minor corrections to steering and throttle to help maintain the heading. I won't deny it, I've always preferred 4WD over 2WD when running on loose gravel and dirt. Let's be realistic; run a typical brushless 2WD truck on dirt, and it looks like an episode of *The Dukes of Hazard* with the vehicle tearing up the farm and doing nothing more than sliding donuts. This isn't supposed to happen with the TSM equipped 2WD Slash, and the bottom line is how well does TSM work in the real world? We shall see...

With the batteries charged and instructions reviewed, it's off to the track. The day chosen for the evaluation was blisteringly hot: 95 degrees and miserably humid. The dirt and gravel was equally as hot, so there wasn't much expected in the way of decent traction.

With the battery connected, the Slash was placed on the ground and full throttle was applied. Straight up the hill the



*Nailing the throttle on loose gravel immediately spins the rear wheels, resulting in a shower of debris.*

Slash went. If any adjustments were made, they were minor. Actually I couldn't see that much as I got showered with rocks, gravel and other debris. It sounds silly, but I had to wait for the dust to settle, so I could see where the Slash was at, but there she was at the top of the hill. This same scenario was tried over and over at different track locations and different types of terrain, and the results were always the same. TSM also enhances braking and this is also very apparent. Knowing TSM works on loose surface material, to complete the evaluation we did some blacktop racing and again the control was great.

No matter what we were taught in school, it's the first impressions that always matter the most and wow, this is really cool! The TSM system worked so well that in the traction department it performed like a typical 4WD vehicle, but it offered the higher all-out speed a person expects with a 2WD truck. The amount of TSM is adjustable and is controlled by the TQ transmitter's Multi-Function Knob. For more TSM, turn the control clockwise. If you want less, it makes perfect sense; just turn the control knob to the left, or counter clockwise.

Anyone can drive a truck around on the street in front of their house, but the true test of performance is the



*Combining TSM with 2WD provides a vehicle with superior speed, and phenomenal drivability.*

amount of punishment a vehicle can take before it's beaten into submission. I gave the Slash TSM everything I could think of, but the truck always came back for more. There is only limited space available in the magazine for photos, but if a dealer wants to see extra photos, there are plenty more of our recklessness with this vehicle on the *HM* Facebook page. This is a super-fun and completely controllable truck.

As I mentioned earlier in the evaluation, I have always liked 4WD for handling.

However, the Traxxas TSM system on the 2WD Slash will go head-to-head with any 4WD truck on the market. This package is a winner. I was impressed at the NRHSA show, and now I'm a true believer. **HM**