

TEAM ASSOCIATED MGT 8.0

Associated unleashes a mega-muscle Monster GT

WORDS KEVIN HETMANSKI » kevinh@airage.com | PHOTOS HOPE MCCALL

When the original Monster GT was unveiled in 2003, Associated was known as a race-only company, yet not only did the A-Team release a monster truck, but it was also an RTR. Originally powered by a .21 engine, Associated later upped the power with a .28 ci (4.6cc) engine and reintroduced the truck as the Monster GT 4.60SE. Power enough for any monster, but why stop at “enough”? For the latest version of the Monster GT (now known simply as “MGT”), Associated upgraded the monster with a massive .5ci (8.0cc) engine that is by far the largest engine available in any truck on the market today. A few tech-tweaks were made to handle the massive power (more on those later) and Associated’s new XP3D FM radio with LCD display keeps the MGT 8.0 under control. Sound like fun? It is.



DRIVE TIME

TEST SPOT

CONSTRUCTION SITE AND MY YARD

WHEELIE-POPPING POWER

We'll just skip the standard engine break-in portion of testing (which went by the numbers) and get right to the driving. I took the Monster GT over to a friend's construction lot where there were piles of dirt and open fields to give it the first run down. It took a while for the engine to get up to temp, and I attribute this to the engine's greater mass. Remember, it has double the displacement of a .25, so there's a big slug of a piston and a lot of alu-

minum to heat up. The carb held a tune well, and I didn't have to worry about the temp as much as I do with smaller engines. The first thing I noticed with the Monster GT is that there is no end to the power. It takes no effort to get the front wheels in the air: just hit the gas and it's on the wheelie bar. The rear diff tended to unload during off-road wheelies when the truck rocked from side to side on the one-wheel wheelie bar, but holding wheelies was easier on pavement where both rear

tires were able to get equal traction. I kept the front end up for a long time on pavement and the Monster GT pulled the front tires off the ground from a rolling start as easily as it did off the line. That's power.

CLIMBING AND FLYING

The new tires seemed to dig in all over, so to test ultimate traction, I made a run at the biggest dirt pile at the site. The dirt was a very loose and sandy mix, but the MGT made it all the way to the top if I was easy with the throttle. If I gassed it too hard, the MGT simply excavated four holes in the soft



soil until it sank itself in. I caught myself stepping up the hill to free it, forgetting I had reverse. Flip the switch, and back out—much better. It worked flawlessly every time. I made my way over to jump-size piles of dirt to get some air time. Just like wheelies, this also took a little getting used to. The second the truck leaves the dirt, the engine's torque and the centrifugal force of the MGT's tires made it want to flip over backwards. So I just cut the throttle during take offs to bring the front end down, and the suspension soaked up the landings easily. At home, I had a lot of fun jumping curbs with the big

rig. They kicked up the truck's nose, but the MGT landed flat every time.

STEERING CONTROL

The MGT's servo-saver is on the small side, and I wondered how that would affect steering, so I spent a little extra time gauging steering response. Steering on grass and dirt was very good, and the truck even felt good on pavement where greater traction tends to overpower weak servos and servo-savers. Not so with the MGT; it has ample steering power. I would like a little more throw, but the stock setup gets the job done effectively.

BUMPS & BRUISES

Couple a big truck with a big engine, and you have a recipe for hitting stuff really hard. Add the MGT's wheelie-popping ability, and it's not surprising that Associated's big truck tends to take a lot of abuse if you drive it like the mega monster it is. The good news is nothing broke or fell off during testing, although I made sure to keep an eye on the axle nuts—good advice for any nitro truck. After testing, the MGT's body was thoroughly scuffed and the bumpers were scarred, but the parts that mattered were ready for more.

The new body and graphics slenderize the MGT. Like the new radio? It's Associated's own FM design. Works great, too.



Extruded aluminum chassis

The Monster GT chassis is the most unique on the market today. It's made out of an extruded, box-shaped section of aluminum that has been machined to accept the transmission and diffs. This is a very strong design and doesn't require chassis braces to maintain rigidity. Molded plastic mud guards on the sides keep tire debris out of the chassis and provide a place to mount the fuel tank. A padded roll bar made of solid steel rod provides rollover protection for the engine and doubles as a handle. The front-mounted radio tray can be removed as a unit, and you only have to remove a few screws to do so.

ASSOCIATED AE-50K

As its name implies, the MGT 8.0 is powered by an 8.0cc (.5ci) engine, the largest Associated has ever put in any vehicle. The AE-50K is based on a helicopter powerplant and uses a side-exhaust instead of a rear-exhaust port like most other engines. The internals have been tweaked for car use, and inside you'll find standard issue stuff such as a machined conrod, 3-port sleeve, ABC construction and a 2-needle slide carb. This engine has too much compression for a pull-starter, so the A-Team went with a hand-held shaft starter for the job. Starting the engine is easy, but I recommend leaving the glow igniter on for a little while to help keep the engine running while it warms up. It's also a good idea to wait longer than usual before making adjustments to the carb because there's a lot of material to heat up. I made the mistake of tuning my engine a little early and I ran it a little too lean at first. Once the carb was tweaked, the engine ran very strong and held its tune well.

ENGINE PERFORMANCE

.50 crank

.28 crank

.21

.28

.50

The new 8.0cc (.50ci) engine (left) does not seem a lot larger than the .28 it replaces, but look at the internals.

SPECIFICATIONS

TEAM ASSOCIATED MGT 8.0

teamassociated.com

Scale 1/8

Price \$520 (varies with dealer)

DIMENSIONS

Overall length 24.2 in. (614mm)

Wheelbase 14.5 in. (368mm)

Width 17.25 in. (438mm)

Weight, as tested 13 lb. (5,900g)

CHASSIS

Extruded main chassis with molded side plates

SUSPENSION

Type Pivot ball

Inboard camber-link positions F/R 1/1

Outboard camber-link positions F/R 1/1

Upper shock positions F/R 1/1

Lower shock positions F/R 2/2

SHOCKS

Molded body with clip on ride height spacers

STEERING

Type Dual bell crank

Servo-saver Spring loaded

Tie rods Steel

Ackerman settings (inboard/outboard): 1/1

DRIVETRAIN

Type Full-time, shaft-driven 4WD

Transmission Multi-gear, enclosed gearbox

Slipper clutch Single-pad

Differentials Bevel gear with steel ring gear and sealed plastic housing; steel outdrives

Spur gear Steel

Brake Fiber with molded-in heat sink

Driveshafts Steel/composite universal drive shaft, steel universal center shafts

Bearings Metal-shielded ball

Gear ratios 2.45 primary; 8.32 1st/5.62 2nd; 19.9 1st/13.8 2nd final

ENGINE & ACCESSORIES

Model Team Associated AE-50K

Construction ABC with machined conrod

Carburetor 2-needle slide

Starter Associated pistol-grip shaft-starter

Manifold tubular aluminum

Pipe Tuned aluminum

Engine mount One-piece, aluminum

Fuel tank 135cc with dual pick-up

BODY, WHEELS & TIRES

Body Team Associated Lexan, printed graphics, factory mounted

Wheels One-piece chrome plastic, 23mm hex

Tires Team Associated all terrain-tread, factory-mounted

Inserts Foam

INCLUDED ELECTRONICS

Transmitter Team Associated XP-3D

Receiver Team Associated XP 3-channel

Steering servo Team Associated S2008MG, metal gear, 111 oz.-in. torque

Throttle servo Team Associated S1903, plastic-gear, 41 oz.-in. torque

Shifting servo Team Associated S1903, plastic-gear, 41 oz.-in. torque

Receiver battery Not included

Charger Not included

Glows starter Alkaline D-cell type, plastic body with spring-loaded clamp

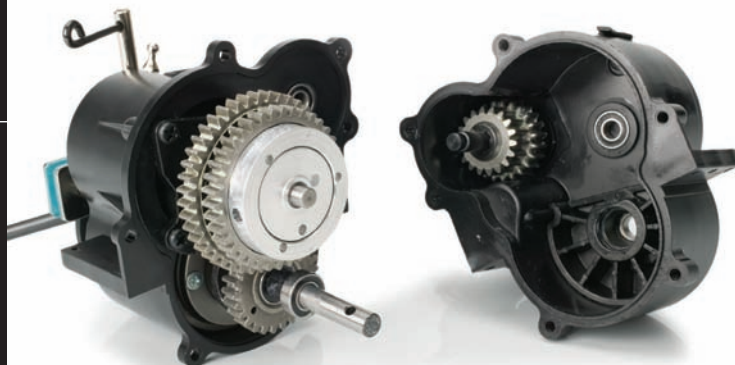
ADDITIONAL ACCESSORIES

Shaft-starter

UNDER THE HOOD



Above left: a fiber composite disc brake does a great job of slowing the Monster GT 8.0. **Above center:** the new tires give lots of grip on all surfaces. **Right:** a dual-shock, independent suspension smoothes out the ride and is fully adjustable.



The MGT's compact tranny holds more heavy metal than Ozzfest. The 2-speed assembly is adjustable and built for abuse.

Beefy forward/reverse 2-speed tranny

The Monster GT's transmission is full of metal gears for durability. They're heavy, but the new engine has ample power to spin the gears. The spur gear is metal, too, and is also fitted with a slipper clutch to further increase drivetrain durability. Inside the trans, a smoothly shifting reverse mechanism engages via a servo-actuated shift fork, and a 2-speed transmission makes the most of the engine's torque and rpm. The heavily constructed unit uses a pawl to engage second gear, and the shiftpoint is fully adjustable via an access port in the gearbox. The gearbox is also home to the single-rotor disc brake, which provides effective 4-wheel braking, since the MGT does not have a center differential.

Aluminum Clutch

You can't put the power down to the ground if the clutch slips, and that's why the Monster GT comes with an aluminum clutch. Using aluminum clutch shoe is nothing new, but what is new is that Team Associated is using four shoes to grab the large-diameter clutch bell. The shoes' spring setup is easy to work on and very effective. An aluminum ring around the clutch bell reduces its operating temperature to give the clutch maximum grip, and the MGT's gear ratios allow a 20-tooth clutch gear to be used for better gear mesh and greater efficiency.



Above: note the cast support for the transmission's top shaft and the aluminum heat-sink ring around the clutch bell.

Left: the aluminum four-shoe clutch gets a good grip on the large-diameter clutch bell.



INCLUDED ELECTRONICS & ACCESSORIES



Team Associated XP3D FM radio

This has to be one of the nicest RTR radios that I have ever laid my hands on. It features digital trims, endpoint, ARC, subtrim and servo reversing. An LCD screen tells you what is going on, and a battery indicator allows you to keep an eye on battery voltage, and an alarm goes off if the batteries get too low. The 10-model memory allows you to set up the truck for different conditions, or you can use this radio for other vehicles that you may already have. The on/off switch has a middle setting that turns on the LDC screen without transmitting, so you can make adjustments without interfering with other radios that may be in use at the same time.

Team Associated S1903 throttle & transmission servos

Nothing crazy here. These servos put out 41 oz.-in. of torque to open the carb, push on the brake and shift the transmission.

Team Associated S2008MG steering servo

Associated stepped up here. The S2008MG servo puts out 111 oz.-in. of torque and has an all-metal gear train for durability. No upgrade required.

Pro-Start shaft-starter

This thing looks like it should be used in outer space instead of starting the engine in the Monster GT. A standard 6-cell stick pack powers it, and Tamiya-style plugs connect the starter and battery. The starter shaft has a home on the starter's side and locks into place when you install it into the end of the unit.

FACTORY OPTIONS

- » Steel clutch set—item no. 25736
- » Tuned pipe—25731
- » Aluminum shock set—25727
- » Forward only kit—25415
- » Steering kit—25395

YOU'LL NEED | WE USED

12 AA batteries	Duracell
1 D battery	Duracell
Fuel	Byron 30% byronfuels.com
6-cell stick pack	Reedy 2400 WolfPack teamassociated.com /reedy
Charger for stick pack	Duratrax Piranha duratrax.com



Wheelie bar

Without a wheelie bar, the MGT would be upside down all time, and you can't have fun with a truck when it's resting on its lid. The wheelie bar/bumper basically is a skidplate with a small wheel in the middle of it. The skidplate stretches far back to provide support to the truck while doing wheelies, and the top is braced to increase rigidity. The small wheel that's attached to it reduces any skidplate scraping while hitting the ground.



A small wheel is mounted in the rear skidplate to give the MGT 8.0 extra stability in wheelie mode.



Big engine, big pipe. The long stinger keeps exhaust goo away from the tires.

Super-sized pipe

The MGT 8.0's large-displacement engine requires a pipe of correspondingly larger volume, so the truck gets a massive single-chamber unit. The pipe body is six inches long from end to end, and with a diameter of 36mm, it definitely has plenty of room to flow exhaust effectively. The 8.0 engine's side-exhaust configuration makes for tight bends in the header, but Associated got the part right with a two-piece, silicone-coupled design that makes smoothly radiused turns for efficient exhaust flow. Final exit is a silicone stinger that routes fumes past the rear wheels and out the rear of the body.

ON THE BENCH

The MGT 8.0 requires a little assembly before it's ready for the dirt. You have to put the wheels on (hard to miss that), and the flag must be installed on the body. Get it right; flag alignment is critical! (Just kidding.) Here are some real tips for you:

MORE STEERING

The stock servo-saver does a good job of protecting the servo gears, but it's small diameter limits steering throw. Replace it with one that has a larger diameter to get more throw. If you end up having too much throw, you can dial out a little in the radio.

MORE STABLE WHEELIES

The diffs come filled with 10,000WT diff fluid, and that is a bit on the light side for a truck of this size and power. It's fine when driving around normally, but when the front wheels are in the air, the rear diff tends to unload, and that causes the truck to rock back and forth on the wheelie bar. I went with 60,000WT in my truck, and it settled the truck down. The only downside is that the truck tends to push a bit more in the turns, but I'm sure you won't even notice that.

ALUMINUM BODY MOUNTS

I have driven enough Monster GTs to know that the rear body mounts take a beating. Aluminum ones will hold up to the abuse and dress up your chassis.

THREAD-LOCK THE WHEEL NUTS

The stock wheel nuts have nylon inserts to keep them tight on the wheels, but over time, the nylon wears and the nuts can loosen while driving the truck. If they loosen a little, you run the risk of stripping the hex in the rim, or the wheel can come off completely and so will the hex and drive pin. It's hard to find those small parts in a big pile of dirt. Just apply a small amount of blue thread-lock to the axle before installing the nut. You'll be happy you did.

Rating the MGT 8.0

This truck is the sickest thing I've ever driven, and all you power junkies will love it as well. The power is great, it looks good, and it's easy to work on. Those are three important things in my book, and the Monster GT 8.0 has been made better with the addition of a great computer radio system. Another cool thing about the truck is that hop-up parts are already available for it, so you can pick up a few extras when you head to the hobby shop to get this powerful monster. Thanks for a great truck, guys. 🤖



- » Biggest engine on the market
- » Nonstop wheelies
- » Dual pick-up tank



- » Rear diff could use thicker fluid

BEST FOR

Experienced backyard bashers