

Ready-To-Run
2WD Brushless Buggy

SHOOTOUT

BY THE RC CAR ACTION TEAM PHOTOS BY CARL HYNDMAN

BUGGY BATTLE ROYALE!



**Team Associated
RC10B4.2 RS RTR**



**Kyosho Ultima
RB6 ReadySet**



Traxxas Bandit VXL



Arrma Raider BLS

Lots of vehicle categories have come and gone since the RC hobby boomed with buggies back in the 1980s, but even in today's truck-dominated RC landscape, the classic 2WD buggy is still a popular way to take RC fun off-road. With their penchant for razor-sharp handling and responsive rear-wheel drive characteristics, 2WD buggies are always an exciting ride. They're a lower-priced way to enjoy RC as well; since they're smaller, lighter, and less complex than bigger truck models (especially 4WD machines), you can get a lot of go for your dough with a 2WD buggy.

Case in point: the four RTRs we've rounded up here from Arrma, Kyosho, Team Associated, and Traxxas. All are less than \$350, well equipped, and ready to rip with sensorless brushless systems onboard to deliver plenty of speed, power, and fun. Some are built for rough stuff, others lean toward track performance, but all four deserve a long look if you're in the market for a 2WD buggy.

BUGGY SHOOTOUT



Arrma Raider BLS



The Raider BLS turns heads with its scale-ish desert-buggy styling, and it looks just as unique with the body off. The slender chassis is barely wider than the battery it carries, which is installed via a trapdoor under the car so there's no need to remove the body. Faux spotlights, a "tube cage" cockpit, and molded rear wing (instead of Lexan) separate the Raider from the other buggies, but tech-wise it sports specs similar to the other buggies with its 2S-rated, sensorless 4000Kv power system.

QUICK SPECS

- Item no.: ARAD40
- Weight (without battery): 3 lb. 0.9 oz. (1387g)
- Wheelbase: 11.6 in. (295mm)
- Width: 13.8 in. (340mm)
- Price: \$240

Above: Arrma includes a 7-cell 8.4V 3300mAh NiMH battery for top speeds that nudge 30mph.

Below: Arrma's 4000Kv motor trims costs with its stamped and sealed can, but it is a solid performer.

The ATX-100 transmitter has all the basic features, including adjustable throttle and steering trim, and protects the knobs with a tinted plastic cover.



The 35A Arrma speed control is rated for 2S LiPo and 7-cell NiMH batteries. The speed control is screw-mounted, so it'll stay put no matter how hard you drive.

FEATURES

- 1 Arrma 4000Kv Brushless Motor
- 2 Arrma 35A 2S LiPo-compatible speed control
- 3 Monocoque-style plastic chassis
- 4 Steel dogbone driveshafts
- 5 Oil-filled plastic-body shocks
- 6 Waterproof ADS-5 servo
- 7 dBoots Sand Scorpion tires mounted to black chrome 6-spoke wheels
- 8 7-cell 8.4V 3300mAh NiMH battery
- 9 Dual-pad slipper clutch
- 10 Bottom-feed battery tray

The Raider BLS uses a monocoque-style chassis with an attached roll cage to help it achieve its desert-buggy styling. This design helps supply a stiff foundation for the suspension components.

An open cockpit, molded rear wing, and faux lights give the Raider a desert-ready look.

BUGGY SHOOTOUT



Kyosho Ultima RB6 RTR

This is the same platform that Kyosho Factory Driver Jared Tebo used to win the 2013 IFMAR EP World Championships but in a rear-motor RTR package with sport specs. The Ultima is the only aluminum-chassis car of the bunch, and it includes some pretty impressive electronics. The Team Orion Neon One 2700Kv motor is paired with a Vortex R10 Sport speed control to provide snappy acceleration without sacrificing feel. A Perflex KT-201 radio system with LCD screen makes adjustment a cinch, and modern parts including big-bore shocks and aerodynamic, cab-forward styling show its racing-inspired intentions, while durable treaded tires are a good compromise between traction and long life.

QUICK SPECS

- Item no.: 30858 (also available as combo including battery and charger)
- Weight (without battery): 2 lb. 14.6 oz. (1320g)
- Wheelbase: 11.2 in. (285mm)
- Width: 9.8 in. (249mm)
- Price: \$340

The Team Orion Neon One 2700Kv Brushless Motor is sensorless and provides good speed for use outdoors or on prepared tracks.



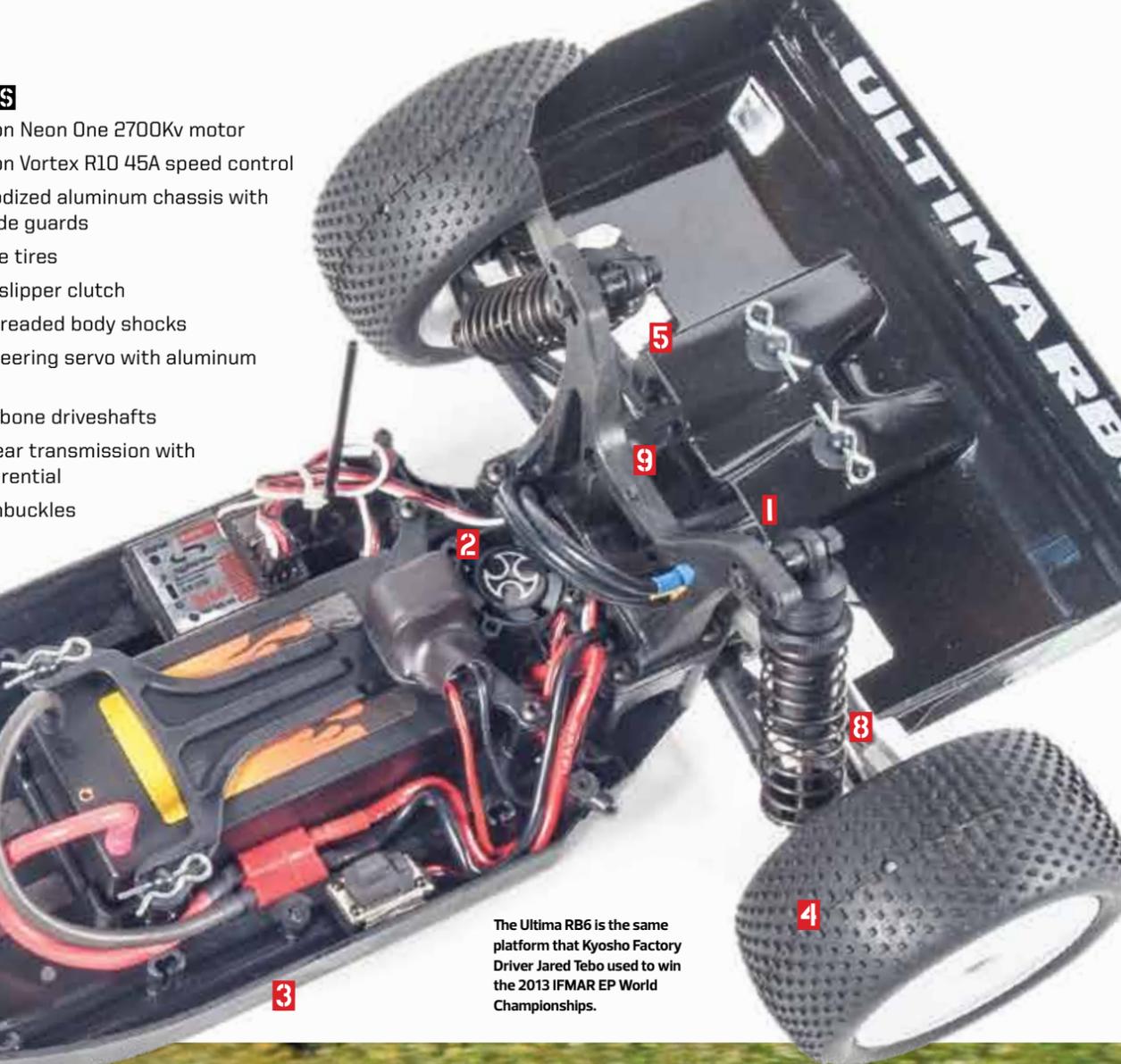
The Perflex KT-201 radio system is the only LCD-equipped transmitter in the shootout.



The Team Orion Vortex R10 45A Waterproof Sport Brushless speed control with cooling fan is small enough to fit snug on the chassis and still allow enough space for a variety of battery options.

FEATURES

- 1 Team Orion Neon One 2700Kv motor
- 2 Team Orion Vortex R10 45A speed control
- 3 Black-anodized aluminum chassis with plastic side guards
- 4 Race-style tires
- 5 Dual-pad slipper clutch
- 6 Plastic threaded body shocks
- 7 KS-201 steering servo with aluminum heat sink
- 8 Steel dogbone driveshafts
- 9 Plastic-gear transmission with gear differential
- 10 Steel turnbuckles



The Ultima RB6 is the same platform that Kyosho Factory Driver Jared Tebo used to win the 2013 IFMAR EP World Championships.



The Ultima's cab-forward styling is on-trend with the latest in buggy racing.

BUGGY SHOOTOUT



Team Associated RC10B4.2 RS RTR



Team Associated's RTR buggy is based on the lethal B4 platform that scorched tracks and racked up Nats and Worlds wins until the introduction of the B5 and B5M buggies. Known for aggressive steering and nimble suspension, the B4.2 is no longer Team Associated's top 2WD buggy racer, but when equipped with a Reedy brushless system with 3300Kv motor and dependable XP 2.4GHz radio, it can be a wicked buggy on and off the track. We've got the money-saving "no battery" version for this test, but for an extra \$50 you can also get the B4.2 RTR as a "LiPo Combo" with a Reedy WolfPack 3300mAh LiPo battery and 3A AC charger.

QUICK SPECS

- Item no.: 9042 (also available as combo including LiPo battery and charger)
- Weight (without battery): 2 lb. 11.2 oz. (1226g)
- Wheelbase: 10.8 in. (273mm)
- Width: 9.8 in. (250mm)
- Price: \$250



The XP 2.4GHz radio system has big knobs and adjustable steering rate. You'll need six AA batteries to power it instead of the usual four.



The sensorless Reedy 3300Kv motor provides reliable power and top speeds close to 30mph.



The Reedy SC600BL can handle a 3S LiPo, and is fan-equipped to keep its cool.

FEATURES

- 1 Reedy 3300Kv Brushless Motor
- 2 Reedy SC600-BL 3S speed control
- 3 Tub-style plastic chassis
- 4 Clipless battery strap
- 5 XP metal-gear steering servo
- 6 Blue-anodized aluminum V2 oil-filled shocks
- 7 Steel turnbuckles
- 8 Dual-pad slipper clutch
- 9 Plastic-gear transmission with gear differential
- 10 Race-style tires



The Team Associated B4.2 uses a plastic chassis that was developed for high-level racing when real-dirt off-road tracks ruled.



Classic B4 styling and blue-anodized shocks give Associated's RTR a high-end look.

BUGGY SHOOTOUT



Traxxas Bandit VXL



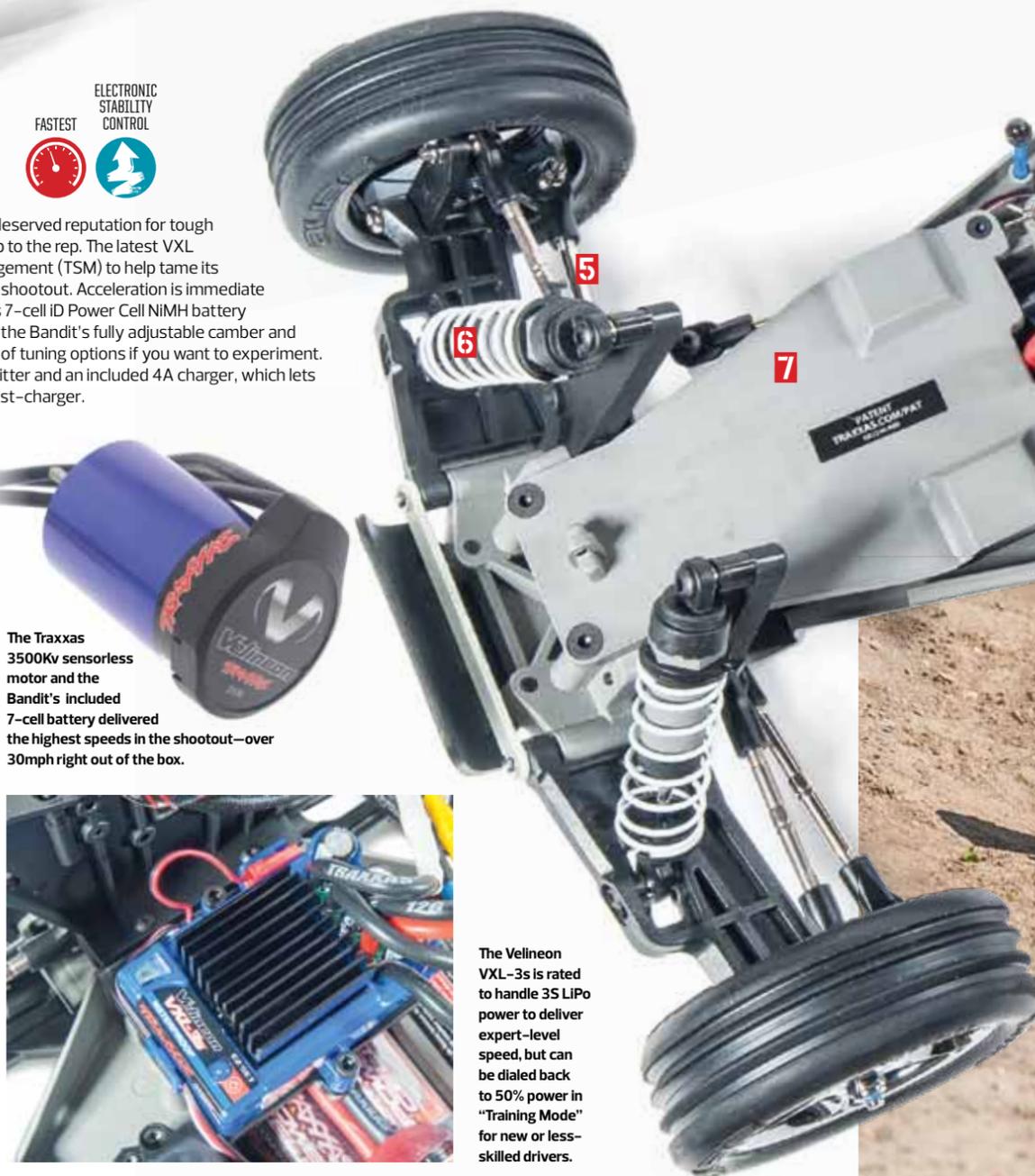
When it comes to bashing outdoors, Traxxas has a well-deserved reputation for tough construction and ease of use, and the Bandit VXL lives up to the rep. The latest VXL model benefits for the addition of Traxxas Stability Management (TSM) to help tame its considerable speed and power—it's the fastest car in the shootout. Acceleration is immediate and you can really feel the weight of the supplied Traxxas 7-cell iD Power Cell NiMH battery helping the car dig in. Though not aimed at track running, the Bandit's fully adjustable camber and toe paired with plush Ultra Shock suspension give plenty of tuning options if you want to experiment. Traxxas also scores with a Bluetooth-upgradable transmitter and an included 4A charger, which lets you recharge in a hurry without having to buck up for a fast-charger.

QUICK SPECS

- Item no.: 24076-3
- Weight (without battery): 3 lb. 5.4 oz. (1513g)
- Wheelbase: 11.3 in. (286mm)
- Width: 9.8 in. (250mm)
- Price: \$340



The Bandit's TQi transmitter is compatible with Traxxas' Bluetooth module, which enables you to connect to the Traxxas Link app on an iOS or Android device for tuning via a full-color graphic interface.



The Traxxas 3500Kv sensorless motor and the Bandit's included 7-cell battery delivered the highest speeds in the shootout—over 30mph right out of the box.



The Velineon VXL-3s is rated to handle 3S LiPo power to deliver expert-level speed, but can be dialed back to 50% power in "Training Mode" for new or less-skilled drivers.

FEATURES

- 1 Velineon 3500Kv Brushless Motor
- 2 VXL-3s speed control
- 3 Plastic semi-tub chassis
- 4 Traxxas Stability Management (TSM) 5-channel receiver
- 5 Heavy-duty steel turnbuckles
- 6 Oil-filled plastic Ultra Shocks
- 7 Traxxas 2075 digital high-torque steering servo
- 8 Revo-Spec Torque-Control slipper clutch
- 9 Steel-gear transmission with gear differential
- 10 Traxxas 7-cell iD Power Cell NiMH battery



The Bandit's plastic chassis is a tough and proven design that also outfits the Rustler stadium truck.



Black-chrome wheels and aggressive graphics set the Bandit apart from other buggies.

DRIVER'S NOTES



**Arrma
Raider BLS**



**Kyosho
Ultima RB6 RTR**



**Team Associated
B4.2 RS RTR**



**Traxxas
Bandit VXL**



JOEL NAVARRO

Built for bashing, the Raider readily tackled anything that got in its way. The stock tires had excellent traction in a multitude of terrain, making it easy to drive, and the bottom-loading battery door allowed for quick pack changes to keep you on the go. On the track, the Raider drove well and its heavier weight kept it planted. The stock tires weren't the best for prepped clay, and this caused pushing in turns. The Raider was better when the aftermarket Electrons were bolted on, but it's much happier as an all-terrain fun machine rather than a track tool.

The Ultima's all-terrain race-inspired tread made the most of the 2700Kv motor, and **the front ribbed tires gave the RB6 lots of steering while keeping the rear reasonably planted even in super loose conditions.** Continuing on the track, the RB6 world championship-winning design made turning laps effortless, especially when Pro-Line race tires were installed. The aggressive handling fit my driving style perfectly and with some adjustments on the radio made the RB6 the fastest buggy during track testing. With exceptional bashing capability and drive-on-rails track manners, the RB6 is my top pick in this shootout.

Though it's bred for the track and has a long racing heritage, the B4.2 handled quite well in our bashing session. **With plenty of power on tap and an effective suspension to put it to the ground, this buggy had a lot of get up and go.** When the terrain got rough, though, big rocks and deep ruts bounced the lightweight B4.2 around a lot. Running on a prepped track, the B4.2 felt more at home on smooth clay. The B4.2 clipped off fast laps and was second fastest in my hands compared to the Kyosho, and performed even better when Pro-Line Electron tires were bolted on.

Traxxas' "fastest name in radio control" tagline definitely applied in the Bandit's case. Easily the fastest car in the group, **the Bandit had the fastest straight-line speed and was almost uncontrollably fast with a 3S LiPo installed.** In the outdoor dirt, the stock tires connected well in most terrain, especially in loamy dirt with the powerful 3500Kv motor throwing up huge roosts. The Bandit also did well on SDRC Raceway's high-grip track, especially for not being a race-tuned rig. It was easier to drive with the TSM stability control turned up but could be dialed back for more feedback as I drove.



ART SANFRATELLO

By far the most realistic looking with its aggressive treaded tires and bold stance, the Arrma Raider BLS buggy tested well on our loose, rugged, rocky testing terrain. **The weight of the vehicle made it quite stable and fun to drive,** while the outdoor all-terrain tires gripped well in the tough testing conditions. The Raider had adequate power and the suspension soaked up the rough stuff well. Overall, it's a great value for someone looking to bash on a budget, and I enjoyed its scale looks.

The Kyosho RB6 was a lot of fun to drive outdoors. Its design is much more skewed toward a race buggy; therefore it's much lighter and nimble. The suspension performed best in the flatter areas, but its lighter weight caused it to feel less planted than the heavier cars tested. **The overall agility of this car made it feel more edgy and made it a blast to drive.** When it was time to take to the track, it responded well. With its race-bred platform, the car felt right at home. With the box setup I found it fairly easy to drive, but it tended to lack a bit of steering for my liking. Rear traction was reasonable, and overall it was fun to drive indoors or out.

Like the Kyosho, the Associated B4.2 was born from a racing platform. It shared a lot of the same outdoor characteristics as the Kyosho, such as light weight and a competition-oriented design. It performed very well in the flatter areas, offering lots of steering and decent rear traction. **I found it to be the most responsive out of all four buggies tested and very aggressive to drive.** Due to its lack of weight, it was challenged when it encountered the taller obstacles, but its power made up for a lot. On the flip side, for my style of driving, it is by far the most trackworthy.

Also very aggressive looking was the Traxxas Bandit—definitely the fastest buggy of the four we tested straight out of the box. **All that extra power and its basher roots make it the best handling buggy we tested outdoors in the loose rocky conditions.** The aggressive outdoor tires, combined with tons of power, made for an effortless test drive while throwing roosts everywhere. Indoors, the weight of the buggy helped it feel quite planted. However, much like the Arrma, the Bandit was more basherworthy than trackworthy due to its body roll and push in the corners.



CARL HYNDMAN

The Arrma felt like its real home was out in the rough stuff. **Its burly design meant it could thrash through the terrain and take some big hits, and keep coming back for more.** The suspension felt a tad too soft overall, resulting in chassis slaps and the rear end dumping over when pushed. At times I was wishing for a bit more oomph out of the power system, but for a buggy designed for entry-level users, it was more than adequate. Indoors, its all-terrain prowess made it a confident buggy, but it lacked the sharp and precise handling that the other race-bred buggies possessed.

The RB6's race-bred handling transitions well to outdoor running. It's lightweight and takes inputs and turns them into quick changes in direction, and if it had more sure-footed play tires, it may have leapt to the top of my list as the favorite. As a basher, a rear-motor race-bred buggy has its merits, and the RB6 incorporates a real-world foundation for use in this way. **I could easily take this buggy for a fun session on a BMX track or a mound of dirt and launch it with predictable and controllable flight,** and the power supplied kept me on my toes with dirt-slinging speed.

The B4.2 is another buggy with a racing heritage that shines through in its handling. Sloppy or lazy inputs can come back to bite you, but correct inputs will reward with a dexterity that is lacking in the others. **It steers on a dime and soars through the air with a whip, downside, or even a backflip without too much effort.** You never have to wait for this buggy—but stay one step ahead of it and plan out your attack because this buggy makes short work of any environment while commanding attention. It's easy to see how this buggy did so well on the racing circuit.

Fun-running is all about going out and tearing it up with your friends, and Traxxas keeps this the number-one priority. Being the fastest doesn't hurt either; **any bash session is more fun when you've got the fastest car.** Big speed, big roosts, and big air are all the Bandit's forte, and the TSM system is an effective tool when traction is at a premium. I'm a racer as well as a basher, and for me, picking the right tool for the job is paramount, so the Bandit is the top choice.

TOP SPEED TESTING

The Arrma Raider BLS and Traxxas Bandit VXL both come equipped with 7-cell NiMH packs, but for our speed runs we also tested every buggy with a MaxAmps 2S Shorty LiPo. We first tested each buggy with its included battery (if provided), then with the LiPo. Since the Team Associated and Traxxas are rated to handle the power of a 3S LiPo battery, we performed additional speed runs on 3S for those models.



Included Battery



MaxAmps 2S 7.4V LiPo



MaxAmps 3S 11.1V LiPo



*Stock gearing. Optional "speed gearing" is included to achieve claimed 65+mph top speed.

MaxAmps power got the nod for LiPo speed testing.



All of the buggies went faster on Pro-Line's Electron tires. Getting the right treads for the track is always the biggest tuning aid for any vehicle.



We speed-tested the cars with included batteries as well as accessory LiPos.

Stock Tires

The Traxxas and Arrma rubber offered predictable performance with their fun-run-oriented treads, but the Traxxas tires gave more grip. Kyosho specs a finer, more racelike tread pattern but molds it in a firm compound that reduced traction. The B4.2's tires seemed to best balance track-ready traction with acceptable wear resistance for play driving. The quickest laps went to the Associated, with the Kyosho keeping pace not far behind. Next was the Traxxas Bandit, which was slower in the turns but made up time on the straights. The Arrma Raider was easy to drive, but its chunky tread pattern was the least track-oriented, which gave the Bandit an edge.

Pro-Line Tires

With Pro-Line Electrons mounted, all the buggies had more grip and the driving lines got tighter. The results of the four buggies still reflected what we achieved with stock rubber, but the gap between the Team Associated B4.2 and Kyosho RB6 was much closer. The B4.2 was still able to post the lowest individual lap times, but the RB6 proved easier to drive consistently and delivered lower average lap times. The Bandit and Raider both went faster on race rubber, but their fun-first suspension setups are geared toward off-road pounding rather than pinning down fast laps.

LAP TESTING

Since the focus of these buggies is fun-running and not competition performance, the bulk of our test driving was devoted to all-terrain outdoor action, the type of driving most buyers are likely to prefer. But after outdoor driving was complete, we took all the buggies over to SDRC Raceway in San Diego, California, for additional indoor high-bite clay track testing. Realistically, owners of these buggies will probably never venture onto a modern indoor racing track, but to get a better understanding of their inherent handling and characteristics, we drove them in this demanding environment. Tuning was limited to the adjustments built into the cars (camber, toe, and preload changes, no altering shock oil, springs, etc.). We first hit the track on stock rubber, then outfitted each buggy with Pro-Line Electrons in clay compound.

BUGGY SHOOTOUT

WHO WINS?

If all four of the cars tested here were trying to do the same thing, it would make sense to declare one as the overall best. But despite each car fitting comfortably in the “Brushless RTR 2WD buggy” category, these cars do not have the same mission. The Team Associated and Kyosho buggy designs are clearly optimized for tracklike conditions, where traction is plentiful and debris and loose dirt are scarce. The Traxxas and Arrma cars are aimed at fun—running on a variety of terrain from the backyard to BMX trails and everything in between. The Arrma is the most scalelike of the bunch and the lowest priced as well. The Traxxas Bandit ties the Ultima for most expensive, but the Bandit is the fastest buggy and the only one equipped with electronic stability control. The whole point of having this shootout is to help you see the pros and cons of each choice and determine what could be a deciding factor in your buggy buy, so let’s see what we found.

MOST FUN

Traxxas Bandit VXL

The Traxxas Bandit kept our smiles planted the longest. Even those who favor race-inspired handling couldn’t deny the power and stability the Bandit provided, and when we set our egos aside, it was hard to argue against the fun we had thrashing the roots, rocks, sand, and big jumps of our local spot. We also liked how hard it can be pushed and stand a hard tumble, with ease of use and no-fuss operation. With every charge, we all just grabbed the transmitter and drove until the battery was depleted.

MOST RACE-READY

Kyosho RB6 RTR

The Ultima’s track-handling cred is undeniable. It’s nimble and follows the latest trends in racing right now. It can be upgraded and offers a platform that can grow as skills progress, and with the correct tires it can provide respectable lap times. The Team Associated B4.2 RS RTR is on pace, but its older design is not as versatile. The Kyosho also has more stable manners around the track, and a slight push helps out of the box. Track performance comes at a price, however. The Ultima is the most expensive car of the group and costs \$90 more than the B4.2.

BEST VALUE

Team Associated B4.2 RS RTR

This one was a tough call, since Arrma packs a lot of buggy into \$240, including a high-capacity NiMH battery. Adding the cost of a similar battery would bring the Associated B4 up to \$275, a \$35 premium over the Arrma. But for the extra dough, you get aluminum shocks, a metal-gear servo, and track-bred performance that can transition to racing if that’s your thing. Depending on your local store, you’re also likely to find better parts support and more hooops for the B4 since it’s been so popular and successful for so long. By all means, if you dig the Arrma’s look, go for it. But for overall value, we’re going with Team Associated by a nose on this one. 🏆



SOURCES

Arrma arrma-rc.com
Kyosho kyoshoamerica.com
MaxAmps maxamps.com
Pro-Line prolineracing.com
Team Associated teamassociated.com
Traxxas traxxas.com

	ARRMA Raider BLS	Kyosho Ultima RB6	Team Associated RC10B4.2	Traxxas Bandit VXL
Item No.	AR102614	30858	9042	24076-3
Weight (without battery)	3 lb. 1 oz. (1387g)	2 lb. 14.6 oz. (1320g)	2 lb. 11.2 oz. (1226g)	3 lb. 5.4 oz. (1513g)
Wheelbase	11.6 in. (295mm)	11.2 in. (285mm)	10.8 in. (273mm)	11.25 in. (256mm)
Width	13.8 in. (340mm)	9.8 in. (249mm)	9.8 in. (250mm)	9.8 in. (250mm)
Speed control	ARRMA 35A BLS	Orion Vortex R10 45A	Reedy SC500-BL	Velineon VXL-3s
Fan-cooled speed control	No	Yes	Yes	Optional
Sensorless motor Kv	4000	2700	3300	3500
Shocks	Plastic	Plastic	Aluminum	Plastic
Preload adjustment	Clip	Threaded collar	Clip	Clip
Camber adjustment	2.9mm turnbuckle	2.9mm turnbuckle	2.9mm turnbuckle	4mm turnbuckle
Toe-in adjustment	2.9mm turnbuckle	2.9mm turnbuckle	2.9mm turnbuckle	4mm turnbuckle
Slipper clutch	Dual-pad	Dual-pad	Dual-pad	Torque-control 3-pad
Differential	Bevel gear	Bevel gear	Bevel gear	Planetary gear
Driveshafts	Dogbones	Dogbones	Dogbones	Telescoping U-joint
Transmission gears	Plastic	Plastic	Plastic	Metal
Servo gears	Plastic	Plastic	Metal	Plastic
Servo torque (oz.-in.)	70	76	53	125
Transmitter/channels (2.4GHz)	ATX-100/3	Syncro KT-201/2	XP 2.4 GHz/2	TQI/2
Receiver channels	3	4	4	5
Water-resistant electronics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Included battery	7-cell 3300mAh NiMH	None	None*	7-cell 3000mAh NiMH
Included charger	Wall type, 600mAh	None	None*	4A DC peak
Connector type	Deans-style	Deans-style	Deans-style	Traxxas High-Current
Price	\$240	\$340	\$250*	\$340
Web	arrma-rc.com	kyoshoamerica.com	teamassociated.com	traxxas.com

*Also available: \$300 “LiPo Combo” version with 3A LiPo balance AC charger and 2S 3000mAh LiPo.