

DRIVEN REVIEW

Text by Jason Carter

Photos by Walter Sidas

HIMOTO

FAST FACTS

MANUFACTURER: Himoto**VEHICLE:** Torpeda**CLASS:** 1/8-Scale Nitro RTR Buggy**DRIVER:** Beginner to intermediate nitro enthusiast**SPEED (AS TESTED):** 44.88mph**PRICE:** \$389.99

If you've caught the past two issues of *RC Driver*, you've no doubt read that there's a new manufacturer hitting the RC market here in the States. Himoto USA has launched three new vehicles from its offices in North Carolina. The newest offering from Himoto is the 1/8-scale Torpeda, which is available with either a

TORPEDA



Vertex .21 or a Team Infinity Japan .27 engine. No matter which you choose, the Himoto buggies are reasonably priced, so neither of the two will break the bank. Let's see how much bang the Torpeda delivers for just a little coin.



Launching in
three...
two...

HIMOTO TORPEDA

PERFORMANCE

I'll start with the Torpeda's power plant, the Infinity .27. Exhaust gasses are routed through an aluminum header into an aluminum SH-tuned pipe. Power from the .27 is sent through a hardened steel clutch bell to the steel spur gear.

SURFACE: OFF-ROAD TRACK; SAND/CLAY MIX

I have a pretty standard Saturday morning routine. Get up at 7 am, shower, shave, brush, load up the old deck-less lawn tractor into the back of the Z71, and hit the road for the eight-mile ride (plus a pit stop for coffee) to the local track. I usually spend a couple of hours prepping the track so it's in nice shape for the weekend. Considering I'm usually the only person at the track that early in the morning, I have the luxury of having a freshly groomed track to myself (insert evil laugh here).

JUMPING AND HANDLING—The Torpeda performs well in the air. At first, I attempted small jumps to get a feel for the Torpeda's in-air attitude, but jumping the buggy was an effortless affair. Thankfully for me, the Infinity .27 had a fast enough response to snap the buggy into shape if you're coming in nose first. I found it very easy to change the Torpeda's attitude while in the air. This buggy is a blast over the jumps.

RATING- 9

ON- AND OFF-POWER STEERING—Not once did I say to myself, "Man, I wish this buggy had more steering." The Torpeda's steering servo was noisy during the bench test but performed well while in action. No hiccups, no problems, just solid. By the time I had a chance to run the buggy, the track was dry. I felt the Torpeda had a bit too much push through the corners, felt the tires weren't hooking up as they should, and was wondering where the problem lay. I looked around and realized that the sun had baked the majority of the moisture out of the track. If you've never had a chance to take a trip to Georgia, you're missing out. It's one of the few places where you can watch the temperature and humidity race each other to see who can go highest. After watering the track, I put the Torpeda through the wringer. Steering response was vastly better, with traction rolls occurring a couple of times. I love driving through turns with the back end kicked out as if I were running a rally race, but even on

a wet track, the Torpeda showed a tendency to snap the rear end around if I came through a turn while on the throttle. I think this could be tuned out of the car very easily with a change of diff oil.

RATING- 9

ACCELERATION AND BRAKING—The Infinity .27 provides plenty of grunt to help the Torpeda live up to its name. When you need power, it's there. I never had a problem keeping the Torpeda under control when entering or exiting turns. Acceleration was predictable out of the turns, and braking was easily controlled.

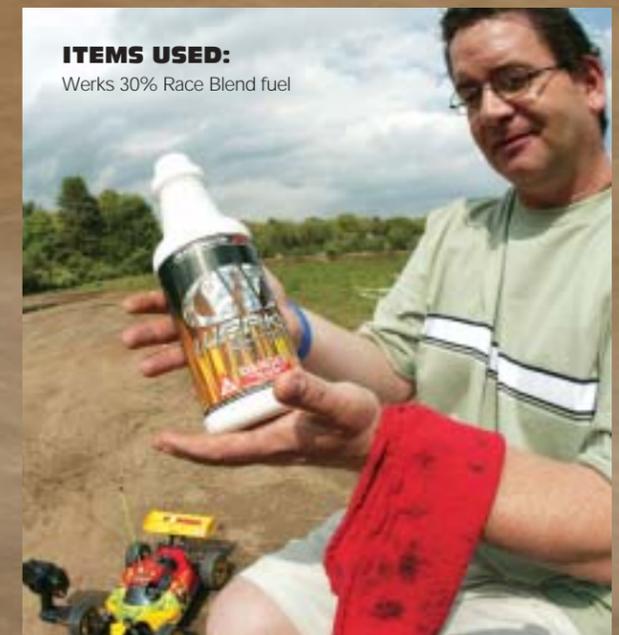
RATING- 9

INFO CENTER

CHASSIS—A hard anodized 3mm aluminum chassis serves as the foundation for the Torpeda. Front and rear chassis braces help eliminate chassis flex. The Torpeda is laid out in traditional buggy style—engine and fuel tank on the left side, servos and radio box on the right. Front and rear shock towers, as well as the plate that ties the steering post to the bulkheads, are all made from 3mm aluminum and anodized blue. The fuel tank has a built-in overflow and splash guards, and there's a secondary splash guard over the front brake disk. **STEERING**—Although I couldn't find specs on the steering servo, I'll venture to guess that the Torpeda's servo has an output of 80-90 ounces. I say this because the Torpeda steers with the same feel as my Spektrum 590M that is installed in my Hot Bodies Lightning 2. The stock Torpeda servo seems noisy but performs well. A cam-style servo saver does a good job of transferring steering forces from the servo to the steering drag link. Cast aluminum steering knuckles pull duty, steering the Torpeda around the track. **SUSPENSION**—The Torpeda has a few unique suspension features. The front suspension arms have springs that ride behind the arms on the hinge pins. In the event of a frontal impact, the lower arms are cushioned—neat! I also noticed that, instead of a conventional screw, the Torpeda uses a steel hinge pin and a set screw to attach the shock to the lower suspension arm. At each corner, you'll find aluminum-bodied shocks with 3mm shock shafts. The shocks bolt up to 3mm front and rear shock towers. A rear sway bar is installed on the Torpeda, but there is no sway bar on the front. **DRIVETRAIN**—Power from the Infinity .27 is transferred through a three-shoe composite clutch to the hardened steel clutch bell, then on to the steel spur gear. Power is then transferred from the center diff to the front and rear diffs via 5mm dogbones. From the rear diff, dogbones are used to send power to the wheels while the front gets a pair of universal drives. Braking is handled by a single front and rear brake disk. **ENGINE AND ELECTRONICS**—The Infinity .27 features a three-needle slide carb, 11 fin heat sink head, and a three-shoe clutch. Starting the .27 requires nothing more than a few tugs of the pull starter. Himoto included a 27 MHz FM radio system with the Torpeda. The transmitter has the usual trims for throttle and steering as well as EPA adjustments for both channels—a welcome touch. **WHEELS, TIRES, AND BODY**—A set of modified chevron treads are pre-glued to six spoke wheels. The included tires have a fairly square profile and are made from a durable compound that should last a good while in most situations. The body comes trimmed, painted, and decaled with printed tribal flame graphics and plenty of decals, which are factory installed.

ITEMS USED:

Werks 30% Race Blend fuel



HIMOTO TORPEDA

WHAT WE LIKED

- Infinity .27 is a solid performer.
- Lower shock mount pins and set screw
- Durability of stock tires

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Preload adjusters move on shock body.
- Switch cover on radio box tore easily.
- Dual front/rear disk brakes on .27 Torpeda



The Torpeda's center diff features a steel spur gear and single-disc front and rear brakes with brake disk guides.



A three-shoe composite clutch comes standard on the Torpeda.



The Torpeda comes with a set of six spoke wheels, each wrapped with a modified chevron tire of a durable compound which should last a good, long time—unless you run your Torpeda on asphalt for long periods of time.

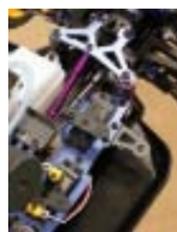


Inside each of the sealed diffs, you'll find four bevel gears and plenty of diff oil.



Here you can see the rear chassis support rod, the engine mounting plates, and the rear center dog bone. Also notice the droop adjustment screw in the rear suspension arm as well as the aluminum hinge pin brace.

Inside the cast aluminum steering knuckles, you'll find a universal driveshaft. Notice the offset of the steering knuckles.



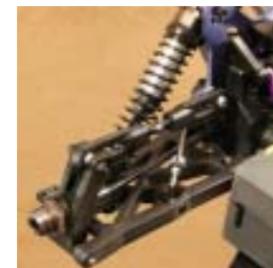
Throttle and brake servos are mounted to a 2mm aluminum radio tray, which comes with a transponder mount should you feel the itch to race your Torpeda.



A roomy radio box comes with the Torpeda. The compartment is large enough for most combinations of radio equipment.



Steering on the Torpeda is standard 1/8-scale buggy fare. A high-torque steering servo's output is transferred through a cam-style servo saver to the front wheels. Notice the shock-absorbing spring located on the lower left hinge pin.



Out back, you'll find a rear sway bar, dogbones, and a 3mm shock tower. Down travel is adjustable thanks to included setscrews in the lower suspension arms.



Here, you have a nice view of the "knee" in the lower suspension arms as well as the front universal drives. Aluminum body shocks with locking preload collars can be found at each corner of the Torpeda.

TECH SPECS

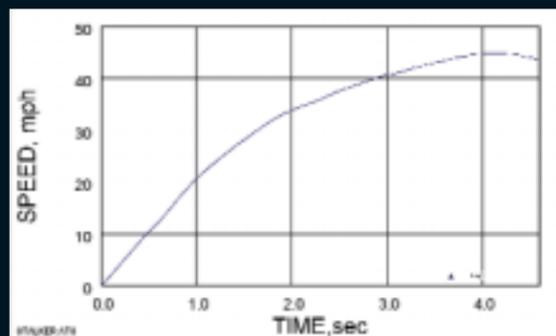
- SCALE:** 1/8
DRIVE: 4WD
LENGTH: 20 in. (508mm)
WIDTH: 12 in. (304.8mm)
WEIGHT: 8 lb. 6 oz. (3799g)
WHEELBASE: 12.75 in. (323.85mm)
TRACK: 10.25 in. (260.3mm)
- GROUND CLEARANCE:** 1.5 in. (38mm)
ENGINE: Team Infinity Japan .27
BATTERY: Four cell AA holder
TIRES: Himoto Modified Chevron
WHEELS: Six spoke
ACCELERATION: 0-10mph- .48sec, 0-20mph- .96sec, 0-30mph- 1.63sec, 0-40mph- 2.88sec; 4.13sec. in 183.76ft. @ 44.88mph

HELPFUL HINTS

GOT TO GET: Fuel, 12 AA batteries, and a glow igniter, and you're set.

RECOMMENDED UPGRADES: External fuel filter, throttle return spring, fall safe

RADAR DATA



CONCLUSION

The Himoto Torpeda is a great bang for the buck buggy. If you've got an itch to get into 1/8 nitro racing or just want to spend time bashing around with friends, the Torpeda is up to the task. The front suspension, with its shock-absorbing design, will take a good deal of abuse, and as your skills progress, the Torpeda has enough suspension tuning options available to be competitive on your local track. Considering the fact that you can get all this in a ready-to-run package that won't break the bank, the Torpeda isn't a bad deal! ©

Links

Himoto, distributed by Myers Trading Co., www.himotousa.com, (252) 946-1248.

Werks Racing Fuel, www.werksracing.com, (408) 365-1000.

For more information, please see our source guide on pg. 193.



AUTHOR'S OPINIONS AND RATINGS

Ratings: 1 to 10 (poor to excellent)

Rating Category: Intermediate driver

■ **CHASSIS**—A hard anodized 3mm main chassis plate provides a solid foundation for the Torpeda. Front and rear chassis braces work to keep flex to a minimum. During a stop for fuel, I flipped the buggy over for a quick inspection. I noticed the screw that secures the rear chassis brace to the chassis had backed out two full turns. Be sure to apply some thread lock to all metal-to-metal screws. Despite a loose screw, the chassis is solid.

RATING-9

■ **DRIVETRAIN**—As with most 1/8-scale buggies, the driveline of the Torpeda is durable. The front universals aren't shielded, so they allow dirt to enter the universal joint, which will likely accelerate wear. I'll probably make a set of Lexan shields to keep dirt out of the universals. Front and rear steel disk brakes keep the Torpeda under control, but I'd like to see a dual disk brake setup for the .27 version of the Torpeda. I found minimal wear on the drive cups after a hard weekend of running.

RATING-7.5

■ **STEERING**—The Torpeda's steering servo is noisy, but it gets the job done. I can't complain about steering response. Throughout testing, I didn't find myself wishing I had more oomph. A cam-style servo saver protects the servo's drivetrain from hard jolts.

RATING-9

■ **SUSPENSION**—The Torpeda uses a unique set of front suspension arms that have "knees" near the wheels, which increase clearance through the center of the buggy. I liked the fact that the shocks are retained with steel pins and setscrews instead of threaded screws like most other buggies. The shock preload collars had a tendency to move during testing. I had to install clip-on preload spacers to maintain the right settings.

RATING-8

■ **ENGINE**—The Torpeda is available with your choice of Vertex .21 or Team Infinity Japan .27 engines. Our test vehicle came with the .27, which ran great during testing. I've been spoiled by starter boxes as well as various types of shaft starters, but the .27 wasn't difficult to get up and running. After I primed the engine, a quick tug or two later, the Torpeda was up and running.

RATING-8

■ **RADIO, BODY, WHEELS AND TIRES**—I really like the fact that the Torpeda's FM radio has EPA adjustments on both throttle and steering channels. The radio's steering wheel is a bit uncomfortable in my hands, but it performed well during testing. The Torpeda's tires are a bit on the firm side, so they should stand up well to abuse on various types of terrain. I dig the body's printed tribal flame graphics. After all the action shots were snapped, I ended up yanking the large majority of decals off the body to make the graphics easier to see.

RATING-8

■ **DURABILITY**—Throughout testing, I didn't manage to break the Torpeda. I did have a screw come loose, and the silicone switch cover on the radio box tore after only a few uses. Other than that, the Torpeda was worry-free.

RATING-9

■ **EASE OF USE**—I found the Torpeda to be very user-friendly. The Infinity .27 started without issue when I had a charged glow igniter on hand. Perhaps I've become spoiled by the current crop of electric and shaft-start engines on the market, but I think some sort of shaft start would make the Torpeda more user-friendly.

RATING-9