



Mini MXS-R EP

Small and sweet, can Seagull's pint-pot MXS-R racer really fly as well as it looks?

This is better, much better. You see, I reviewed this MXS-R's stablemate a few issues ago, you know, the pretty looking little Mini Sparrowhawk that joined Seagull's EP range earlier this year. Fine it may look yet those wheel fairings didn't really help through take-offs and landings, where nose-overs were an ever-present risk.

There's no such problem here I'm pleased to say, indeed, I've quickly come to love this little model. Anyway, mustn't get ahead, let's have a quick overview.

In bringing three new designs to its EP (electric power) range Seagull has chosen to adopt a size notably smaller than the norm previously established by its 50" span favourites. This 35" span MXS-R, loosely based on the Red Bull racer, is an incredibly cute little machine, yet just one glance will be sufficient to raise

vague concerns. After all, there's a limit to the size a model can shrink to, yet still use an 1800-2200mAh 3s Li-Po battery, without bringing some unwanted flying traits to the party. This is just a concern you understand, one that any intermediate or experienced pilot will ask and with perfectly sound justification.

WOODY WONDER

A tidal wave of foam has drenched the hobby in recent years; many love the material yet if, deep down, you really prefer balsa then you'll

be very happy here. Not only is the MXS-R a laser-cut balsa / ply creation, it's supplied with a beautifully decorated glass-fibre cowl and a similarly lovely set of spats. Moreover, while you may be inclined to replace the pilot with a better example, as I have, generally the hardware package is fine, too.

Guidance takes the form of black and white copies of the colour version that can be downloaded from Seagull's website. Generally it's sufficient to guide the builder / flyer at who the model is intended.



Whilst the glass fibre spats are strong enough, the small wheels will only cope with smoother take-off surfaces.



With elevator and rudder servos sited at the tail, there's plenty of room here for the battery and Rx.



A plastic, pre-painted canopy must be glued to the balsa deck but the fit isn't perfect so you may find that some screws are called for.



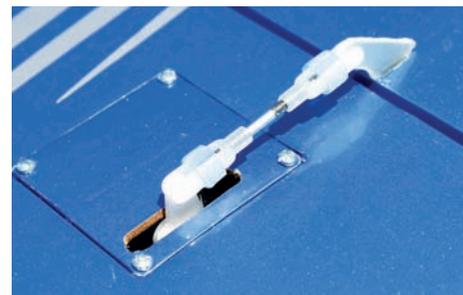
Those who have had enough of foamies will like the fact that this one's balsa.



I thought this E-flite chap looked a bit better than the bod supplied. The hatch, incidentally, is retained by magnets.



I slipped some ParkZone micros in at the tail, although some trimming was required for a good fit.



Buy some good micros and you'll be able to fit and forget 'em.

SYSTEMS

I allocated a small yet powerful Overlander 2836/08 size, 1120Kv outrunner for this model. Swinging a 10 x 7" prop, my system generates some 270 watts and 25 amps peak or around 130 watts / lb. It's nice when the calculations hit the spot and they really have here. The powertrain delivers buckets of punch when I need it, so endowing the model with a performance deserving of the term 'pocket rocket'. I've covered the system's demands with a 40-amp ESC that's best sited on the motor extension underside – this to benefit from airflow cooling (after a suitable outlet is cut on the cowl underside) – and not in the fuselage as the instructions seem to suggest.

The servo count numbers four; in my case some spare ParkZone digital micros to drive elevator and rudder, plus a couple of JR digital micros, one in each wing, to push ailerons. All fall into the 'powerful micro' servo segment.

ALL TOGETHER

Assembly is a pretty straightforward sequence with just a minor hiccup occurring thanks to control surface horn tabs that are too big for the pre-cut slots. Easily overcome, of course. The cowl underside will probably need a trimming visit from the Dremel to ensure it clears the undercarriage legs; keep it handy, too, for the spat slots.

It's nice to find a pilot bod in the box but the aesthetics don't seem to suit, so an E-flite 1/9-scale chap eventually found favour.

FINAL BITS

Small it may be yet the removable top hatch provides access to a cavernous interior with plenty of room for a receiver and any 3s 1800 – 2200mAh Li-Po battery. The suggested C of G point is fine although I erred on the cautious with a slightly nose-heavy stance for the first few flights and have stuck with this ever since. Control throw wise, the manual suggests a range for which the lower figures are fine for starters.

WHOOOSH!

Yes, it doesn't hang about. Not unexpectedly, there's a tendency to pull to the left during the take-off roll, albeit easily corrected with rudder. As you'd also expect, the undercarriage is nicely positioned to facilitate a comfortable take-off and landing.

The model's very well behaved with a slow speed envelope that's surprisingly benign, to the extent that it shouldn't surprise the



Vents need to be considered to assist ESC cooling and in this respect I opened out a hole on the lower cowl underside.



A spinner is supplied but it's a cheap affair so I fitted an E-flite job.



She flies smooth and goes exactly where you put her. Depending on how it's set up, the roll rate can be pretty sparkling, too.



unwary when flown sensibly. The only danger comes when flying this little machine in windy conditions. The power system is sufficient to help it penetrate through a 15+ mph blow but, needless to say, things get a little more interesting when the time comes to slow down and return to earth, the light airframe being exposed to the mercy of the wind. All told, I've found that it's better on calmer days when the power available can really be appreciated.

Power there is, then. The MXS-R responds with a smooth and predictable flight pattern that belies its size, it feels like a bigger model at times, always tracking assuredly. I've set my model up for an aerobatic repertoire that's pretty traditional and although I've power to hold a prop-hang, control surface sizes haven't really been designed with the 3D pilot in mind. Like the full-size, this one feels better carving straight lines and not hanging about much while it does so.

TOLD ALL

Good news, then, Seagull has done its homework here. This is a great little aeroplane, the archetypal car parcel-shelf model. It's something for the good intermediate or

experienced pilot, of course, and one who has access to a smooth take-off surface. Not cheap, but worth it, in my opinion.

DATAFILE

Name:	Mini MXS-R EP
Model type:	ARTF sport scale racer
Manufactured by:	Seagull Models
UK distributor:	J. Perkins Distribution Tel. 01622 854300 jperkinsdistribution.co.uk
RRP:	£104.99
Wingspan:	35.4" (900mm)
Fuselage length:	30.4" (772mm)
Wing area:	226 sq. in.
Wing loading:	22 oz / sq. ft.
All-up weight:	2 lb 2oz
Suggested engine:	450 – 480 size
Power system:	Overlander 2836/08 1120Kv outrunner, 40 amp ESC, 1800 / 2200mAh 3s Li-Po, 10 x 7" APC prop
Functions (servos):	Aileron (2); elevator (1); rudder (1); throttle (ESC)



The Mini MXS-R doesn't hang about but feels safe even when the speed is bled off. Don't overdo it though or she'll bite. Being small and light the model's better in calmer conditions.