

BY JOHN LUPPERGER

Hobby Lobby's 'Telesport'

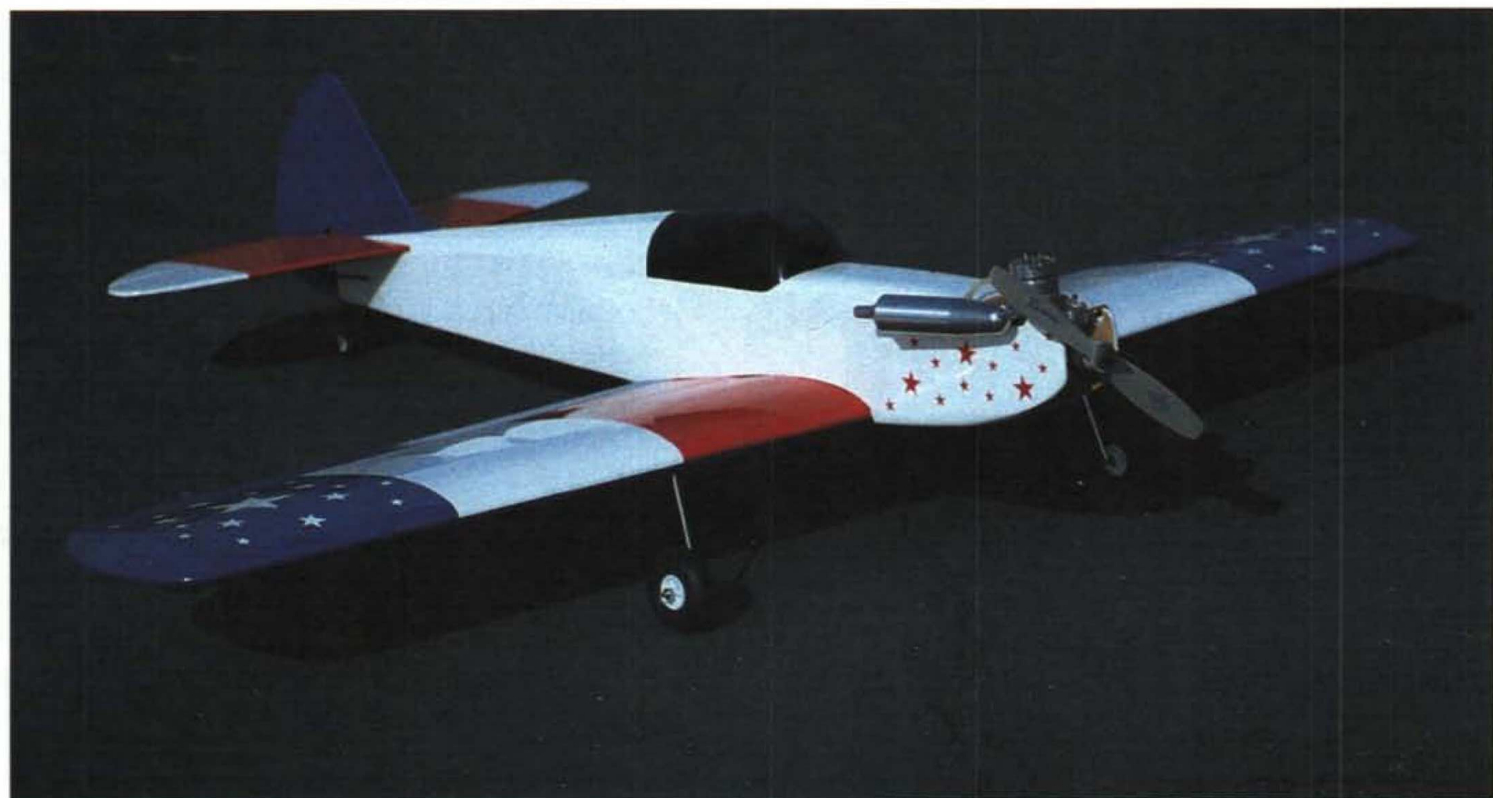
A classic-looking sport model with hotdoggin' aerobatic ability!

The Telesport was designed by Ted Davey for Hobby Lobby International. It's a low-wing sport model capable of outstanding aerobatic performance in the hands of any moderately capable pilot, yet is actually easy enough to

windscreen, add a pilot, and cover it in a scale color scheme complete with N numbers to produce a semi-scale look. Not only would you have a great looking model, you'd also have one capable of some real barnstorming performance.

THE KIT

All parts come bagged or rubber banded together. The canopy is wrapped with tissue. The full-size plan sheets are rolled and there is an illustrated instruction sheet with a complete parts list. The wood quality in



The Telesport makes up into one handsome looking ship—all she needs now is a set of wheel pants to *really* look sexy. Patriotic covering job was done with Solarkote.

fly that it could be used as a secondary trainer. The design is quite simple and easy to build. The full-size plans and instructions are well thought out and should present no problems for anyone with previous building experience.

The Telesport's lines are similar to some of the homebuilts of the '30s. If you wanted to, you could cut the canopy to create a

Low-time pilots need not write off the Telesport just because it's a taildragger—with that wide-track landing gear, ground handling is a cinch. See text for the author's comments.



my kit was average, and the die-cut parts were easily removed from the sheets. Parts fit for the most part was pretty good (more on this later).

CONSTRUCTION

The wing is of standard D-tube construction which results in a very strong and stiff structure. All of the ribs have building tabs at each end, which allow the wing to be built on a flat building board without the need for a wing jig. The left and right panels are both framed up and permanently joined prior to adding the sheeting.

Before sheeting, make sure the ribs have a smooth taper from the root to the tip. As stated earlier, the parts fit was pretty good, but the wing ribs were off just enough that there surely would have been some waviness in the finished wing if not corrected. This was easily accomplished using a 36-inch aluminum T-bar with sticky-backed sandpaper, which was laid on the root and tip ribs and the ribs in between sanded as needed.

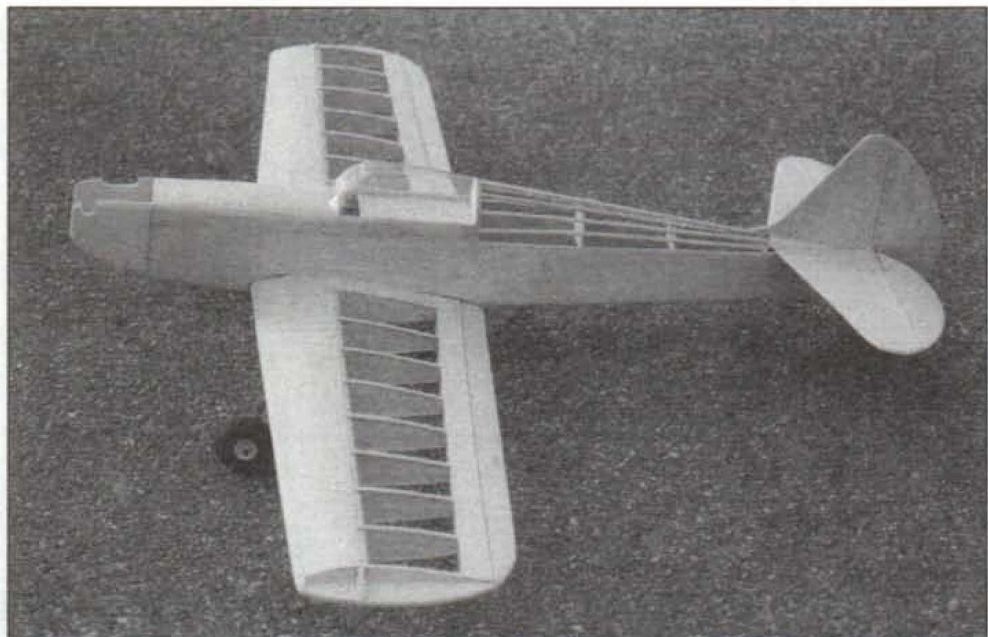
Be sure to use plenty of epoxy when gluing the hardwood landing gear blocks into the

is the wing sheeting. The blocks protrude beyond the ribs so that they are flush with the outside of the lower wing sheeting. There are no specific instructions as to how the area around the gear blocks should be sheeted, and most modelers will probably opt to do it in sections. I took a bit of extra time and made a cut-out in the sheeting to fit exactly around the gear blocks. This was slow work, but the payoff was a finished wing devoid of splices in the sheeting.

The ailerons are of the strip type and only require double-beveling the leading edge, rounding the tips to follow the wing contour, and drilling holes for the torque rods. The torque rods do not have hinge bearings at their root and therefore it is important that a hinge be placed right at the root of the aileron to help support them.

The fuselage is simple to build and goes together very quickly. The entire front of the fuselage from the firewall to the rear of the wing opening is doubled, and the rear section gets stringers all the way back to the rudder post. The area below the stab mount is also doubled for strength.

One point I didn't really like is that the

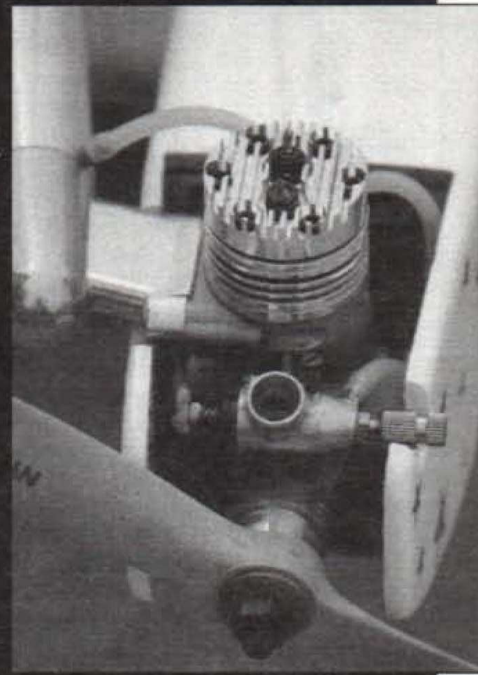


Telesport's construction is completely conventional in all respects and goes together in short order. For those who would rather buy than build, this airplane is also available in pre-covered ARF form, for about twice the price of the kit.

notched ribs, as there is no additional bracing in this area other than a doubled rib section. This is not meant to imply that the area is weak, as the ribs are all 3/32 balsa, as

fuel tank is built permanently into its compartment (as opposed to being inserted through the wing opening) with no access. If it ever becomes necessary to work on the tank at a later date, it will require cutting the fuselage open.

The two plywood blocks for the wing trailing edge bolts are glued into notches in the fuselage wing saddle area and are further backed up with pieces of hardwood. After drilling the wing and blocks, you are supposed to seat the supplied 1/4-20 blind nuts into the hardwood, but when I did this the hardwood pieces split and the blind nuts never did become secure. I knocked out the blind nuts, filled the holes with micro balloons and epoxy, added additional wood behind the hold-down blocks,



MERCO .61 RC

The English-made Mercó .61 used in the Telesport review is also available from Hobby Lobby. It's priced in their latest catalog at only \$119 (suggested retail is \$145.95), which is very reasonable for any .60 size engine—especially one with such rugged construction. The engine has a one-piece crankcase, front and rear ball bearings, and a ringed piston. The engine comes complete with a muffler that proved to be surprisingly effective; using it and a Graupner 12x6 prop, I had one of the quietest two-strokes on the field.

Break-in consisted of running several tanks of fuel through the engine on the ground prior to the initial flight. Revs seemed a bit modest for the first flight at about 8,000, but the pulling power of the engine was really impressive. When the nose of the model was pointed up the Mercó just kept chugging away as if no undue strain had been put on it. After a few more flights the power started to pick up a bit. Resetting the needle valve after a couple more flights started to show the engine's real potential. As the rpm approached 9,000 the Mercó really started to perform. This engine has real pulling power and is also fairly economical on fuel; the Telesport has a 10-ounce tank, and there was usually about 1 ounce of fuel left in the tank after 10-12 minutes in the air.

If you want an economical engine that should last a very long time, the Mercó .61 is an excellent choice. **MB**

HOBBY LOBBY'S TELESPORT

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| WINGSPAN | 60 in. |
| WING AREA | 639 sq. in. |
| WEIGHT RTF | 96 oz. |
| WING LOADING | 21.6 oz./sq. ft. |
| AIRFOIL | Full symmetrical. |
| POWER | .40-.61. |
| RADIO | Four channels |
| | (aileron, elevator, rudder, throttle). |
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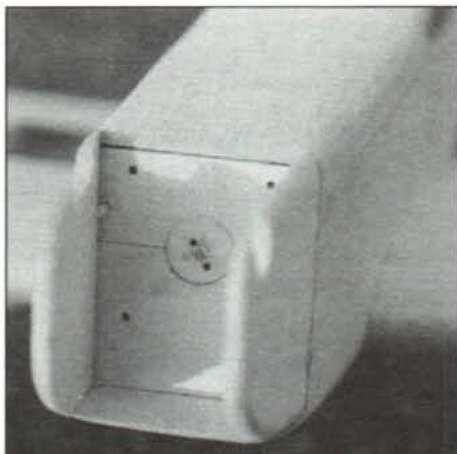
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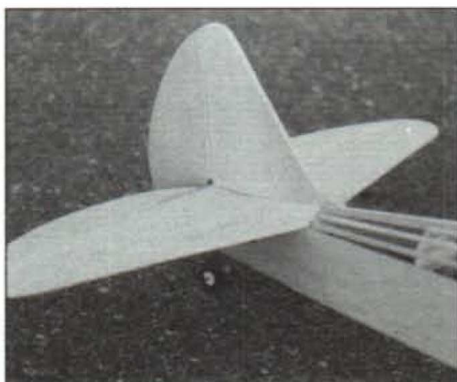
Fuel tank is built permanently into the fuselage and exits the firewall through the center of the engine mount. There's supposed to be balsa triangle stock between the cowl cheeks and the firewall, but the use of a .60 size engine mount doesn't leave enough room.

redrilled and then tapped the holes for the bolts. I feel this is a much better way to secure the wing and would recommend it to anyone building the Telesport.

The tail surfaces are sheet balsa and only require gluing together and sanding. I replaced the stock wire elevator joiner with a 1/4-inch dowel, which I feel is less likely to flex. I also used a Du-Bro tail wheel bracket instead of the hinge-type bearing supplied. This way, the rear of the fuselage carries the weight of the model instead of the single hinge bearing and the rudder hinges.

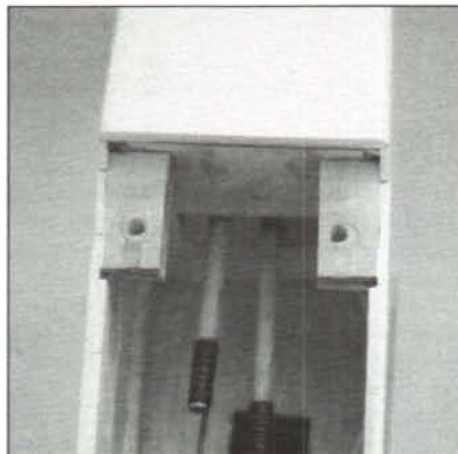
COVERING

The covering I used was Solarkote from



Pre-cut sheet balsa tail surfaces—what could be simpler?

Global Hobby Distributors. The bottom of the wing and horizontal stab were covered in dark blue and the rest of the model in the patriotic red/white/blue scheme seen in the pictures. This color arrangement has proven to be highly visible during aerobatics. The clear canopy was painted on the inside with black paint and glued to the fuselage with Wilhold RC-56 glue. (If you don't have a bottle of this glue in your supplies, get one quick, as I understand it has been discontinued.) The entire engine compartment was generously coated with 5-minute epoxy for fuelproofing.

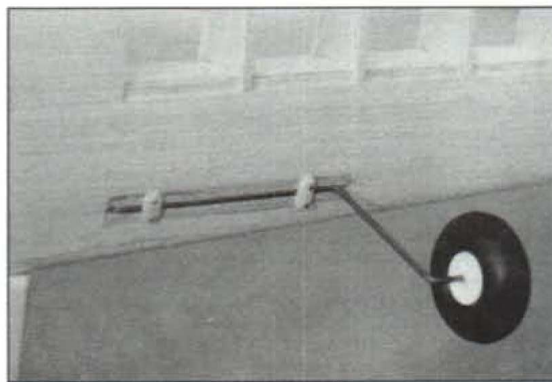


The Telesport's wing is held on with a single dowel at the leading edge and two 1/4-20 nylon bolts at the trailing edge. Rather than use the large blind nuts supplied in the kit, John tapped directly into the hardwood blocks on either side of the fuselage.

FLYING

Here's the part you've been waiting for! Test flights were carried out in the early afternoon in about a 15 to 20 mph wind. I procured the talents of my flying buddy Steve Shofro to carry out the initial test flight while I got pictures. Even though there was about a 45 degree crosswind, the first takeoff run was straight down the runway. This first flight was spent checking out the general flight characteristics and listening to the engine to determine tuning requirements. It was decided that the only change needed was to add some rudder travel.

After a couple more sedate flights to allow the engine to get additional run



Although it took a bit of extra work, careful measuring and cutting produced a landing gear block cutout in the lower wing sheeting without the need for splicing.

time, it was time to start seeing what the Telesport could do! Well, let me tell you, there's not much the Telesport *won't* do. In the hands of a capable pilot (someone more qualified than I), the Telesport should be able to do just about any aerobatic maneuver in the book. Personally, I found the Telesport to be very easy to fly, yet capable of all the aerobatic maneuvers I can do. Loops were big and round (with a .60 in the nose there is more than enough power to make them as big as you want), rolls were smooth (at the rate of about one per second), split-S's were clean and



The tail wheel wire with hinge bearing supplied in the kit was replaced with a Du-Bro tail wheel assembly so that the load is carried by the fuselage, instead of the rudder hinges.



Fuselage is wide enough to take three standard servos abreast with room to spare. Radio used is a Futaba 7UAPS PCM. Aileron servo is mounted on hardwood rails in the wing center section.

straight, Immelmans were easy, and snaps were crisp.

The best part of all is that the Telesport slows down so nicely that you feel like you're landing a trainer. Three-point landings are a cinch, or if you want to bring it in with a little speed, you can make beautiful wheel landings. The Telesport is one of the best-mannered aerobatic sport models I've ever had the pleasure to fly.

Since it was obvious that the Telesport was more capable than I, it was time to again enlist the aid of my buddy Steve Shofro. I few years back I helped Steve learn to fly; now he can fly circles around

me! Steve took the Telesport up and proceeded to really wring it out. Additional maneuvers that Steve was able to pull off were spins (upright and inverted), double snaps, and knife-edge. One of the nice things about the Telesport's light weight and its ability to handle a .60 size engine is that Steve was able to string maneuvers together continuously without losing momentum. This really makes aerobatics fun! After several flights, Steve's comments were that the Telesport is a very nicely mannered model capable of providing its owner with some exciting aerobatic performance.

One of the things that impressed both of

us was the Telesport's excellent ground handling. Even during high-speed taxis, the model handled like an RC car. The wide stance gear makes it very stable when turning, and crosswind conditions are no problem.

If you want a sport aerobatic model that can handle a wide variety of engine sizes (including four-strokes), is easy to build and doesn't cost a ton of money, the Telesport is it! It's a very rugged model that can withstand the abuse of sport flying from any type of field. It's really nice to find a model that actually lives up to its advertising claims! **MB**

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