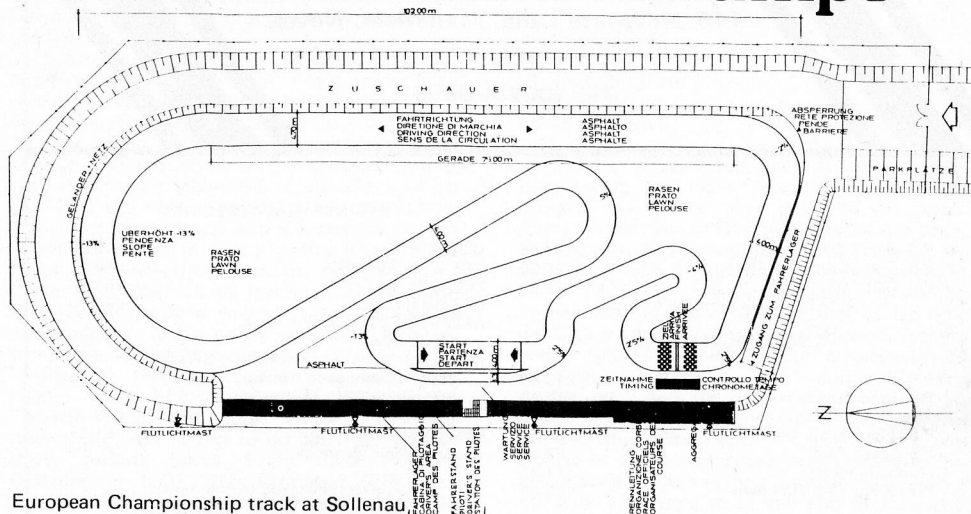


# $\frac{1}{8}$ th 1981 Euro Champs



European Championship track at Sollenau, Austria

This years European Championships were held in the village of Sollenau, some 40 miles south of Vienna, in the beautifully scenic country of Austria on a circuit that demanded 16 million rpm from the motors, for an eternity, every single lap. Well, it seemed like that anyway. In truth the circuit measured 360m to the lap (about 50% longer than Wombwell) and had an enormous 75m straight with a huge banked bend, followed by another straight of 50m. This gave, in all, a flat out section of some 180m in total. Lap times by the end of the week were, to fall amazingly, to sub 20 seconds.

The English team did it's usual trick of keeping the organisers guessing as to who was running and some literal last minute changes caused amusement (and panic) amongst the team. Andy Stafford was going to Vienna to pit for Paul Pagdin, but when he turned up at the PB Factory to meet Paul, a boxed kit was thrust into his arms with the words 'Hi, build this and you can borrow it to run in the European Championships at Vienna'.

'But I'm not in the team!'

'You are now; so get in the Citroen, we've got a ferry to catch'.

John Russell, on the other hand, took his car on holiday with him to Vienna, on the off chance that he may be able to sneak in some free practice, only to find that he too was suddenly offered a place. This was due to some countries not sending their full quota of drivers, thus allowing those on the top of the list an additional place (England is top of the list).

En route to Vienna, we, that is Paul Pagdin, Gary Culver and Andy Stafford (Citroen CX 2 ton carryall), Phil Greeno (Porsche Can-Am

ex Bruce McClaren), Fred Martin and myself (Golf GT1 turbocharged deathwish dodgem car) had stopped off to watch the German GP at Hochenheim and we all concluded that Hector Rebarque drove his Brabham just like some people drive their model cars. To see Rebarque drive inside Villeneuve on the entry to a right hander and then put some left in to nerf Villeneuve onto the grass, had us all looking for Tom Martin and the Black Flag. But no one was seen to comment. So, what is good for the goose, must be good for the Alpha.

After the GP we drove the odd 500 miles to Vienna to arrive there shortly before 2am. Phil Greeno couldn't keep up with the rest of us and so he arrived on Monday afternoon to find us practicing on the circuit. Initial reactions to the total length of the flat out driving was a sweep-stake as to how many engines would get blown up during the course of the week and this ranged from a mere half a dozen to numbers greater than the total output of all the engine manufacturers. Traction at this stage was very low and so we gave Tuesday a miss, leaving Wednesday as the remaining free practice day.

Tuesday, in fact, saw a hive of activity in the hotel car park, with the PB Team attempting to build the kit up for Andy Stafford in record time and with different people building different parts, it was expected that the car wouldn't handle at all.

Thursday and Friday were organised practice sessions of approximately eight minutes (three minutes warm up, followed by a dummy five minute heat) thus giving two Formula and two Sports sessions per day in heat order. Manual lap counting/timing was

used in these sessions but nevertheless, Gary Culver emerged with fastest individual lap times in both Formula and Sports. With this and the unofficial lap times posted by the Serpent team, speculation started to mount on the likely contenders for the final.

Saturday dawned bright and clear, as we had come to expect and Heat 1 got under way shortly after 9am with Paul Pagdin turning a very good time of 14 laps and 20.7 secs. Heat 10 was going to be a good heat with Phil Greeno and Franco Sabattini battling it out, with Phil finally taking the result with a 14 lap and 13.2 sec time. Round 2, Heat 1 and Paul set a blistering 14 laps and 9.5 secs which was to remain the FTD. In all twenty four 14 laps times were turned in, with the unlucky Gary Culver and Walt Bailey just missing the semi-final. Andy Stafford turned in a good time of 13 laps dead, in his newly assembled hire car, which placed him 25th overall.

Straight through to the final went Paul Pagdin (PB), Franco Sabattini (SG), Ermes Tadiello (SG) and Steve White (PB), thus leaving the next fastest to do battle in the two thirty minute semis. From these Roberto Bartolomasi (SG), Bob Errington (PB), Phil Greeno (PB) and Sergio Veronesi (SG) all turned in 80 laps and joined the others for the forty minute final.

After the initial turmoil of the start, we had Paul Pagdin in the lead followed by Steve White and Phil Greeno, then the four SG cars and finally Bob Errington limping into the pits with a 'popped' ball joint. This was knocked back in to rejoin the fray, but after a further five minutes the engine went 'ping' and enabled Bob to relax and watch the rest of the final. Paul held the lead to the halfway stage when a noisy silencer forced him to pit down to effect hasty repairs and then Steve had trouble, forcing him back.

Seven minutes from the end, the announcement gave Phil Greeno the lead followed by Ermes Tadiello. Phil then pitted and Ermes was in front of him but not a squeak from the PA. One minute to go and Phil could not pass Ermes; both of them struggling with their cars. The hooter went just after they had passed the line, so there was a full lap left to go. Still Ermes held Phil off and as they were about to cross the line Ermes Super Tigre cut but with enough momentum to cross the line in front of Phil. The SG camp went wild!

What a finish (with anticipation)! However as the results were announced it turned out that Phil had lapped Ermes earlier and, therefore, Phil Greeno emerged as the 1981 European Formula 1 Champion. The PB camp went wild!

Final results were :

|   |                     |     |               |
|---|---------------------|-----|---------------|
| 1 | Phil Greeno         | 107 | Great Britain |
| 2 | Ermes Tadiello      | 106 | Italy         |
| 3 | Roberto Bartolomasi | 104 | Italy         |
| 4 | Franco Sabattini    | 103 | Italy         |
| 5 | Steve White         | 101 | Great Britain |
| 6 | Paul Pagdin         | 101 | Great Britain |

7 Sergio Veronesi  
8 Bob Errington

100 Italy  
31 Great Britain

15 Keith Pleased  
18 Phil Booth  
22 Gary Culver  
24 Walt Bailey  
25 Andy Stafford  
29 Fred Martin  
66 John Russell

102 Ran

Sunday looked set again for a beautiful days racing and right from the outset it was obvious that things were going to get quick. Every single heat in Round 1 saw 14 lap times put in, with Bob Errington in Heat 7 setting the early pace with 14 laps and 3.4 sec, this held to Heat 12 when Franco Sabattini drove an immaculate race to record the first 15 lap time with 21.0 secs. At the end of Round 1 there was an incredible twenty four drivers with 14 lap or quicker times.

Round 2 and the pace really started to get going. Heat 2 saw Ermes Tadiello with 14 plus 1.2 and Steve White with 14 plus 1.5; that was a heat to watch. Everyone else seemed to improve with Franco setting another FTD with a 15 plus 17.2 secs, so at the end of Round 2 there were now thirty five drivers with 14 laps and still just one with 15. So onto Round 3 and everyone knew that this had to be fast and that you'd need a 15 to get straight through in the top four. Heat 2 saw another superb dice between Steve White and Ermes Tadiello and this time Steve took it and crossed the line as the horn blew. We all thought he had made

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Phil Greeno, Formula 1 European Champion  
1981

