

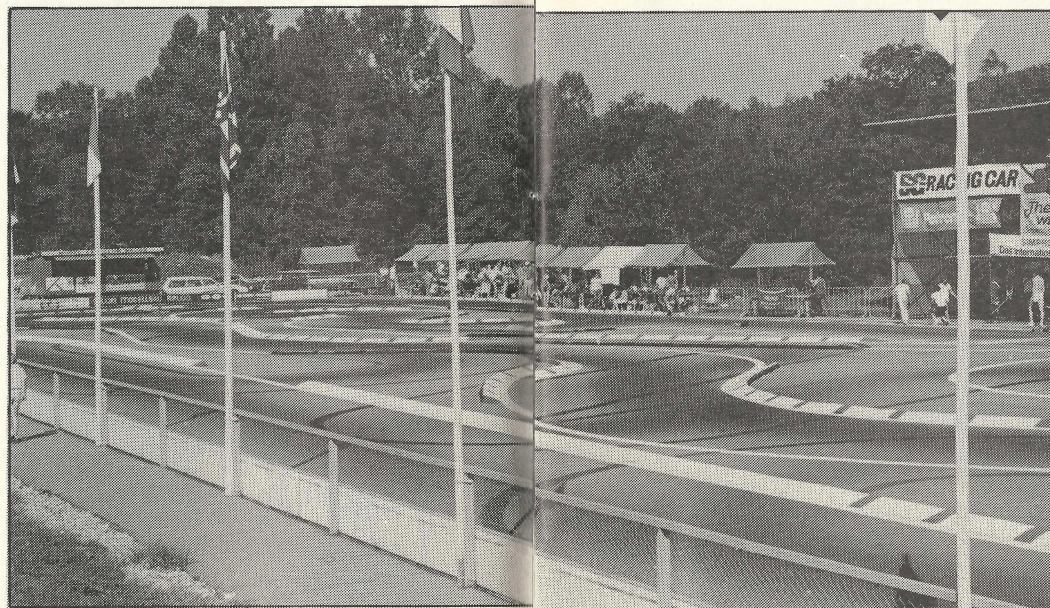
ONCE AGAIN THE best drivers in Europe gathered for the annual European Championship to be held this year in Switzerland. The notable exception being Ermes Tadiello, reigning Euro Champ, who we believe has now retired from racing after all the fracas of last year's World Championship.

The Brugg circuit looked daunting, not so much because of its size (330 metres) but more for the method of track marking. This was the first time for me that a championship had been run on a permanently marked tarmac area. The markings looked substantial to say the least, in that they resembled 6in. high, one-sided *Toblerone* strips placed all around the circuit. This meant that in the very tight section a slight mistake would roll you over whereas on the high speed parts an error could start you off on an Appollo mission! Result: a great desire for precision on the part of all the drivers.

Practice

During the early practising sessions of Wednesday and Thursday several drivers were noted as having mastered the layout. Stefano Calpista of Italy driving his SG car was probably the smoothest and had a best recorded lap of 20.7 seconds; Rody Roem of Holland with his *Serpent* 'Quattro' was not far behind although the car seemed to vary in performance between runs. Calpista, satisfied with his performance stopped practising by 2pm on Wednesday only to return for a quick run late on Thursday afternoon. On reflection I think that this was probably a mistake as the circuit changed characteristics during each day as the temperature rose, this in turn produced slower lap times.

Chris White from Britain had the good sense to acquire a spare bed-sheet from his hotel to drape over the polythene pit covering thus preventing



Above: flags of the assembled nations surround the Brugg circuit. Note take-off ramp type of track markers.

Euro-champs

Bob Errington reports on the premier 1/8th racing event in Europe. Brugg - Switzerland - August 4-6

Below: super cool and so laid back he's fallen over! Steve White adopts a low profile after winning the European Champion title by the barest of margins.



himself from being grilled under the intense heat of the mid-day sun. This heat brought out several biting insects which immediately attacked Phil Greeno causing him great concern.

Phil showed a great desire to reveal to everyone, every 10 to 15 minutes, exactly where he had been bitten and to ask whether he should seek medical advice. Phil was to experience a great many strange occurrences during the weekend such as the loss or theft of his hotel room key which forced him into sleeping with his feet placed against the door. Wardrobes

mysteriously appeared outside his room which immediately fell apart when the door was opened. On another occasion his wardrobe door was locked during the night and the key mysteriously lost.

Back at the circuit and everything was wrong for Giulio Ghersi one of the SG team's top drivers, his car was permanently being rebuilt by an ever-changing team of mechanics all endeavouring to perfect the car to suit his demanding driving style.

Qualifying

Saturday morning and the start of qualifying was upset by the rain that had fallen overnight thus causing the first round of heats to be slower. This meant that Dave Dixon (heat 1), John Russel (heat 3), Phil Greeno and Phil Hague (heat 5) all had heats classified as wet. By this time the track was drying out fast and in heat 7 Steve White set FTD with 14 laps in 5 minutes 6.5 seconds which set the ball rolling.

Heat 8 looked potentially faster with

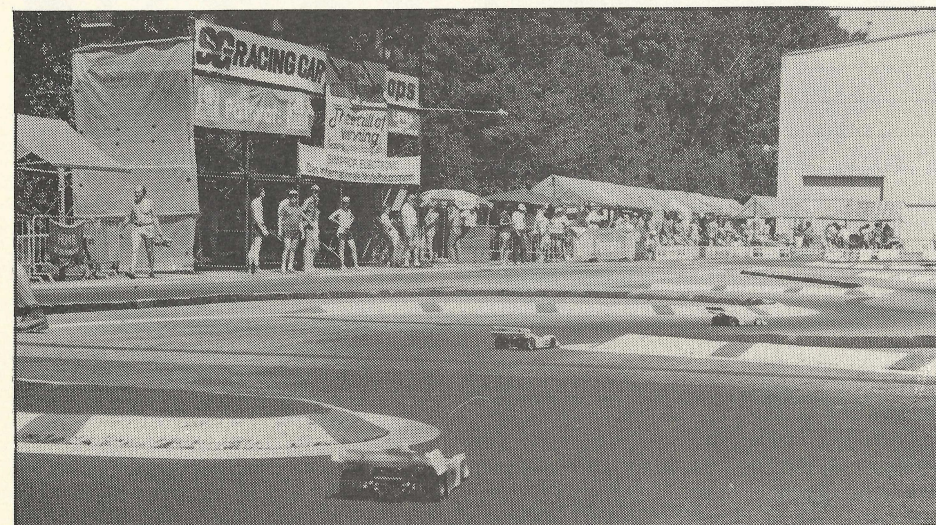
scores at the end of the heat were, Bob, 14 laps, 00.08 and Rody 14 laps, 1.9. Orazi, Berganzini and Colin Strauss also scored 14 lappers.

Heat 9 saw David Lecat (France/PB), reigning World Champion pit his talents against Dominico Calce (Italy/SG), Pieter Bervoets (Holland/Serpent), Roberto Bartolomasi (Italy/SG) and Gary Culver (Britain/PB).

Heat 10 had Stefano Calpista, Chris White (Britain/PB) and Paul Pagdin (Britain/PB). Both heats were fast and clean but were slightly slower than the previous heat leaving Bob Errington holding FTD after round 1.

Round 2 remained dry throughout and whilst many improved their times it appeared equally clear that many were experiencing problems which meant that Bob's FTD stood firm at the end of the round.

Round 3 and whilst heat 7 was in progress rain began to fall and many drivers, finding the conditions steadily deteriorating, pulled off. Heat 8 came out for practise but never started as the organisers took the strange decision to



Above: three cars chase each other through the chicane during the dry qualifying rounds. Note extremely high elevation of the drivers relative to the circuit.

Rody Roem (Holland/Serpent), Colin Strauss (Britain/PB), Vittoriano Orazi (Italy/SG), Luca Bergonzini (Italy/SG), Michael Mielke (Germany/SG) and Bob Errington (Britain/SG) all having shown promise in practise.

Rody Roem got the start he had been looking for with an opening lap (not quite full distance) of 19.35 seconds which must have been the fastest of the weekend, followed by Bergonzini, Errington, Strauss and Orazi. By lap 7 Bob was in the lead followed by Roem and Orazi the latter's engine was the fastest in Switzerland and he was able to take 10 metres off of anyone along the straight, subsequently on laps 7-9 we saw him put in an incredible string of 20.85, 20.85 and 20.95 second laps to catch the leading pair although the positions remained the same. The

postpone the rest of qualifying until the track was dry and would re-start at heat seven!

One hour later, heat 7 recommenced and Steve White flew around to score a record 14 laps in 5 minutes 1.60 seconds to put him in second fastest position.

The next heat had Orazi looking for a faster run but a loose wheel put paid to that. Bob Errington eventually won the heat with a time of 14:1.45 slightly slower than his previous best.

Heat 10 had the spectators on their feet as Chris White drove a superb heat chased throughout by Stefano Calpista. Chris crossed the line first to record the second fastest time thus far of 14:1.0. Calpista made a mistake on the very last lap which certainly cost him a straight through sit-out spot.

Round four only got into the early heats before heavy rain started to fall. So, after a short delay it was announced that qualifying was halted and as the rain didn't look like stopping no further qualifying would take place. All drivers had had three dry runs and so the qualifying list was posted and how nice it was to see the first three places being held by British drivers.

As you can see the top four were separated by 1.0 seconds, the top ten by 3.25 seconds and the top 18 by 8.0 seconds. Incredibly 52 drivers were on the same lap!

Well the rain eased off to allow us to pack up but during the evening it started to rain very heavily again. In fact it rained all night and was still pouring when we arrived the next day for the finals.

Qualifying list

Pos./Name	Country	Car	Laps
1 R. Errington	GB	SG	14 5/00.80
2 C. White	GB	PB	14 5/01.00
3 S. White	GB	SG	14 5/01.60
4 J. Buehler	CH	Serpent	14 5/01.80
5 R. Poem	NL	Serpent	14 5/02.90
6 V. Orazi	I	SG	14 5/02.65
7 P. Luccesi	I	Mantua	14 5/03.90
8 L. Bergonzini	I	SG	14 5/03.30
9 S. Calpista	I	SG	14 5/04.55
10 G. Culver	GB	PB	14 5/04.05
11 K. Hoschen	D	SG	14 5/04.30
12 D. Lecat	F	PB	14 5/04.60
13 M. Bernard	F	SG	14 5/04.90
14 P. Hague	GB	PB	14 5/06.95
15 F. Poldi	I	Mantua	14 5/07.25
16 P. De Carro	SW	PB	14 5/08.10
17 M. Constantini	I	SG	14 5/08.50
18 C. Strauss	GB	PB	14 5/08.80
34 D. Preston	GB	PB	14 5/14.35
43 P. Greeno	GB	SG	14 5/18.00
50 K. Plested	GB	PB	14 5/21.40
53 P. Pagdin	GB	PB	13 5/00.00
70 D. Dixon	GB	Mantua	13 5/09.90
92 J. Russell	GB	PB	12 5/24.75
95 D. Preston	SG	PB	11 5/15.85

Finals day

The first finals to be run were the 1/32nd finals and these were really in terrible conditions. Dave Dixon struggled to score 11 laps in 15 minutes to 72nd place overall, whilst two Frenchmen made it into the 1/16th and then the 1/8th finals. Norbert Mayrhofer of Germany, who always drives well in the wet went right through to the 1/4th finals.

The 1/16th final had Paul Pagdin and Keith Plested but as both of them decided not to run they were placed 62nd and 64th respectively.

The 1/8th finals featured Phil Greeno and Debbie Preston both of whom struggled to score 6 laps leaving them in 49th and 50th position, Romano Garbani (Switzerland) and Michael

Racing Report

Salven (Germany) meanwhile both went right through, eventually all the way to the main final.

By the time the 1/4 finals had started the rain had stopped, the track however was still very wet. No British drivers were featuring at this stage but 30 plus laps were needed over the 15 minute

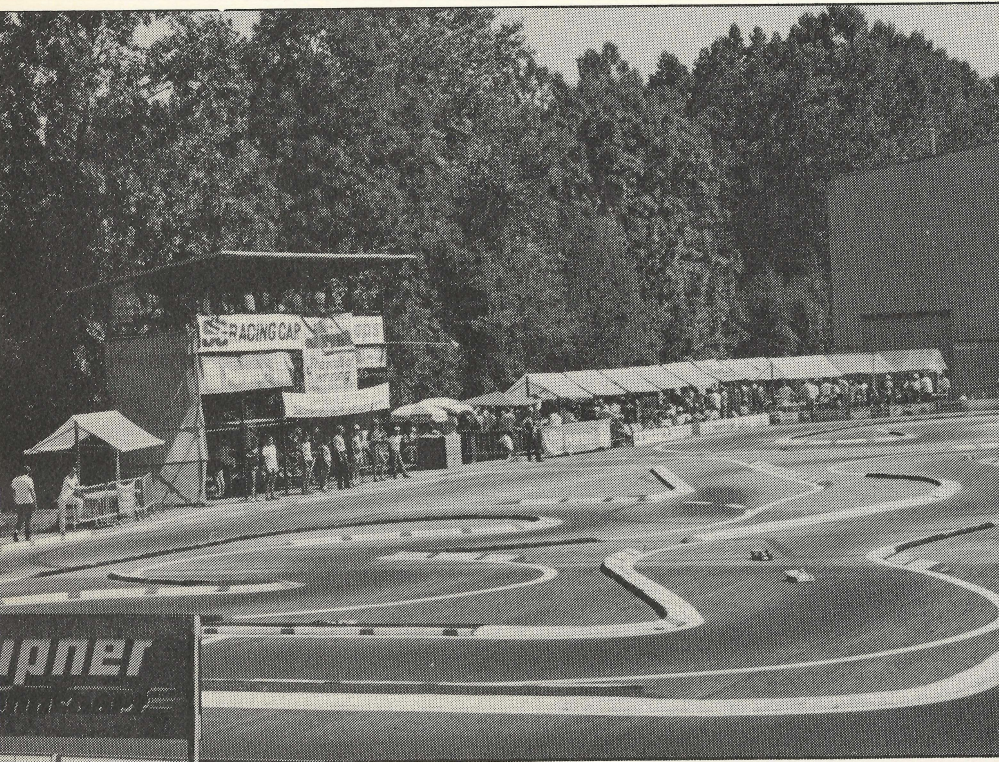
decide, even to the extent that on is public introduction lap he changed tyres first. Be warned, never stand next to Gary during a Final (*I'll try not to... Ed.*) unless you are really into 'vibro-massage'. His legs manage to oscillate due to the excitement such that the rostrum actually trembles.

good half lap lead. Then Steve called to his pit crew that his tyres had gone off and his car slowed enough for Bob to reel him in slowly. At the 12 minute mark both Steve and Bob came in for fuel and whilst John Russel attended Steve's car, Charlie Dudfield did one of his famous fuel stops to put Bob out first and into the lead. Bob held the lead until his next fuel stop when on his last lap his car ran out of fuel, leaving it stranded on the circuit. Steve was a little bit luckier as his own car gave a couple of gasps before the straight and only careful driving got it back into the pits for more fuel. Bob, although now with fresh rubber was a couple of laps down and so out of contention.

Gary Culver had by now worked himself up to second place and managed to take the lead from Steve at the next fuel stop. This he held for some minutes until disaster struck and he too ran out of fuel after just crossing the lap-counting line.

Now Jakob Buehler was in second place on this his home track and was desperately trying to hold onto Steve. However, Steve's pit crew had shortened the fuel stops to 4 minutes and so he was called in with only 2 minutes left to run. Steve passed comments on several items (all unprintable) as Jakob Buehler sailed through into the lead very hotly pursued by Steve.

Jakob seemed to be able to hold onto the lead but as the end got nearer the pressure got greater until finally he made a mistake at the end of the straight and that was enough to let Steve through and there was no way that Steve would commit an error. So Steve won the 1984 European Championship by just 5 seconds from Jakob after 45 minutes of concentration and superb driving. Congratulations were forthcoming from all quarters on a well-deserved win. How nice it is to see Steve White's persistence pay off at last with a big win for Britain. □



Above: general view of the Brugg circuit a very tight shape demanding a high degree of driver precision. British drivers proved their superiority on a real 'drivers' circuit.

period to go any further.

Over the one hour lunch break the track began to dry out — not a lot, but a little. So when the 20 minute semi-finals commenced conditions had definitely improved.

Gary Culver did what was required of him to gain entry into the Final so did Klaus Hoschen (Germany/SG) and Garbani, Mielke, Roem and Salven. Calce of Italy was left in 11th place with 45 laps with one-time favourite, Calpista a further lap down. Neither Colin Strauss or Phil Hague could come to terms with the damp conditions leaving them with 23/32 laps and 24th/22nd positions respectively.

The Final

So to the 45 minute race to decide the 1984 European Champion, the circuit still felt slightly greasy but improvement was hoped for during the run.

Every type of tyre was tested with none showing any real advantage, Steve White found a set of UFRA 'Specials' to be best, so to did Bob Errington albeit of lesser diameter and was therefore scheduling for a tyre change. Gary Culver just couldn't

The start for me was a disaster as the car spun off of pole position and had Chris White's car sat on top of it whilst Steve shot off into the lead. This is how it stayed for the first 10 minutes as Chris' car suffered critical radio interference and Steve pulled out a

Final

Pos./Name	Country	Car	Laps
1. S. White	GB	SG	112
2. J. Buehler	CH	Serpent	112
3 K. Hoschen	D	SG	110
4 G. Culver	GB	PB	110
5 R. Errington	GB	SG	110
6 R. Garbani	CH	Serpent	109
7 M. Mielke	D	SG	105
8 R. Roem	NL	Serpent	96
9 M. Salven	D	Serpent	96
10 C. White	GB	PB	90