

Race Report

THIS IS NOW the fourth year that they have raced this class and I am beginning to think that they should re-name it the European All-Weather Championships. Apart from the first trial year when the weather behaved itself, every other year has had its fair share of foul conditions. The second year in Switzerland saw a horrendous downpour for the start of the semi-finals, petering out gradually during the main final and then bursting into blazing sunshine 20 minutes afterwards. The next year in Vienna saw snow fall during the first two rounds of qualifying and then again this year we had hail-come-sleet fall during the quarters which dried and then repeated itself exactly half way through the main A-final.

Come to think of it the format of qualifying has been different every year as well. The first year we had the top 64 go through to

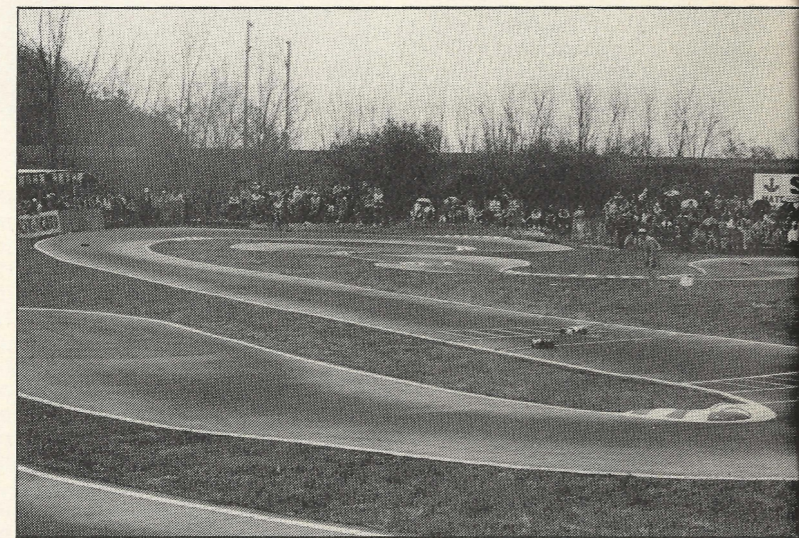
qualify the less endurance you suffer in the various semi-finals on your route to the 45 minute main Final.

This year saw a slight variation on this with the amalgamation of A and B class licence holders into a dual level meeting. Separate heats were held for the B licence holders as well as a separate 'Christmas Tree' overlapping (in time) the A tree. The one advantage this gave was the added time between qualifying from say the quarter final to the semi-final.

Certain drivers were listed as 'B' licence holders due to a quirk in the regulations. Bernard, Pezzini and Tadiello being the three in contention. Pezzini had been in the army for a year and Tadiello had moved out to Singapore after the fiasco of the last World Champs. Both these two were unable to keep their 'A' licence ranking and thus were classified 'B' much to everyone's annoyance,

were immediately erected as a barricade, what a shame they didn't do it earlier.

Saturday was qualifying day and featured the four rounds of qualifying for both the A & B groups. FTD finally going to Pieter Bervoets of Holland with his *Serpent* car with 18 laps



me anyway) Frenchman, Veyseyre with 18 laps in 5mins. 13.0secs. followed by Bernard, Pezzini and Tadiello.

English drivers did not fair well here with Steve White being fastest in 12th place.

English times are shown below:

Saloon Car Eurochamps

Bob Errington reports from Besancon, France on this prestigious 1/8th scale racing event

finals day where they were re-grouped into eight 1/8th finals whereupon the top 32 went into four quarter-finals and then the top 16 into two semis. Finally we had the eight, most worn out, cars and drivers in the one-hour final.

The second year saw the normal three rounds of qualifying followed by two semi-finals and then the main final (Top four qualifiers have gone straight through). The following year utilised the new standard EFRA system, affectionately called the 'Christmas Tree' whereby the higher you

including themselves.

Despite all this the Friday morning saw practice fully under way and immediately highlighted one or two possible safety aspects as cars slid off the straight and into the pits. Culminating in the afternoon when yours truly had a transmitter go dead half way down the said straight. The car (now missile), rocketed into the line of standing drivers at the end of the pits and bowled one over heavily damaging his shin and rendering him in great pain. (It didn't do the car any good either). Heavy boards

in 5mins. 9.3secs. Second was Rody Roem (*Serpent* Holland) 18 laps 5mins. 10.1secs. Third, Jacob Buhler (*Serpent* Germany) 18 laps 5mins. 11secs. and fourth was Julio Gheresi (SG Italy) 18 laps 5mins. 12.5secs.

The 'B' Grouping had FTD fall to an unknown (to

British times

S. White	17 laps	5min. 1.3secs.	A
G. Culver	17 laps	5min. 1.3secs.	A
P. Pagdin	17 laps	5min. 4.1secs.	A
D. Preston	17 laps	5min. 5.3secs.	A
R. Errington	17 laps	5min. 6.3secs.	A
N. Sayles	17 laps	5min. 7.2secs.	B
P. Hague	17 laps	5min. 7.7secs.	A
P. Greeno	17 laps	5min. 10.9secs.	A
C. Strauss	17 laps	5min. 12.3secs.	A
C. Dudfield	16 laps	5min. 0.3secs.	B
A. Stafford	16 laps	5min. 2.6secs.	B
S. Fagg	14 laps	5min. 0secs.	B

Sunday was finals day and the start of the two 'Christmas trees'. Steve Fagg was first on and scored 59 laps in his 20 minute run enough for him to reach the B quarter-final. The first B quarter-final was won by Weber of Germany with 50 laps with Charlie Dudfield notching up 47 laps and 3rd place. The first B group semi-final said goodbye to Charlie who retired after 55 laps whilst in the second semi Nigel Sayles drove to 2nd place and thus to the Final.

The B group final (held in the afternoon) escaped the bad weather and conditions seemed to remain constant throughout. Nigel Sayles the only Briton in this final, hit trouble and had to settle for 85 laps and 8th placing.

At the end of the 45 minutes it was Bernard of

France driving his four-wheel drive SG who won with 140 laps on the similar car of Tadiello (Italy) with 138 laps.

Now back to the A group and the first of the quarter finals held in the morning. Bob Errington and Phil Hague appeared in the first and managed a one-two with 63 and 62 laps respectively. The second quarter was won by Phil Greeno with 54 laps whilst Colin Strauss dropped out after 29 laps.

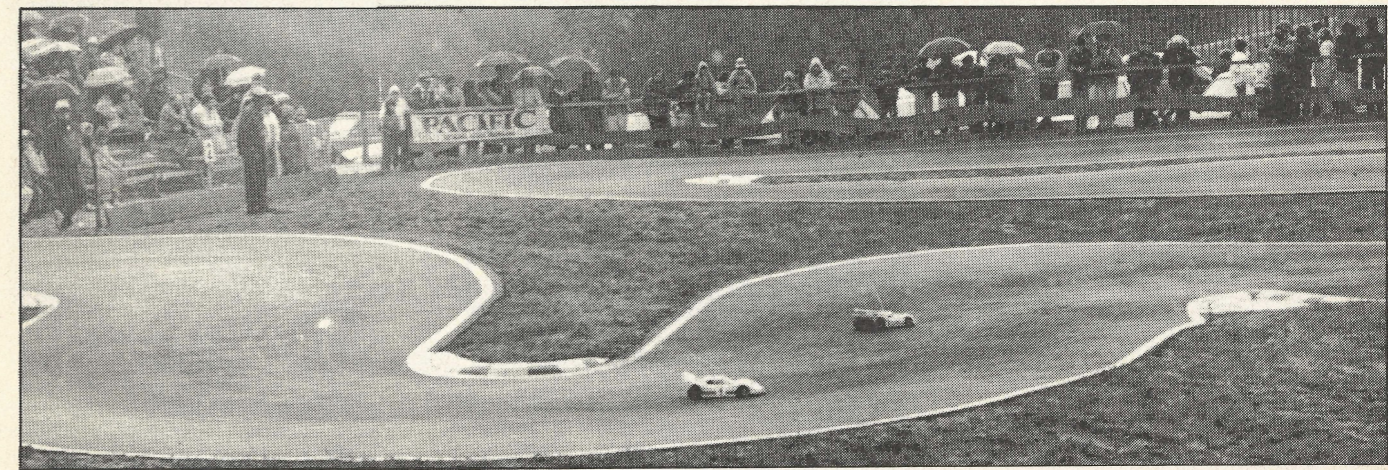
The first of the A semi-finals saw the start of the weird weather with rain

away from the rest of the field. Philip Collet of France was holding third till an engine cut dropped him back whereupon Paul Pagdin took up the third spot until an unfortunate incident with another car put paid to his chances. At 18 minutes Pieter Bervoets had nearly a full lap on Rody Roem who was about two laps ahead of third place man Philip Collet. Then it happened, the heavens opened to a flurry of snow which gradually worsened and started to settle. The track surface became the nearest thing

attempt to hold the lead Bervoets appeared to change tyres but to no avail and it was shortly afterwards that Collet passed Roem to take the lead. The gap widened gradually to nearly a full lap by the end of the 45 minutes Pieter Bervoets was forced to retire 5 minutes previous and this alone dropped him to seventh place, hardly justice. Rody Roem finished second with Julio Gheresi some four laps behind in 3rd with our own Phil Hague holding a well deserved fourth.

Final Positions were as follows:

A lucky result maybe and if it had remained dry probably the *Serpents* would have been first and second but 'if' is the name of the game and fortunes vary as does the weather. SG have won both A & B titles but I'm sure that at the Sports championships in Holland on the *Serpent* home track (Heemstede) things will be very different. many drivers indeed feel that it would be a miracle indeed if any car other than a *Serpent* were to make the final. We will have to see



Above and left: two views of the Paul Richard circuit situated at Besancon on the French/Austrian border.

falling after 5 minutes, turning into heavy sleet and then back to sunshine. Collet of France mastered the conditions and won the semi with 58 laps followed by Paul Pagdin (57 laps) and Phil Hague also on 57 laps. So we said goodbye to Gary Culver (7th) and Bob Errington (8th).

The second semi had more consistent (though worse) conditions and was eventually won by Luchesi of Italy with 53 laps followed by Cromberge 51 laps and Orazi also with 51. Again, we said goodbye to Steve White (4th) and Phil Greeno (7th) and Debbie Preston (8th).

So to the main Final, again to be run over the full 45 minutes. Right from the start, top qualifier Pieter Bervoets took his *Serpent* 4WD into a good lead over fellow team mate Rody Roem both of them pulling

to a skid pan that anyone had yet seen and despite the fact that all but one of the finalists were using 4-wheel drive machines, all cars were having great difficulty in staying on. As the track got wetter so the greasy conditions improved and it was apparent that Rody Roem was gradually catching Pieter Bervoets and so all eyes were on Rody. But who was that passing him through the esses? It was Philip Collet his car clearly more stable now. Collet pulled away from Roem and gradually caught and passed Bervoets to put himself less than two laps behind. Also he had not long pitted so when Bervoets and Roem came in for fuel he was able to gain yet again. The gap eroded over the next seven minutes till Collet was on the same lap as the leading pair. In a desperate



Above: a collection of British drivers at the Euro's. Top row left to right: Andy Stafford, Nigel Sayles, John Russell, Colin Strauss. Bottom row: Paul Pagdin (left) and Phil Hague.

Final results

Name	Country	Car	Motor	Laps
1 P. Collet	France	SG (4)	Rossi	121
2 R. Roem	Holland	Serpent (4)	OPS	120
3 J. Gheresi	Italy	SG (4)	OPS	117
4 P. Hague	Britain	Serpent (4)	OPS	115
5 P. Pagdin	Britain	PB (4)	Rossi	115
6 F. Cromberge	Holland	Serpent (4)	OPS	113
7 P. Bervoets	Holland	Serpent (4)	Rossi	106
8 J. Bahr	Germany	Serpent (2)	OPS	104
9 Luchesi	Italy	Serpent (4)	OPS	100
10 V. Orazi	Italy	SG (4)	OPS	87