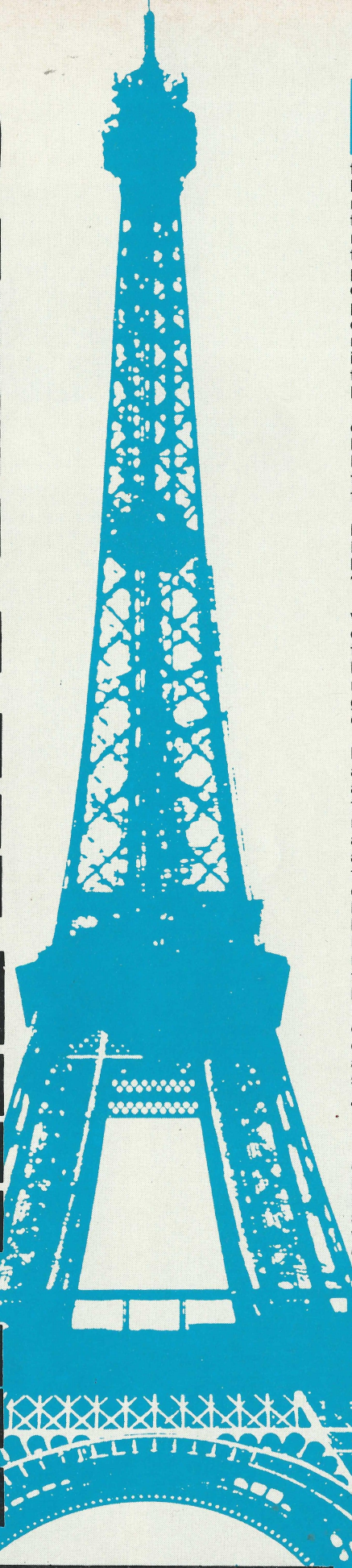


AWFUL IN PARIS



Europe's biggest 1/12th scale event, the European Championships — was staged this year in the Parisian suburb of Creteil. Long time bridesmaid in this meeting Christian Keil at last turned in the performance which mattered and won two of the three 'A' final runs to take first place. Christian's combination of *Associated/Reedy* horsepower and *Associated 'RC 12L'* chassis proved fast all weekend, never turning in less than 31 laps in every qualifying run, and taking pole position on the last heat of Saturday.

Britain sent the joint largest contingent, 21, the same as the host nation France. Again we had most drivers in the 'A' Final, three, but we did not bring the title home.

Associated/Reedy powered home the first three cars, Phil Davies second with a 'C' car and Matthew Ford third driving the 'Corally'.

Phil drove superbly, the car was good and he made the best of it. Matthew at last produced the result at the top level which he promised in the warm-up race last year, his car looked good, his motors were the equal of Keil and Davies.

Paris is not far, closer to London than Washington, Tyne and Wear. But it costs four times as much to get there, thanks to the English Channel. Subtle nation the British, swaggering aboard ferries making jokes about the recent disaster, and then making straight for the open foredeck because, if it happened to them, it would not be funny. Arrangements at the French end were satisfactory, a nice modern hotel not 800 yards from the circuit. We tried to do battle with the Parisian Boulevard Peripherique at 5.30 on Thursday, it took an hour to do five miles. We returned by another route at a slightly higher speed!

The venue

The hall was large, light, and only slightly stuffy, due to the large glass area on either side. High above the track was a strong if makeshift rostrum which afforded an excellent view of the track. Corners featured

strongly, there being 10 of 90° or more, none connected by a straight longer than 12 or 15 feet!

Relaxation was not on, the short main straight affording the only real chance for a breather. Corner marking by dots was OK, except that the dots were very steep-sided, touch one and the car became an unguided missile. Mike Reedy (name-dropper!) sidled up to me and said he had brought his camera for my heat — to do some aerial photography! I didn't let him down! The barriers between lanes were angle iron bars laid with two edges down, like a pyramid.

Cars could easily cross from lane to lane. Frankly this sort of circuit would not be allowed in the UK, and was not of the calibre expected for a European Championship. Grip was hard to come by, but that was the same for everyone.

The pit area was roomy, with plenty of mains points available. Organisationally the meeting was very good. Considerable discussion took place over the start procedure. *MRCC* (the organising club) wanted to use a staggered start. Cars left the line at one-second intervals, their eight minutes starting when they crossed the line for the first time. *AMB* Auto Timing made this possible and it was agreed by all except two Danes to use this procedure for qualifying despite the EFRA rules. The Danes protested, and were allowed to run 'under protest'. There was overwhelming driver approval, EFRA referee Fer Van Helden agreed the staggered start. At least it was democratic if rule-bending. Pit areas are something no one worries about — until they go wrong.

One needs an accessible mains supply, a sturdy table and a chair of reasonable height. We almost got all three, but as usual the mains supply was slightly down, causing erratic cut-out in some charging systems. It wasn't bad, merely annoying. But the tables were good, chairs comfy and room to stretch one's legs was available.

The ubiquitous *AMB* system was used throughout the meeting for lap timing/counting. New to the Euro Champs was the staggered start in qualifying. Cars were released at one-

second intervals, their eight minutes starting when they crossed the line for the first time. This creates some problems, and solves others.

The first corner accidents were virtually eliminated, and if one started to catch the car ahead, both knew that the closing car was faster, which renewed the desire to hold someone up. However, once strung around the track the actual leader was impossible to identify, leaving virtually no indication of one's own performance until times were posted. The spectator interest was nil. The more important problem was knowing when one had finished. 'GEC Stychfields' system of a green light at eight minutes is the only solution for a standing start. One envisaged a system of pit boards hung out on the infield section by helpful team-mates! As it was the 'commentator' called out finishing cars as they crossed the line, so it became easy to know when to stop.

Friday qualifying

AMB provided a large scoreboard showing the first three cars, number of laps for the first car, and elapsed time from race start. This was superb, an excellent addition to any race meeting.

Drivers briefing at 9.00am on Friday was followed by three rounds of controlled practice for some, but for many it was the total lack of control of airborne cars which caused the problem. The track was a test of car and driver, so it should be.

But the seeding system pitched the best drivers in with the worst in each heat. This was a hell of a gamble on the part of the French. Staggered starts suit this system by allowing the best drivers to start first, and preventing the first corner pile-ups. Had EFRA officials enforced this, the story could have been very different, with a standing start penalising all those who made errors in the first two bends.

The seeding did mean that the 'A' Finals were not a repeat of the heats, as it is in the UK. The first time all 'A' Finalists raced each other was in practice on Sunday.

Extra excitement was guaranteed by this method, and for this alone the staggered start system could well be copied throughout the UK for nationals. Formula 1 and 2 drivers could be in mixed heats with a staggered start, yet still have equal opportunity of a good qualifying run.

Compared to many of the British contingent, I was a novice. Previous International experience being limited to last year's Dutch GP, I had never seen the 'Psychout' in action. The object of the exercise is pretty simple. Make the opposition think. The reason most people get lost in thought is because it is such unfamiliar territory. They think they are on the wrong track and hopefully, get lost trying to get back on target. At its brilliant best in the hands of Mike Reedy and George Land the effect is devastating. In Reedy's case it is a question of fear. You know damn well that he will have the horsepower for that crucial run. The problem is, can you match it! Motors previously thought good enough, suddenly become too slow, *fearing* the inevitable *Reedy* onslaught. It always comes, but by the time one realises that it's there, the mind has thought away any vestige of confidence you had left.

In George's case, it's the wall of silence. He listens and talks a lot, but he never says anything. He will encourage or discourage a line of argument as he pleases, but one never knows which line of argument is the one he follows. Mere novices can indulge, but on a coarser level. Leaving aside the obvious one's like calling interference on your worst run, the surprise is a goody.

You pick up a competitor's car, concentrate on some totally standard item and look surprised. Say nothing, politely excuse yourself, hurry back to your pit and start doing something to the self-same part.

My favourite is to cover a part of the car with a cloth every time you're not working on it. There's nothing to hide, but it makes them think, makes them worry. Avoiding the Psych-out is easy in principle, but requires courage. Success is never final and failure never fatal, it's courage that counts.

You set yourself a target, a reasonable one — say top 20 — and you watch the times. There is then a set figure which can be aimed for, and an amount of judgement required in finding the right tools to do the job. That way there is no danger of over-valuing other drivers (so far unseen) advantage, or being lost in thought about getting more power when what's needed is more handling. To find out if I followed the gist of all this bull — read on.

Three rounds of practice being completed, the competition began in earnest on Friday with two rounds of qualifying. Phil Davies started the ball rolling with a 31-40 in heat four. The car looked smooth and fast, but dumped slightly at the end. Andy Dobson upped the stakes with his only 32 laps of the qualifying and set a very difficult target indeed at 32-16.2. Stefan Oberle of Germany posted 31-13.5 in heat six, as did Britain's John Reid on 31-20.1. Nilsson from Sweden took heat eight from the front with 31-36.7. In heat 10 Jean-Michel. Fraise put 31-13.4 on the board following Walter Herbst on 31-4.2 to the flag. The second 32-lapper came in heat 11 when Stefan Nordman of Finland put 32-18.9 under his *Reedy* powered *Associated '12L'*.

José Rosas had been tipped by some to take this year's title, and he opened his bid with 31-20.5 in his first run. His team-mate in the 'Drastic Racing Equipe', Georges Bohdanowilz, posted 31-11.1 using his *Corally*. Their cars were all *Corally*, motors by *Drastic* and cells *Ralph Weiss*.

By close of play at 10pm on Friday, Andy Dobson's *Parma* powered 'Europanther' was on top of the tree. *Parma's* motors looked strong and the possibility loomed that 'Dobbo' could become the first person to win this title twice. His 32 laps could be beaten, but there were ten people lined up behind him on 31 laps, including Christian Keil (31-12.5) and Denis Blandin (31-21.9) from heat 2. Jurgen Lentenback (Germany) turned a 31-7.5 in round 2 and made up the top drivers after a day's racing.

Saturday Qualifying

Slackening his grip on pole position was Andy Dobson, who failed to match Friday's time. This allowed Phil Davies' 32-9.5 to take pole position in his fourth round to qualifying. Phil's car was still good, his nerve holding well as he lapped Britain's Mark Jewitt in the same heat five times, and second fastest man in the heat a mere twice! Christian Keil was also faster, 32-8.4 after a similarly stunning display of precision on the limit driving. José Rosas on the other hand looked so smooth, it was as though he was not really trying. He joined the 32-lap brigade on 32-15.2, as did his team-mate Georges Bohdanowilz only one tenth of a second behind!

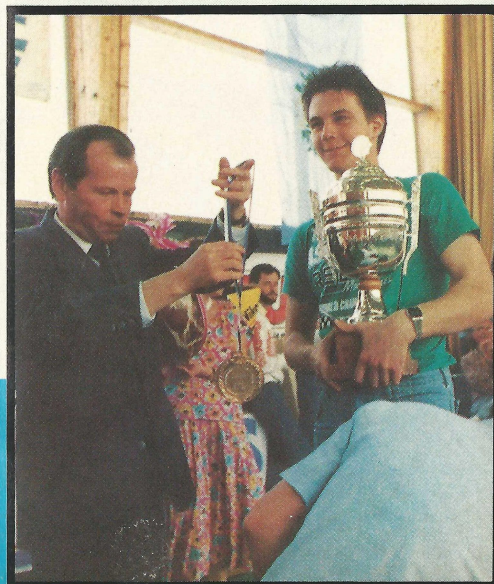
Ian Spachett failed to make the cut (only eighty contest the finals on Sunday) being 83rd. Mark Jewitt was 80th, his weekend punctuated by a lack of handling as well. Tim Walden was 64th. The French announcer had trouble with many non-French names, and may have made an equal list of the Germans, Dutch, Swiss, etc. His handling of some of the British one's was good, Tim's came out as Monsieur Valden — said quickly!

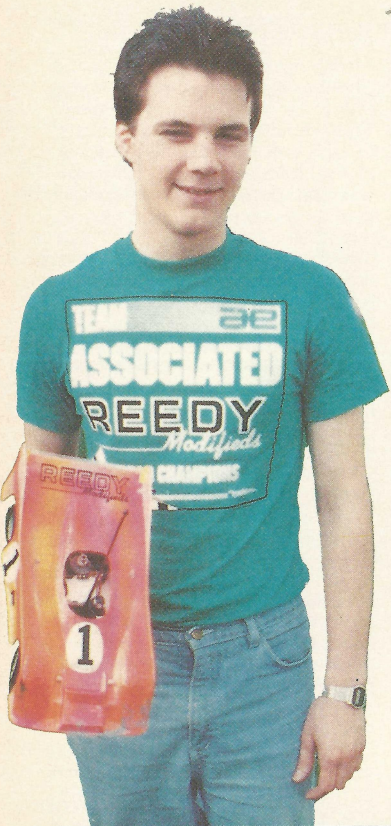
Keith Helnike was 52nd, unable to stay away from the dots long enough to do justice to his car or his motor. Jim Spencer's unique mid-battered scratch car was 49th (Mr. Spenceur!).

Pete Winton 41st, just behind Pete Stevens in 40th. 36th was Rob Roy, who switched to a long wheelbase *Corally* for Sunday's finals. Keith Helnike was also changing streams in mid-horse, buying all the bits and building the car for Sunday. He swapped to the now saddle pack *Corally* car, which must have been expensive! Pete Riley took his *Corally* to 34th with some help from *Laser* in the cell depart-

Far left: the spoils of winning, Matt Ford, Christian Keil, and Phil Davies with cups, champagne, flowers and even Easter Eggs! Centre: Christian receives his trophy and medal, never has there been such a popular win! Below: activity in the British pits during the Euro's weekend.

Pete Winton reports from the 1/12th European Championships





ment. The 'D' Final was renamed the Watford League Final since it featured Peter Farmer (Mr. Fermeur) 25th, John Reid 26th, Martin Allen 27th, Greg Cutler 28th, Andy Smith 29th and Chris Evans 32nd! It was so close that Martin, Greg and Andy were all on identical times — 31-13.60. For Pete Lemeur, his face told the story of disaster, but for Chris Evans it was annoyance. Mike Reedy was supplying equipment to Chris and to go so fast, get hit so many dots was cruel reward. Chris was covering the event for RRC, so if their report is a little negative you'll know why!

Glyn Pegleur (slur the last syllable — cur — Pegleur was how it was announced!) was using Parma motors, but his Schurally chassis combination wasn't suited to the track. In the last run he took the car by the scruff of the neck and shook out a 31-8.3 for 19th place. Mark Barford (Mr. Berfeurd!) was an excellent 15th, but some pity was afforded Tim Dakin who was bumped from the A final in the last round to head the B final in 9th place.

Andy Dobson failed to improve on his first round score,

so ended Saturday seventh fastest qualifier. Behind him Finn Stefan Nordman was eighth, the last 'A' Final place. José Rosas was sixth, still that one tenth of a second behind Georges Bohdanowicz in fifth. The German who bumped Tim Dakin into the 'B' Final was Stephan Kohler of Germany, fourth fastest. Matthew Ford may only be fourteen, but he drives very maturely. In his 'A' Final run, father John Ford was watching and swaying from side to side in time with the car on the circuit, in effect he was willing the car to a time! It certainly worked, Matthew ended up third fastest, a stupendous achievement in getting his Corally to work properly whilst making the best of his Associated/Reedy motors.

Also Reedy powered was Phil Davies 'C' car, which looked good right from the start. Phil matched Christian in each round, but eventually failed to take FTD. He was six seconds behind, almost a third of a lap. Mike Reedy had almost missed the meeting completely, a change of visa rules after he left America, obliging him to spend time at the French immigration's

beck and call before he was let into the country. I'm sure he thought it all worthwhile as he took the three top places. Christian Keil must now be Reedy's longest standing top European driver. He has used Associated cars since 1983 to my knowledge, and has been powered by Reedy for four successive Euro 'A' Finals. This time it was pole position, and few would bet against his winning on Sunday.

Saturday Night Fever

The banquet on Saturday night was a poorly attended, chaotic affair. The incidents with the cake, the sugar lumps and the water bottles did more to put back the cause of Anglo-French relations than Henry V. Personally I did not feel happy in France. It was very expensive, two people being charged £18 for a round of six drinks. The service was poor and the food not up to the reputed standard. The only sensible suggestion to come from all this was that such races should be in the provinces, and not capital cities. I'm sure the French would be equally surprised at London food prices.

Sunday started with a round of finals practice. At 11:31 the first 'A' Final took off with Phil Davies leaving Christian Keil to be swallowed by the pack, who duly obliged! Matthew made the best of the rest to hold second place, but unable to close on Phil. All eyes switched to Christian Keil, who was charging from seventh place. Some of his passing manoeuvres were simply breathtaking. He charged up to fourth place quite easily, and then had to chase Andy Dobson, whom he caught and passed by halfway. Passing Matthew was something else.

Christian closed in OK, but needed considerable skill to get by. Matthew didn't block, but drove tight and fast. When Matt gave Christian the hole he eventually stole through was not obvious to me, but as 7½ minutes approached, Christian started to close as Phil Davies slowed. The previous charge was not gentle enough on motor or cells for Christian to catch, so Phil won with ease in front of Christian and Matthew with Andy fourth.

At 13:50 Phil again left Christian for dead at the start, but this time Keil recovered to

take second and close on the leader slowly for the first half of the race. Thereafter it was a holding operation. Matthew was having a dice of all dices with José Rosas, neither giving any quarter as they sped round for lap after lap. Most eyes were on the leading pair, and when Phil Davies dumped badly at 7½ minutes Christian went past as did Matthew. So it was one win apiece to Christian and Phil, with a second and third for Matthew.

Although the 'A' Final was a best two of three system, all other finals were best one of two. Mark Jewitt opened the British account by winning the 'J' final from the back of the grid. He was third in the 1st leg, but cut 13 seconds off his time in the second leg for an eventually easy win over Freidmann of Belgium and Gense of Finland. Tim Waldon was unable to make any impression on the 'H' final which was won by Hubert of France.

Jim Spencer turned 31-9.5 to win the first leg of the 'G' final. His car looked OK now, but it was not enough as Straub of Germany took the win in the second leg with 31-7.9. Both

drivers were 1½ laps quicker than in qualifying!

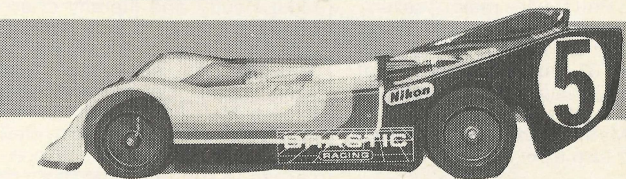
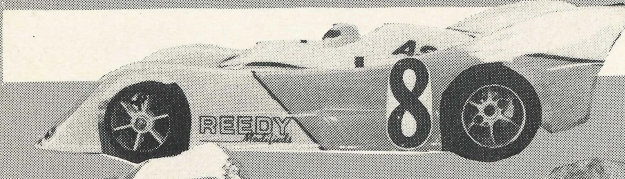
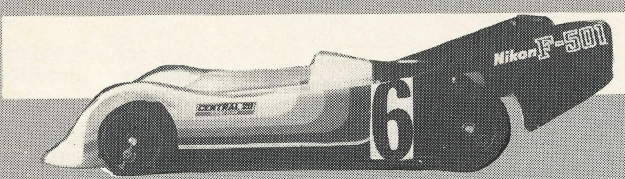
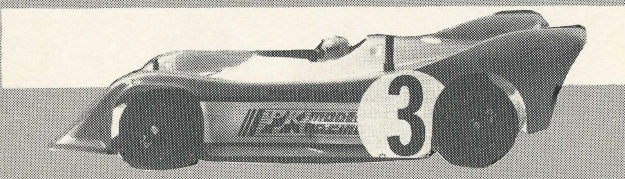
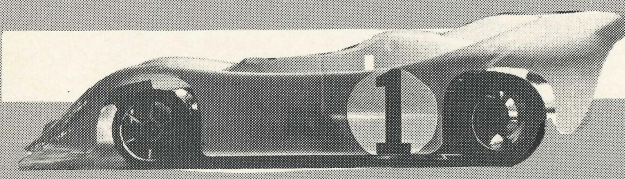
The only Brit in the 'F' was Pete Winton, who dummed the first leg from pole with an awesome display of aerobatics. An early collision with Stephan Kaske of Germany brought the German over to apologise afterwards, a very nice gesture. His prime concern was to help out the Dane Neilson! "We must drive better, so he doesn't win next time," said Stephan. Pete obliged, turning a 31-7.9 with a Parma 'quad' wind which should have been used before now!

Not Parma's fault, we all had a free choice of winds and Pete chose something else for qualifying. Pete Riley literally stormed the 'E' Final, winning both legs with times which would have put him in the 'A' Final the day before! Tony Anderson of Finland came second, a lap down in both legs. With six Brits in the 'D' Final we must surely have won that. We did, but only with Andy Smith turning a 32-12.4, the others filling third to eighth places. Pete Farmer retired from the first final with problems, and never bothered to appear for the second leg.

Glyn Pegler took time to settle in the 'C' Final, but once again threw his car round in the second leg to win in 32-11.90, an 'A' Final time again! Glyn has been eying the new '12L' with envy, and looked carefully at those in use, especially Christians'. Expect a clutch of saddle packs from the Laser Computer in the near future!

The second leg of the 'B' Final displayed the only organisational weak point of the weekend. Tim got the start OK, but behind him Stephan Oberle and Jean-Nichel Fraisse were battling for second, for three laps they battled until a series of corner banging incidents left Jean-Michelle on the wrong side of the track. He waited for Stephan and then carried on, only to be awarded a one lap penalty for corner-cutting! Jean-Michel left the rostrum to remonstrate with the referee's and returned to drive his car. He restarted behind Tim Dakin and harried Tim badly for several laps. Tim should have let him go, but nonetheless the referee's should have taken action. Tim finally got away to win in a tremendous 32-1.9, eight seconds clear of Stephan

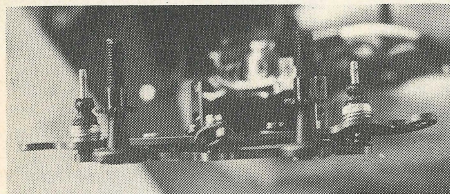
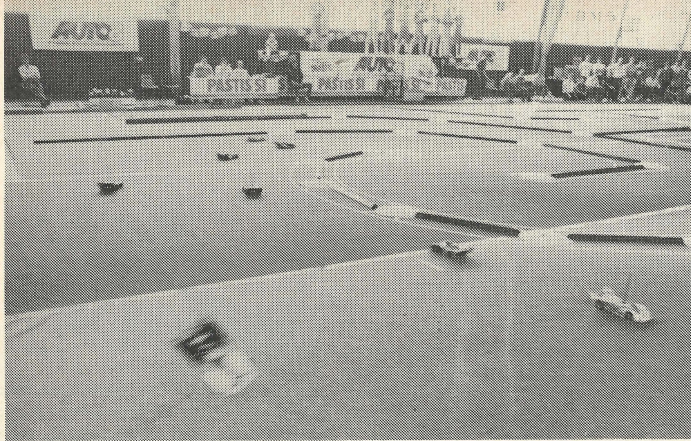
Name	Car	Cells	Motor	SP Cont.	Radio	Servo	FR Tyre	RR Tyre	RR Dia.	GR RTO	UL RTO	Body
KEIL	12L	Sanyo Pushed	Reedy Orange	CS Fet	Robbe	Futaba	Ass. Green	Ass. Green	53.0	20:96	34.7	Ass. Toj.
DAVIES	C	Laser SCR	Reedy Brown Double	Schumacher	JR	Futaba 132H	TRC Green	TRC Green	50.5	10:46	34½	Schumacher Toj
FORD	Corally	Laser SCR	Reedy Green Quad	Intronics Int'l	Futaba/JR	Futaba	Parma Green	Parma Green	51.0	20:100	32.0	Alpha Toj
KOHLER	Corally	M&H Pushed	Reedy Blue Double	CS Rakey	M. Plex	Futaba 132H	TRC Green	TRC Green	50.0	11:48	36.0	BW Speeder
ROSAS	Corally	Drastic Sanyo SC	Drastic Triple	CS Fet	Futaba PCM	Futaba 132H	VFRA T5	VFRA 75	50.0	21:100	33.0	BW Speeder
DOBSON	Parma	Parma SC	Parma Double	Laser FWD	Futaba	Futaba	Parma Green	Parma Green	52.0	22:100	35.9	Parma Osella
NORDMAN	12L	Keil Pushed SC	Reedy Green Quad	Scratch	Sanwa	Sanwa	Ass. Green	Ass. Green	53.0	22:108	34.0	Ass. Toj
BOHDANOWICZ	Corally	Weiss SCR	Drastic Triple	CS Fet	Space	Robbe RS800	Ufra T5	Ufra T5	52.0	22:100	35.9	BW (Kyosho) Speeder



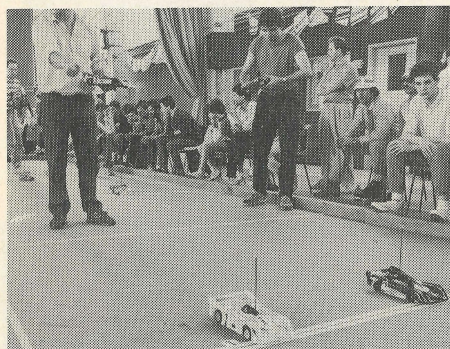
From left: the finalists, Bohdanowicz, Dobson, Ford and Ross.



From right: the finalists, Davies, Nordman, Keil and Kohler.



Top: the result of the Rosas-Nordman clash, Nordman got away with a spin. As for Rosas the remains of this Corally can be seen left.



Left: John Ford wonders if anyone would mind son Matt's car going in front?

Oberle, who won the first leg. The refereeing was poor. I discussed the incident with Fer Van Helden who felt that the early Oberle/Fraisse incidents were 'just racing'. When I pointed out that Oberle had collided with many others in the later part of the same race, Fer just shrugged his shoulders! Surely persistent collisions should result in warnings to both drivers, and that never happened all weekend.

The judging was poor and erratic, certainly not of a sufficiently high standard in the lower to mid range finals.

So, with Britain's winning six of the nine Finals already run, could Phil Davies make it seven? The situation was easy to grasp. Phil and Christian Keil had both turned 33 laps, Phil had two of same, Christian one. If Christian could better 33-14.0 he would win. Matthew could also win if he could turn a very fast 33 or even a 34.

The Final Final

Christian Keil had clearly done something to his car which made it quick off the line, since he and Phil went through the first two turns side by side.

Coming to the third, he was too close to the dot by an inch, and his car pushed gently into Phil's. Phil was pushed wide and hit the wooden barrier hard. Christian was away, Phil got swallowed by the field. Matthew was handily placed in second, but had no answer to the Keil horsepower. By halfway, Christian was up on Matthew's

tail, having lapped Phil. Phil let him by to thunderous applause. Matthew obviously was less than happy to see Christian passed, but eventually Matt gave best, immediately letting Phil go by as well. Christian made the line with three seconds to spare, and to rapturous applause. It was by far the most popular win for years, someone from every country was cheering the lad from Germany. For perhaps only the second or third time since the Euro's began, the favourite won.

For Christian it was all too much, and after the back-slapping and hand-shaking was over, he sat down at his pit with Mike Reedy and literally cried. By prize-giving he was smiling broadly, and started a 'champagne spraying' war which Phil Davies and the superb Matt Ford gladly joined in. The organisers provided drinks and nibbles for all concerned to round off the day.

That track and those referees were the only blight on an otherwise superb meeting. For José and Magali Rosas it was a triumph. Bernard Denevi the Race Director ran a very tight ship. There was thirteen hours racing on Friday, a total of 70 heats, and it finished only eight minutes late, a superb effort.

The organisers sought and received a large amount of help from the city of Creteil, whose officials presented the prizes. There were many sponsors, principally Nikon the camera people, Pernod, the drinks company, and Auto 8, the

French R/C car magazine.

To José and Magali, thank you. The food and the hotel spoil things for me, but that wasn't their fault. The race meeting was a very good one, and that was down to them. I have fond memories of the Dordogne region, perhaps they could organise a meeting there next time — for there surely will be a next time on this showing.

The stars of the track were Christian Keil, Phil Davies and Matthew Ford. Well done to each of you, to Christian many congratulations. A year is a long time, but could Christian become the first man to win it twice when we meet next year in Denmark? On this showing he just might.

Schumacher

It seems incredible that the 'C' car has remained unchanged since 1984, and in that time has been placed second twice and first once. The key features of front independent wishbones, 'upside down' servo mounting, and 'rocking' rear pod have been copied variously by all the major manufacturers. No one has yet copied the rear roll adjuster which seems odd, since it is the secret of the 'C' cars continued success. Generally all users kept the car as kit, but there were several different choices of front springs. Rear roll adjusters were mostly set stiff with plenty of negative camber on the front. Notable variations on the standard car were found in the pits of a French driver who was using an aluminium chassis — he didn't feature in the top finals.

Schumachers top drivers were Phil Davies, Pete Farmer, Mark Barford, and Parma powered Tim Dakin.

Corally

This expensive newcomer has only been around for 14 months, yet found a majority following. Like the 'C' car it features rocking rear pod, upside down servo, and front wishbones. The front track is wider than any other car, causing problems in finding a bodyshell to completely cover the front wheels (wheels projecting outside the shell are illegal). Alpha Track Parts have made a 'Toj' shell which does the job and this was favoured by many drivers. There were some Frewer 'Toj' bodies with small extensions which 'legalised' cars, this mod being passed by the scrutineers.

Set-ups varied, some users running the car soft all-round with light front springs and the front roll-bar. Others preferred hard front springs without roll-bar and ran the rear fairly tight. Corally are so close to being best, but that front end needs looking at to increase its bite. As they proved in the last World Champs, this development must come if they are to compete in the World's in Holland in 1988, so it was not surprising to find a new car on show, featuring saddle pack cells and a revised front end. What was unusual was

that no-one ran this car, until you found out that it has only just been finished! Corally were numerically the strongest at Paris with just over 41% of the cars present, all that in only 12 months! Corally were hoping José Rosas, Jean-Michel Fraisse, Matt Ford, Georges Bohdanawcz, Bert Vander Becht or Constant Paid, could turn it on.

Associated RC12L

Considering its late entry to Europe (Feb. '87) there were a surprising number of '12L's' on show. It tied with the 'C' car for second most popular, a real turnaround from 1986. Like the 'C' car, the majority of '12L's' were standard, the only variations coming from adjustments to the rear damper spring. A saddle pack car is still to make the big sales numbers in Europe, but the '12L' came with a World Champs win under its belt. No doubt the '12L's' driver hopes Christian Keil from Germany. He has been so close on previous occasions that everyone knew he would be there or thereabouts.

Parma Euro Panther

More like a sabre-toothed tiger, the 'Europanther' is almost as long in the tooth as the 'C' car. With one Euro Champ win to its credit (ULM 1984) it is somewhat surprising that the car did not feature in greater numbers. The most up-to-date car on show featured carbon-fibre chassis and T-piece and (non-production) rear ride height adjusters. Andy Dobson and Martin Allen ran cars with wishbones in practices, but Martin reverted to the standard car for the rest of the meeting. Like the Corally mods were few, just changes to set-ups to suit personal taste. The two UK cars were bolstered by some French drivers, but in reality their best chance was Andy Dobson.



Results

1	Keil	D
2	Davies	GB
3	Ford	GB
4	Kohler	D
5	Rosas	F
6	Dobson	GB
7	Nordman	SF
8	Bohdanowicz	F
9	Dakin	GB
15	Barford	GB
17	Pegler	GB
25	Smith	GB
28	Allen	GB
29	Cutler	GB
30	Evans	GB
31	Reid	GB
32	Farmer	GB
33	Riley	GB
37	Stevens	GB
40	Roy	GB
41	Winton	GB
50	Spencer	GB
52	Helmke	GB
63	Walden	GB
73	Jewitt	GB