

1:12 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 1988 1/12th World Championships was organised on behalf of IFMAR and EFRA by

PK Model Racing and the members of Micro Baarn. The event as ever was held in the spacious and well-equipped Sports Hall De Trits in Baarn, Holland.

From all around the world travelled 1/12th racers all looking to compete at the highest level. The largest teams were from America, Japan, England, Germany and France. Sadly 15 of the 120 entrants failed to make an appearance, including firm favourite Andy Dobson. Also surprisingly few of the American manufacturers were represented; noticeable absentees being Parma, Bolink, Checkpoint and Losi.

The American team featured many known faces including Neisinger, Lavacot, Johnson, Clausen, Light and Hechler plus a few new ones (at least to me) - Shawn Ireland, Chris Doseck and Michael Ebert. Much was expected of all these people with the aid of 'Godfathers' Mike Reedy and Erni Provetti.

The European contingent was probably at its strongest ever with great expectations of a European victory for once. The favourites to produce this result were Davis, Keil, Oberle, Paul, Milsson, Lautenbach and local hero Oscar Jansson. Supporting these drivers were Schumacher, Reedy and of course Corally/PK.

As for the Far East Team they were largely unknown quantity. That is apart from one young man - Masami Hirosaka, ably supported by Reedy and Yokomo. Only time would tell

the quality of drivers from the Far East.

Equipment

Most of the cars used by the 'big' names were what we now know as standard, with the most common being Associated 'RC12Ls' and Corally 'SP2s'. Next down on the list were Schumacher 'SPCs', 'TRCs', 'Kawadas', the old Delta and a lone Parma car - well someone had to!

RC12L - Most of the top

wintergreen added to traktite produced a suitable balance. **TRC Pro 12** - A much re-developed car which appeared to be a carbon copy of an SPC car. So much so that a Schumacher Oberle rear was fitted to one of the team cars with no problems.

Kawada - The car hails from Japan and is a virtual clone of the '12L', being very nicely made and complete with a superb alloy rear end 'a la Oberle. Some were seen with ground effect-type lexan

feature an adjustable current limiting device, the L standing for 'Lavacot' who I believe was responsible for the mod.

Tyres

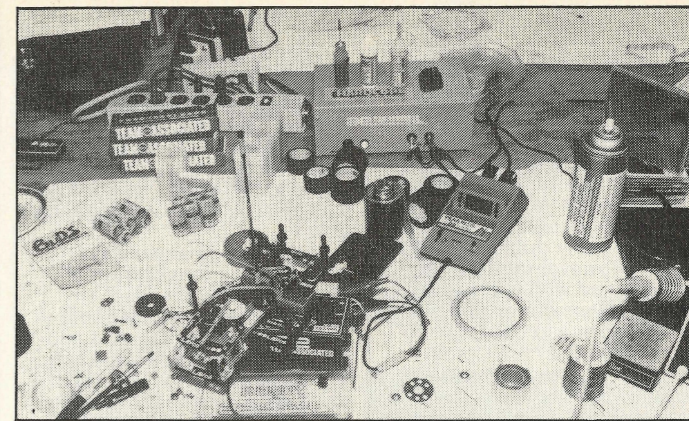
A surprise new name appeared on the tyre front, namely Yokomo. Those who had them - Team Associated reported excellent grip and minimal wear, while those who didn't looked on in envy. England's finest - Grand Prix C - worked impressively well as did Associated and TRC greens. Chris Evans made a lot of contacts, and could soon be very busy exporting little black lumps of rubber to America and Canada. The PK team were using their own exclusive 'hush hush' rubber, although Chris Evans reckons this was because they didn't want to admit to using his rubber - a likely story!

Batteries

Nine out of ten drivers were using Sanyo 'CSE' cells. The more popular sources were Reedy, Corally, Keil, and Trinity. Rumour has it that Fernando Belair of Pro-cell had been through over 40,000 SCE cells leading up to the Worlds, with the best of these in use by the top American drivers. Certainly the Reedy team didn't lack for power.

On to the track

The circuit laid out by the organisers has to be one of the most difficult ever devised, designed by some sadistic non racer I suspect, and guaranteed to bring out the worst in any car or driver. The layout



involved square corners with steel bott dot launching ramps on every apex. No inviting hoses to follow mindlessly around! On this circuit you had to make and drive the lines with 100% precision and concentration. Even the long straight allowed no relaxation as the slightest error could result in 'serious altitude', off cunningly hidden bott dots. A dandily placed Corally advertising board stopped cars below head height entering

race control, but several drivers managed to leapfrog even this! After five days of practice the circuit was not mastered - even by some of the A finalists. It was impossible to drive for eight minutes without making any errors, especially through the sadistic multiple chicane before the straight.

At this point the track was barely the width of a car if you tried to take the racing line full bore. It could be done but most drivers opted for a sensible but

safe line.

One certain fact was that any World Champion from this circuit would have to drive flawlessly, and would deserve the title.

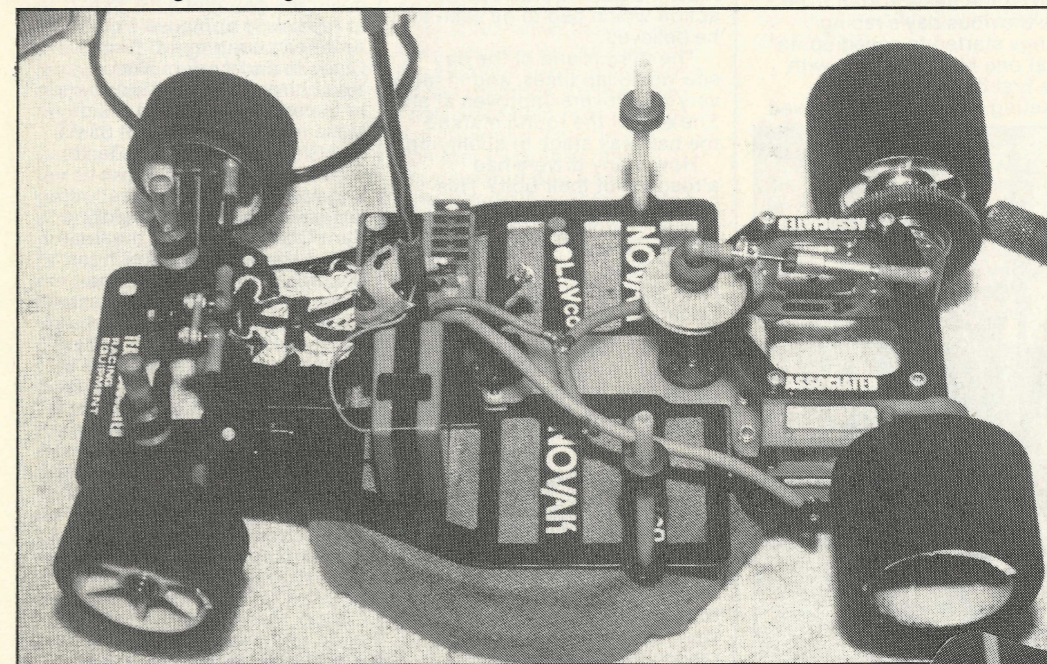
The racing

The actual race meeting was held over six days. Free practice on Monday, qualifying Tuesday to Friday and finals on Saturday. On each day of

practice there was a round of controlled practice followed by three rounds of heats. The heats were re-seeded at the end of each day so that drivers were in heats of similar racing standards. The now common staggered start system was used resulting in fair starts for everyone. This did cause one or two problems when Masami started qualifying in earnest, completing one lap before the last drivers had started! The combination of staggered starts and reseeding was a very good idea, as it gave everyone a fair chance at a good clean qualifying run. Also of help were the soothing words of race director Koos. He helped immensely by talking the backmarkers out of the way of the race leaders.

The much-feared IFMAR referee system was a complete non starter. Why? Because they didn't bother to turn up. This left Jan Van Kooj and Co in the lurch, putting unnecessary pressure on the organisers who after all had enough to do. Having said this the standard of driving in the heats was fairly good, but come the finals most drivers developed little horns and started driving with smoke pouring out of their ears.

Left, below and opposite: Masami Hirosaka's RC12L with carbon chassis which he drove to an amazing victory - becoming double World Champion (1:10th off road 4WD and 1:12th).



Model Cars dynamic duo

Rob Roy and Dave Gale report

from the recent 1:12 Worlds

Reedy drivers were using a new chassis made of a composite carbon fibre and kevlar sandwich - very tasty! A short wheelbase car was available but unused and new glass filled front arms were fitted to try to prevent breakages. Most top drivers had fitted an Oberle rear end, which proved very popular.

SP2 - All looked standard apart from some of the Hong Kong and Singapore chassis made of carbon fibre to reduce weight. Some drivers increased castor, but most didn't.

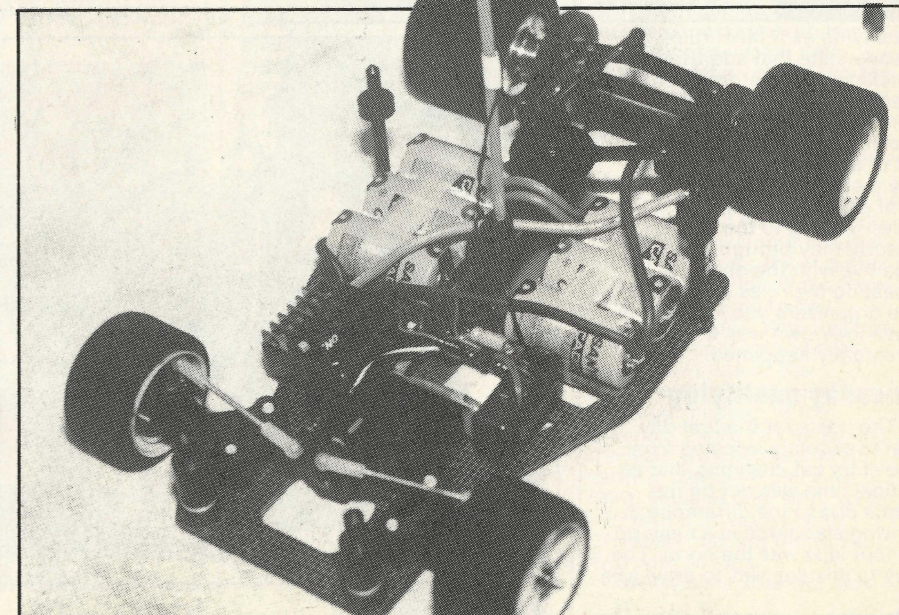
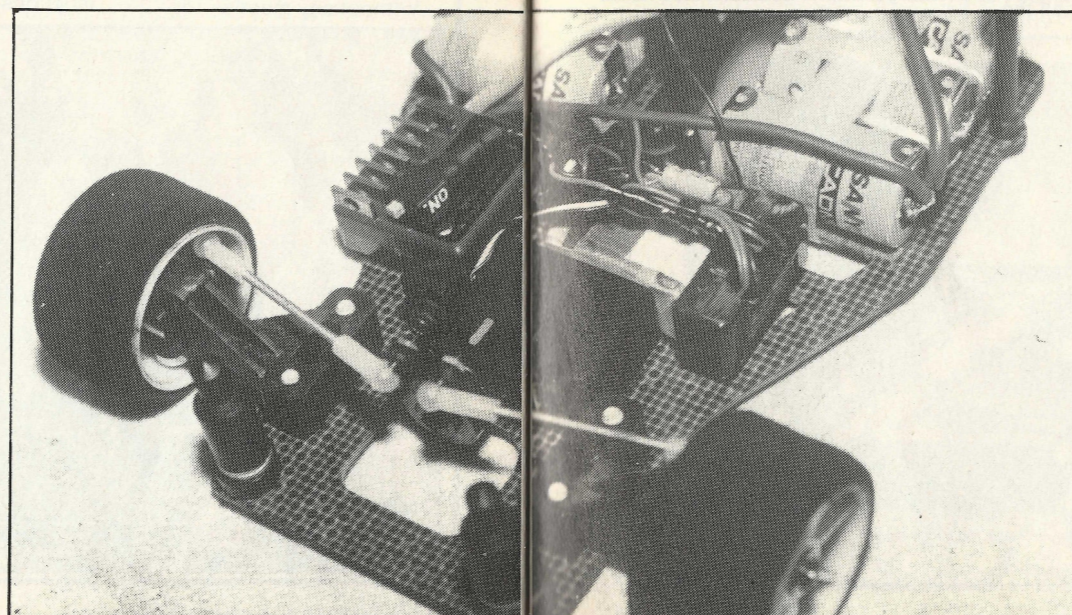
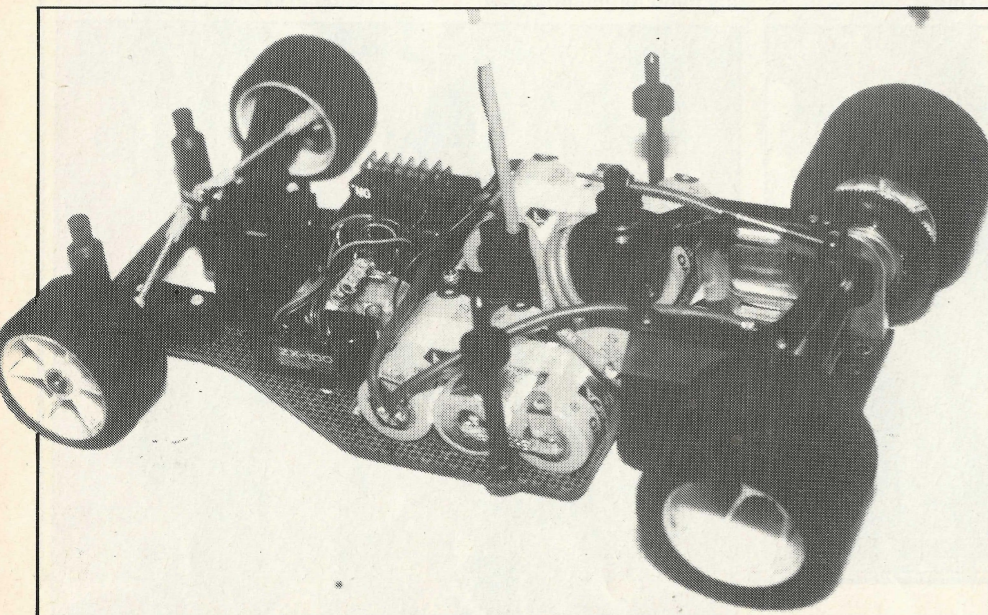
SPC - all cars were standard apart from the German LRP duo of Lautenbach and Oberle, and several others sporting the popular Oberle rear end. Most struggled with excess grip until

mouldings, which didn't seem to make much difference.

Speed controllers

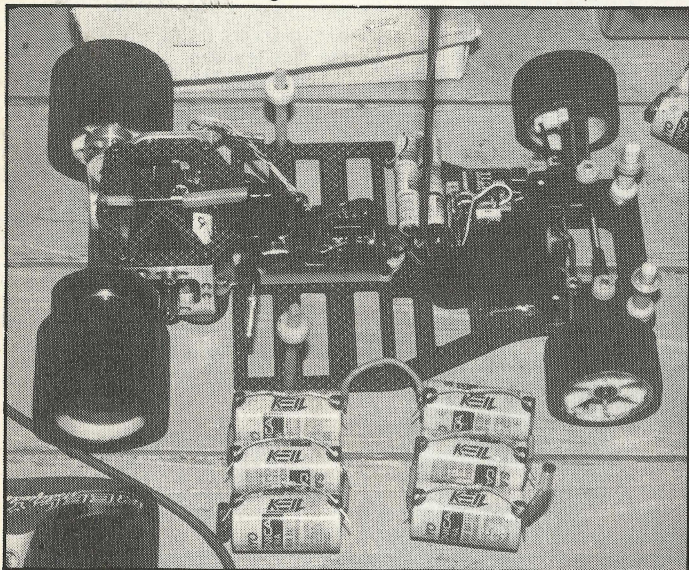
All the good Corally drivers sported the new PK Speed controller. This is microprocessor controlled with a current limiting facility. During braking, the energy from the motor is used to recharge the batteries, although efficient this did result in tardy braking compared with traditional controllers. Despite personal reservations the speed and duration of the Corally drivers said it all.

The top Novak drivers were using a Novak 'L' speed controller, which appeared to



Monday - free practice

During free practice it became clear that the European drivers were most suited to the track layout, especially true for the *Corally* drivers. The Americans struggled with poor handling and same fairly dubious driving. However controversy soon reigned with many non *Corally* drivers complaining that the team had been able to use the facility of the *Corally* test track the previous weeks. Certainly the World's carpet was used with a near identical track layout. Team *Associated* also complained that some drivers had an unfair advantage by competing at the warm-up meeting (surely the whole point of a warm-up meeting is to allow the drivers to try the circuit out). An IFMAR meeting was convened in which a proposal to run the track in the other direction was squashed. However an American proposal to allow the track to open for another two hours at night for free practice was passed. A British complaint that the American *Paragon* tyre additive should be banned because it smelt of wintergreen fell on deaf ears. It was assumed that it would be banned during



qualifying as IFMAR rules clearly state that additives smelling of wintergreen are illegal. Quite why the Americans bothered bringing the stuff in the first place is a bit of a mystery since before the meeting everyone had been sent a complete list of IFMAR rules relating to the event. Clearly they brought the additive with the objective of cheating the rules and bullying the organisers into letting them have their own way which eventually happened.

Tuesday qualifying

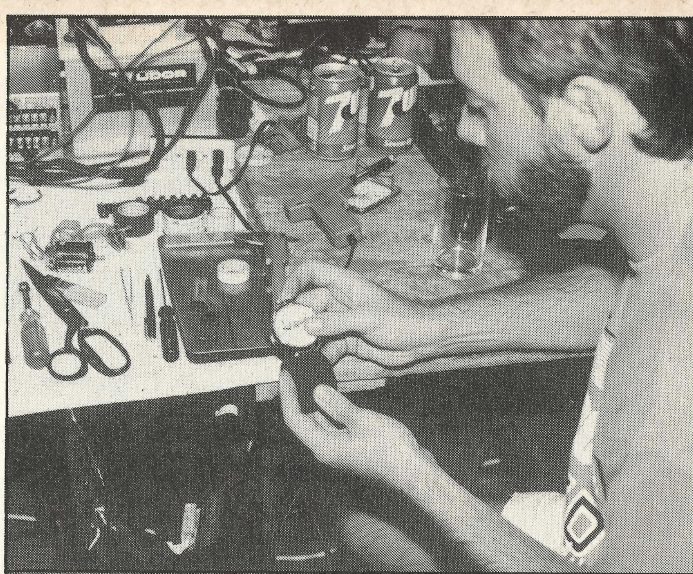
The heats for the first day were randomly selected from the entry list, meaning that an A final time was not on the cards due to the difference in driving standards in a heat: up to four laps was the norm. The key to this day was to drive well

enough to get seeded into one of the top two groups for the next day. Even this was not easy as the majority of drivers had still not found a perfect set up. This means that most were prone to the odd error or 'Major wall blast' which kept lap times down.

Still, the big names soon moved to the fore scoring 32 laps with apparent ease. Twelve drivers managed this score with Oscar Jansson and Burt Vd Vecht leading the way. The other name that set the track alight was that of Masami Hirosaka. The Americans struggled to keep up with the Europeans, Davis, Keil, Lautenbach, Oberle and Nilsson. The bad handling of the *Associateds* was compounded by Mike Reedy who used the policy of 'No handling' 'No horsepower'. Similarly Ernie Provetti was only handing out small doses of 'Mouse Power', and saving the monsters for later.

Wednesday qualifying

With the heats sorted from the previous day's racing things started to speed up. In heat one Masami let rip with the first 33 lap time of the meeting, 33 15.9. This showed



the way to the rest who struggled in his wake. In the second round a lot of people moved on to 32 laps, but again only Masami could reach the goal, this time 33 13.2. What was interesting about Masami's car was that it wasn't exactly quick but his lines were so perfect and consistent with his machine gun throttle/brake action which had to be seen to be believed.

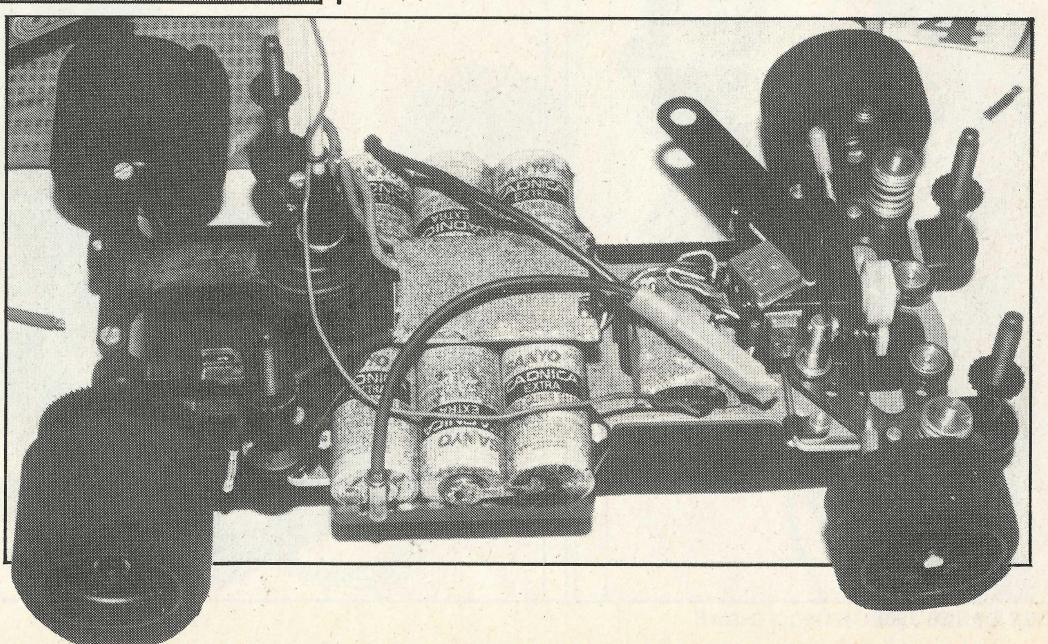
The third round of the day saw no 33 lap times, and in fact very few drivers improved at all. The end of the round marked the half way stage in qualifying.

How many drivers had already shot their bolt? This left the qualifying order

Masami Hirosaka	33 13.2
Anders Nilsson	33 0.1
Joel Johnson	32 0.8
Kent Clausen	32 0.8
Oscar Jansen	32 1.0
Christian Keil	32 1.1
Burd Vd de Vecht	32 2.6
Constant Paul	32 3.9
Denis Blandin	32 6.7
Mike Lavocat	32 6.8

Thursday qualifying

This was the day when Mike Reedy opened his Pandora's Box. The horsepower finally let loose was ready to do its stuff, and show the non-*Reedy* runners who the real 'boss' was. Ernie Provetti also unleashed some 'Monster Horsepower'. Suddenly all the



Tyre technology at an all time high - tyres being checked across their width for hardness.

top *Corally* drivers were sporting *Trinity* motors.

In round one Masami gently upped the pace with 33 10.3. In heat 4 Tony Neisinger threw down the gauntlet with 33 6.3 to rapturous applause from the American contingent. Kent Clausen and Anders Nilson also chirped in with 33 lappers. In the second round of the day Masami retook FTD with 33 6.0 and Shawn Ireland and Oscar Jansen joined the 33 lap brigade. The guy with the fastest car was undoubtedly Kent Clausen. Before the final round started Tony Neisinger was heard to say 'I'm gonna make 34 laps or break the car trying', so the crowd waited with bated breath. Tony set a scorching pace, but a series of costly errors prevented that 34 lapper, but a 33/8 proved that it was mathematically possible. Cristian also managed 33 laps. After nine rounds of qualifying seven drivers had managed 33 laps, the only real question being: Would Friday see the first 34 lapper?

Right: Masami Hirosaka talks to Tony Neisinger before the start of the finals.

Friday qualifying

Overnight Holland was subjected to massive thunderstorms, similar to those experienced in a typical day's racing at Halifax! The previous weather had been very hot and humid especially in the hall. Since 1/12th is held indoors nobody worries about the weather, however on Friday morning the track was much slower than it had been the previous night. Many theories abounded, but Mike Reedy's seemed most logical - the carpet must have absorbed some of the moisture lowering cornering speeds. In the first round only Masami managed a slow 33 lapper, with all the other top drivers struggling on slowing 32 laps.

In the second round only Oscar improved to record 33 laps, although Phil Davies put himself on the bubble with a fast 32 laps. A very unfortunate incident occurred to Mike Lavocat who was credited with 32 0.1. Checks showed that he had actually completed 32 laps at 7 mins 59.7, and was told to stop by race control thereby preventing the required 33 lapper. Mike protested but nothing could be done - in fact he took it all extremely calmly.

On to the final round of qualifying, round 12. I think it is fair to say that many drivers bottled out at this last chance of qualifying, although this was probably due to frustration rather than nerves. However the track was back up to speed, leaving those with the determination and grit a final chance.

In heat one Christian Cooly turned 33 15.2 and Joel Johnson and Chris Doseck, the American Nationals winner returned 33 10.4 and 33 15.4 respectively. All British eyes were on heat nine where Phil Davies, last round qualifier at Las Vegas was preparing to qualify. Phil had a brand new *Reedy* for the job, which was re-skimmed on the *SRM* lathe (taking an amazing seven cuts!) and his best set of cells. Despite one small mistake Phil drive absolutely perfectly to record 33 13.6 to take fifth

place overall - he'd done it again. Constant Paul also managed to record 33 laps, but being the slowest split time just failed to make the A, and had to be content with pole in the B.

Anyhow folks the final qualifying order was as below.

1 Masami Hirosaka	33 6.0	Japan
2 Tony Neisinger	33 6.3	USA
3 Oscar Jansen	33 9.4	Holland
4 Joel Johnson	33 10.4	USA
5 Phil Davies	33.13.3	GB
6 Kent Clausen	33 13.5	USA
7 Shawn Ireland	33 14.7	USA
8 Christian Kiel	33 15.2	Germany
9 Chris Doseck	33 15.2	USA
10 Anders Nilsson	33 15.7	Sweden
26 Matthew Ford	32 10.7	GB
26 Rob Roy	32 13.0	GB
30 Pete Farmer	32 16.1	GB
32 Tim Dakin	32 17.1	GB
34 David Gale	32 19.7	GB
41 Glyn Peglar	31 2.6	GB
43 Mark Barford	31 3.3	GB
64 Craig Drescher	31 16.5	GB
67 Mark Jewitt	30 0.6	GB
76 Chris Evans	30 6.6	GB
95 Ian Spasshet	29 8.3	GB

Finals

As is the norm the A finals were decided on the basis of the best two times out of three added together. All the other finals were held over just one run - one too many in my opinion! Each final had a practice round to sort out possible radio problems. Many drivers showed little interest in their final, after five days trying to qualify they seemed to be something of an anticlimax compared with the real races about to start. Mark Jewitt won the G final after a race-long battle with Craig Drescher and Frank Killam, both of whom faded in the dying minutes of the race to allow Mark to take an excellent win. David Gale had an interesting time in the D Final. He forgot to charge, 12 volted his *Ni-cads*, only to find that his motor was devoid of any brushes - what a plonker. To add insult to injury he even failed to notice this fact when adding power spray to the brushes! Mathew Ford won the C Final in convincing style, leaving Pete Farmer and Rob Roy to battle it out for last



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place. Rob finally took the honours while Pete managed to fight his way up to eighth place. Burt V de Vecht won the B final after a race-long battle with team mate Constant Paul who had failed to make the most of pole position.

A Finals

After qualifying performances everyone expected the A Finals to be a battle between Tony and Masami, with the rest trailing in their wake. These two have totally different driving styles with Masami relying on a vicious throttle/brake action to keep the car on line. This is a very inefficient way of driving so duration and speed would be major factors. Tony on the other hand must have the smoothest driving style I have ever witnessed. Wide sweeping lines, but always on the apex characterise his style. All this means that he could pull a much higher gear ratio making his car incredibly quick down the straight.

A Final round 1

At the start Masami was a little slow, and as he rounded the sleeper at the end of the straight hit one of dots, 'wall blasting' race control in the process. This left Tony with a clear lead over Joel and Christian. By lap 5 however Masami was right behind Christian going down the straight and soon after passed him in the infield. Joel hit a dot allowing both Masami and Christian through, who slowly began to haul in Tony. Meanwhile Joel was holding up a train of drivers all looking for a way through. Joel kindly moved over to allow Kent Clausen through on one of the chicanes, only to T-bone him at the exit. Kent recovered and was soon challenging for 4th place only to be punted off the circuit by Phil Davies after being forced off line by Joel. Meanwhile at the front the chasing pair had caught right up with Tony, but fading tyres put Christian out, with Masami's charge through the field causing him to dump badly in the dying seconds of the race. Tony just made 34 laps with Masami and Christian making fast 33 lappers. This must have given Tony a large psychological advantage going on to the following finals.

A Final round 2

Again Tony got the jump, but Masami held his line through the sweeper. Inevitably the two collided putting them both out along with Phil Davies who got caught in the mêlée. Appalling marshalling saw Masami and Tony back on the track whilst



Top: Hirosaka - double World Champion. Centre: Phil Davies (GB) came home in 5th place. Above: Keil looking depressed talking to Mike Reedy.

victim Phil Davies was left behind a track marker. Kent Clausen meanwhile had got the lead and was holding station over Christian and Oscar. After only two laps Masami demonstrated an amazing recovery, passing both to move up to second. Oscar then turfed Christian out of the way, unfortunately to cheers of the partisan crowd, who again cheered when Christian returned the favour. Phil Davies soon progressed to fourth place and was being caught by Tony who had dropped back after the start. Going through the chicane onto the straight Tony punted Phil off the track in what appeared to be a deliberate move. With just one minute to go Kent suddenly spun out in one of the chicanes, letting Masami and Christian through in the process. Those two dived for the lead, with both suffering spins at the same place as Kent. Masami duly went on to win with a 34 lapper, with Christian heading home Kent also with 34 laps.

Immediately after the race

Kent leapt from the rostrum and ran to the chicane which had cost him the race. Unbelievably rain was dripping from the roof and had formed a large damp patch on the racing line. Despite protests an IFMAR vote decided that the result must stand, and that plans to alter the track thereby avoiding the patch could not take place due to the method of determining the A final winner on times rather than positions. An hour break was called while the roof leak was fixed and the track allowed to dry. This was helped by about 20 racers with hair driers, scorch marks on the carpet was all the evidence left after the hour long break.

No warnings were given about the unsportsmanlike driving – perhaps we British apply different standards in this area?

A Final round 3

Again Masami was slower off the line, but elected to tuck in behind Tony around the sweeper. All 10 cars followed in line astern until the inevitable pile-up in the middle chicane. Poor old Phil copped the worst of it as usual giving the leaders half a lap advantage already. Tony clipped the dot going on to the straight, and Masami was through into a lead he never relinquished. This allowed Joel into second ahead of Kent and Oscar, with Tony coming up quick. Soon Joel and Kent dropped out allowing Tony and

Oscar to battle it out for second. Tony soon got the upper hand, but by this time was some 2-3 seconds behind Masami. Gradually Tony reeled him in, but a mistake on the very last lap prevented him from cracking the 34-lap barrier behind Masami. This left Masami the clear winner with two 34 lappers, with Tony one lap behind, although in terms of distance covered perhaps only 2-3 metres would have separated them it was so close.

End result

1 Masami Hirotsuka	68	26.7
2 Tony Neisiner	67	12.4
3 Christian Kiel	67	17.4
4 Kent Clausen	66	14.0
5 Phil Davies	66	17.2
6 Shawn Ireland	66	22.1
7 Scar Jansson	67	17.4
8 Anders Nilsson	64	2.2
9 Chris Doseck	63	9.3
10 Joel Johnson	60	12.0

Masami is now double World Champion. Who is to say that if he tried his hand at IC power he wouldn't be a quadruple World Champion. The young man has a rare form of talent, but this should now take anything away from Tony Neisinger who has been at the top of the World or thereabouts for six years – think about it.

As usual *Associated* and *Reedy* dominated the results. First to fourth in this Championships was paid for by hard graft and 'loads of money'. *Corally* had a successful

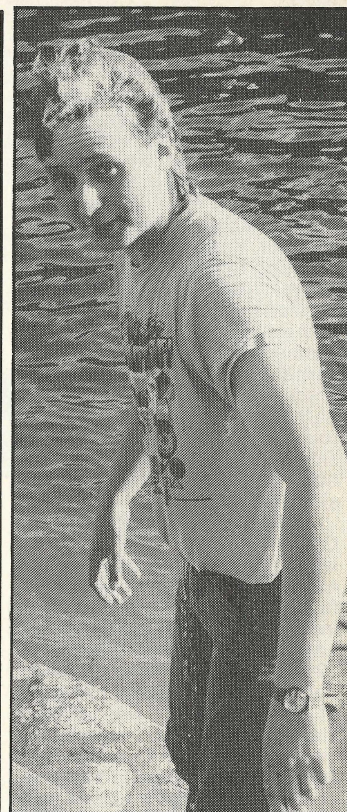
Championship, Oscar could have won if he was more of a thinking driver like Alain Prost in formula 1. The new speed controller had a fine debut and three *Corralys* made the A, and five in the top 15. One *Schumacher* made the A, but this was really due to the talent of the driver rather than any extensive back up from the factory.

Conclusion

The people in Holland should look back on this meeting with pride, as their organisation as usual was superb. The only real problems were caused by inefficient and lacklustre management by IFMAR. The *paragon* issue was not dealt with at all well; what is the purpose of rules if they are not upheld. Personally I think the referees should have been present and strong warnings given to various drivers in the A finals. It was disappointing to see some of the better drivers driving in this way, perhaps a strong chance of the black flag would have given the incentive to produce more of a race.

Congratulations to Masami – a nice guy and a very deserving Champion. You should have seen him trick driving with one hand, with the transmitter upside down, and even with his feet. With skill like his what hope do us mere mortals have?

In two years' time Tokyo is the likely venue: be there or be square!



Jamie Booth celebrated his 20th birthday with an assisted swim in the local lake.