



The finalists line up for photographs before the start of the hour long race - Monesi (No. 1) faces the camera from pole position. Below: Monesi - rightly very happy.

RALLYCROSS

World Championships

Model Cars reports from Mantova,

Italy, on the 1988

World Champs

The highlight of the 1988 Rallycross season was naturally the World Championships, held on the 11th to 17th July, 1988 in Mantova, Italy. The location of the circuit was in the back yard of Italian manufacturer and distributor of model car equipment, 'Mantua Models,' run by the renowned enthusiast Franco Poldi and the circuit that he had created was a fitting challenge to test the mettle of the aspiring World Champions.

The track

The purpose built Rallycross circuit was to have received its International debut with an invitation event two weeks prior to the World Championships, but in the end bad weather (yes, they do have it in Italy!) caused its postponement until

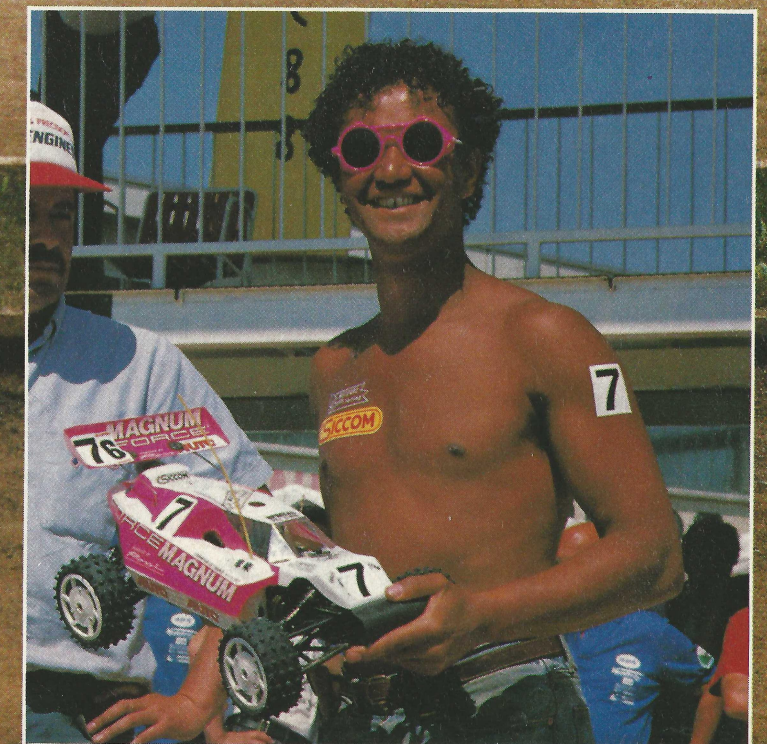
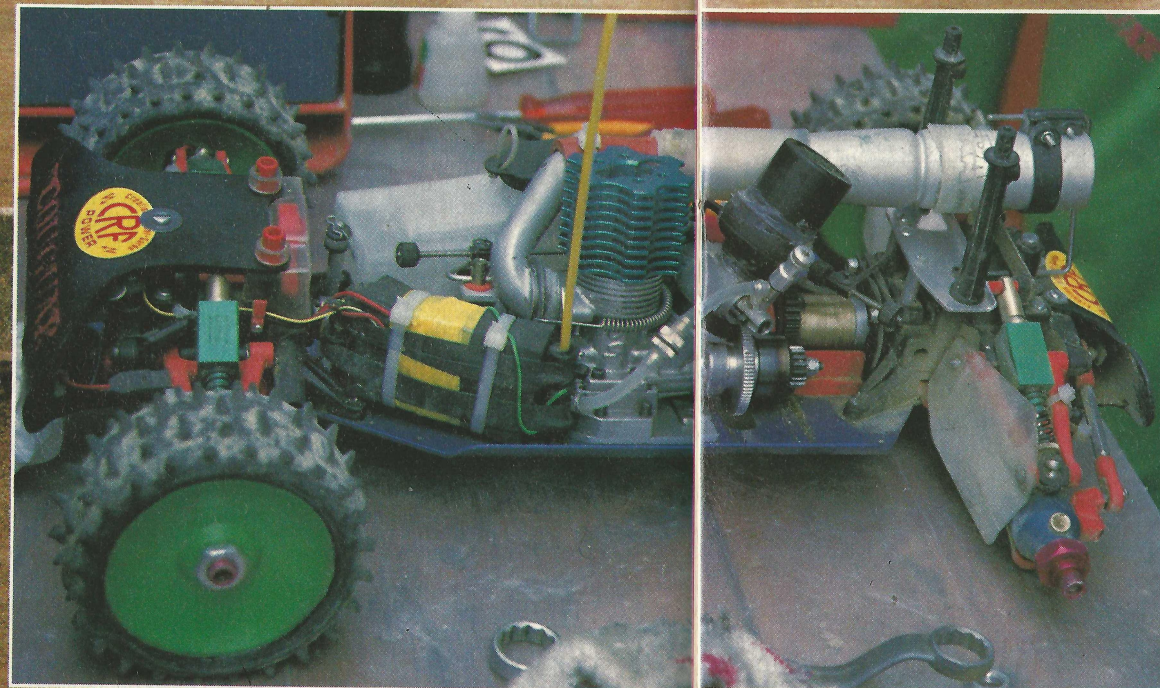
Sunday 10th July, right before the World event, so that little was known of the 'pitfalls' of the track to the Championship contenders prior to arriving in Italy. However the drivers were greeted with a superb facility, purpose built to provide the highest standards of racing for the competition. The compressed earth surface of the track was ideally suited to the rigours of intense competition and featured built in water sprinklers that could be activated at will to damp down the surface prior to rolling smooth. A large rostrum and grandstand seating offered drivers and spectators a good view of the track, although the pit was really not quite large enough for the assembled throng.

The track itself was probably the most demanding a design that had ever been presented to an International race meeting



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Left: Monesi before the final posing with his Ghibli. Above: the Cougar belonging to Verne who drove the only micro racing car in the final. Right top: the Japanese challenge ended in second place. Right: Pascal Gueye in matching Siccom goggles.

and it tested both drivers' skills and car design and set-up to the limit. The back straight featured a triple hump - somewhat like three 'sleeping policemen' from your friendly Surrey housing estate and these if taken at the perfect speed could be jumped in one go - resulting in a jump of some 25ft. in length! One other double-hump of some 2½ft. in height followed on the left hand side of the track and was also possible to jump by taking the first hump at the correct speed to clear the second - but get it wrong and it would flip the car on its roof with no trouble at all. The third trial was sheer drop off of another shallow hump, just before a hairpin left turn!

These obstacles were in addition to a track that had an interesting shape to begin with, so you can believe that if it offered a challenge to the most experienced drivers! In fact it provided 300 metres of sheer hellish challenge.

The British Team

Eleven drivers were finally offered places to represent Great Britain in these World Championships.

Name	Car
S. Wilcox	Kyosho
J. Chamberlain	Kyosho
A. Harman	Kyosho
R. Stitson	Siccom
M. Stitson	Siccom
R. Allum	Siccom
M. Allison	PB
D. Allison	PB
J. Weedon	PB
T. Chung	PB
K. Plested	PB

The fledgling British Kyosho team, driving their new World Champ specification, long wheelbase 'Burns' cars were to be seen in their new all red uniform bearing the *Ripmax*, *Futaba* and *Kyosho* logo's and if appearances were to provide any guide, certainly looked promising! The cars were to be the latest World Championship design featuring large diameter shock absorbers, new suspension geometry and adjustable stiffness centre differentials.

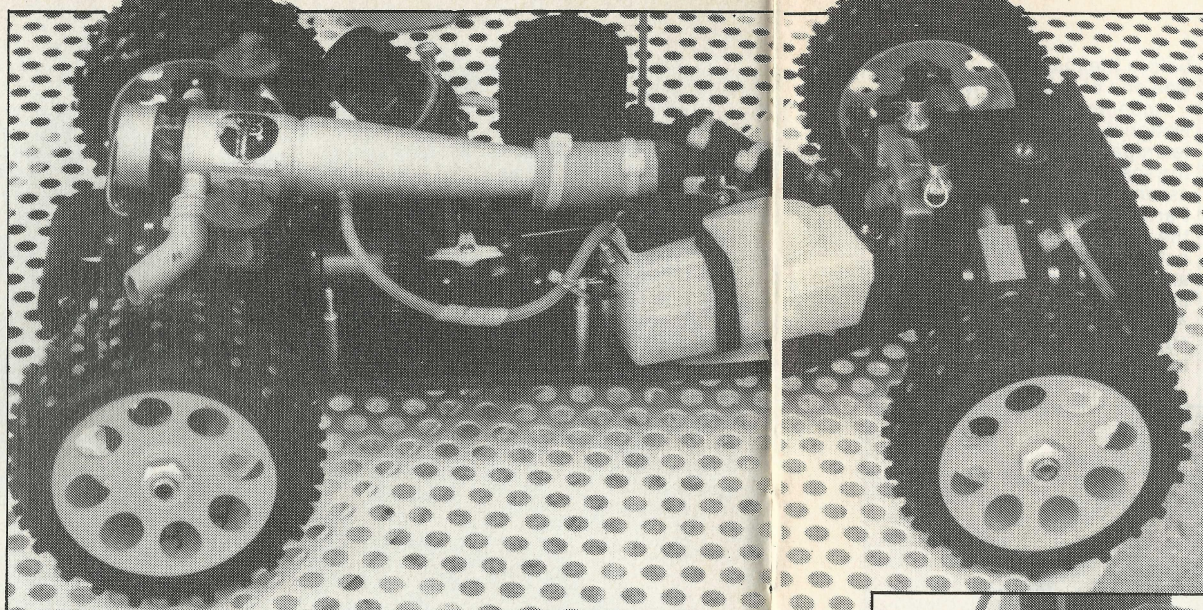
The PB team, under the wing

of the gov'nor, Keith Plested also were all running the evolution World Championship special, belt drive 'Mustang X3.' Already tasting success in England under the expert thumb of James Weedon, could this revolutionary belt drive 'Mustang' with its unusual layout and only differentials at the front and rear, be the dark horse of the meeting.

Windsor based *Team Siccom* had been burning the midnight oil and were to race their latest lightweight 'Magnum Force' cars that were featuring for the first time coil over rear shock absorbers and centre differentials with no auto-locking. With their pedigree well known from previous European and World Championship results, they were expected to perform well.

The Rest of the World

For the first time at an International rallycross meeting the Japanese were to be seen in force. Since having made an initial advance party raid at the 1986 World Championships at Grenoble, they had spent the ensuing two years with their master plan - develop a car that would win the World Championships - hence the *Kyosho* 'Burns.' Under the watchful eye of their team leader Junechi the highly entertaining drivers from Japan were to be seen smiling, unscrutably in the pits and appearing to thoroughly enjoy their trip to Italy. The World renowned star of model car racing, Katsunori Kondo was racing under the rising sun of *Kyosho* and was expected to perform well. His eight team members may have not been so well known, but were also expected to show good form. With two exceptions they were racing the *Kyosho* 'Burns' and were using the latest OS motors. One development *Kyosho* was running special Titanium wishbones and very much modified and lightweight parts as a test exercise. As a whole, the team was much in demand by collectors of 'T' shirts and other such souvenirs and by the end of the meeting



Above: Boulmier's Cougar which looked good but lacked that little bit in performance. Right: Alan Harman's trainee mechanic at work (Clive Coote).

there were certainly plenty of Japanese style 'T' shirts in evidence.

France has produced several Rallycross stars and of course the 1986 World Champion Frederick Veyssere. Driving again for *Yankee*, he was expected to produce a good result at the meeting. Olivier Danieri who was the winner, on the track at the 1986 European Championships (by six laps) but then disqualified on a technicality (fuel tank slightly oversized) and driving the *Siccom* 'Magnum Force' was expected to produce the goods this year. Team mates Pascal Gueye and Alain Lyon were also favoured to produce a winning form and of course Philippe Boeri driving the *Yankee* was a previous World Champion finalist and so was naturally a force to be reckoned with.

From Italy the host nation and the land of many celebrated drivers there were plenty of challenges to the World Crown. Previous European Champion and now employee at the *Mantua*

Models operation, Maurizio Menesi was obviously a favourite driving his new 'Garbo Ghibli' car powered by the company's special *Mantua* 'Buggy motor.' Also a finalist at the 1987 European Championship, Baruchello driving the *Yankee* had to be a contender for the title.

The 1987 European Champion from Switzerland, Didier Boulmier had made a surprise switch from *Yankee* and was now to be seen driving the increasingly popular choice in Europe of the *Micro Racing* 'Cougar' car, in this case powered by his trusty *OPS* 'Buggy Pro' motor. Along with his *Micro* racing team mates, resplendent in their team uniform they were thought to present a real challenge to the 'Old Guard' of manufacturers.

New to the International Rallycross game were our friends from Australia who made up for what they lacked in driving experience by their ability to consume vast amounts of the 'Amber Nectar' and still (just!) converse and remain upright. From what we

could understand they certainly enjoyed themselves hugely and even developed a taste for Italian wine.

Qualification

The format for qualifying for this event is unique in that the heats are of ten minutes duration, hence fuel economy and the ability to race the heat without a stop for fuel, was to be a significant factor. It soon became obvious that there were those that could make the duration easily without stopping and those that couldn't and there were no apparent easy answers to the conundrum.

There were six actual rounds of qualifying heats, starting on the Wednesday and two rounds were held each day. Preceding this on Tuesday were timed 'seeding rounds'

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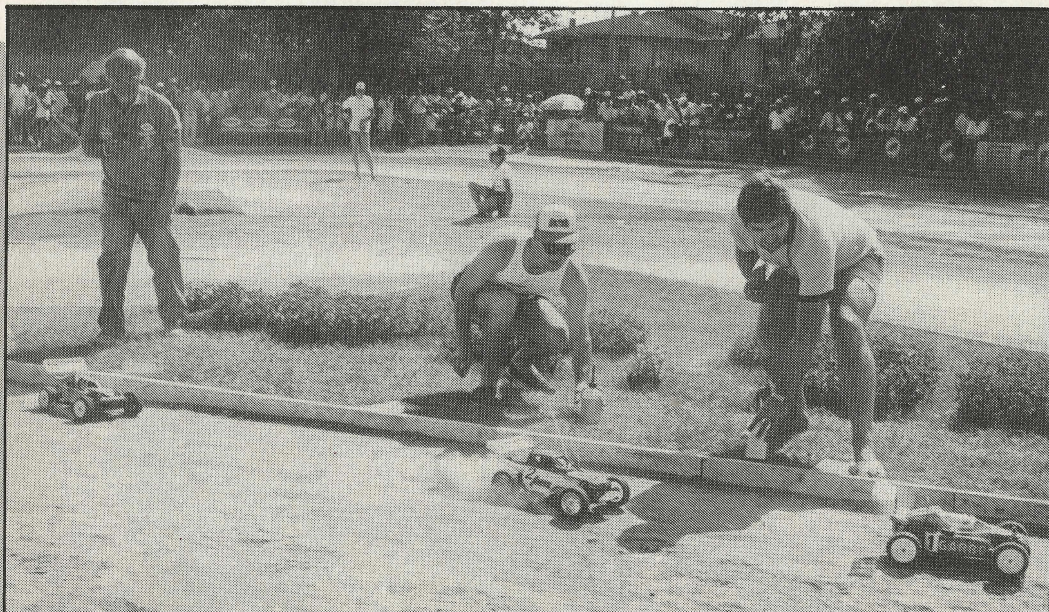
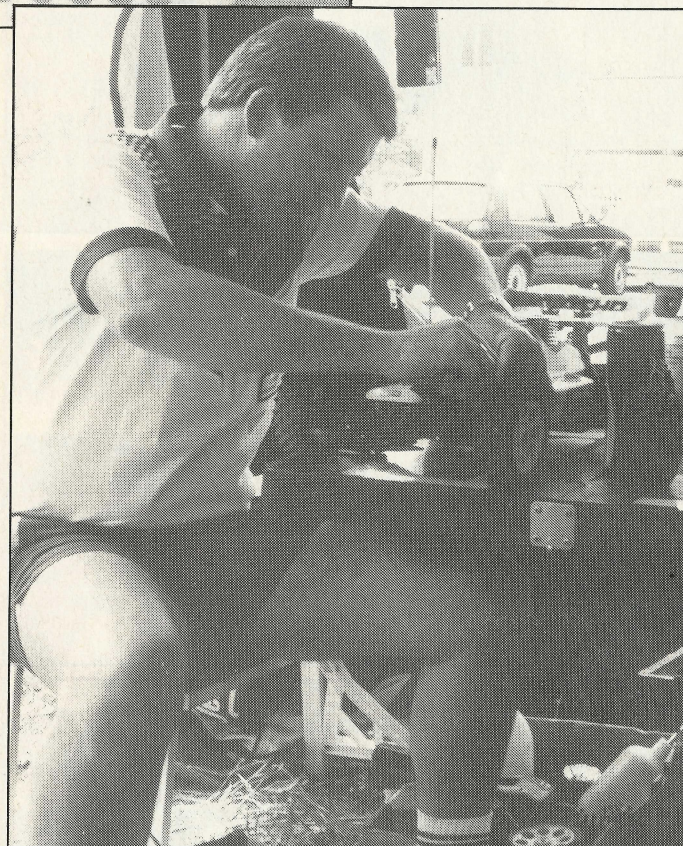


that were used to rank the drivers according to their ability into the actual heats.

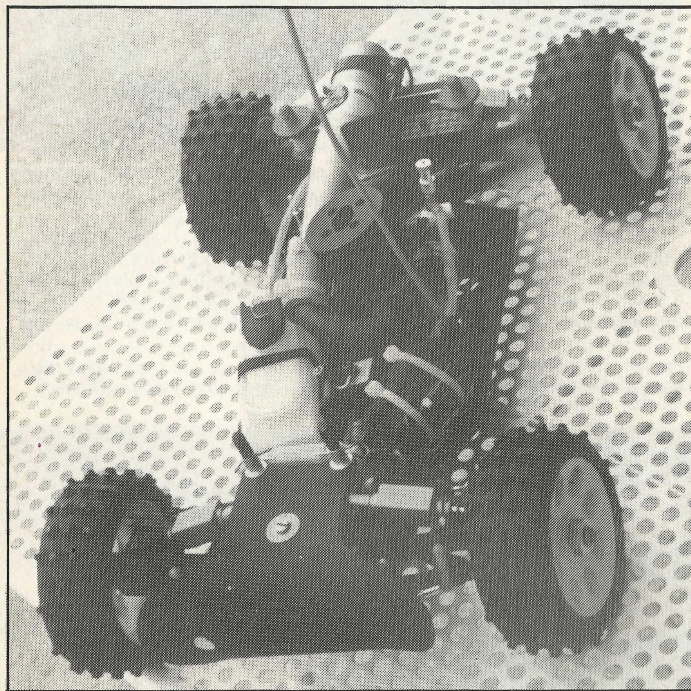
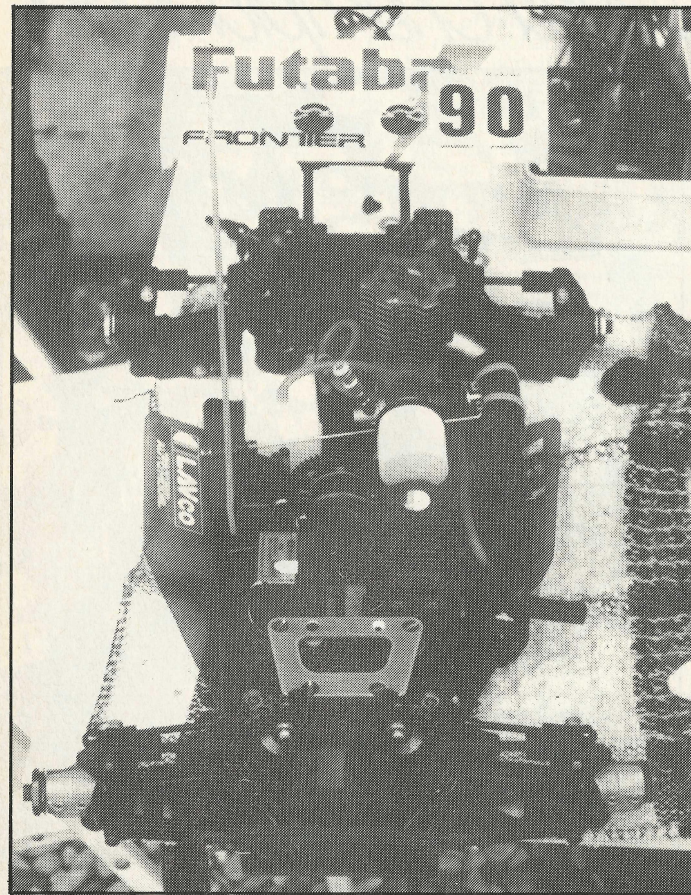
The following three days of qualifying produced enough drama and excitement to write a book on and a fair amount of heartache too! The track was a

difficult one to master for many of the drivers and caught out the unwary without compunction. It was a delight to see some drivers flying the back triple jump several times and then lose all they had gained by one giant flip as the

Far left: start of the main final - note Baruchello in second spot makes the best start. Centre: the three Italians in the top three qualifying positions. Monesi, Baruchello and Ghedini.



Below: Kyosho Burns as used by the Japanese - long wheelbase and adjustable centre diffs featured. Bottom: Boulmier's Cougar. Bottom right: Veysere's Yankee before the final.



jump was misjudged. Everyone had their own stories to tell of some dramatic 'off' during a real 'flyer' of a qualifying attempt.

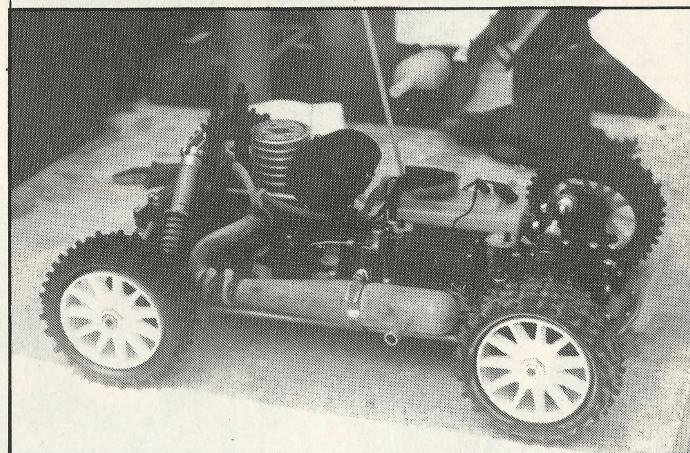
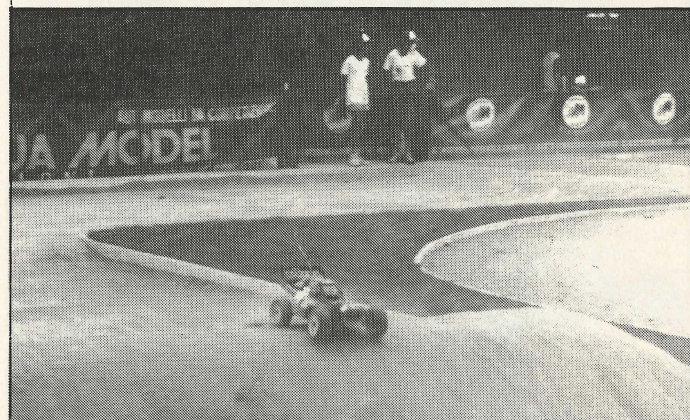
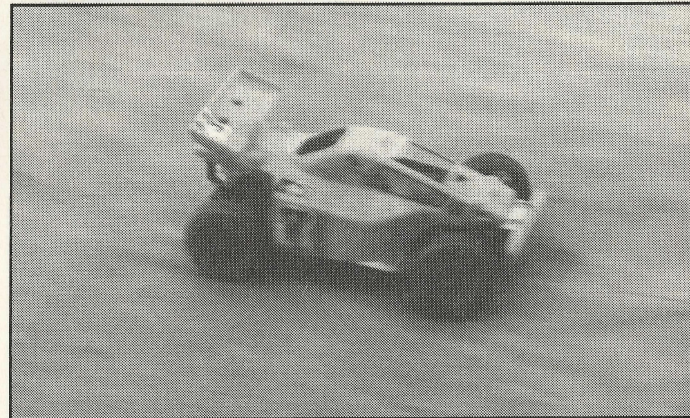
By Friday evening, the long days of qualifying were over and the real picture emerged in the shape of the final qualifying list for the Saturday's sub-finals.

The Final

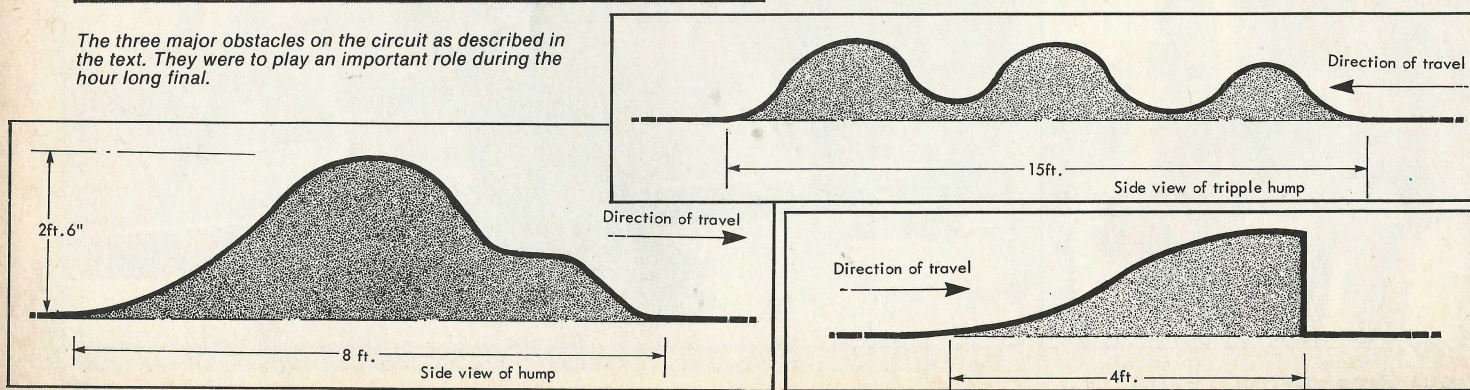
After the excitement of the semi finals on Sunday morning, the atmosphere of the hours

before the main one hour final was one of pure carnival.

Accompanied by their National Anthem, each national team paraded in turn in front of the rostrum area for the assembled photographers. Particularly impressive were the Italian team in their national uniform of blue shirts and team hats and the Italian model federation officials from AMSHI in their green shirts and straw hats - certainly the leading nation for overall style. After the drivers' parade, the



The three major obstacles on the circuit as described in the text. They were to play an important role during the hour long final.



real business got underway with the ten finalists summoned out to be officially introduced to the spectators who had by now gathered in enthusiastic hordes around the trackside and waited for battle to commence.

Pascal Gueye wowed the crowds by appearing dressed in only shorts with sponsors' badges stuck to his chest and wearing fluorescent pink sunglasses, and hair decorated with fluorescent pink and green cable ties! Naturally the home drivers of Monesi and Baruchello received tremendous applause from the spectators who were only prepared to accept an Italian winner. The Japanese drivers were also loved by the crowd for their good natured humour and high spirits. You could see they were delighted to be in the final and it really showed.

The race

Monesi started from pole position on the grid and as the flag fell, rocketed away with Baruchello and Veysere in close pursuit. For the first few minutes, to the excited screams from the crowd, the lead swapped, between the Italian and the Frenchman, with the

Qualifying Results

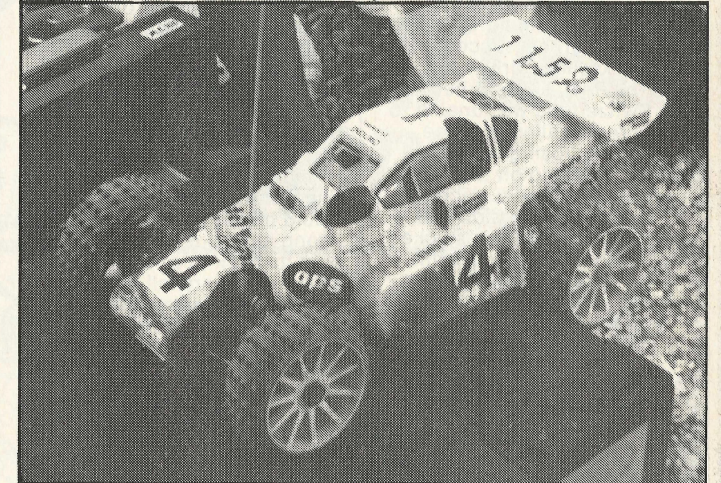
1. Kanai Yuichi	Jap
2. Kondoh Katsunori	Jap
3. M. Monesi	I
4. Yagi Noriyuki	Jap
5. F. Veysere	F
6. A. Lion	F
7. D. Parriaux	F
8. P. Boeri	F
9. B. Gianpaolo	I
10. M. Vittorio	I
11. Kodama Katsuyji	Jap
12. A. Colli	I
13. A. Harman	GB
14. V. Laurent	CH
15. D. Olivier	F
16. S. Wilcox	GB
17. Kogawa Akira	Jap
18. P. Gueye	F
19. R. Pintaric	A
20. A. Cantoni	I
31. J. Weedon	GB
46. J. Chamberlain	GB
48. M. Allison	GB
49. D. Allison	GB
60. R. Allum	GB
73. R. Stitson	GB
74. K. Plested	GB
78. T. Chung	GB
109. M. Stitson	GB

rest of the field in hot pursuit.

Slowly Monesi pulled away into a small lead of several seconds from these two other drivers. Meanwhile the Japanese threat from Kondoh

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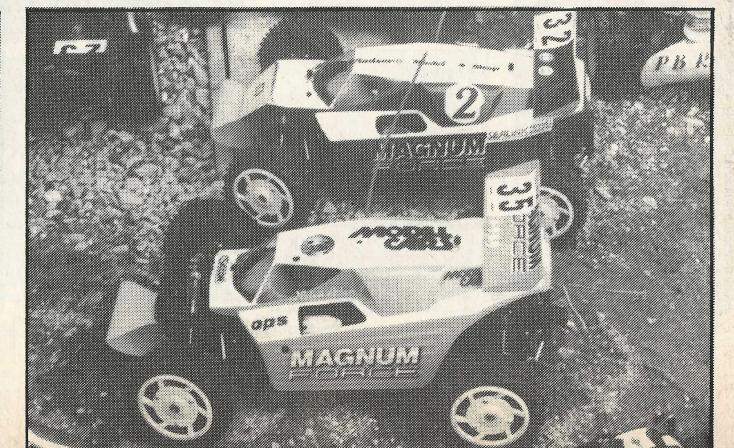
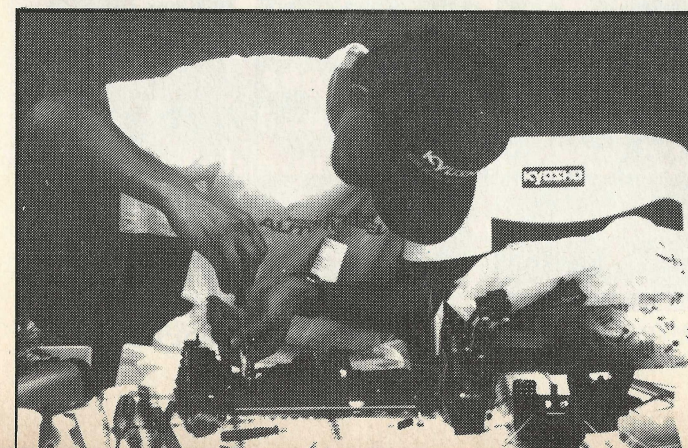
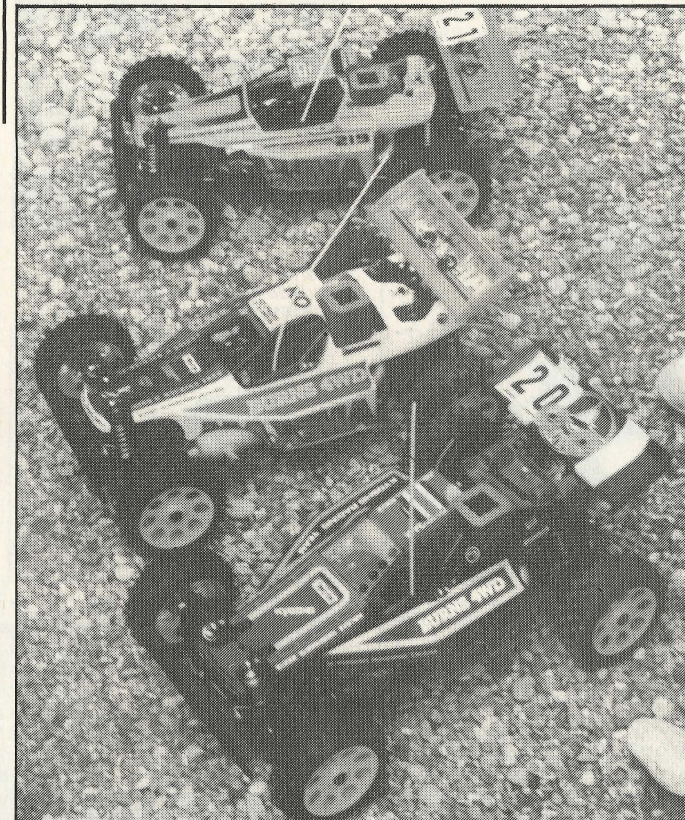
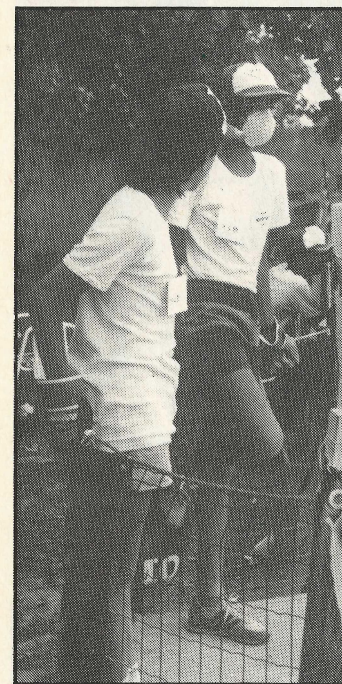
World Championships



began to materialise, as he fought the 'Burns' into a challenging position eventually to reach second position halfway into the one hour race. His team mate, Yagi Noriyuko

Yagi Noriyuko exhausted after the final just manages to hold up his second place trophy. Bottom: the British Siccom entries of Ralph Allum and Richard Stitson.

Below: the dusty circuit meant that marshals needed to wear masks. Centre: Kyosho 'Burns' cars were popular and showed well at their first big meeting.



had also come through the field and was holding the third position at this time and then slipped past to take the second position.

Pascal Gueye, despite promise shown during the semi finals, was plagued with radio interference during the final and was unable to drive his wayward 'Magnum Force' with any chance of real success. The sole 'Cougar' driver to make the final, Laurent Verne from Switzerland was unable to make a real challenge to the leading cars, losing out in ultimate handling on the deteriorating track surface.

In the pits, the tension was mounting as the minutes ticked away. Franco Poldi was calm as he watched his own driver maintain his leading position, driving in a perfectly controlled and precise fashion, worthy of

Kondoh looking cool after taking fourth place.



a potential World Champion.

In the closing minutes of the race, Yagi Nomyuki realised that the only way he could bridge the 15 second gap between himself and Monesi in the lead, was to leap the jumps that Monesi was gently and perfectly driving over.

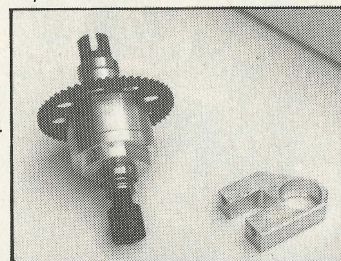
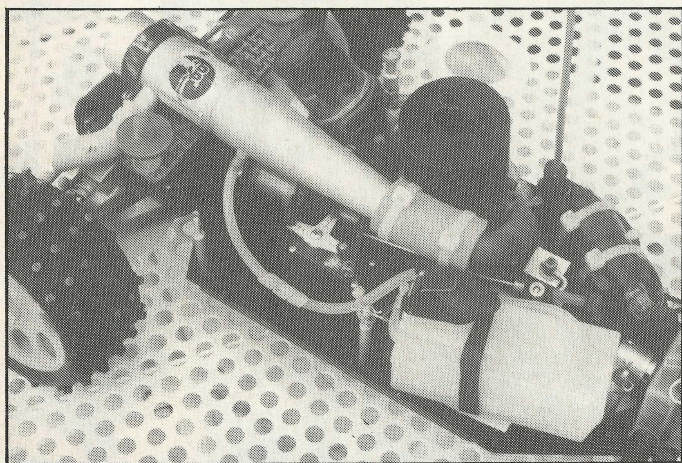
To the excitement of the crowd, the race was on. For several laps, Yagi would hit the jumps perfectly, flying through the air to save precious seconds each lap. The gap between them narrowed tantalisingly as his Japanese team mates willed him on. Then without reason, Yagi would hit the jump just slightly wrong and somersault the car onto its back to await the arrival of a marshall, widening the distance back again. In the lead, Monesi carried on like clockwork, never putting a wheel wrong. Frederick Veyssere meanwhile had retaken third place with his Yankee from Kondoh's 'Burns,' but was unable to make any further impression on the leading duo. As the final minutes passed, Yagi was unable to catch the perfectly paced Garbo Ghibli of Monesi and as the flag fell Monesi became the new World Champion with Yagi and Frederick second and third respectively but still on the same lap after 60 minutes of the most thrilling racing seen in rallycross.



Left top: Keith Plested (The Guvnor) with his development belt drive X3 came to the World Champs to develop the new car. Top: Top with the old - now ex-World Champ, Veyssere, with his winnings.



Below: development ball adjustable differential for the Kyosho Burns now also in British as well as Japanese hands.



1/32 A 1. Mougín F 2. Mosing A 3. Ton NL 4. Baruzzi I 5. Ampaivorn SM 6. Stitson GB 7. Genzel D 8. Assi A 9. Bertelli I 10. Bauer NL	1/16 A 1. Okumura Jap 2. Rolland F 3. Leonardi I 4. Allison GB 5. Jonschigh D 6. Pongrai SM 7. Plattel CH 8. Genzel D 9. Mougín F 10. Ampaivorn SM	1/8 A 1. Previati I 2. Nori I 3. Lachat F 4. Lebras F 5. Tenthof NL 6. Rocamora E 7. Putanier F 8. Pongrai SM 9. Rolland F 10. Mougín F	1/4 A 1. Daniere F 2. Kogawa Jap 3. Pintaric A 4. Ghedini I 5. Consolaro I 6. Clerici I 7. Bottcher D 8. Lachat F 9. Pongrai SM 10. Previati I	Semi Final A 1. Kanai Jap 2. Monesi I 3. Veyssere F 4. Parriaux F 5. Baruchello I 6. Kodama Jap 7. Harman GB 8. Ghedini I 9. Lachat F 10. Kogawa Jap	Final 1. Monesi I 2. Yagi Jap 3. Veyssere F 4. Kondoh Jap 5. Parriaux F 6. Colli I 7. Boeri F 8. Ghedini I 9. Verne CH 10. Gueye F
1/32 B Hoetschick D Allum GB Lind DK Cataldo I Bianchi I Karlsson S Clerc CH Chung GB Ericsson S Palsson S	1/16 B Atzammstorfer A Ramella CH Allison GB Lodi I Denis F Poldi I Stephanides A Lind DK Allum GB Karlsson S	1/8 B Bisello I Weedon GB Muffat F Monlong D Budulig D Chamberlain GB Kojima Jap Poldi I Denis F Lind DK	1/4 B Wilcox GB Gueye F Cantoni I Kaneda Jap Guignet F Boulmier CH Yoshida Jap Kojima Jap Chamberlain GB Lind DK	Semi Final B Kondoh Jap Yagi Jap Lion F Boeri F Marzegan I Colli I Verne CH Wilcox GB Gueye F Yoshida Jap	Final 1. Monesi I 2. Yagi Jap 3. Veyssere F 4. Kondoh Jap 5. Parriaux F 6. Colli I 7. Boeri F 8. Ghedini I 9. Verne CH 10. Gueye F