

1989 European 1/8 Championships

This event, the premier in the EFRA calendar, promised to be very hot. The Madrid circuit had last been seen by the British contingent back in the days of the two wheel drive SG Columbia and memories of the event were good indeed. Little had changed at the circuit since then, save the bumps which had appeared on some of the corners, causing cars to go wildly off line if the correct line was not taken. The circuit was certainly big though, and gave no impression of speed to those on the rostrum. The rostrum was fairly high and the straight some distance away.



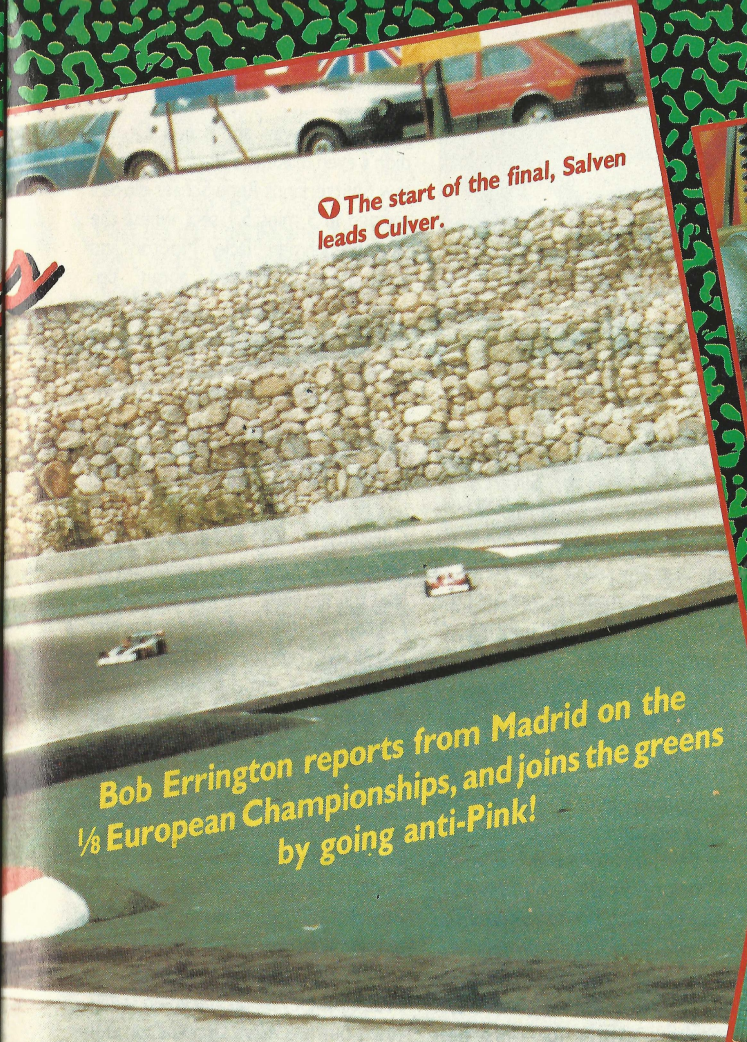
▲ The Serpent team in the final.



● The first three L to R, 2nd placed Gary Culver, 1st Jurgen Baehr, 3rd Domenico Calle.



▲ The trophies

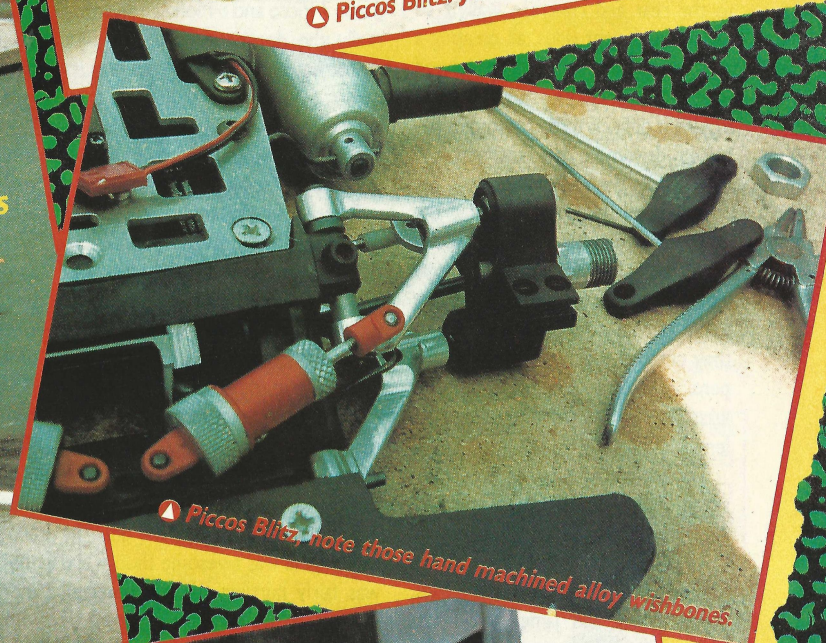


▼ The start of the final, Salven leads Culver.

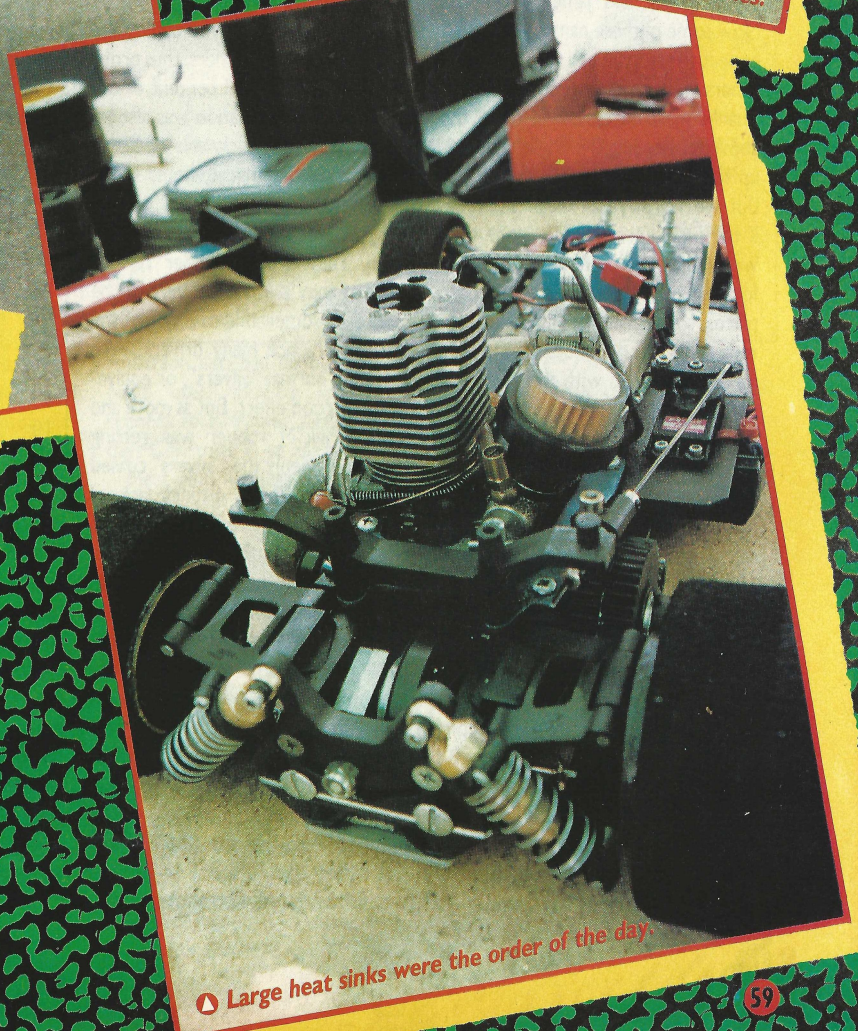
Bob Errington reports from Madrid on the 1/8 European Championships, and joins the greens by going anti-Pink!



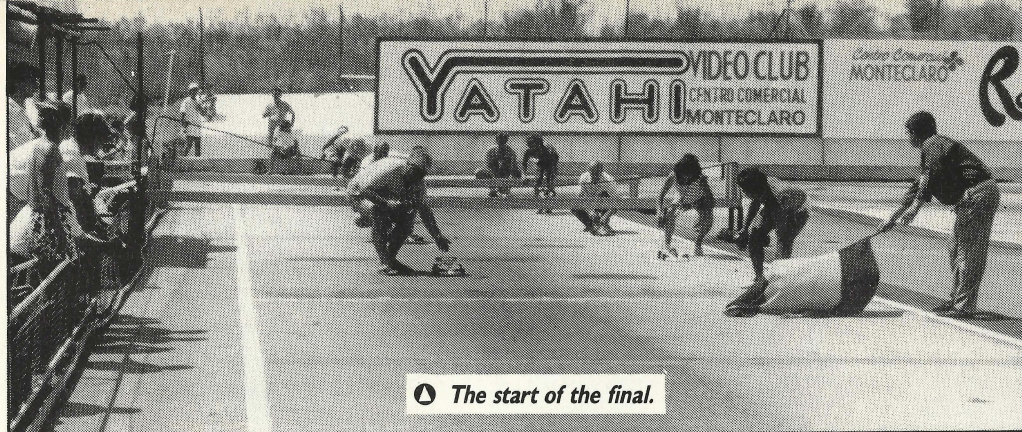
○ Piccos Blitz. Just look at that alloy machining!



▲ Piccos Blitz, note those hand machined alloy wishbones.



○ Large heat sinks were the order of the day.



● The start of the final.

The whole circuit had been built on the side of a hill, but had been made level with banked spectators seating to the rear and concrete walling to the left and right sides, all creating a sort of amphitheatre which echoed each and every engine sound, but also making it difficult to communicate between driver on the rostrum and mechanic in the pits below.

Talking of the pits, these had the narrowest entrance yet seen on any circuit being less than 18 inches across with a pointed marker to ensure that either cars entered the pits slowly, or they entered them with half the suspension missing, this was to cause at least one English driver great problems.

The English team for this event consisted of the 10 following names: Ian Anderson, Gary Culver, Chris Deakin, Dave Dixon, Bob Errington, Mark Plested, Dave Preston, Nigel Sayles, Steve White and James Wilkinson. Now some of these names you would expect to see at a Euro Champs whilst others were at their first such event. Thanks must be extended to all the above for keeping the English number up for next year's E.C.'s in England. But we will have an unfair situation. If the first timers had not gone then we would have a restricted number for next year. But, having saved those places, those that benefit under current rules are *not* those who gained us the places. So with this obviously unfair state, should we change the rules at this year's conference? Please let us know your views.

The actual number of competitors caused some questions, for EFRA clearly states ten heats of ten cars ie 100 drivers, yet there were eleven heats! In the end there were 94 drivers present who passed through technical inspection! Serpents were the most popular car present with 60 cars whilst the new Blitz cars were second favourite with 23 present and PB's were third with 6. There were just two Associateds and two Deltas present, three of these four being Spanish with the lone Associated of Stephano Colombini from Italy.

On the engine front the new Rex motor was tops with 33 present to the 23 S Power, 11 OPs, 10 Nova Rossi, 7 Picco and 6 Mondial. Showing really the domination that the Rex motor has at such an early stage in its career. Even the English Serpent drivers were under orders to use the Rex motor in preference to the now doubted (by some) S Power.

Practice on the circuit in the days up the weekend, gave little away save that the circuit always seemed slower in the hot afternoon sun. Fastest man on the track though was Colombini with his Associated, with no differential! He had three slightly different cars to choose from, but all were rapid indeed. The cars handling always looked awful, jumping from bump to bump and frequently stepping out of line without the help of the diff. The Rex engine was awesome though and was fairly hurtling the car between corners. What was also apparent by now though was that you could take any line round the corners, thus probably reducing the skill content of the circuit. Local information was also to tell us that the track was not in a grippy state but that it should be by the weekend!

Tyres were another issue here in Spain. The Arrows number 10's or Pinks as they are known were at the centre of some controversy. At the start of practice many drivers were using the normal "Sivers", or equivalents, to good effect. But as more and more "Pink" M rubber was getting laid, so, suddenly the "Sivers" ceased to work (having a distinct lack of grip!), forcing more people on to "Pinks" and so accelerating the cycle. It was felt after the World Champs in Holland that somehow the surface had got "contaminated" with an unusual rubber, here too there were the same feelings. Speaking to the Italian drivers only seemed to confirm matters. They were able to tell us that in Italy, only "Pink" tyres are used now, "Sivers" no longer being so good. Also that the later "Pinks", the softer ones, are not as good as the firmer ones! For those of you

who don't know, "Pinks" are nearly twice as expensive as "Sivers"; are reputed to last longer although tests so far are not conclusive; chunk far easier than any other tyre. With all this in mind, many drivers at this meeting felt that all forms of "Japanese" rear tyre should be banned before it seriously damages our sport. More of this anon.

Qualifying

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny as we had come to expect so all were thus keen to get in first round times before the sun got too hot.

Heat one round one saw three sixteen lappers go straight in for Swedens Ola Wall, Switzerlands Beat Stadler and Norways Eric Arntzen. This was quite a surprise for a first heat and perhaps ominous for the whole of the qualifying. Heat two had two more sixteens for Italys Matteo Ricci with his Rex powered Serpent clocking a quick one and for Portugals Luis Silva, Englands Dave Preston clocking a 15 in 5 mins 12.5 secs. Another three in heat three for Italys Stefano

1	Rody Roem	Holland	Serpent	17 laps	17.46 secs
2	Stefano Colombini	Italy	Associated	17 laps	18.25 secs
3	Roger Sahli	Swiss	Serpent	17 laps	18.40 secs
4	Traugott Schaeer	Swiss	Serpent	17 laps	18.62 secs
5	Michael Salven	Germany	Serpent	17 laps	18.80 secs
6	Rob Kuiper	Holland	Serpent	16 laps	2.80 secs
7	Alberto Picco	Italy	Blitz	16 laps	3.30 secs
8	Gary Culver	England	Serpent	16 laps	3.64 secs
9	Rene Schaeer	Swiss	Serpent	16 laps	5.10 secs
10	Jacki Ermen	Holland	Serpent	16 laps	5.72 secs

De Rossi, Spains Oscar Lamota Franco and Swedens Krister Johansson whilst Englands James Wilkinson had a slow start, not finishing his first run. Heat four had another sixteen for Michel Sune from France exactly the sort of start he was hoping for. Gary Culver had found himself in heat five, but there was no delays here as he sped round to record the quickest sixteen so far in just 5 mins 3.64 secs.

Two more sixteens in heat six and another two in heat seven, whilst Jan Andersons promising start faded out

before half way and Chris Deakin didn't even make the start. Heat eight saw Switzerlands Rene Schaeer clock a sixteen in 5 mins 5.1 secs whilst the two Frenchmen, Jacky Mouton and Jose Rosas followed about ten seconds behind. On to heat nine now (which was the only full heat! so guess who was in it). Here there were no less than seven sixteen lappers or better. Rody Roem was quickest with his 17 laps in 5 mins 17.46 secs followed by Switzerlands Roger Sahli less than one second behind and then Germany's Michael Salven just 0.4 secs behind Roger. Belgian Eric Vandereydt lead the sixteens followed by Bob Errington, Switzerlands Jakob Buehler and Italys Fabrizio Cozzoli. Steve White having some problems, being left with a quick fifteen. Heat ten had another six quick times with seventeens for Italys Stefano Colombini and Switzerlands Traugott Schaeer and sixteens for Hollands Jackie Ermen, Switzerlands Albert Grob, Germanys Robert Hoffman and Belgiums Rudi Favoreel. Nigel Sayles being yet another Brit not off to a good start — this time with four laps. The last heat, heat eleven, produced no seventeens but five more sixteens for Hollands Rob Kuiper, Italys Alberto Picco and Stefan Solaroli, Germanys Jugen Baehr and Switzerlands Andrea Haechler.

So at the end of the first round there were already 36 drivers on 16 laps or better. The top ten looked like so:

drivers on sixteen laps, three of which were improvements, no seventeens but Steve Whites 16 in 5 mins 6.70 was a lap better than round one. Heat ten this time became incredible, eight of the nine scored sixteen or more and all eight of these were faster than before. Traugott Schaeer nipped 2½ seconds off his 17 laps time whilst Stefano Colombini managed nearly three seconds. Nigel Sayles, the ninth man in this pack, was still stuck on four laps, though this time it was a quicker time! His spirits were still high though. The last heat had six more sixteens, five of which were quicker. So at the lunch break 12 noon till 4 pm (yes 4 hours) the situation was that there were now an incredible 54 cars on sixteen laps or more, 46 of these within one lap of the leader. Luck, a clear run, and lots of power were obviously going to be more important here in qualifying than driving skill. The top ten was now:

1	Stefano Colombini	Italy	Associated	17 laps	15.59 secs
2	Traugott Schaeer	Swiss	Serpent	17 laps	16.12 secs
3	Rody Roem	Holland	Serpent	17 laps	17.46 secs
4	Roger Sahli	Swiss	Serpent	17 laps	18.40 secs
5	Michael Salven	Germany	Serpent	17 laps	18.80 secs
6	Thierry Guillemier	France	Serpent	16 laps	0.46 secs
7	Massimo Fantini	Italy	Blitz	16 laps	1.22 secs
8	Rob Kuiper	Holland	Serpent	16 laps	1.41 secs
9	Stefan Habbecke	Germany	Serpent	16 laps	2.2 laps
10	Albert Grob	Swiss	Serpent	16 laps	2.83 secs
13	Gary Culver		Serpent	16 laps	3.64 secs
21	Steve White		Serpent	16 laps	6.70 secs
26	Bob Errington		Blitz	16 laps	8.22 secs
27	Dave Dixon		Serpent	16 laps	8.35 secs
55	Dave Preston		Serpent	15 laps	0.00
60	James Wilkinson		Serpent	15 laps	3.73 secs
76	Chris Deakin		Blitz	14 laps	1.76 secs
78	Mark Plested		P.B.	14 laps	5.69 secs
90	Ian Anderson		Blitz	7 secs	—
91	Nigel Sayles		Serpent	4 secs	—

Certainly some room for improvement here!

The third round commenced on time with little happening in the first three heats with only six people improving slightly. Mark Plested had a much improved run in heat four, moving up to 15 laps, whilst Gary Culver pruned nearly two seconds off his best in heat five. Ian Anderson had his first full five minute run in heat seven and came home with fifteen laps in 5 mins 6.45 secs, Chris Deakin also shaving a few tenths off his time as well. Heat eight saw local star driver Carlos Ducay finally show his form as he too joined the sixteens. Heat nine saw several drivers improve their times, notably Roger Sahli



with a 17 in 5 mins 15.55 secs and also notably Bob Errington who managed to improve by about three seconds only to be told that he had not had his transponder fitted! OK, so its the drivers responsibility for the transponder, but, the race officials are aware of any not registering on the computer, so what happened to the idea of a back up system? Heat ten

So, despite the high afternoon heat, the circuit was still getting quicker. What could happen in the last round though!

Dave Preston once again ran out of fuel bang on the five minute mark preventing him from completing his last lap whilst Mark Plested in heat four got his quickest time, but this was going to be still eight seconds too slow for the top eighty qualifiers. Gary Culver flew round in heat five, clocking fourth quickest overall! Ian

1	Michael Salven	Germany	Serpent	17 laps	13.98 secs
2	Jurgen Baehr	Germany	Serpent	17 laps	14.58 secs
3	Stefano Colombini	Italy	Associated	17 laps	14.75 secs
4	Roger Sahli	Swiss	Serpent	17 laps	15.55 secs
5	Jackie Ermen	Holland	Serpent	17 laps	16.05 secs
6	Traugott Schaeer	Swiss	Serpent	17 laps	16.12 secs
7	Gary Culver	England	Serpent	17 laps	16.39 secs
8	Dave Dixon	England	Serpent	17 laps	16.79 secs
9	Alberto Picco	Italy	Blitz	17 laps	16.97 secs
10	Stefano Solaroli	Italy	Blitz	17 laps	17.40 secs
18	Bob Errington		Blitz	16 laps	2.50 secs
29	Steve White		Serpent	16 laps	6.70 secs
35	Nigel Sayles		Serpent	16 laps	8.85 secs
70	Dave Preston		Serpent	15 laps	—
75	Ian Anderson		Blitz	15 laps	2.40 secs
77	James Wilkinson		Serpent	15 laps	3.73 secs
85	Mark Plested		P.B.	15 laps	13.13 secs
89	Chris Deakin		Blitz	14 laps	1.15 secs

Anderson also had his best run two heats later, showing just enough seconds to guarantee a place in Sundays Christmas Tree finals.

Heat nine had just one seventeen lapper, but it was quickest of all for Michael Salven. Michele Baruzzi, Bob Errington and Jakob Buehler all got

1	Roger Sahli	Swiss	Serpent	17 laps	15.55 secs
2	Stefano Colombini	Italy	Associated	17 laps	15.59 secs
3	Traugott Schaeer	Swiss	Serpent	17 laps	16.12 secs
4	Jackie Ermen	Holland	Serpent	17 laps	16.50 secs
5	Alberto Picco	Italy	Blitz	17 laps	16.97 secs
6	Stefano Solaroli	Italy	Blitz	17 laps	17.40 secs
7	Rody Roem	Holland	Serpent	17 laps	17.46 secs
8	Michael Salven	Germany	Serpent	17 laps	18.80 secs
9	Thierry Guillemier	France	Serpent	16 laps	0.46 secs
10	Massimo Fantini	Italy	Blitz	16 laps	1.22 secs

their fastest times whilst Rody Roem just could not go as fast as in round one. The next heat saw Colombini get his fastest time in four heats! — quite an achievement. Massimo Fantini also raised his game to a seventeen as well. The very last heat then, and still people were going quicker. Dave Dixon and Rob Kuiper both got seventeens as did Jurgen Baehr, Jurgens time was 14.58 secs, so from virtually nowhere, Jurgen was suddenly second fastest! Domenico Calce also improved to an almost dead sixteen lapper to become the quickest non seventeen.

So that was the end of qualifying. As we said earlier, Stefano Colombini had achieved four seventeen lap times, all four of them separated by just 3.5 seconds. Also in the same heat though, was Traugott Schaeer who also got four seventeen lap times, and these had just 2.4 seconds between them, even more consistent and extremely unlucky to be down as sixth qualifier and not one of the four straight through. The final qualifying order was thus:

Sunday — Finals Day
First final of the day was the 1/32nd 'B' Final which was won by Oscar Francos from Spain, Frances Patrick Michaut was second just one second behind on 60 laps with our own Dave Preston third and thus up to the 1/16th. The 'A' was won by Frances Michel Sune on 59 laps, half a lap ahead of Ian Anderson and a full lap on third placed Maurizio Calvari, our funny little Italian friend who insisted on wearing a body warmer all week! James Wilkinson never got the run he was looking for and thus bowed out of the contest.

Dave Preston's luck ran out at the five minute mark in the 1/16th 'B', perhaps he ran out of fuel again!

Either way it was the end of his progress. Germany's Michael Mielke had a comfortable win with 62 laps to Switzerland's Nicolas Desbaillets on 60 and Frances Jose Rosas also on 60. The 'A' went to Frances Gaetan Fraioli on 60 laps, Belgium's Rudi Favoreel was second on 59 just ahead of Didier Cassagne with Ian Anderson placed sixth and out.

Michael Mielke repeated his performance in the 1/8th 'B' with another win also on 62 laps from Italy's Daniele Cantarella just four seconds behind and Hans Peter Holl third one lap behind. Harold Hunn took the 'A' on 61 laps from Nigel Sayles, half a lap behind, and Ola Wall another eight seconds back in third.

The quarter finals were the last of the morning session and here Michael Milkes run came to and end on his opening lap. Daniele Cantarella followed through though with a fine win on 62 laps only just ahead of Anders Ljungquist with Fabrizio Cozzoli just a few seconds behind in third, but still on 61 laps. The 'A' was taken charge of by Rene Schaer with a convincing 63 laps to Albert Grob second on 61 with Italy's Matteo Ricci four seconds behind in third. Nigel Sayles had always been up with the bunch and so was unlucky to finish fourth on 60 laps with Steve White one lap behind in fifth, thus two more English out of it.



▲ The Madrid circuit.

There was a shorter lunch break now together with the scheduled slot for the top four to practice. Here though was drama as Michael Salvens car shot straight on at the end of the straight, reducing the car back to kit form! On examination a wire was found broken by the receiver, hopefully this was the cause of the crash and not caused by it!

The first semi final off, the 'B', looked like a team Blitz affair with five Italians present. Rene Schaer took the lead with Dave Dixon in hot pursuit, Solaroli was third with Bob Errington fourth and Domenico Calce having traffic problems for the first five minutes. After the first fuel stop Errington had moved up to third spot but problems soon came as one of the "Pink" rear tyres blew apart at

the end of the straight. But no such problems for the leading pair. Fantini disappeared with just seventy seconds left from what was a sure qualifying position, but the event did let Cozzoli through. Result of Semi 'B' then:

1	Traugott Schaer	63 laps	20 mins 14.20 secs
2	Dave Dixon	62 laps	20 mins 0.67 secs
3	Domenico Calce	62 laps	20 mins 10.21 secs
4	Fabrizio Cozzoli	61 laps	20 mins 2.34 secs
5	Massimo Fantini	58 laps	18 mins 47.65 secs
6	Bob Errington	57 laps	20 mins 20.57 secs
7	Daniele Cantarella	56 laps	20 mins 0.04 secs
8	Michele Baruzzi	56 laps	20 mins 17.74 secs
9	Anders Ljungquist	46 laps	20 mins 4.38 secs
10	Stefano Solaroli	30 laps	10 mins 3.12 secs

Rody Roem moved through from fourth on the grid to lead 'A' semi from Rene Schaer and Jackie Ermen by the five minute mark. But what looked like running out of fuel was to cost him half a minute and at the end,

the loss of a place in the final. Jackie Ermen was to disappear at the same time, only for longer as too was Alberto Picco. Gary Culver thus moved himself up into second spot and with Rene Schaer having a couple of minor problems, Gary found himself winning the semi.

1	Gary Culver	63 laps	20 mins 15.18 secs
2	Rene Schaer	63 laps	20 mins 17.65 secs
3	Rody Roem	61 laps	20 mins 11.29 secs
4	Thierry Guillemier	61 laps	20 mins 12.12 secs
5	Rob Kuiper	60 laps	20 mins 3.37 secs
6	Matteo Ricci	59 laps	20 mins 18.10 secs
7	Jackie Ermen	56 laps	20 mins 0.07 secs
8	Alberto Picco	54 laps	20 mins 12.72 secs
9	Albert Grob	49 laps	20 mins 9.94 secs
10	Stefan Habbecke	1 lap	— 23.57 secs

So to the European Championship Final. With seven Serpents it looked promising to go their way, but there were those Blitz and no one was forgetting the lone Associated. But there is still a problem with Michael Salvens car so a ten minute delay is requested and granted, but the track is closed for practice.

A non standard arrangement and one which caused a lot of arguments. But eventually all is deemed OK so the final begins.

Firstly I must apologise for the lack of info on the final. The public address was abysmal with very little information at all, and with no monitor for any non officials to see. This all meant that this important forty five minute final became difficult to follow.

Michael Salven is having problems right from the start and the following bunch is quick to pass him. Jurgen Baehr thus takes the initial lead but Stefano Colombini quickly moves past and starts to pull away. Gary Culver is also running well and passes Baehr into second spot. Domenico Calce was having problems with full size tyres and the car rolls over putting him at the back of the pack. At the five minute mark most of the leaders pit for fuel so Cozzoli finds himself in the lead till 6 1/2 mins when he pits for his intake. Colombini thus takes back the lead which has stretched nicely now. Gary Culver is holding second from Baehr with Sahli now in fourth spot.

One third distance now and something is wrong with the leaders car, its getting quite noisy perhaps the silicone has split? Colombini continues though after his pit stop. Culver is still second Sahli is third and Calce has worked his way up to fourth. Baehr has lost nearly a lap

somehow but we didn't see it whilst watching the leader. At nineteen minutes Colombini pits and Mario Rossi, his mechanic, looks at the car. The silencer has worn away! Colombini climbs down the rostrum leaving Gary Culver in the lead now from Calce. The gap is only two seconds so

Michael Salven top qualifier.

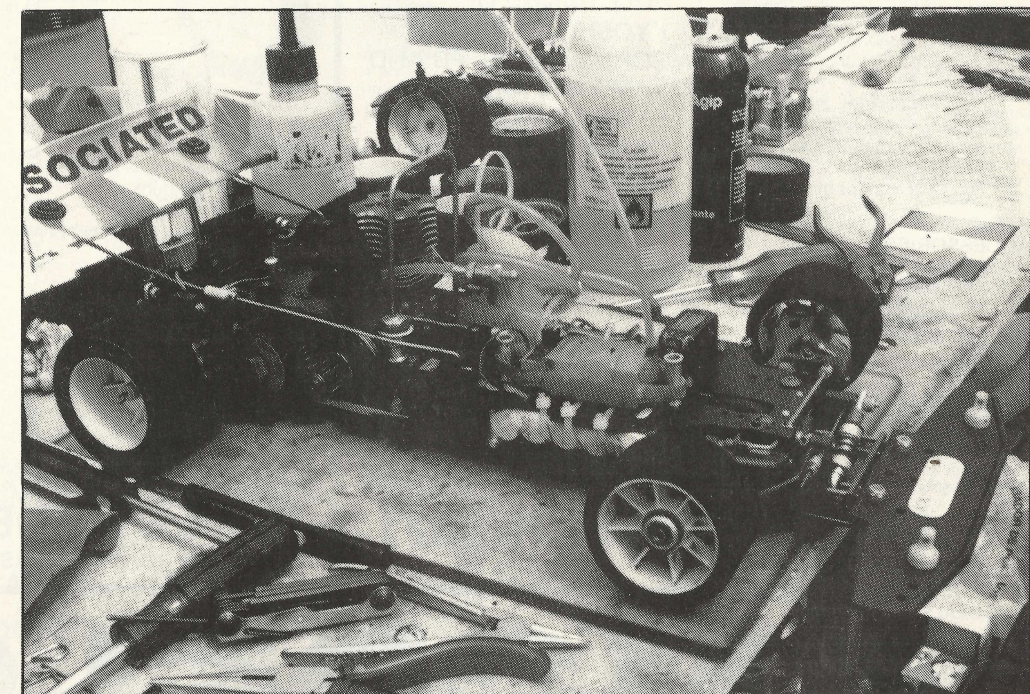
Calce really has been catching up.

Colombini returns to the track three and a half minutes later, but some of his spirit has obviously gone now. Culver is in for his 25 min stop — and out again but as he negotiates the far right hand bend his car spins off the track, trapping him behind the kerbing — Calce goes through.

Calce now holds his lead from Gary Culver and Roger Sahli, the Blitz heading the Serpent snake behind. This situation remains for some six or seven minutes, then, whilst Calce is trying to lap Salven, what looks like a deliberate crash causing Calces car to stop losing him a lot of time.

I say, "Looks like a deliberate

Colombinis Associated.



ing about the passing move!

Either way Gary Culver is back in the lead but Jurgen Baehr has been fighting back and is in second place with Calce third and Sahli fourth. Jurgen is lapping at around 18.7 secs a lap to Garys 19.2 secs and it is not long before Jurgen takes the lead. This time nothing goes wrong and Jurgen is able to stretch out his lead to about half a lap and come home European Champion 1989.

Serpent and Mondial, and perhaps some consolation for the World Champs. it was nice to see Leonardo Garofoli of Blitz congratulate Pieter Bervoets of Serpent soon after the final, and with a smile on his face as well.

What had happened to Dave Dixon I hear you ask. Well you remember in the second paragraph we said the narrow pit entrance was to

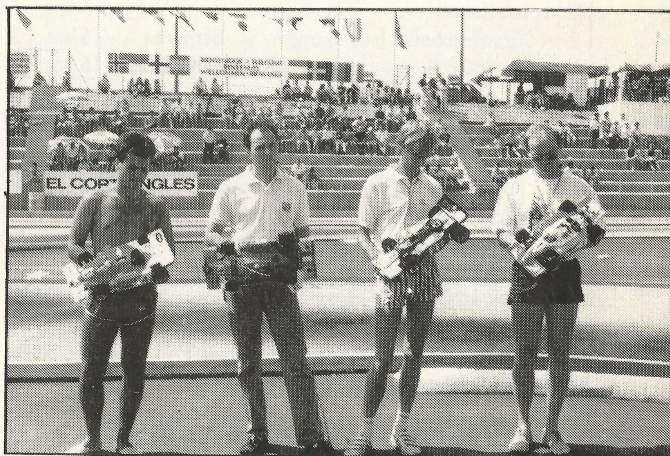
1	Jurgen Baehr	Germany	Serpent/Mondial	138 laps
2	Gary Culver	England	Serpent/Rex	138 laps
3	Domenico Calce	Italy	Blitz/Rex	137 laps
4	Roger Sahli	Swiss	Serpent/OPs	134 laps
5	Fabrizio Cozzoli	Italy	Blitz/Rex	132 laps
6	Traugott Schae	Swiss	Serpent/S.Power	132 laps
7	Stefano Colombini	Italy	Associated/Rex	128 laps
8	Michael Salven	Germany	Serpent/Rex	125 laps
9	Dave Dixon	England	Serpent/Rex	114 laps
10	Rene Schaer	Swiss	Serpent/S.Power	90 laps

crash," (which was also commented by several Serpent drivers watching), but I cannot believe it to be so of Michael Salven who is known as one of the best drivers around. There An excellent win for Jurgen Baehr, must have been some misunderstand-

cause an English driver some problems! Well it was Dave who in the excitement of being in his first European final, forgot to slow enough for his first pit stop — result, half the front suspension missing. Never mind Dave, I'm sure you'll be there again. ○



▼ European Champion Jurgen Baehr.



▼ The crowded pits.

▲ The top 4 with their cars.

