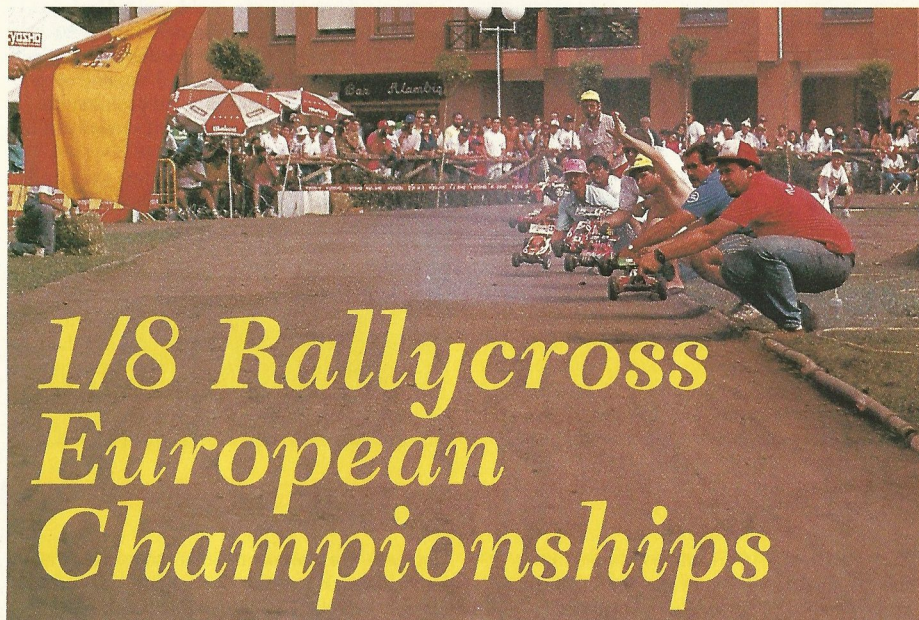




Justin Mackey's Kyosho Inferno.

2nd Olivier Danieri, 1st Roberto Ghedini, 3rd Samuele Lenzi.

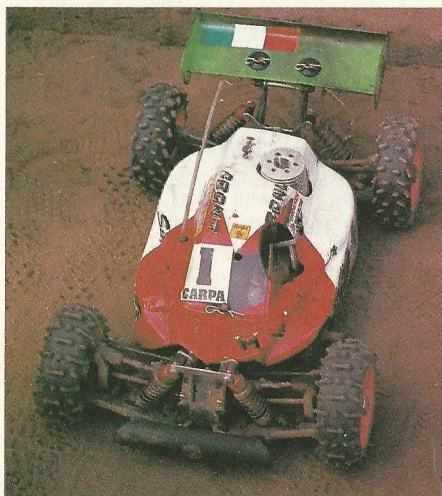


# 1/8 Rallycross European Championships



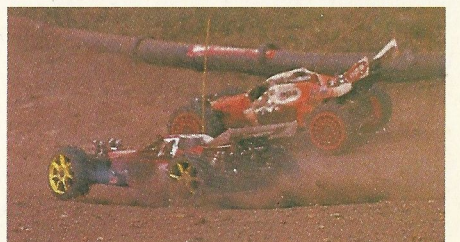
Justin Mackey being congratulated.

REPORT by KEVIN GRIFFIN



The British Team.

The winning car,  
Roberto Ghedini's Crono.







# 1/8 Rallycross European Championships

Last month I reported on the 1/8 Rallycross in Germany. This month it's the European Championships in Spain. I left you with these few words: we have 1200 miles to drive and the French lorry drivers strike to contend with. Well, those 1200 miles took 38 hours to complete with French lorry blockades at every town we came to, but with some superb navigation we managed to circumnavigate the problem areas. We left Usingen at 10 am on the Monday morning, arriving at our destination, Leon in Spain, at midnight on Tuesday, having had only five hours sleep, so a good night's rest was the first thing on the agenda.

Wednesday arrived and we had a day's sightseeing escorted by Ignacio Madrid Perez, our friendly and most helpful Kyosho Espania Director of Marketing. Racing was to commence on Thursday. The sightseeing obviously included the race track which was in the middle of a block of flats, which seemed very odd to us British drivers as we are so used to racing in the middle of nowhere. Throughout the Wednesday, the other British drivers started showing up with stories of their horrendous journeys through France. The Oddie bus however had not as yet turned up. Could the border control have refused them access? Did they look a dubious bunch of characters? Well — hardly New Age Travellers — more like Old Age!

Thursday arrived and all the drivers would have a maximum of five 10 minute practice runs. This was to run into Friday morning, as the majority of drivers took four runs on the Thursday, leaving them one run on the Friday in case the conditions had changed. Friday afternoon would be timed practice which would be used to determine the heats for Saturday.

The British team was the strongest ever, with 19

drivers competing and expected to do well as most of them had raced all the previous week in Germany on a dirt surface, something that in the U.K. is not possible.

Saturday arrived as hot as ever. Thank God for marquees! At least the pit area was cool, for standing out in the sun was almost unbearable.

Racing started at 10 am and continued until about 1.30, then we would stop for siesta. This would be about 2½ hours, so racing would recommence at 4 pm. The British team were performing very well, and in fact we equalled the Italians in the top 10 qualifying, as the British team put three drivers into the top 10 places, these being Stewart Wilcox at number 6, Justin Mackey at number 8 and Tommy Chung at number 9, with two Infernos and one Mugen. The other 16 were placed as follows:

- |    |                 |               |
|----|-----------------|---------------|
| 4  | Ian McLarney    | 18th Crono    |
| 5  | Tony Miller     | 23rd Unika    |
| 6  | Ian Oddie       | 26th Pirate   |
| 7  | Ralph Allum     | 34th Unika    |
| 8  | Mike Cradock    | 37th Inferno  |
| 9  | Dave Hill       | 42nd Mugen    |
| 10 | Kevin Blears    | 43rd Pirate   |
| 11 | Mark Stitson    | 48th Unika    |
| 12 | Marc Knight     | 50th Unika    |
| 13 | John Broadhurst | 53rd Inferno  |
| 14 | Adrian Fulcher  | 55th Unika    |
| 15 | Kevin Griffin   | 59th Inferno  |
| 16 | Andy Pierce     | 61st Inferno  |
| 17 | Harry Box       | 77th Pirate   |
| 18 | Paul Dudley     | 91st Crono    |
| 19 | Paul Cairns     | 109th Corsair |

The bravest driver of the British team was Tony

Miller, as he had left his sick bed, or should I say bathroom (to be polite) to qualify. Boy! Did he look ill! In between heats he slept, but whilst out on the track he squirted his car from corner to corner as quick as it would go, but his sickness overcame him and in fact he was taken back to his hotel before his last run (no pun intended).

The top qualifier was Didier Boulmier from Switzerland, driving a Micro-Racing Corsair powered by an OPS engine. He was a cool six seconds faster than Roberto Ghedini from Italy, with his Crono, and third was Beren Puche from Spain.

Sunday started with the 1/256th final. Only six drivers failed to qualify for a final and Paul Cairns from Great Britain was one of them. Paul had suffered engine problems all week and so today he would be a spectator.

Paul Dudley would be the first of the British team to race as he was in the 128th final. Paul again had suffered considerable engine problems but had managed to qualify in 91st place. Today he was flying, he took the lead in his final and never looked back. He stormed through into the 164th where he joined Harry Box. The track was cut up so badly that rather than racing, it would become more a case of whoever could keep their car the right way up the longest, would win. Harry Box was not to progress any further, for he too was suffering engine problems and only managed to race for seven minutes in the 20 minute race time. Paul however was running well until he came to an abrupt halt at the end of the straight. On closer inspection, his problem was within the engine — backplate off — and yes, his con-rod had broken, so Paul retired.

The next two British drivers to race were Andy Pierce and yours truly, who couldn't keep his car on its wheels, and Andy was most unlucky as he had an engine cut while in second place with only a few minutes left to run. So two more British drivers bit the dust!

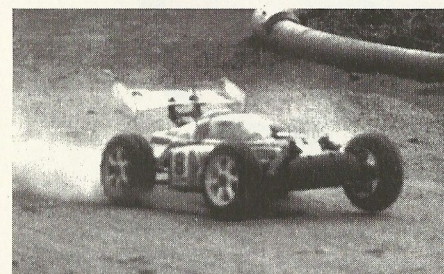
On we go to the 1/16th and five British drivers. The first to retire with a broken car was John Broadhurst, then Kevin Blears. Marc Knight was the next, again the track beat him. It was almost impossible to complete a lap without making a mistake. Marc had travelled to Spain especially to

compete. He commented that the express train service was slower than riding a bike, so perhaps there's something to be said for British Rail after all! Mark Stitson, son of Windsor Models was also in the 1/16th but was not on the same high that he had been the previous week in Germany. He was the only British driver to move up to the 1/8 finals with his Unika, but this was where his luck was to run out, for he suffered from a number of problems, dropping him some five laps behind the leaders. Ralph Allum also fell foul of the horrendous track conditions and failed to continue up the tree. However Dave Hill (fresh out of retirement and driving a Mugen that he had borrowed from Anthony Williams, who did not travel on down from Germany) did move up into the 1/4s, along with Mike Cradock who was flying. Mike seemed to have dialled in his Kyosho Inferno really well for the track conditions. His car looked quite secure as it traversed all the bumps. Ian Oddie and Tony Miller both qualified into the 1/4 finals but neither of them were to continue any further. Ian's Pirate looked most unstable as he fought with the controls over the terribly bumpy track. The dust also didn't help with the control of your car, for if you spun on the far side of the track, the dust cloud you sent up would hide your car completely so that you were

driving blind. Tony, although looking healthier than he had on Saturday still looked decidedly below par and was not on the pace, for he too dropped out. Dave Hill was very unlucky, as he very narrowly missed progressing into the semis. However, Mike Cradock was on a high as he soared through the 1/4s finishing third. Ian McLarney also qualified through to the semis with his Crono, powered by an old Nova Rossi Turbo 3 port that was beginning to sound a little tired.

So into the semis and Great Britain had five drivers out of the 20 left. All things being equal, it looked as though we would have a good chance of having three or four in the main final. The top British drivers were: Stewart Wilcox, Kyosho Inferno; Justin Mackey, Kyosho Inferno; Tommy Chung, Mugen Supersport; Ian McLarney, Crono; Mike Cradock, Kyosho Inferno.

Things started to look on the black side when within three minutes of Tommy's semi his car ground to a halt. The engine sounded fine but there was no drive, so what was the problem? Minutes later, all was revealed; Tommy's engine had come loose and had chewed up the clutch bell, so Tommy was the first to bite the dust. Next out was Mike Cradock. His engine had worked hard in the dusty conditions but it had had enough. Poor Mike, his engine suffered a number of cuts and he was out. A similar fate befell Ian McLarney — his Nova Rossi had breathed its last, so just two drivers left. Both were past British National Champions and both were capable of mixing it with the best in Europe. Well, number one, Stewart Wilcox was running well but suffered interference which cost him his



chance, but Justin Mackey, who was also the top British driver in the Worlds, was still on a high and sailed into the main final. The car never missed a beat and Justin drove it to the limit. One minute we have five top notch drivers in with a chance now we had just one left, so everyone's

Name	Qual Pos	Final Pos	Lap Score	Nationality	Make of Car	Engine	Fuel	Steering Servo
Roberto Ghedini	1	1	67 45.20.95	Italy	Crono	Picco	Roga	Sanwa HM
Samuele Lenzi	2	3	67 45.29.00	Italy	Crono	Picco	Roga	Sanwa ERG TX
Olivier Daniere	3	2	67 45.25.47	France	Mugen	JP Tops	Tornado	Futaba 9302
Maurizio Monesi	4	4	66 45.48.59	Italy	Kyosho Inferno	OPS	Klotz	Futaba 9801
Didier Boulmier	5	10	47 39.49.98	Switzerland	Micro Racing Corsair	OPS	Micro Racing	Futaba 9301
Jaime Puche Beren	6	9	63 45.38.99	Spain	Mugen	Mondial	Cyclone	Futaba 9302
Justin Mackey	7	7	64 45.35.98	Great Britain	Kyosho Inferno	Mondial	Model Technics	Futaba 9302
Vincent Moray	8	5	64 45.05.01	Belgium	Super Pirate	Serpent	Tornado	Robbe RS 1000
Cyril Mougin	9	6	64 45.07.33	France	Kyosho Inferno	Rex	Hot Fire	KO 301 BZ
Alexandro Catozzi	10	8		Italy	Tag	OPS		



'Just a little bumpy and dusty?'



eyes were on Justin Mackey. The track was a nightmare to race on. The only fast section, or should I say marginally faster than the rest, was the main straight which turned 90 degrees to the left at the end, over a small earth mound that then led onto the rough back-straight with a chicane halfway along its length. The remainder of the track was to be treated with the utmost caution otherwise you would suddenly be on your roof.

As the race started, Roberto Ghedini flew off into the lead. Within a couple of laps, Olivier Daniere had moved up from third to second, so a Crono led, followed by a Mugen, then another Crono, with Monesi fourth with his hinged-chassis Inferno. Justin was still seventh, holding off Alexander Catozzi with his Tag and Cyril Mougin with his Inferno. At about four minutes, Daniere moved into the lead but Ghedini was right on his rear bumpers, and was pushing Daniere to the limit. At the first fuel stop Manesi moved up to third place. Daniere had pulled out a gap of some 50 yards. At the second fuel stop however, Manesi's car cut on exiting the pit lane, so he dropped back a little. Ghedini seemed to have developed a Turbo boost for he pulled back the gap that Daniere had made and retook the lead. Also his teammate Samuele Lenzi had moved with him and took

second place. Could Daniere have a problem? Time would tell. At the 20 minute mark, the positions were: 1 Ghedini, 2 Lenzi, 3 Daniere, 4 Mougin, 5 Boulmier, 6 Monesi, 7 Mackey, 8 Moray, 9 Catozzi, 10 Puche.

Then at 25 minutes, Justin moved past Monesi. Boulmier had an engine cut on the far side of the track and Ghedini was gradually pulling away from the rest of the field. Boulmier had another engine cut so it looked as though his engine was on its last legs. Ghedini was nearly half a lap in front. The first three cars were on the same lap. Monesi was a lap adrift at the 40 minute mark. With just five minutes left Ghedini was slowing — his car looked unstable and his front shocks looked as though they weren't functioning. Could Daniere catch him, as he had retaken second place? Boulmier was now last, ten laps behind the field with an engine that would only run in spates of one lap at a time. Justin was still seventh with a comfortable gap and little chance of catching sixth place Cyril Mougin. As the seconds ticked away Daniere moved closer and closer to Ghedini but Lenzi was right on Daniere's tail. Could they catch Ghedini? No — but as they crossed the line the gap was only five seconds and the front of Ghedini's car was almost on the floor. So a brilliant win for the comparatively new Italian Crono car. I'm sure that Mr Sabbattini would be well pleased.