

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP '93 COIMBRA, PORTUGAL



# Super Crono!

**S**eventeen drivers from Great Britain had qualified to race in this year's European Championship which was to be held in Coimbra, Portugal. This was probably the furthest the Euro Champs had been from Great Britain and most people set off soon after the Helmsley BRCA. Racing was to begin on Wednesday and finish on Sunday.

On our arrival on Tuesday we were met with a scorching day with temperatures in the high eighties and low nineties! Thankfully

the next few days were not quite as hot and a gentle breeze was very welcome.

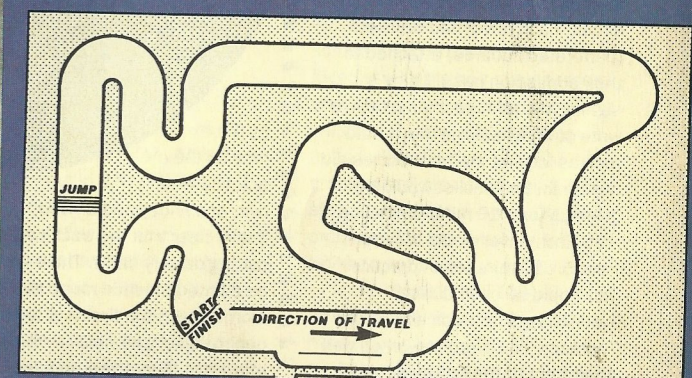
The venue was a fair size with enough parking spaces for all. There were two grandstands set up for spectators, together with a snack bar which sold sandwiches and refreshments. The covered pits were first class, a permanent metal structure with corrugated roofing protecting all from the sun. The only downfall was of how much pit space there was. Although at the end most people got used to the space, it

needed clarification on where each country was supposed to be potting. Each member had only 1m of table each, which so easily could have been more but for the cover.

The track itself was enclosed in a very small area which is unusual for a European circuit but the organisers had made use of every part of the area to build an interesting and, to start with, very flowing track. The surface was slightly different compared with hard packed sand that is common place abroad. Although it was hard

underneath this track had a shale top surface which consists of many small stones, similar to a hockey all weather pitch. This made the track very slippery to start with but these stones soon disappeared to leave a slippery hard surface.

Wednesday morning was the first day when all 140 competitors came together. The British team was one of the largest contingents consisting originally of 17 drivers but soon it became clear that there was space available. This was snapped up by Paul Dudley of



Tommy Chung upheld the British honour with a finals place but the Italians ruled the roost at the 1/8 Euros.



Puma Racing. The whole team was as follows:

- Ralph Allum - Unika**
- Harry Box - Pirate**
- Mark Chaplin - Inferno**
- Tommy Chung - Hodr**
- Mike Cradock - Inferno**
- Paul Dudley - Crono**
- Paul Entwistle - Pirate**
- Kevin Griffin - Probe**
- Tris Jones - Laro**
- Justin Mackey - Inferno**
- Gary Marsden - Mugen**
- Tony Miller - Hodr**
- Ian Oddie - Pirate**
- John Skidmore - Mugen**
- Mark Stitson - Unika**
- James Weedon - Inferno**
- Stewart Wilcox - Probe**
- John Zotti - Unika**

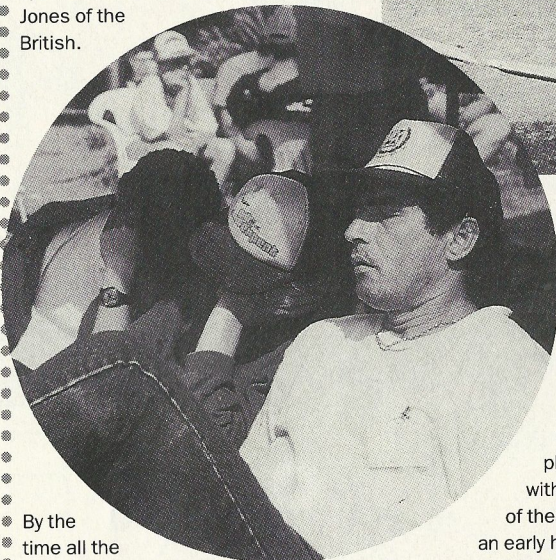
During the morning the registering of drivers/mechanics took place as well as the technical inspection of all the cars to make sure the cars complied with EFRA regulations.

The afternoon was the first time in which cars could be seen on the circuit. Each driver had 5 tickets (perforated squares) attached to their admission pass. Using a signing in board, each driver could write down what time they would race as long as the frequencies did not clash. Each ticket would be given up for a 10 minute practice slot. Each driver would therefore have 5 x 10 minutes of practice. This could be used during Wednesday afternoon and all day Thursday. This system worked well apart from towards the end when drivers wanted to race to get the nearest they could to the conditions of Friday. There was a made fight for practice slots and hopefully next year an orderly queue will be formed using fencing, not just officials!

Most drivers used either two practices on the Wednesday, leaving three for Thursday or one and four respectively. The main testing was for tyres. Various makes of tyres were in evidence. Most were similar to SLD performance tyres which has a series of blocks on it. The most common tyre that became evident was the Pulsar tyre. Many people tried the new SLD qualifier but this was not found to be popular. I had a chat to the head of SLD, the French tyre company and his opinion was that the tyre to use was the SLD Imperial which has a large groove down the middle. I actually used this for the first day and a half but when all the loose stones/dirt had been removed the best tyres were those with blocks,

which for me was the Mantua Ghost.

The British Kyosho team were all using different tyres. Mark Chaplin was using the familiar BSW-40 tyre with Mike Cradock using the new Kyosho block tyre. Euro finalist from last year, Justin Mackey was using SLF Qualifier. James Weedon used SLD Imperials and stuck with them throughout. As the track became dustier the senso tyre seemed to be used more. This has a pattern which looks like horizontal and vertical equals sign. This was used by Ian Oddie and Tris Jones of the British.



By the time all the practice was over and Friday had arrived it was clear that the track was cutting up very badly. There was to be a timed practice round in the morning with the first real round of qualifying to take place in the afternoon. The timed practice round would prove to be very critical as the results from this would seed the heats for the real qualifying rounds.

At the start of practice a good lap time was around 29 seconds. This had become 32-33 seconds by the timed practice and the track would get a lot worse with around 38 second laps on finals day. On top after the practice round was world finalist Daniel Reckward from Germany driving a Mugen. In second was Didier Boulmier from Switzerland with a Corsair. He was very fortunate because his first time was very poor but due to a computer failure his heat was run again and with different tyres and set up he set the second best time.

A terrific third was our own Tommy Chung's Hodr. This was one of the highest spots for a Britain for years and Tommy definitely deserved his place at the top. Behind him was Eric Lapiere from France with former world champ and top Kyosho driver



The circuit provided by the Portugese looked excellent, at first but proved to cut up badly.

Maurizio Monesi in fifth.

Reigning champ Roberto Ghedini was placed seventh with his Crono. All of these would have an early heat in round one would was quite

important with a deteriorating track.

The next highest Brit behind Tommy 3rd was Tris Jones with the Laro in 12th with myself 13th which was much higher than I had ever hoped for. This gave Tris and myself a great chance with Tris ranked in heat 2 and myself in with some of the best drivers in the world in heat 1. James Weedon had also shown why he's one of our best in 17th with Justin Mackey in 20th.

The two unluckiest drivers must have been Mark Chaplin and Tony Miller. Mark had a wheel come off during his run which although didn't seem to matter as it was practice, turn out a disaster. Tony had a frequency clash which was no fault of his own. Team manager Richard Stitson had notified the organisers of the change, but they had failed to correct the computer. This meant that both Tony and Mark were ranked in the last heat (14) which made their task an uphill struggle from the start. Whilst mentioning our team manager and knowing I might be biased, I must say how much work he did I have never known so many times at which the call rang out 'the Great Britain team manager to the lap counting house!' Many people told me how well they thought Richard

had done and how appreciative they were.

During the long break between practice and first rounds, the official ceremony took place which was superbly organised with all 16 national anthems played. Then the first round. In the first heat Maurizio Monesi recorded a 9 lap in 5:05.16 with Tommy Chung a brilliant time as well only 0.37 seconds behind. This race was extremely hot and I've never been so nervous! Racing with these guys helped me though and my time put me 17th. In the next heat Frenchman Eric Lapiere (Inferno) went a second quicker than Monesi to take FTD.

Nobody would get near these times after round one so the Frenchman was to stay on top with Monesi second and Tommy third. Fourth was the practice leader, Reckward, with right behind him defending champ Ghedini from Italy. Sixth was another

consistently top class European driver, Olivier Daniere. Second last year and nearly always in the major finals he went sixth fastest with his Tops powered Mugen.

I was the second highest placed Brit with two places behind me, Justin Mackey showing how consistently good he is abroad. Three places further back in 22nd was James Weedon with Mike

Yankee's latest car looked good but did not make the top 10.

Cradock also qualified in the 1/4 finals. The meant the British had only one semi finalist. John Zotti had not even made a time and was the lowest Brit at this point and was finding it hard to adjust to conditions in his first ever Euro's. Just above him was Tris Jones who after having a great draw in heat 2 broke a UJ and would find it hard to set any sort of a time later. In between many of our drivers felt they could have done better but knew it would be hard to improve with the track getting worse.

Saturday was the final day of qualifying with three rounds to take place. There was hardly any point of racing for most people as they would have to have a storming run to better their first round times. The only use was to adjust the car to the track in preparation for finals day. Only drivers who had a disaster of a day on Friday were to go better.

Both Tris Jones and John Zotti made a reasonable time in the second round but both were only 8 lappers. Also improving from the first round were Brits Kevin Griffin and Harry Box. Both went a few seconds quicker but still fell places overall. The only other Brit to go near his first round time was Stewart Wilcox who made one of the quickest second round times with his Probe which was only 1/2 second off his best. He was only 6 seconds off Maurizio Monesi's top time of 9 laps in 5:17.59 which was a full 12 seconds slower than his first round time. Behind him in round two was another Italian, Andrea Gennari, this time was his best so far and would put him into the 1/4 finals. Round 3 and only one man would make an impact - Roberto Ghedini. He posted an astonishing 9 laps in 5:15.61 which was only 8 seconds behind his first round time and way clear of anything else in the round. To do such a quick time with the bumps that were now present was unbelievable but the Crono driver was showing us why he won over the Spanish bumps last year.

In the fourth round the first heat was to prove the quickest and top of the whole round was Great Britain's Tony Miller! Tony put in a terrific 9 in 5:26.67 which was unbeatable and he must have been near enough the only person to have his best time in the last round - a superb run under the conditions. Just slower than Tony was German Daniel Reckward with Andrea Gennari driving an Inferno in third. He must have been cursing his bad first round time because he managed to do 3, 9 lappers in the last 3 rounds.

So nothing changed in the top

25 after the first round. With track conditions differing so much from the first round maybe other ways of qualifying need to be found. There are rumours that EFRA will discuss the possibility of a system where the drivers best 2 or 3 or possibly 4 runs from the 4 rounds will be totalled up. At least this would give some purpose to later rounds?

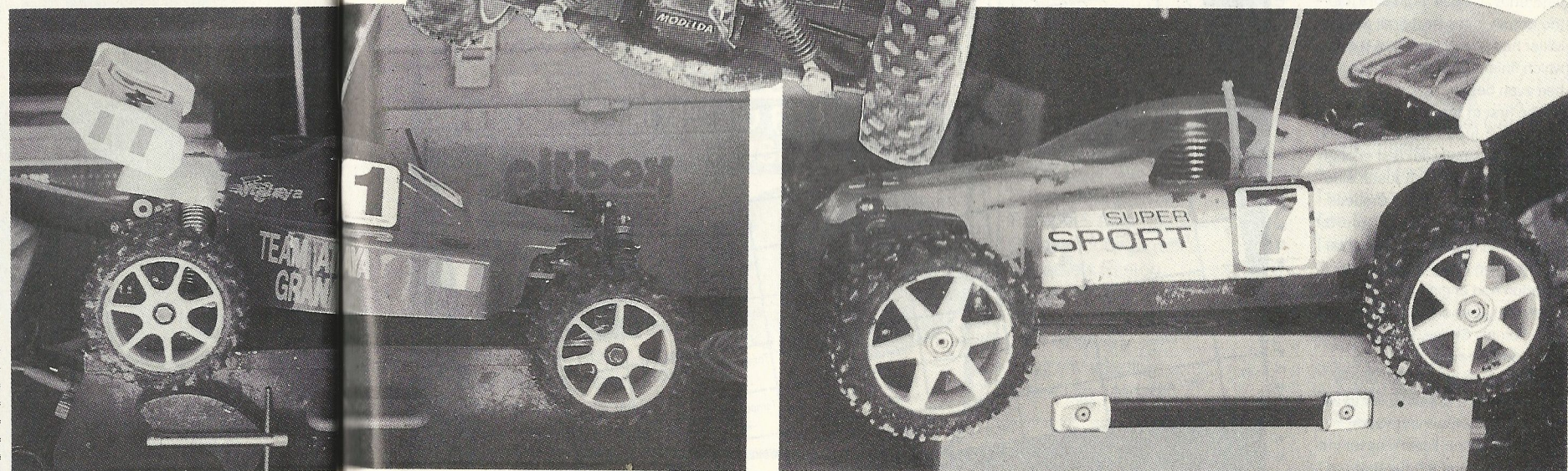
The top five were as follows:

- Eric Lapiere (Fr) - Inferno**
- Maurizio Monesi (I) - Inferno**
- Tommy Chung (GB) - Hodr**
- Daniel Reckward (GER) - Mugen**
- Roberto Ghedini (I) - Crono**

Racing would start at 9.00am on Sunday morning and there was a lot of racing to get through. The finals ran to the standard EFRA Christmas Tree format but unlike the British Nationals where the top five go up to the higher final, in Europe this it is the top three which makes the finals much harder and competitive.

The first race was the 1/256 final which involved two British, John Zotti and Kevin 'Killer' Griffin. Kevin had given the British something to enjoy over the meeting with his hair-raising races and trusses and spectacular crashes! He was actually going quite well in the final but a throttle problem and his car jamming with a stone put paid to his race. No such problems for John who drove his Unika to 1st place.

In the other 1/256 final, Harry Box after a terrible start picked himself up and finished 2nd with his Pirate which meant the British had another qualifier. This was to end in the 1/128 final when John Zotti could only finish 5th. More misery for us came in the other 1/128 final. Tris Jones had an engine cut and managed to do only



five laps to end a terrible weekend after such a promising start in the practice round. The problem was later found to be dirt in the engine. Harry Box also had engine cuts and finished sixth.

More engine trouble for the Brits when Paul Entwistle had an air filter block with dust in the 1/64 final and he ended 7th. There was then a gap until the next Brit, Ralph Allum in the 1/32 final. He never seemed comfortable and the track was now so bad that I think he was glad to finish! Mark Chaplin had certainly not finished his racing and came 2nd in the next final to move up to the 1/16 final. Paul Dudley failed to move up due to engine cuts (familiar to the British by now!).

The 1/16 final which Mark Chaplin had moved up to included four (yes four) other Brits. John Skidmore after a good qualifying position had a driveshaft come out and finished 10th. Ninth was Ian Oddie who after leading had several cuts. Mark Chaplin's shock absorber broke on his Inferno and the track was bad enough with all four shock absorbers! He finished 8th with Gary Marsden 7th. Gary's aerial broke which caused interference. This meant that the last four places were all British but Tony Miller would come to the rescue. He was to finish a very good 2nd only 0.01 seconds behind the winner!

The 1/8 finals were next and the pace was really hotting up. Stewart Wilcox was our man in this and together with his Probe was probably the best drive we had seen so far on finals day. Every time there was a tangle Stewart seemed to come off worse and was desperately unlucky to come only fourth, just one place off. I think Stewart may have progressed further had things worked out differently. No new problems for the British in the next final as Tony Miller had an engine cut at the start which finished his race before it had even begun.

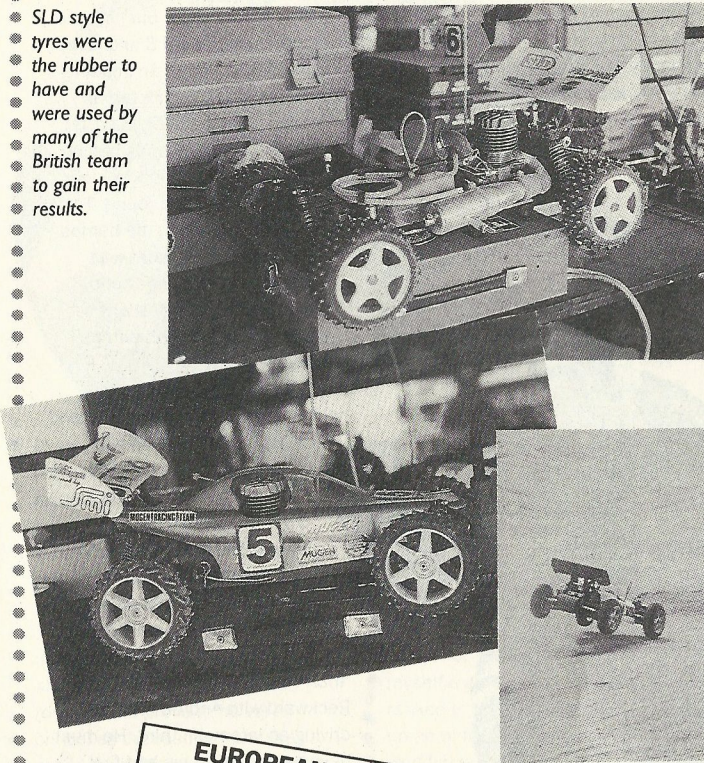
The first of the 1/4 finals had myself and Justin Mackey present. We were basically not fast enough on a terrible track and Justin also had an engine cut. Mike Cradock was doing us proud in the other 1/4 final until his shock broke and also Kyosho team mate James Weedon had engine trouble.

We only had one British driver left - Tommy Chung. With the rest of the team cheering him on, he produced one of the best drives ever seen by a British driver to win the semi-final from last years winner, Ghedini. Tommy never put a foot wrong and left the rostrum to

a standing ovation! The other semi dampened our spirits slightly when Monesi of Italy led from start to finish in a time 16 seconds quicker than Tommy's!

We wouldn't let this put us and we were all keeping our fingers crossed for Tommy. Unfortunately he had a terrible start, which makes it extremely difficult to stay with the pace. It was Ghedini who led from the start with Reckward of Germany behind. Lapiere of France had several engine cuts but still finished 8th due to retirements of Laffranchi of Italy (Inferno) and Reckward (Mugen). Our own Tommy

SLD style tyres were the rubber to have and were used by many of the British team to gain their results.



Chung had a steering arm pop off which lost him a great deal of time and would finish an excellent 7th. Although I think he hoped for much more, he proved that he is our best driver abroad now making three finals and many semi-finals in between!

The Laro of Lachet finished sixth in his first major final (more to come I think) and Weinmann fifth. Fourth was an astonishing Philippe Boeri who hadn't looked that good earlier in the week but showed why he's a former Euro's champ now with Pirate. However the top three was to be a clean sweep for the

Italians. Ghedini led from start to finish although Monesi got close in the middle part of the race. He fell back to allow Andrea Gennari a terrific second place after qualifying 20th. Ghedini showed us the master he is with his (and Crono) second European title in succession with Inferno's 2nd and 3rd. I later was informed this was only his second meeting this year, so to come and win was incredible! The British performance was not one of the best but Tommy Chung again shone. The final positions for the Brits were as follows:

7th	Tommy Chung
27th	Mike Cradock
28th	Justin Mackey
30th	Mark Stilton
33rd	James Weedon
35th	Stewart Wilcox
47th	Tony Miller
53rd	Gary Marsden
57th	Mark Chaplin
58th	Ian Oddie
59th	John Skidmore
72nd	Ralph Allum
75th	Paul Dudley
87th	Paul Entwistle
92nd	John Zotti
97th	Harry Box
102nd	Tris Jones
107th	Kevin Griffin

A well organised championship was enjoyed by most especially to start with, although the deterioration of the track was disappointing. Next year the Euro's are in Pendle, Lancashire for the first ever British Euro's. A lot of work needs to be done for this and who knows we might have the best chance we've ever had of a European champion?

### EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP 1993 - COIMBRA, PORTUGAL

FINAL POS	NAME	NATIONALITY	RESULT	CAR	ENGINE	FUEL	SERVO	FTYRE	RTYRE	QUAL POS
1	Roberto Ghedini	I	71 laps 45:20.05	Super Crono	Picco	Roga	Futaba 9302	Mantua Magik	Pulsar	5
2	Andrea Gennari	I	71 laps 45:38.90	Kyosho Inferno	Mondial	OPS	Futaba 9302	Courmon Magik	Pulsar	28
3	Maurizio Monesi	I	70 laps 45:21.11	Kyosho Inferno	OPS	OPS	Futaba 9302	Pulsar	Pulsar	2
4	Philippe Boeri	F	69 laps 45:13.25	Pirate M4	Mondial	Meca-Fuel	Futaba 9302	Pulsar	Pulsar	23
5	Erwin Weinmann	GER	79 laps 45:22.09	Rex	Rex	Deutsch 10%	Ko 1003	Pikes Peak	Pikes Peak	16
6	Philippe Lachat	F	68 laps 45:40.05	Laro Rush	PLX	Meca-Fuel	Ko 1003	Pikes Peak	Pikes Peak	13
7	Tommy Chung	GB	65 laps 45:23.62	Hödr	Corsa OPS	Dynaglo 25%	Ko 1003	Pikes Peak	Pikes Peak	3
8	Eric Lapiere	F	57 Laps 45:01.40	Kyosho Inferno	JP Racing Top	Tomado 25%	Ko 1003	Pulsar	Pulsar	1
9	Alex Laffranchi	I	44 laps 28:37.36	Kyosho Inferno	Nova Rossi 2000	Tomado 25%	Futaba 9302	Ellegi Magik	Pulsar	8
10	Daniel Reckward	GER	37 laps 24:00.19	Mugen	Rex	Self Made	Futaba 9301	Pulsar	Pulsar	4