

The 1993 1/8 IC Circuit World Championships

Gothenburg, Sweden.

Lamberto Collari makes it a hat trick, taking the win for Italy and BMT for the third time!

August 1993 would see the IFMAR (International Federation of Model Auto Racing) World Championships held in Sweden at the Vast-8 track in Gothenburg, Sweden, being a member of the European Federation of Racing Automobiles (EFRA), made it a fitting venue for what was EFRA's 20th Anniversary. In those early days in 1973, 1/8th IC circuit racing was the only class of radio controlled car racing that existed, there were no electric cars of any description, no buggies, nothing else at all, just flat pan, suspension less, two wheel drive cars!

EFRA was formed from just a handful of people, these including Franco Sabattini (formerly of S.G.) and the one and only Ted Longshaw, or Lead Tongshaw as he is lovingly known by the Japanese! How the cars have developed over the years, and how the racing has become so professionally organised, is all thanks to the efforts of just relatively so few people: Those that promoted the culture, and those that developed the technology.

It is the accepted norm today to have a fully automatic, computerised lap counting system that is able to produce a lap by lap printout of the times, accurate to better than a hundredth of a second. It was only a few years ago in America when the proposed method of lap counting was to be completely manual, with a driver's finishing time being recorded on paper by the lap counter looking down at the sweep second hand of a large clock as the car swept across the finish line. Note that the clock didn't stop, as it was shared by all the lap counters, each of whom had two cars to count. I wonder what accuracy that system had!

Anyway, here we were in Sweden in 1993 with a full list of organisers, each have much experience in their field and many of whom had served duty when the Vast-8 club ran the European Championships back in 1980. Now this club had a race control facility better than some full size circuits! The pits were fully covered for all 150 entrants, the drivers stand capable of holding 20 drivers comfortably, a technical inspection area and that fantastic race control with such a commanding view. Not only was there all this, but also on site was a large club house facility complete with a bar, that doubled as a large indoor circuit for electric racing, toilet and shower blocks, plus grandstand facilities for the spectators. An excellent setting for a World Championship event!

In all some twenty seven countries were represented, America topping the list with 21, then Italy on 13, Japan on 11, Holland and Germany on 9, Sweden on 8, and, Thailand, Switzerland and England with 7. So there were 150 drivers, with probably as many again of interested parties, supporters, families, etc. All

quite a feat to organise and keep orderly.

The most popular makes of car present were fairly well split between BMT and Serpent, with also a good spread of Picco cars, plus a few Parsecs, a handful of PBs and a One-O-One car from one of the Japanese drivers. On the engine front, Nova Rossi, and their Top and Rex derivatives, were by far the most popular, with probably an even split between the Serpent Mega and the OPS.

The gadgets that caused considerable interest, were the tiny starter boxes in use by all the Japanese drivers. These were about 300mm long by about 100mm wide, and were powered by twin Mabuchi type motors, fed off a standard 6 cell stick type battery pack. The two motors drove the same spur gear and seemed more than capable at turning engines over, easily lasting a full days service. The only drawback was the noise of the gear mesh which made the engines sound like bags of nails! Apparently the Mark II version uses belt drive and is totally silent.

The One-O-One car (101) was a strange looking device. In one way it was very modern in that the wishbones and many other parts, were made of carbon fibre, whilst other items like the tank and gearbox looked like they came out of the Ark! The car appeared as "average" around this flat circuit, but somehow it didn't look quite right, not really a car for England.

John Grant, from Australia, entered another one of the fabulous 'Doc' Jock creations for the Concours event. This time Jock had produced a hand made model of a Porsche 917, as raced in the Can-Am series by the late Mark Donohue circa 1970. The model was based on a Serpent chassis and could be driven around, though no one volunteered to drive it. The detail was fantastic, down to opening doors and a fully detailed cockpit including a working steering wheel and the on/off switch for the radio concealed within the dash. Looking at the rear there was a fully detailed gearbox, plus all the structural monocoque for the "tub" and the rear wing. Even each disc brake had about sixty tiny ventilation holes drilled in it, and a tyre valve fitted. Something like 3000 hours had been put into this model, and it really was fantastic!

However, this type of project was not really what the Concours event was all about. This was aimed primarily at painted bodysells. For this, all the cars were lined up at the opening ceremony, and gradually whittled down to the winner who turned out to be Tsuyoshi Sasai (no, I can't pronounce it either!) from Japan with his beautifully painted BMT car. It soon transpired that the body shell had actually been painted for him by Anders Myrberg from Sweden, who was the designer of the World Champs logo for this years event. Quite a fitting reward. Anders had

also been commissioned to paint body shells for others, and another example was that painted for Jean-Pierre (JP) racing of France. Anders claimed that they didn't take long to do! For him maybe! For me — a lifetime. Well done anyway.

The opening ceremony itself, though staged in the damp and thus lacking much in the line of outside spectators, was a good affair kicked off by a band of pretty young Swedish majorettes, which kept a lot of the drivers occupied for quite some time (I wonder why??).

Wednesday — The Start of Qualifying.

Qualification had been arranged into six rounds of heats spread over the three days, thus there were two rounds a day. However, the very first round of heats started on a damp track, and as yours truly was in heat two, it was all quite interesting. By halfway through this first round, the lap times were falling below the pre set fifteen second marker, and thus were declared "dry". By the end of this round, Oliver Mack had recorded the fastest single lap at 13.17 seconds. As times were so varied, it was decided that, weather permitting, extra heats would be run at the end of round two, for those involved in the damp round one heats. This was thus so. At this point Lamberto Collari got the lap time down to 12.54 seconds, and a run out time after the ten minute run of 46 laps in 10:05.67, to hold the top spot with the only 46 lapper. Alberto Picco was second after running out of fuel on his last lap, Christophe Aygon from France third, and Oliver Mack fourth. Two Blitz, a Serpent and a Picco. And yes, you have probably noticed that the qualifying runs were over ten minutes, thus necessitating a fuel stop. English positions at this point were: Gary Culver 14th, Mark Green 16th, James Haydon 17th, Bob Errington 22nd, Nigel Sayles 26th, Gareth Bell 68th and Stevie Scott 113th.

Thursday.

Thursday's proceedings started late after overnight rain again. By the end of round three, Picco had finished his heat to be the second driver on 46 laps, whilst Stefano Colombini slipped into third spot to make it three Blitz and a Picco making up the top four. Gary Culver was in the same heat as Colombini, who ran out of fuel this time, and in round three improved his time to a 45 lapper and 11th overall, whilst Gareth Bell moved up to 55th spot.

Round four was right up to the 13th heat of 15 (but now running in reverse order) when it rained again. So the big question was, would the other 12 heats count or not?



The Vast-8 track, with the fantastic facilities in the background.

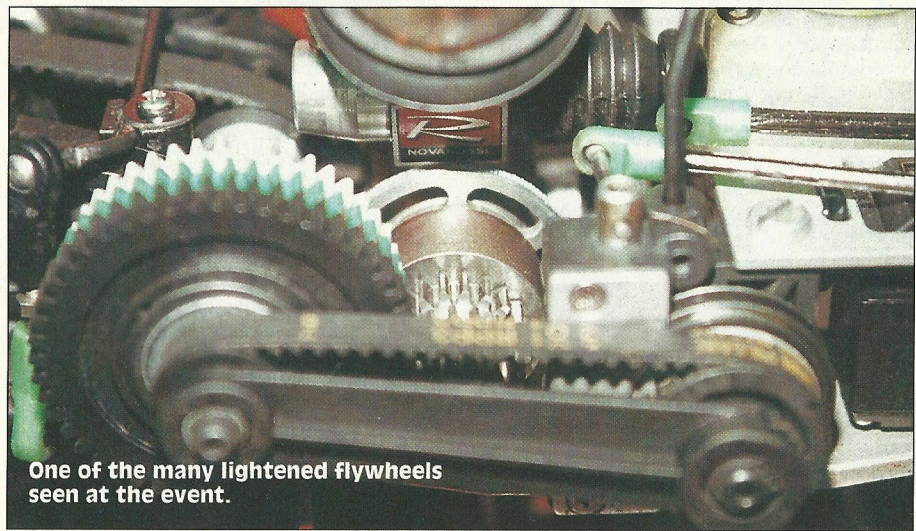
finals, for cars qualifying from positions 131 to 150. Quite a dubious honour! Whilst these early finals were running, the opportunity was taken to look around the pits at some of the cars. Most of the cars were basically standard kits, but with some lightening work done. Popular with many, was the idea of putting cooling vent holes in the disk brake, this looked nice, helped the braking and reduced the



Friday

Friday, the last chance to qualify, but at least it was dry, and at the end of the day they were able to fit in the previous wet heats from round four, thus everyone got six dry heats. Gary Culver was unfortunately not able to improve on his round three time, in fact his car was now tipping over with the high grip. Still, Gary was 17th and so just in the semis — a good result by any standard. James Haydon and Mark Green were a second apart from one another on 44 laps, and placed 23rd and 25th. Bob Errington was five seconds behind in 33rd and thus top of the eighth finals, with Nigel Sayles top of the sixteenth finals in 47th spot on a 43 lapper. Gareth Bell was now 83rd and Stevie Scott was up to 105th spot with his 41 lapper. Incredibly, in 100th spot was Trond Andresen from Norway, I say incredibly because he had been 100th at the European champs a few weeks before, quite a coincidence!

The actual top qualifying for the main and semi finals was as follows:



One of the many lightened flywheels seen at the event.

Final

1 Lamberbo Collari	Blitz	Italy	46 5.67 secs
2 Michael Salven	Serpent	Germany	46 6.21 secs
3 Michele Baruzzi	Serpent	Italy	46 8.69 secs
4 Oliver Mack	Serpent	Germany	46 9.47 secs

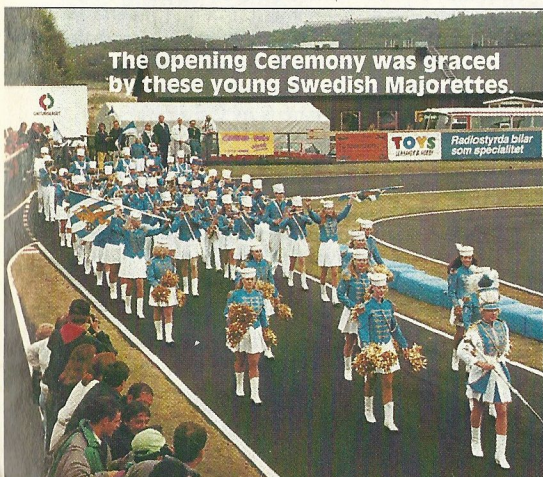
Semi Final

5 Alberto Picco	Picco	Italy	46 9.64 secs
6 Marcel Schouten	Blitz	NL	46 13.30 secs
7 Stefano Columbini	Serpent	Italy	45 secs
8 Christophe Aygon	Blitz	France	45 1.60 secs
9 Maurizio Busnardo	Serpent	Venezuela	45 1.63 secs
10 Rody Roem	Serpent	NL	45 2.59 secs
11 Alessandro Aspesi	Blitz	Italy	45 3.95 secs
12 Claus Engel	Serpent	Germany	45 6.69 secs
13 Mikael Fransson	Serpent	Sweden	45 6.89 secs
14 Jacky Mouten	Parsec	France	45 7.10 secs
15 Ralph Burch	Picco	USA	45 7.68 secs
16 Stefan Koenders	Serpent	NL	45 8.08 secs
17 Gary Culver	PB	GB	45 8.40 secs
18 Daniel Born	Blitz	CH	45 11.21 secs

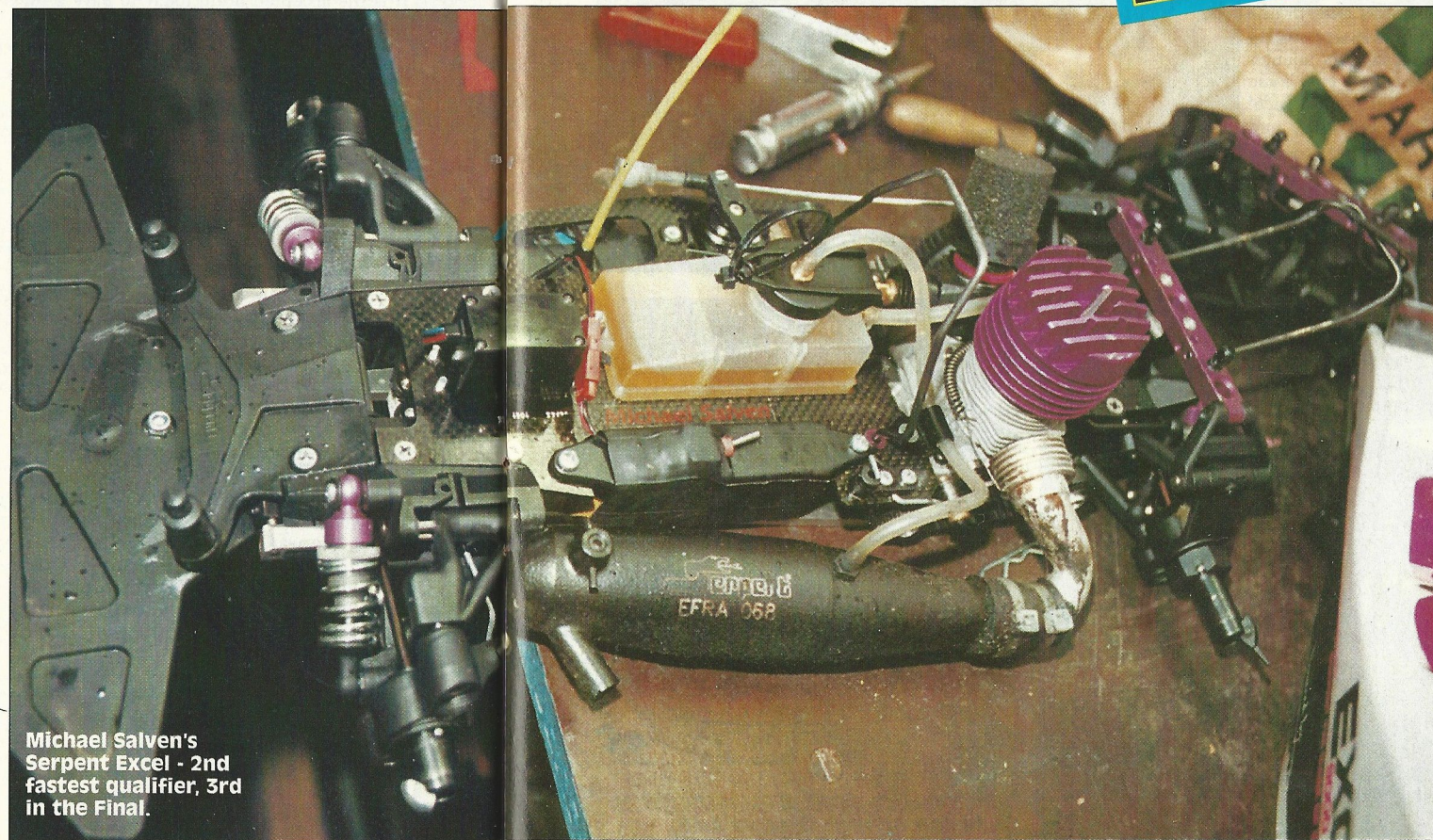
Quite a line up! Surprises? The main one for me was the competitiveness of Venezuela's Maurizio Busnardo, the point being that competition in Venezuela is hardly at World class level, so for Maurizio to do so well is a great credit to him and to his mechanic father — well done to both of you.

Saturday — Start of the Finals

The first finals away would be (and this is quite a mouthful), the one thousand and twenty fourth



The Opening Ceremony was graced by these young Swedish Majorettes.

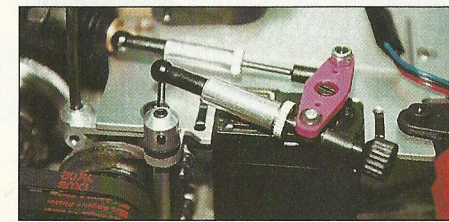


Michael Salven's Serpent Excel - 2nd fastest qualifier, 3rd in the Final.

rotational mass. My car has this now! Another common idea was a lightened flywheel. The extremes of this could be found on the PBs of Gary Culver and Nigel Sayles, where the flywheel was much, much smaller than normal. This had the advantage of lowering the engine closer to the chassis and thus reducing the centre of gravity. However, Gary's car certainly seemed to roll over in the latter heats! Another disadvantage must be starting, as the engine will now obviously turn over faster than before. In the past, over speeding an engine on a starter, could well end up damaging the engine, especially with a less than perfect engine! I now understand that this feature is now productionised on the '94 model. Time will tell!

It was interesting to see on Collari's car that he was using a Centax clutch. No conclusions were forthcoming, although this was changed to the standard BMT clutch ready for the one hour final. Alberto Picco's car was using twin side belts, but then the car does not employ any form of chassis brace. Oliver Mack's car was the most surprising, as it was spied with twin drive belts to the rear axle, this apparently to overcome the problem that had occurred in Germany at the Euro's.

The neat over rides fitted to Alberto Picco's car - note the twin belts on the layshaft.

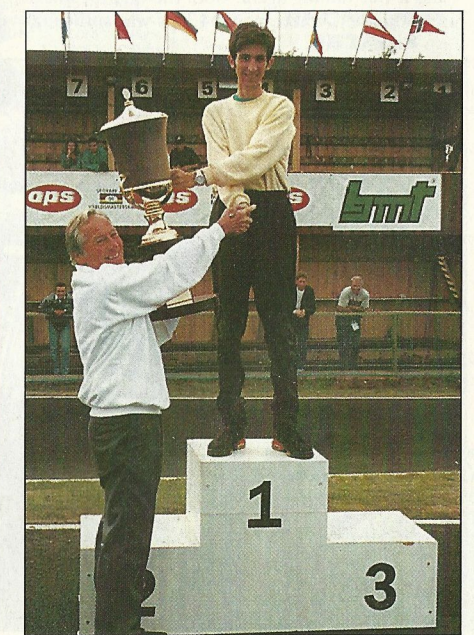


This car had to be seen to be believed. The detail on 'Doc' Jock's Can-Am Porsche 917 was incredible, and what is more, it is actually driveable!

One of the 256th finals featured Britain's young Stevie Scott, and though he finished fifth and thus unable to go to the 128th finals, he did beat Art Carbonell and David Leat from France, both former World Champions!!

The 64th finals had Gareth Bell in, who drove well to finish second on 86 laps and thus go up

Ted Longshaw presents Lamberto Collari with the World Championship Trophy - it must be getting quite a habit by now!





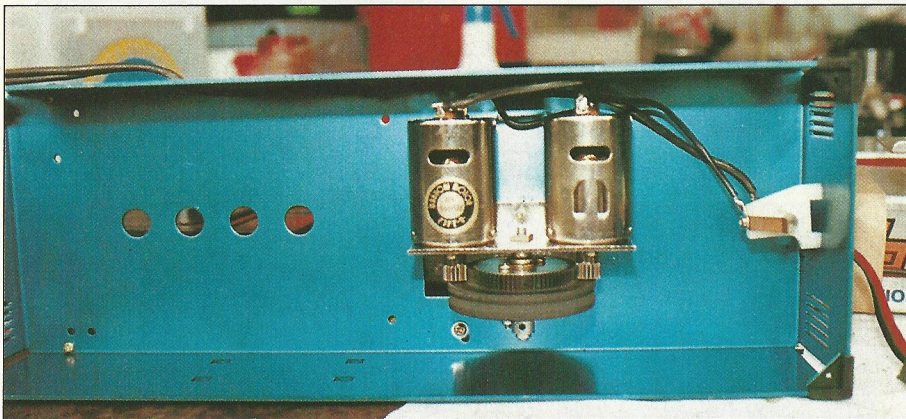
The Japanese Team were using these very small, scratch built starter boxes.

to go through. Many of the cars were running with tape around the cooling fins because of the cold! This then saw the demise of Mark Green and James Haydon, with only Gary Culver left for the Brits, and with a damp track. Funny how all the other nations there think that we know what to do in the wet?!

For the semis the track remained greasy, and really quite slippery. The antics were amusing to

simply controlled the pace by what can only be described as perfection in motion. Salven too was perfect, and at any other time, he would have been invincible, but here Collari was just that bit better. Collari never looked pressured. He had a nine second lead which Salven whittled down to four seconds, then simply, and it did look too easy, Collari opened the gap back up. The guy was just ice cool, nothing seemed to upset his rhythm. He never made a single mistake for the whole hour. Salven's car was out of tyres at 50 minutes which cost him second place to the charging Colombini. However, Collari's car looked like it had only run 20 minutes, there was lots of rubber left when the car was examined at the end, and no, he hadn't changed tyres.

The painter of the Concours winning car, Anders Myrberg from Sweden.



The twin Mabuchi motors used to power the Japanese starters.

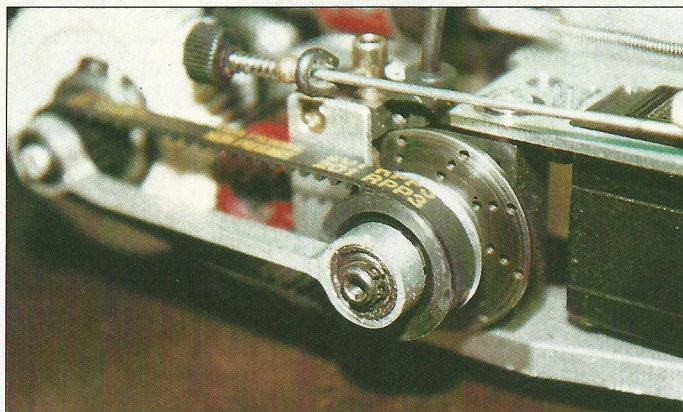
into the 32nds. He was a little slower on 85 laps, but still third, thus he moved up again to the 16ths. Unfortunately, this is where his charge expired as a damaged pipe caused the engine to run rich, and run out of fuel, losing him three full laps. Nigel Sayles was also in this final but he managed second spot on 87 laps, thus going up to the 8ths.

The first 8th final saw the end of Belgium's Eric Vandereyt, who had gone through the 64ths, 32nds, 16ths, but then the car expired in the 8ths! The other 8th final seemed to run in total confusion, as there was no commentary and the lead car had gained a lap penalty for a jump start! At the end though, both Bob Errington and Nigel Sayles failed to get through.

watch when you don't have to drive in it! From the first semi, Milko Tenthof, Jackie Mouten and Christophe Aygon went through. In the second semi, Gary Culver's run came to an abrupt end when a tyre came off the rim just after the start! Ooops! Aspesi, Sweden's Mikael Fransson and Colombini were those that joined the Finals.

The Final

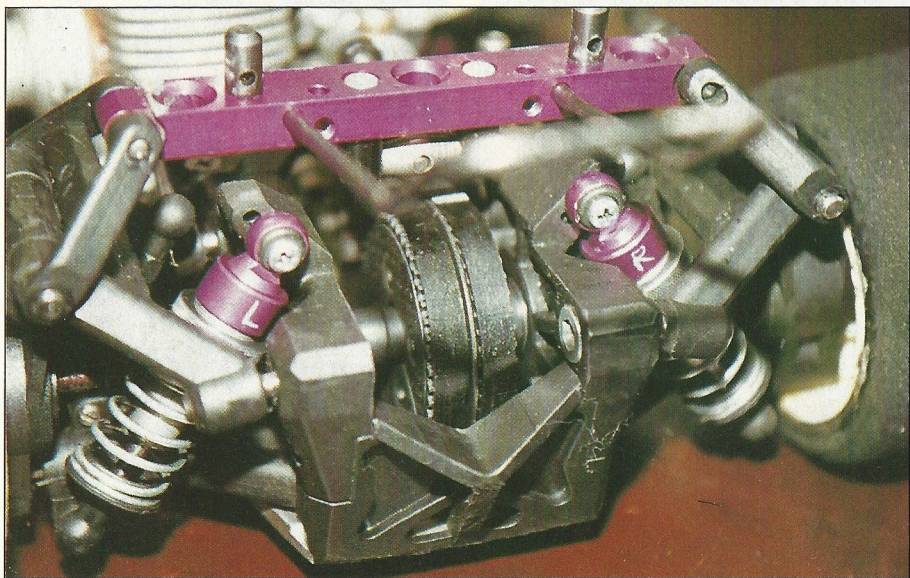
The Final itself was run in perfectly dry conditions and, in one way, was disappointing in that for fifty minutes it was just a two horse race. But what a race! Collari led away and



Sunday — Finals Day

And it was raining again! Both the quarter finals ran in the wet, where now 54 laps was sufficient

Ventilated discs arrive in model car racing - they work well too!



Final positions

- 1st Lamberto Collari Blitz/N.Rossi 269 laps
- 2nd Stefano Colombini Serpent/N.Rossi 265 laps
- 3rd Michael Salven Serpent/Mega 265 laps
- 4th Mikael Fransson Serpent/? 257 laps
- 5th Oliver Mack Serpent/N.Rossi 255 laps
- 6th Christopher Aygon Blitz/N.Rossi 244 laps
- 7th Michele Baruzzi Serpent/N.Rossi 241 laps
- 8th Alessandro Aspesi Blitz/N.Rossi 211 laps
- 9th Jacky Mouton Parsec/N.Rossi 207 laps
- 10th Milko Tenthof Serpent/Mega 201 laps

Lamberto Collari — truly a great World Champion, now for the third time in succession — amazing!

Congratulations to all, especially to the organisers, for a fantastic event and one which will be difficult to top.

Oliver mack's Serpent Excel used a twin belt drive to the rear axle.