

This year's European Championships were held in Salzburg, Austria, on their fast and open dirt track. Salzburg isn't that far away from Ulm, the scene of last year's non event, when rain washed away any fun which we may have had. With this in mind, everyone had their fingers crossed for good weather, and that's exactly what we got — the hottest summer Salzburg has seen for 10 years. 34° is pretty unbearable for most Brits in a well equipped holiday hotel, but under a tent and around a track with little shade, it was little short of inconceivable. We didn't see a single spot of rain throughout and the temperature was up to around 30° by 9.30 am, and it wasn't possible to find any shade trackside, other than in the humid pit tent, until around 3.00pm. There were almost as many water fights between the Heats as there were killer flies, who for the first two days gorged

themselves on the competitors, especially the unsuspecting Brits.

The flowing dirt track exhibited zero grip due to the dust, but with the varied levels and camber changes to test their skills, most drivers seemed to like it, because out and out horsepower wasn't called for. The surface was unusual in that it continued to exude a 'flour like' dust for the whole event, and didn't polish off like most dirt tracks do. This, combined with the lack of wind, or any air movement for that matter, resulted in a very narrow racing line, surrounded by bearing eating dust traps. The track proved faster in the mornings when it was still moist, and eventually started to cut up a little for 4wd, but by no means

the new 2wd bench mark, were looking good from the beginning. The XX seems to ride bumps without protest which made them quick on this undulating track. As for RC10s, well Jurgen's, Rob Gammon's, Alan Harman's and Craig's cars all looked good, but this wasn't necessarily the case with some others. The Cougar 2000s driven by Jamie, William, and a few others were all lapping quickly as well, but maximum driver commitment was required to keep on the pace.

On the smooth track found in practice, Kevin's Predator looked simply superb, only matched by Craig's Cat 2000 on the clock, although Kevin reckoned there was more to come. On balance all of the Cats looked marginally the better in the

when the track was in good condition, but dropped off the pace slightly later in the day when the dust came up. Jon Tucker did phenomenally well to take third place on the grid with his Corally powered Losi XX. Jimbo Pearson made TP's week by posting two almost identical times to secure an A Final place, whilst Richard Sitar from Vienna proved his skill by improving his time on the second day to keep his A Final place. William Mitcham piloted the first Cougar into eighth place, which proved to be the only one in the top ten. Jamie couldn't better his Round 1 time and was very disappointed to be in the B Final. On the other hand, Karl Marsden was pleased with being the third Cougar driver,

also in the B. Local driver Michael Selnov kept his Losi XX in the top ten with his first Round time, as did RCMC's Editor Alan Harman with his Parma powered RC10.

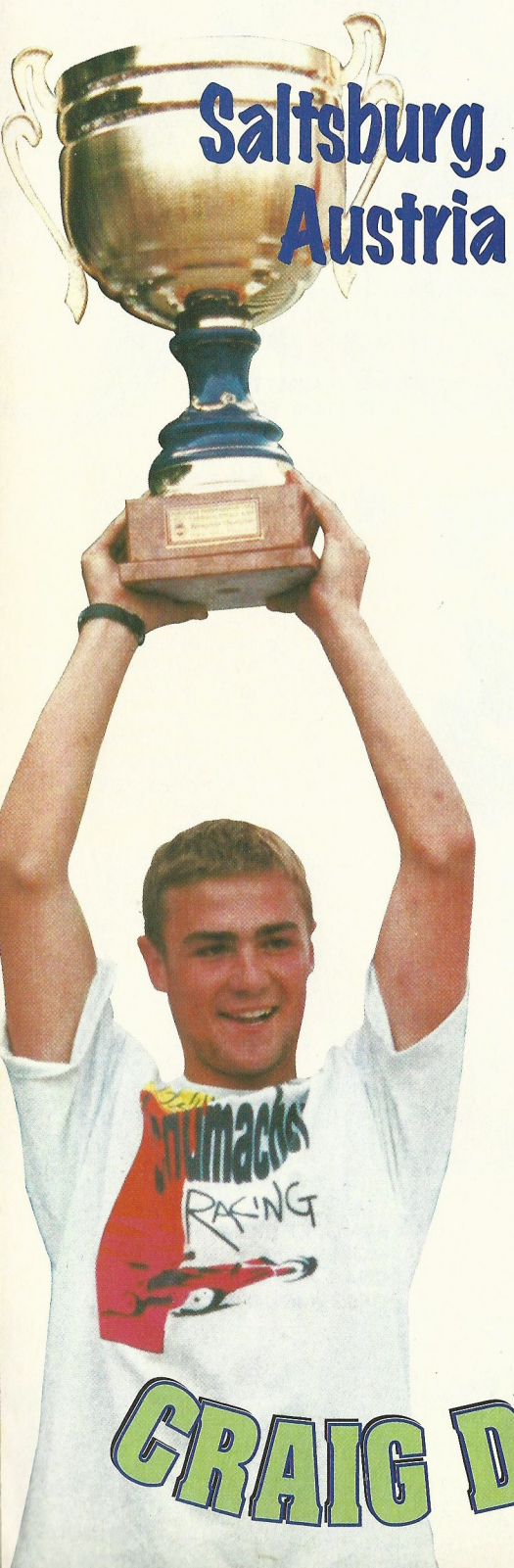
Round by Round qualifying would, I think, have resulted in a different picture, but it wasn't to be.

third places to improve on his fourth qualifying place for second overall with his LRP powered Losi XX, but probably the most impressive drive in the circumstances was that by William Mitcham, who after a first race blow out, finishing ninth, picked up a second and fourth in the other two legs to take an incredible third overall from eighth on the grid with his Corally powered Cougar.

Richmond Rogers won the B Final to keep the Brits at the forefront, ahead of Losi team mate Heikki Naulapaa. Karl Marsden managed third and second highest Cougar finish at the event. Might this earn Karl an A Team place for next season?

The 2wd Finals

Craig Drescher's Reedy powered RC10 proved to be absolutely untouchable in all three legs to take his fourth back to back European 2wd title! It really was a display of total dominance. Kevin 'Mr Consistent' Moore had a second and two



1994 1/10 Off Road European Champs



Practice Promise...

During open practice the Brits showed they were there to really 'kick butt', with Drescher, Moore, Mitcham, Tucker and Stafford all putting in good times. Sascha Falter and Patrick Feschtschenko were also impressive from the German camp. The only other drivers to mix it with the best were the two drivers from Finland: Heikki Naulapaa and Jukka Steenari. Jukka was driving for new motor, nicad and speed controller sponsors and was smiling a little after practice, then a lot after the 4wd drive event, so read on...

The Losi cars,



The ever busy (and hot) pits.



hands of mere mortals, whilst all of the Predators, although there were only a handful and all factory assisted, looked at this stage to be definite A Finalists...

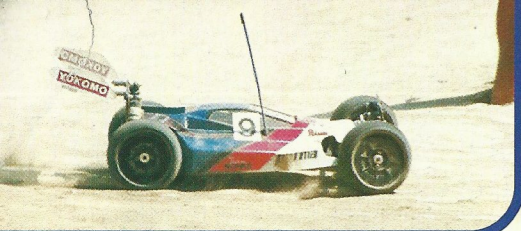
2wd Qualifying

Craig Drescher was quite simply in a league of his own with his Reedy powered RC10! After an average Round1 qualifying run, Craig continued to improve even when the track slowed down.

Patrick Feschtschenko was very quick with his Losi XX

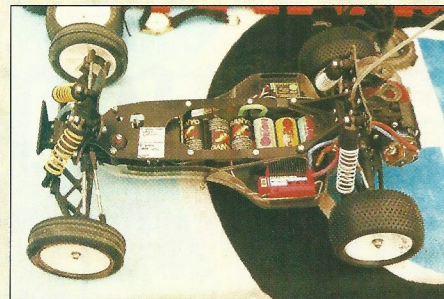


CRAIG DRESCHER MADE THE COMPETITION EAT DUST!



4wd Qualifying

The Round by Round system was new to everyone, and proved to be very interesting. Yet again Craig dominated, this time with his Reedy/Keil powered Cat 2000, and was only bettered in one Round by popular Finnish driver Jukka Steenari with his Corally/Orion powered Cat 2000. Sascha Falter, the German Yokomo Reedy/Keil driver, was very consistent with two



William Mitcham drove his heart out to place his Cougar 2000 in 8th on the A Final grid for an eventual 3rd overall!

seconds and two thirds over the five Rounds. Kevin Moore, after a breakage in Round 1, 'did the business' in the third Round with a second place. Both Jon Tucker and Patrick Feschtschenko put themselves in their second A Final, only Craig and Kevin doing the same. Patrick ran a Predator, as did another A Finalist; Robert Gammon, placing three Predators in the A Final at their first European Championships! Unfortunately for Richard at Tenth Technology, my money wasn't on them to take the title though, as they seemed to lose their potential winning edge as the track became more cut up. Maybe next year?

Ellis Stafford's Parma Yokomo managed to secure a well deserved A Final place in the last Round after several promising runs were spoilt by dumping just short of the time. Ellis's



Team mate; Richmond Rogers, now back with the Yokomo YZ10 again, was safely in the A with two fourth place finishes. At the back of the A Final grid came Werner Bergbauer, another German YZ10 driver, this time powered by GM Evolution motors. Werner's last Round time pushed Jamie Booth into the B Final to join other British stars such as William Mitcham, Rory Cull and the ever present Karl Marsden. Stuart Wood and Ben Sturham languished at the bottom of the B Final. Ben was the source of much amusement over the week as he blamed everything and anyone possible for his diabolical bad luck, in his normal quiet manner (NOT)! Ben salvaged the event for himself in the last Round after much work by Manny Panasar, his mechanic and motor man for the week, and pep talks from half of the British Team. Ben did however win an arm wrestling contest with a huge Frenchman, who apparently up to that point was unbeaten — Yet another British win!

WINNING CARS

The 4wd Finals

Craig again won the first two legs by leading from start to finish in his normal style, and so took yet another European title, making the score three wins in the last four years! We saw some really close racing in the 4wd event thanks to Jukka Steenari, who raced nose to tail with Jon Tucker in the first leg for three minutes. Jon squeezed ahead into second place, only to dump four corners from the line due to an over optimistic gear ratio. Jukka took a well deserved second place in the leg whilst Jon dropped to sixth, absolutely gutted, with Patrick picking up a nice third place.

Jukka was cheered on by the Brits!

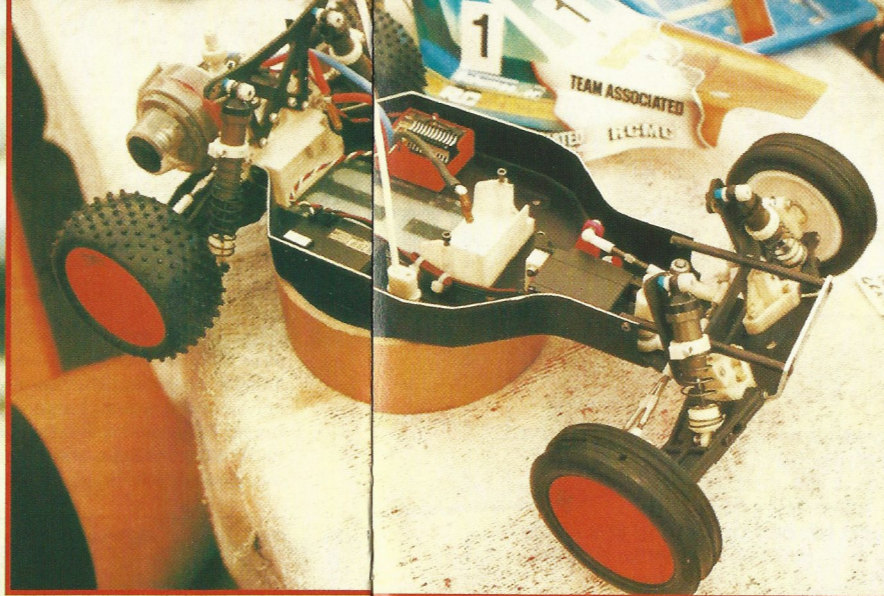
In the last leg Craig didn't get as good a start as usual, allowing Sasha into the lead which he held for almost two minutes under strong pressure from both Craig and Jukka. Sasha then made a small mistake, Craig slotted through and dropped into cruise mode and was then never caught. Sasha was then under pressure from Jukka, so another great race followed until Sasha buckled and made another very small mistake. Jukka took his opportunity and made it through into second place. This race decided who was to take second place overall. Kevin Moore scored three fourth places to take, yes fourth overall, and while we couldn't see a British 1-2-3, Jukka was helpful and friendly to the Brits, so was cheered on by much of our Team once it was clear Craig was safely on for his third win.

Overall the meeting was a great success, the track stood up well, the organisation and running of the meeting was superb and the Brits won everything — well Craig did!! The local scenery was breathtaking, most people finding the time to take a trip up the mountain roads to see Hitler's 'Eagles Nest'.

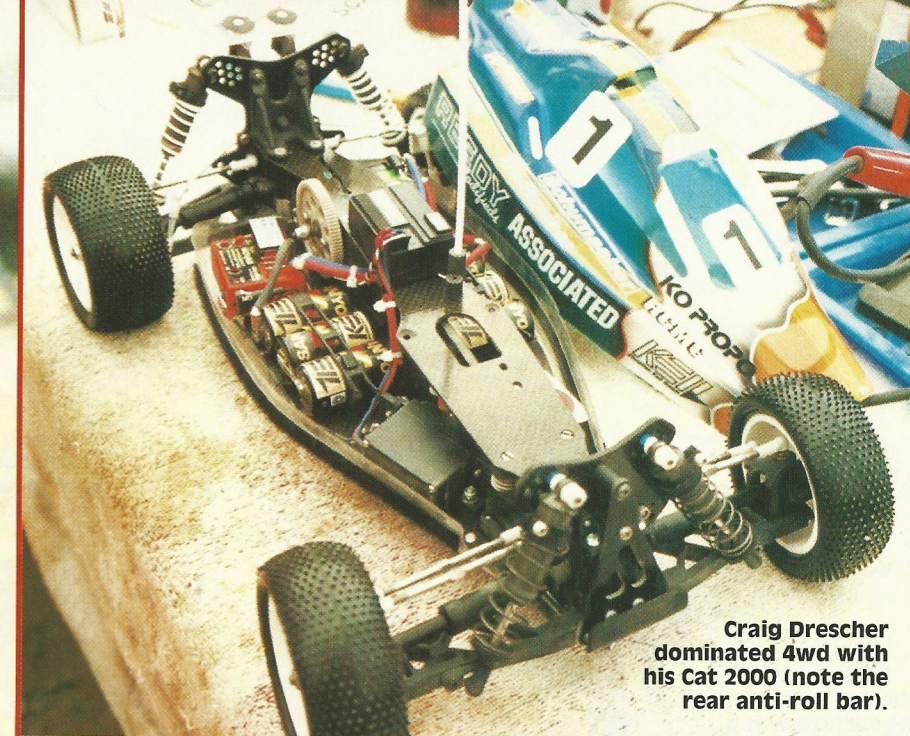
Many thanks to everyone at the Salzburg Club for a great time!

Round by Round Qualification - The Explanation!

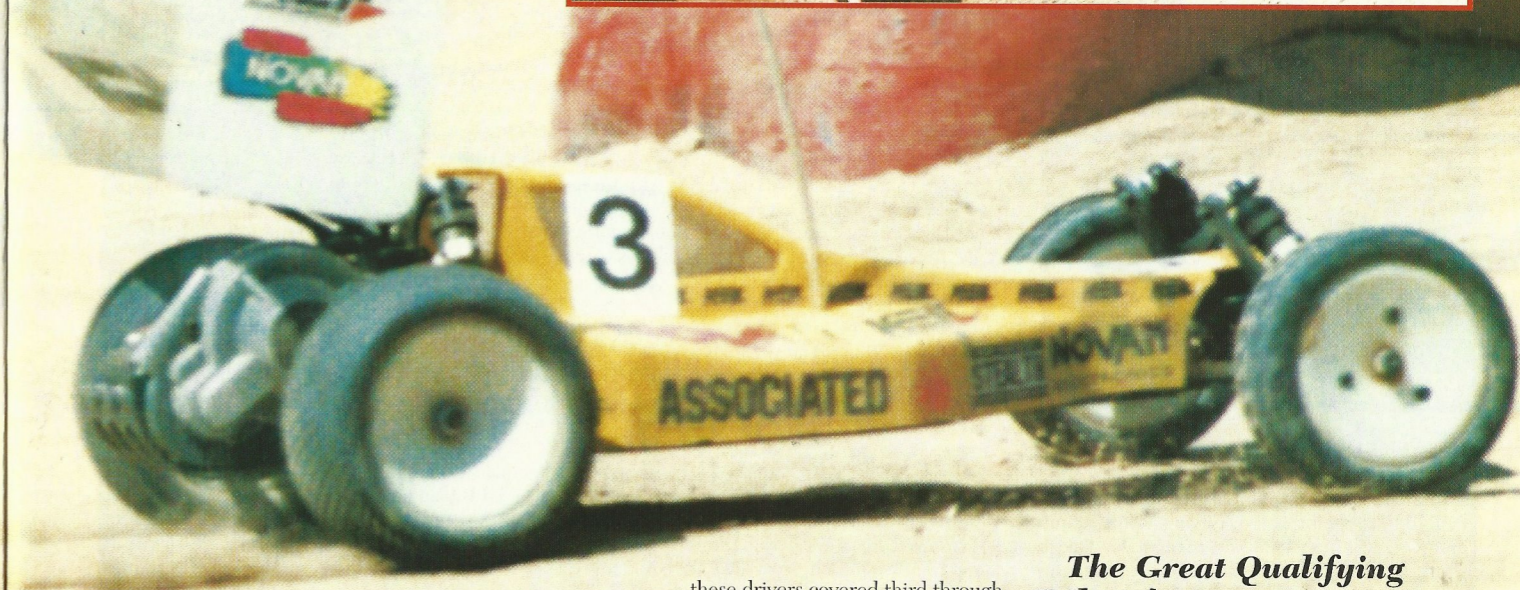
This system tries to eliminate track conditions and the overall 'speed' of the track from the equation when deciding which ten drivers are most worthy of an A Final place. Basically a finishing position in a given Round, when the track was in a given condition — wet, dry, muddy or bumpy, is used to decide which Final you find



Craig's winning Associated RC10 is always immaculately prepared, and immaculately driven too!



Craig Drescher dominated 4wd with his Cat 2000 (note the rear anti-roll bar).



yourself in. If a driver wins a Round of qualifying with the quickest time for that Round he automatically gets a place in the A Final. He may have won the first Round, when on a dirt track it may have been at its quickest, or on a multi surface track when it may be slowest, or the last round after rain or on a cut up grass track, whatever, the conditions don't matter. Because he has proven himself to be the better of anyone at the meeting in the prevailing conditions he deserved to be in the A Final. Each driver's best finishing position for a Round is used to grade that driver. On this occasion Craig Drescher won four of the five Rounds, the only other Round winner being Jukka Steenari and so they respectively took first and second on the grid for the A Final. There were then four different second place finishers in the five Rounds, so

these drivers covered third through to sixth on the grid, separated by their best times. Ellis Stafford and Robert Gammon both managed third place finishes and so were next on the grid, followed by Richmond Rogers and Werner Bergbauer with their fourth places in Rounds 3 and 5 respectively.

I found the system very exciting all the way through to Round 5, unlike the 2wd event when the qualifying was really over by Round 4, and where effectively only two of the five Rounds counted for much.

Round by Round qualification means that everyone has a chance, no matter what the track conditions. Put simply, 'one round wonders' won't like this system but consistent, versatile and skilful drivers will still make the grade. I will show my colours and say I hope we see more of it.

The Great Qualifying Debate!

2wd qualifying was done in the normal FTD manner, and by the end of the first day it was abundantly clear that Round 1, run straight after timed practice, was much quicker than the other two Rounds held that day. In fact, I could only find four drivers in the top fifty who improved their times in the second and third Rounds and, discounting Craig who was in a class of his own, then no-one in the top 23 improved after Round 1! A close examination of the results indicated that the track had indeed become slower even during the first Round, making those in later Heats at a disadvantage. The argument put forward by the Team Managers was that the experienced race officials should have made allowances for this fact, by either using Round by Round qualification or seeding the top drivers more closely to even up each driver's chances. Making the Team Managers aware of the potential problem before the meeting, therefore giving them the chance to take a democratic vote might well have been a good idea.

A good example of the problem was that five of the drivers who made the A Final were in Heat 6, all of the German and Austrian A Finalists qualified from this Heat, and all eight drivers from Heat 6 qualified for either the A or B Finals, whilst only four drivers, Craig Drescher, Jamie Booth, William Mitcham and Jukka



Craig was simply in a league of his own...

