

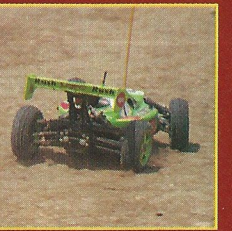
arrived on the Wednesday morning in preparation for the first of the three practices that should be allowed under EFRA rules. As I arrived, I could hear cars circulating the track. What was going

on I wondered? As I approached the British team I was informed that there was no organisation and that practice had been going on for two and a half days! In it turned out that the Italians had been there the week



With no World Championships in 1995 (these take place every two years) the highlight of the season was the European Championships in Italy. The racing was very good as usual with the new points per round qualification system working well as the track deteriorated. However, the organisation was a big let down and left the Italians with few supporters.

Report by Mark Stitson



other 8 lappers. The top non-Italian was runner-up in 1994, Erwin Weinmann of Germany driving a Kyosho.

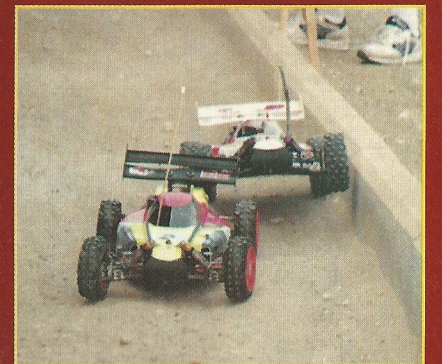
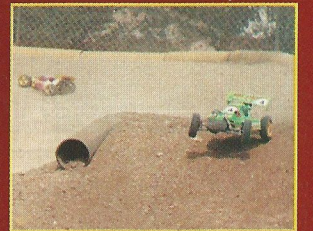
The top Brit in these early days was David Crompton (Laro) who seems to excel in the big competitions. Just behind him was Jamie Booth who was driving the new Kyosho Inferno MP5 car. This was the first time the new car had been seen and was being used by the three British Kyosho drivers of Jamie, Lawrence Harris and Mike Cradock as well as a couple of European drivers. Obviously, the new car was a big talking point as the old Kyosho T/Inferno had extremely good results and it would be interesting to see how the new car performed.

A further 2 rounds of timed practice were run the following day with the best position in a certain round counting for the drivers. The purpose of the timed practice was to seed the drivers into heats of equal

ability for the actual qualifying. During the practice there were various problems with the organisation/computer and this meant that the final practice run (which were supposed to be in the actual heats to sort out problems) could not be run. Drivers were getting very impatient since nobody knew their position for qualifying and would have to wait until Friday morning. Once the positions were finally known there were no fewer than 8 Italians in the top 10 with the top Brit, David Crompton in 16th place.

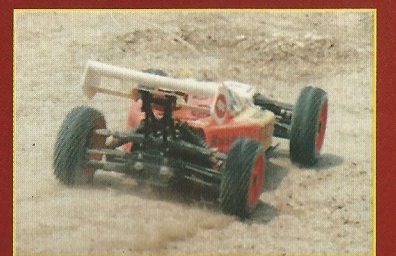
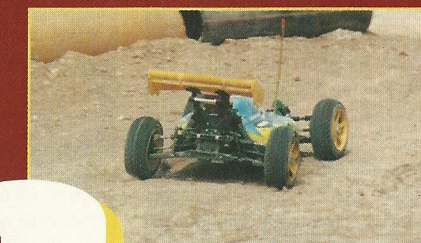
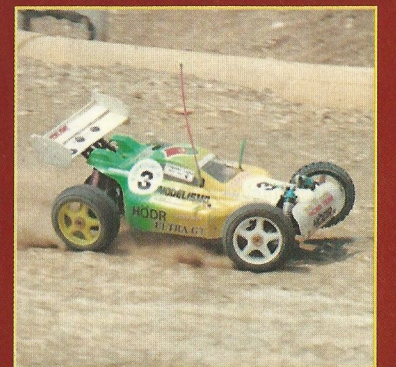
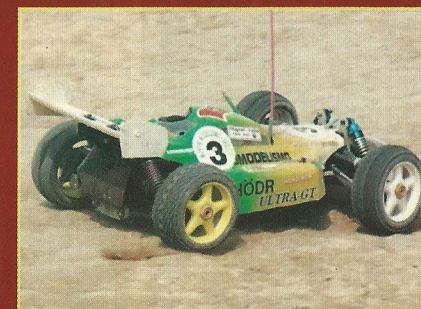
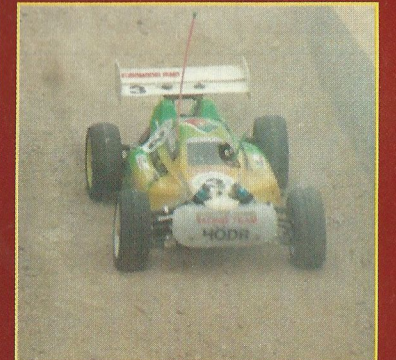
It was a relief to actually start qualifying after all the problems of the first few days. The qualifying would be calculated on the points per round system. This means that it is the position within each round that is important to the driver. Each round is separate so that changes in conditions do

not affect qualifying. The top driver in each round would get 200 points with the next getting 198 then 197,196 and so on. There were five

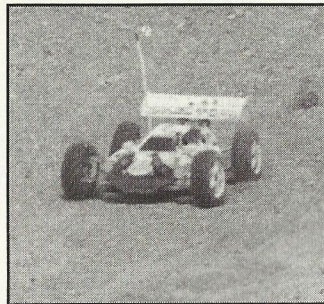
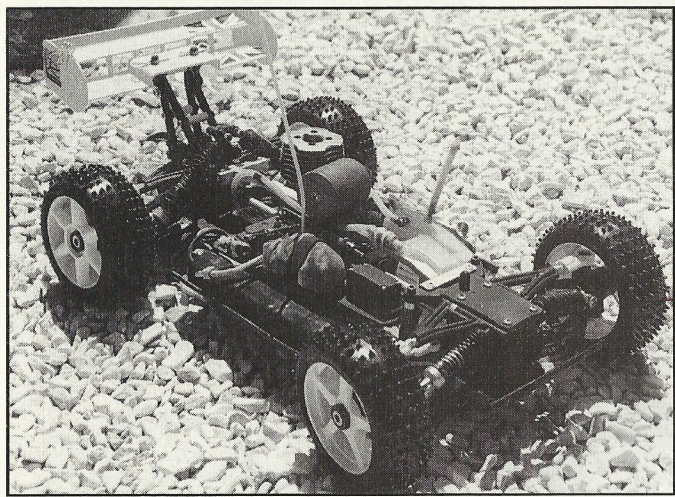
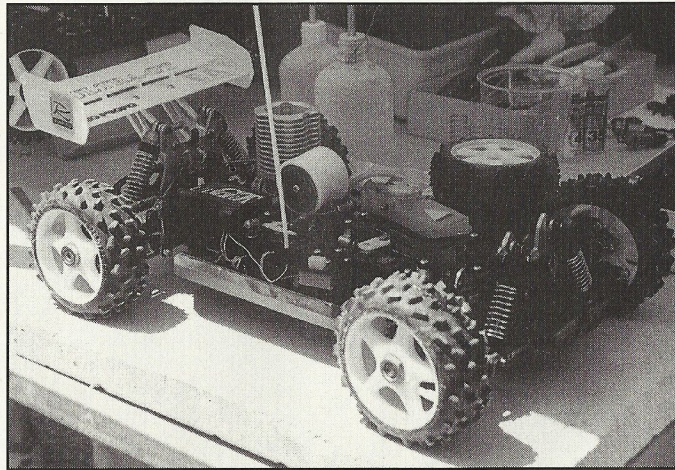
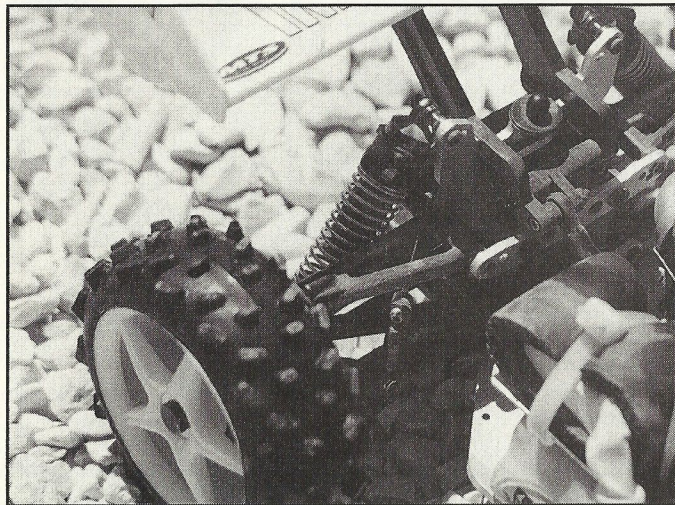
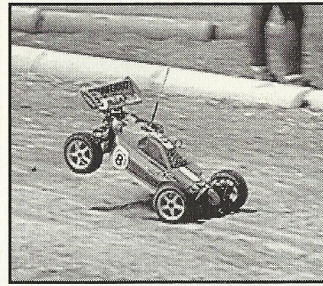
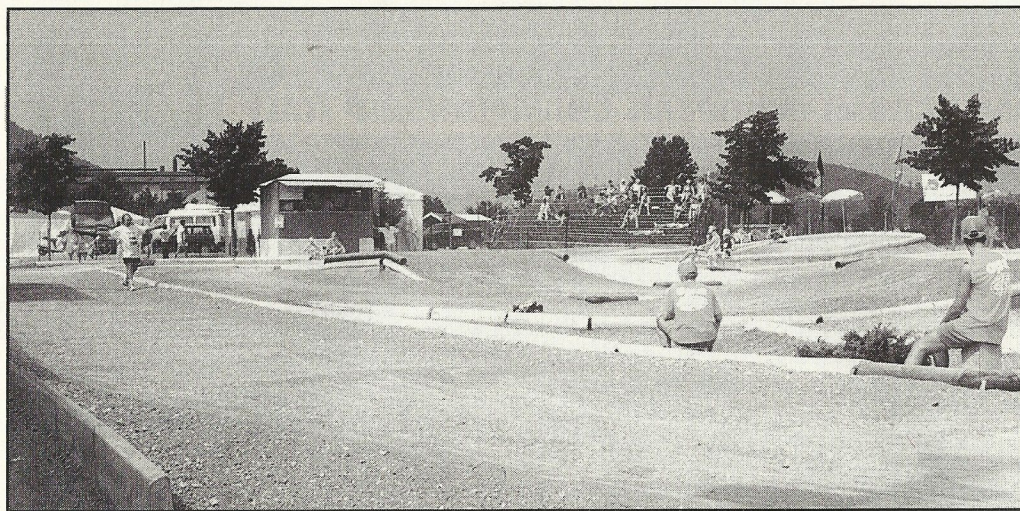


before practising and when some of the British lads arrived on the Monday they were still at it! The British lads were not going to miss out and had a go. On the Tuesday, as most people arrived, more joined in and around 75% of the competitors were practising freely. This disgraceful behaviour by the Italian organisation meant the track was practically destroyed before the racing should have begun, and left those turning up on Wednesday well and truly miffed!

The first timed practice took place that afternoon and it became clear that there would be an elite group who could complete 8 laps in the 5 minute run which was quite amazing. Unsurprisingly, the only drivers to achieve this magic figure were Italian! Double European Champion, Roberto Ghedini was the fastest with the Bergonzoni Flash followed by defending European Champion, Andrea Gennari, now driving for Crono. Marco Zoppelletto (Mugen) and Marco Crandesso (Tag) were the



Rush Job



rounds in total with the drivers best three positions counting as their final total.

The first to secure the maximum 200 points was defending champion, Andrea Gennari (Crono.) He was one of only two drivers to achieve 8 laps, the other being fellow Italian and Crono team-mate Samule Lenzi. Marco Zoppelletto (Mugen) was the 3rd Italian at the top. World Champion, Maurizio Monesi, now driving for Crono was 5th but just behind him came Britain's Jamie Booth (Inferno MP5) and David Crompton (Laro.) These were two excellent runs and would set them in

good stead. In total the Brits had six drivers in the top 20 with Lawrence Harris (Inferno MP5), Danny Conway (T/Inferno), Stewart Wilcox (Mugen) and John Skidmore (Flash) all recording superb times.

In round 2 it was double European Champion, Roberto Ghedini (Flash) who secured top spot and 200 points. He was only a fraction ahead of the very consistent Zoppelletto (Mugen) with Alessandro Catozzi (Tag) in 3rd place. The top Brit in this round was yours truly in a remarkable 6th place. My SG/Mantua Extreme was handling superb and 6th place in the round is

definitely my best result of my life and you could say I was pleased! Jamie Booth built on his excellent 1st round position by finishing 8th in this round. Lawrence Harris (Inferno MP5) ended 12th, Stewart Wilcox (Mugen), 15th, Tommy Chung (Ultra GT), 17th and Justin Mackey (Mugen), 18th giving the Brits 5 in the top 20.

The track was deteriorating as each round passed so drivers had to learn to drive the track each time as the lines altered a fair bit, although the track didn't become as bad as in Spain or Portugal a couple of years ago. In round 3 Samule Lenzi recorded a time of 7 laps in 5:06.76. This would not have been good enough for the top ten in round 1 but because the track had slowed this was enough to give him top spot in the round. World Champion, Monesi was second in the round but was nowhere on the overall listing (adding

the three scores together) since he failed to race in round 2. The top place by a Brit was achieved in this round with Lawrence Harris ending a brilliant 5th. His Kyosho team-mate, Jamie Booth was the model of consistency finishing 8th again.

Friday was over and with three round completed total scores could be calculated. At this stage Marco Zoppelletto (Mugen) was the top man with a 2nd place and two 3rd places in his three rounds. It had been a brilliant day for the Brits with Jamie Booth the best in 5th place overall with his performances of 6th place and two 8th places. Lawrence Harris was 8th overall, David Crompton 9th, Mark Stitson 10th, Justin Mackey 11th and Stewart Wilcox 12th meaning 1/2 of the top 12 were British. The two British Flash drivers of Ian Oddie and John Skidmore had also done well in 17th and 20th place. However, nobody could afford to rest as there was a lot of drivers who were down the overall list as they had had one bad run. With two more rounds to come on Saturday morning these bad results could soon disappear.

The first round on Saturday (the 4th in total) was won again by the works Crono driver Samule Lenzi. This meant he had two 1st places and a 2nd as his best three scores. Nobody could catch this and so he

would go into the final round already knowing he had FTD overall. This year it had an added bonus in that the top driver moves directly into the main final - not bad! A surprise 2nd place in the round was Spanish driver, Daniel Vega with his Mugen with Catozzi (Tag) 3rd.

The top Brit in this round was Justin Mackey (Mugen) who finished an excellent 9th. This put Justin 15th overall, the last spot in the semi finals! David Crompton had another good run to end 11th as did yours truly who ended 14th.

Lawrence Harris, Ian Oddie and Jamie Booth also made the top 20.

The 5th and final round would be a nervous affair as most people would not know where they had qualified until the last race had run. The winner of the round was Michele Baruzzi, yet another Italian Crono driver. Baruzzi is better known in 1/8th circuit racing as he used to drive for BMT. This year at the circuit World Championships he drove for Serpent and made the final and he showed he could handle the bumps of off-road equally well by winning the round. Roberto Ghedini (Flash) finished 2nd with defending champ, Andrea Gennari 3rd. This was an important run for Gennari as he had failed to finish two rounds of qualifying. He had to put up a top performance in the last round to qualify for the semis overall. He delivered the goods proving he is such a good driver. The best Brit in the round was John Skidmore driving the Flash. He ended 7th for the best result of his life. Jamie Booth finished 11th with Justin Mackey 12th, showing he had got used to driving the now bumpy track.

Overall, Samule Lenzi had already clinched the sole place in the final. In 2nd came Marco Zoppelletto (Mugen) who would have pole position for one of the semi-finals. Pole in the other semi fell to 3rd overall, Alex Laffranchi. Alex has this year become Italian Champion driving a Picco powered Turbo Inferno. Alex is not sponsored by Kyosho and was still using his old T/Inferno at the Euros.

The top 7 drivers were Italian and the first from another country in 8th was also the top Brit in the form of Jamie Booth. This was a good result for Jamie and the new Kyosho car but no surprise given his form in this year. Lawrence Harris also made the semi-finals with the new car in 11th place, with right behind him, David Crompton (Laro.) Both had performed on the big occasion once again. The fourth and final Brit in the semis was yours truly. I ended 14th overall and was absolutely delighted as it was the best result I have ever achieved. Justin Mackey was unlucky to just miss out on the semis ending 17th and he would have to race in the 1/4 finals but showed a lot of promise in the last two rounds.

The very lowest finals were run on Saturday afternoon and only one Brit figured in these. Trevor Cadby (Laro) had only qualified so far down because he arrived late at the meeting and the first time he raced on the track was the first round of qualifying! Not surprisingly with the round by round qualifying, he didn't do so well. However he duly won the 1/128th final from start to finish so that he was through to the 1/64 final on the Sunday.

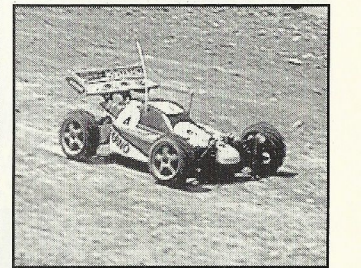
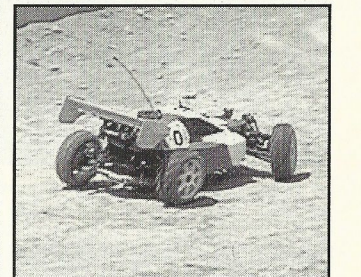
Sunday arrived and the weather

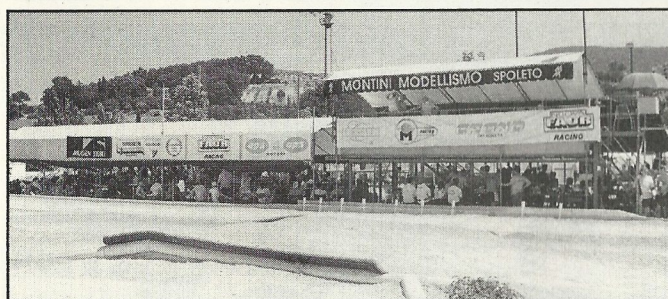
was still baking! It would be a long wait for some drivers but there was plenty of work to do preparing the cars. Nick Soothill was the first Brit out on the track and he didn't have any time to prepare. No sooner had he arrived from his hotel was he up the rostrum stairs and at the start line! Unfortunately Nick didn't finish in the top 3 which is necessary in order to move up through the finals format.

Trevor Cadby was next up and he had a terrific race to put himself 3rd. On his penultimate lap, Trevor had a mistake and this meant there was three cars battling for one place with a lap to go. Trevor was showing signs of nerves but he clung on to capture 3rd place, but the 4th and 5th place were only 1.4 and 1.7 seconds behind at the end!

The two 1/32nd finals were next up with three Brits in action. Danny Conway couldn't move through his final after an engine cut struck. Danny was quite disappointed with

his performance since he is very high in the Championship back home. However, his early rounds were good with his T/Inferno and it was only as the terrible holes appeared did his chances fade. He





will not have encountered such bumps before as it was the first time he had raced abroad but all this was no consolation for him as he still felt he should have done better. However, he did record FTD at the mini-moto racing on Saturday evening!

In the other 1/32nd final Mike Cradock (Inferno MP5) also left the competition after struggling over the now huge bumps. However, Trevor Cadby (Laro) continued his amazing run to 4 finals by taking victory after starting last on the grid. The 1/16th finals were next and the pace was

really hotting up. Three Brits were in the same final, with Tommy Chung (Ultra GT), Trevor Cadby and John 'Superman' Zottl (Mugen) on the track. Tommy is usually one of the best British drivers when we travel to the big events but this year he looked a shadow of his former self. In the final the car just couldn't handle the craters on the track and Tommy failed to qualify. Trevor also failed to move through, but only because of an engine cut, otherwise he may have moved up yet again. It had been a good run though! John Zottl was the bright spot for the British camp as he had a tremendous race. He eventually finished 2nd, sandwiched between former World and European Champion, Frederick Veyserre and another former European Champion, Didier Boulmier.

There were no other Brits racing until John Zottl was out again in the 1/8th final. John's car was superb and he was driving very well as he tried to progress to the 1/4 finals. It was a very close race although Daniel Vega from Spain was way out front. This was not a surprise since he had qualified 2nd in one of the rounds. Behind him there was an almighty scrap but John Zottl came through to snatch the third and final place although he was only a couple of metres behind 2nd place.

The 1/4 finals signalled the beginnings of the top drivers with quite a few hoping to get through right to the final itself. Justin Mackey (Mugen) and Ian Oddie (Flash) were the two Brits in the first one. Ian's chance went with an engine cut but Justin managed to qualify in third place. It was a good performance from Justin as he had a terrible start but qualified quite comfortably, 11 seconds ahead of Daniel Reckward of Germany who finished 4th in the World Championships last year.

The second 1/4 final had three Brits taking part but John Skidmore only lasted two laps. He unfortunately lost a driveshaft from his Flash after a crash. It was a shame to end in such a way as 'Chalky' had driven the best I have ever seen him drive during qualifying. John Zottl also left the race early at around 1/2 distance. John also lost drive on his Mugen and he might well have qualified for the semis had he carried on. Nevertheless it was a good run of 3 finals and a very respectable result. Stewart Wilcox

(Mugen) did qualify using all his experience in such big meetings. He finished 3rd, well clear of the next car. The winner was Eric Lappiere of France, but in 2nd place was Daniel Vega of Spain who qualified despite an engine cut!

The atmosphere for the start of the first semi was brilliant, there was a lot of people watching, cheering, and the whole thing was a terrific spectacle. Laffranchi of Italy (T/Inferno) started from pole and won with the first 27 lap performance in the 20 minute races that we had seen. Defending Champion, Andrea Gennari took his Nova Rossi powered Crono into the final, comfortably ahead of Alessandro Catozzi (Tag). Back down the field, the two British lads, Justin Mackey and Lawrence Harris, were having 'nightmares'! Wherever there was an incident one of the two seemed to be there! Lawrence's problems multiplied when he was given a 10 second penalty for corner cutting, although this was wrong as Lawrence waited and didn't gain an advantage from it. This seemed to put him off some what and he finished 7th.

Nevertheless it was still a good result overall. Justin, meanwhile had fought his way through the field and had a real chance of making the final. He did manage to hold on to 4th place and a place in the final. The second semi-final had a comical warm-up to say the least. On my first warm-up lap I crashed over the jump and broke my front shock mount. I couldn't believe it! Each participant can call for a 10 minute delay to the race if they so need and we duly did! Frantic repairs took place and I was ready to go. The other competitors, seeing I was ready began to go out onto the track. However, this was before the end of the official 10 minutes and the race organisers were none to happy. All the cars that went on the track were given an official warning, meaning 6 cars had a warning before the start of the race!

When the race finally began Baruzzi of Italy took control with his Crono. Daniel Vega (Mugen) who had started in the 1/8th finals was moving up through the field with some speed. The four Brits were not having the best of races with David Crompton out of the race after only 5 minutes. Stewart Wilcox (Mugen) was not going bad, but yours truly (SG Extreme) and Jamie Booth

(Inferno MP5) had terrible starts and were plumb last.

Eventually we began to work our way up and I got passed Jamie who was really fighting the handling of his car. My fate was decided just before the fuel stops when my engine cut. I had had problems throughout the week with engines which was unlucky as they have run well all year. The problem was so bad that we ended up using John Zottl's engine in the semi (Thanks John!), but still the problems seemed to follow us. A 2nd and 3rd cut finished my chances completely.

Barruzzi ended up the winner and recorded the fastest time in either semi. Daniel Vega finished an incredible 2nd ahead of young Frenchman Philippe Lachat, who earlier in the week had looked well off the pace. The final place was secured by double Champion, Roberto Ghedini. Jamie Booth put in a blinding 2nd half of the race and was being willed on by his pit crew towards the end because they could see that if he finished 5th there was a good chance that the fastest loser would come from this semi as it was quicker. Their thinking was correct and Jamie put in four 44 second laps at the end to clinch the 10th spot in the final, finding out after a long while. Phew!

In the final itself there was an unbelievably hectic start with nobody budging an inch! Samuele Lenzi (Crono) got his car around the first corner before the others and the pole man began to pull away. Michele Baruzzi was the nearest to him with Philippe Lachat (Laro) up to third after starting 4th on the grid. The two British lads, Justin Mackey (Mugen) and Jamie Booth (Inferno MP5) both had the worst starts possible and occupied the last two positions on the track.

Just after the 10 minute mark, Lachat had put on a scare and took the lead, much to the delight of the French team who were watching the final right next to me! Lenzi had made a few mistakes and had to use all his skill to keep the car on its wheels. It was later found that his rear diff was ceasing up and obviously this made the car difficult to drive. At around half distance Lachat's main worry looked like the charge of Andrea Gennari (Crono.) He had had a bad start but worked his way up to 3rd place. His lap times were exceptionally quick

Final Pos	Name	Nat	Result	Sponsor	Car	Engine	Fuel	T'mitter	Servo	Tyres Tyres	Tyres Tyres	Qual Pos
1	Philippe Lachat	F	59 laps in 45:34.25	Laro	Laro Rush	OPS	OPS	KO Esprit II	KO 1003	Medial Pro Pulsar	Medial Pro Pulsar	10
2	Michele Baruzzi	I	59 laps in 45:38.12	Crono SVM	Crono	Nova Rossi	Nova Rossi	Futaba FF3	KO 1006	Crono 'X' pattern	Crono 'X' pattern	4
3	Andrea Gennari	I	59 laps in 45:38.97	Crono N. Rossi	Crono	Nova Rossi	Nova Rossi	Futaba FF3	Futaba 9303	Pulsar	Pulsar	9
4	Samuele Lenzi	I	58 laps in 45:07.87	Crono SVM	Crono	Picco	Roga	Futaba FF3	Futaba 9303	Pulsar	Pulsar	1
5	Daniel Vega	SP	58 laps in 45:11.64	Hi Sinsa	Mugen Athlete	Mugen Uno 7	Aero-model	Sanwa Exzes	KO 1003	Pulsar	Pulsar	32
6	Justin Mackey	GB	58 laps in 45:29.78	Mugen T. Longshaw N. Rossi	Mugen Athlete	Nova Rossi	Model T'nics Duraglo 25%	KO Ex-10	KO 1003	Pulsar	Pulsar	17
7	Roberto Ghedini	I	58 laps in 45:40.98	Berg-onzoni OPS	Berg-onzoni Flash	OPS	OPS	Sanwa Exzes	Sanwa ERG-XZ	Pulsar	Pulsar	6
8	Alex Laffranchi	I	57 laps in 45:02.49	Picco	Kyosho Turbo Inferno	Picco	Picco	KO Esprit II	KO 1006	Kyosho 'X' pattern	Kyosho 'X' pattern	3
9	Jamie Booth	GB	57 laps in 45:32.61	Kyosho Ripmax OS KO	Kyosho MP5	OS RZB	Duraglo 25%	Futaba FF3	KO 1003	Kyosho 'X' pattern	Kyosho 'X' pattern	8
10	Alessandro Catozzi	I	44 laps in 34:20.69	TAG Mod-els OPS	TAG	OPS	TAG	Sanwa Exzes	Sanwa ERG-XZ	Pulsar	Pulsar	5

1:8th RALLYCROSS EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP SPOLETO, ITALY

tech chart

considering the state of the track and if he could keep it on its wheels he could catch Lachat rather than second placed Barruzzi.

Lachat continued to lead after his fuel stops and began to pull slightly away. With 6 minutes left he came in for his last fuel stop. On exiting the pit lane, Lachat had managed to remain ahead of the two Cronos of Baruzzi and Genaari who were re-fuelling less and it was just a matter of keeping his nerve for the last 5 minutes. The two Brits were still finding it very hard, although Justin Mackey was much steadier than Jamie Booth and had moved up a couple of places.

Alessandro Catozzi (Tag) finished 10th after his OPS engine gave up on him. 9th finished a slightly disappointed Jamie Booth (Inferno MP5.) The car had not looked good during the final and it was obviously very difficult to drive on such a bumpy track. The bumps cannot be understated, far worse than is ever witnessed in the UK and Jamie confirmed that it was the bumpiest track he had ever driven on. Nevertheless, to make the Euros final is no mean achievement and it was still an excellent result overall. A very disappointing 8th was Alex Laffranchi (T/Inferno.) The Italian champion did not look good and was caught up in too many battles during the race to ever figure at the front. He ended only a few seconds behind Ghedini of Italy (Flash) who never made up the time he lost off the track when a stone lodged in his wheel...

Final British Standards

Name	Position
Justin Mackey (Mugen)	6th
Jamie Booth (Kyosho)	9th
Stewart Wilcox (Mugen)	15th
Lawrence Harris (Kyosho)	16th
Mark Stitson (SG Extreme)	19th
David Crompton (Laro)	21st
Ian Oddie (Flash)	29th
John Zottl (Mugen)	34th
John Skidmore (Flash)	35th
Tommy Chung (Hodr)	57th
Trevor Cadby (Laro)	58th
Danny Conway (Kyosho)	67th
Mike Cradock (Kyosho)	69th
Nick Soothill (Mugen)	85th
Nick Simmerson (Crono)	123rd
Gary Marsden (Tag)	125th
Jon Hazelwood (Crono)	131st

Justin Mackey (Mugen) eventually climbed to 6th place by the end of the race. This was a tremendous result for Justin. He had driven a very good 2nd half of the race to pick up places whilst others faltered. Justin had made the final just as his Dad had said to me in the morning, even before Justin had raced his 1/4 final! By ending 6th, Justin surpassed the 7th place that he achieved in Portugal a couple of years ago to record the best result of his life. Well done!

5th came Daniel Vega from Spain. The flying Mugen completed a memorable day for the Spaniard who only qualified for the 1/8th finals. He finished 4 seconds ahead of Samuele Lenzi who had done well considering the problems with the car, and

surely he would have been close to winning otherwise? The top 3 were away on 59 laps. Andrea Gennari ended 3rd but should have won.

With about 15 minutes to go, he had the race at his mercy when he made 3 or 4 mistakes in 1 lap. This crazy lap cost him lots of time and most probably Th. race. He did have a tremendous battle on the final lap with Baruzzi but missed 2nd place by 0.87 seconds after 45 minutes!

Lachat did keep his nerve in the final minutes. He ended only 3 seconds ahead of the other two but this was mainly due to the fact that he slowed down on the last lap, just to be sure. Lachat had finally confirmed the promise he has shown, particularly the FTD at the Pendle Euros last year when inexperience in the semi caused him to break the car. The tears this time were only of joy, and I think everyone, except the Italians, were pleased that he had won. It was pleasing because of the way the Italians had gone about trying to win the Championship. Crono in particular must have been gutted after spending so much money to get 6 or 7 top drivers to drive for them only to see a Frenchman driving a Laro win!

