

1/8 RallyCross

1995 EFRA European Champs

Jamie's new Kyosho MP 5. Straight out of the box it made the A Final!



The British Team resplendent in their BRCA shirts.

The venue for the 14th European Championships was Spoleto, Italy, and just for once, as you'll know, it wasn't a case of going abroad to find some decent weather! The British Team was 17 strong, taking up the original sixteen allocated places, plus one extra given to us on our arrival.

So, it was Spoleto or bust, either by flying or driving there. For myself it was the latter, so with a convoy of five vehicles we travelled down to Dover for the 6.15 a.m. ferry on the Sunday morning, only to find we already had problems: Two of the convoy failed to show up, but we waited at Calais for the next ferry to dock, and, sure enough, there they were - an hour late!

We set off across Europe (a word of warning to prospective travellers, France motorway tolls are expensive!), travelling North to Belgium then

through Luxembourg, Germany and Austria, then via the Brenner Pass, into Italy, thus avoiding any more tolls. Once in Italy, again there are motorway tolls but they are actually very reasonable.

We spent the night just inside the border, continuing our journey to Spoleto on the Monday morning. The meeting's 'organisers' had up to this point not forwarded the Team with any information whatsoever, and all the Hotel bookings had been made without any assistance at all. Now, this may seem hard to believe, but on arriving in the town of Spoleto and booking into our Hotel, no one even knew the location of the track! Luckily for us, the receptionist spoke a little English and gave us directions, for which we were very thankful!

Rules - What Rules?

On Monday afternoon, we decided to pop along to the track to see it for ourselves, only to find to our absolute amazement that drivers were out practising! The rules state quite categorically that no racing must take place on the track for one month before the event, but here we were two days before the event's official opening and all the Italians were out practising. Well, what would you do? That's right, we joined them! Again this was the order of the day for Tuesday.

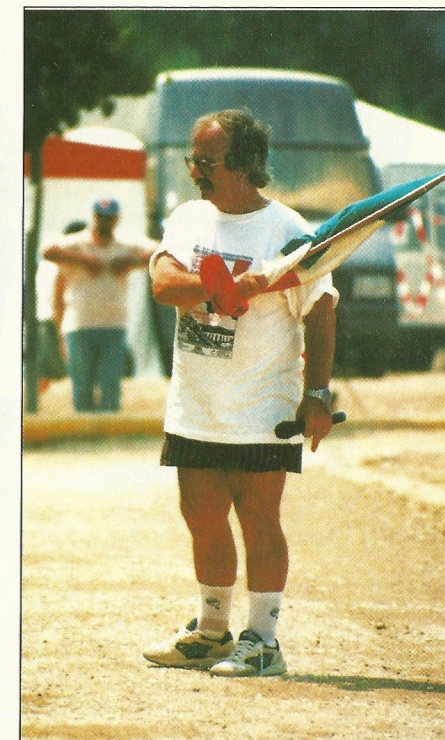
Chaos Reigned...

On Wednesday morning there was absolute uproar at the track: The Italians had broken just about every rule in the book, and Stephane Veaux

Philippe Lachat Wins For France And Laro Kevin Griffin Reports From Spoleto, Italy



Jamie Booth thought it sensible to stay in the shade...



Maurizio Calvari was appointed as Race Director at the last minute, after the first allowed open practice before the event started!



Friday evening's entertainment: Mini motor bike racing. Jamie Booth prepares himself, only to find he couldn't fit!

was way too late. By this time, the meeting was rapidly turning into a farce!

Qualifying - At Last!

So, Friday was already upon us. On arriving at the gates to the pit lane everyone was asked to book in again before they would be allowed in the pit area. Yet another delay, but racing did

eventually start, a little late but the 1st Round of qualifying got underway to a big sigh of relief all round.

Andrea Gennari set the fastest time in Round 1, now driving for the Crono Team, as is Maurizio Monesi. What was a real surprise was that they were also both using Nova Rossi engines, rather than their long favoured OPS motors. The top British driver was Jamie Booth with his new Kyosho Inferno MP5 in 6th place. Believe it or not (by now nothing would have surprised me!), the track was already badly cut up, thanks primarily due to the amount of illegal practising that had been going on, but with the new system of qualifying in use, this wouldn't actually prove to be a problem.

The Qualifying System

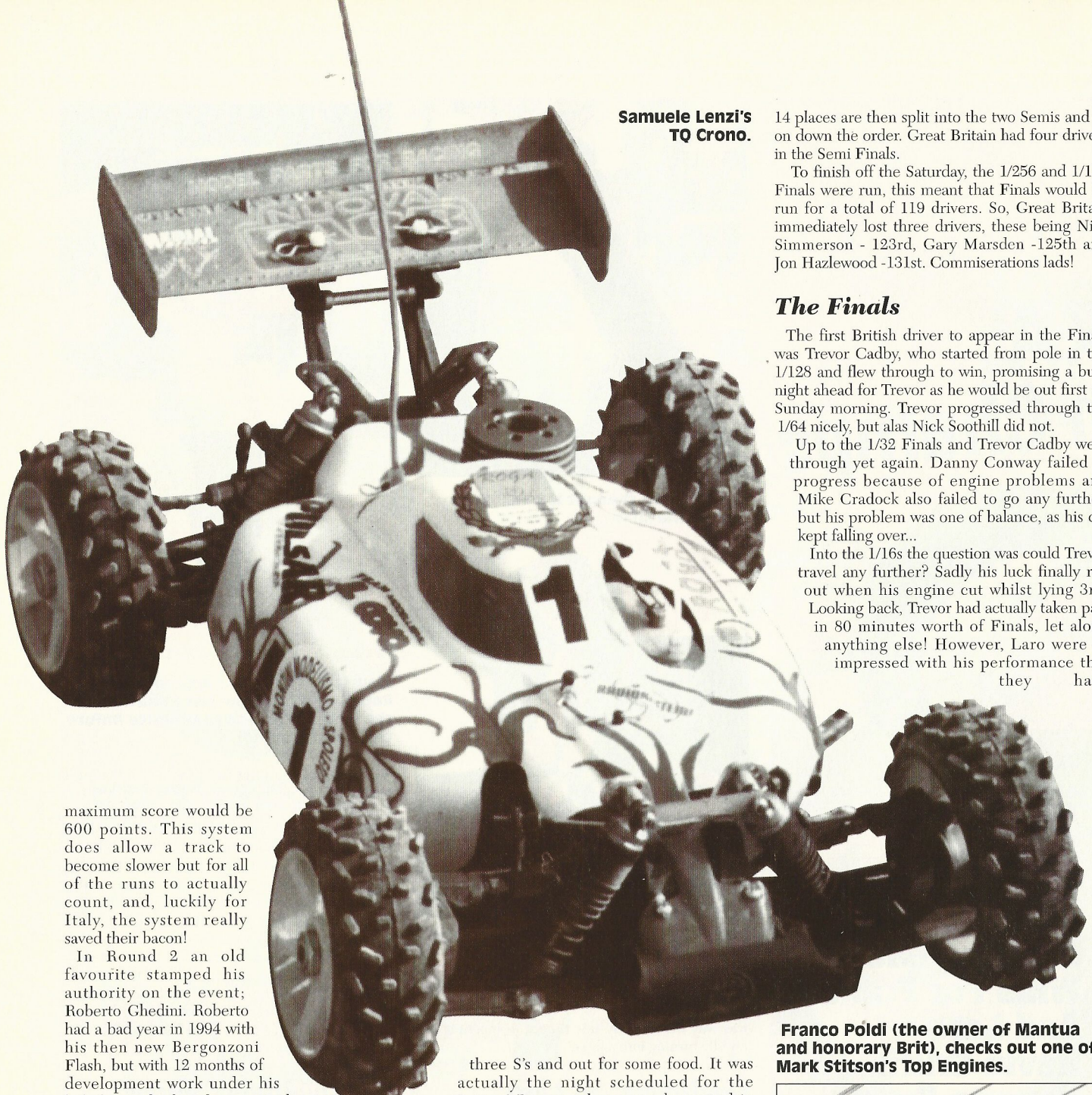
For anyone who may have forgotten how the new system works, it is based on Points per Round, eg 200 Points for TQ, then running down the order. The best three Rounds count, thus a

the E.F.R.A. 1/8 RallyCross Chairman was fuming. The Race Director was dismissed on the spot, and there were numerous Team Managers meetings. The outcome? Absolutely nothing happened all morning. The first timed practice Round was due to start at 2.30pm, but needless to say it didn't. In fact, it was nearer 4.30 by the time it got underway, and went on until it was nearly dark. What a marvellous start (I don't think!).

By Thursday morning, we were all dreading what would happen next. Well, this time it was computer problems that delayed the morning's proceeds into the afternoon, so the official opening ceremony was cancelled, and practising got underway again in the afternoon. We should have then had the drivers reseeded according to their timed practice times, then another run to check for interference problems - Wrong again, it



Samuele Lenzi (left) took FTD with his Crono.



Samuele Lenzi's TQ Crono.

maximum score would be 600 points. This system does allow a track to become slower but for all of the runs to actually count, and, luckily for Italy, the system really saved their bacon!

In Round 2 an old favourite stamped his authority on the event; Roberto Ghedini. Roberto had a bad year in 1994 with his then new Bergonzoni Flash, but with 12 months of development work under his belt, he was back at the top. Mark Stitson showed the Brits the way round by qualifying 6th.

The last Round of qualifying on Friday was taken by Samuele Lenzi with his Crono, so after three qualifying Rounds who was leading? Surprise, surprise, it wasn't any one of the three drivers that had netted an individual Round F.T.D. It was in fact the Italian, Marco Zopelletto, driving a Mugen powered by a Mugen Uno engine, closely followed by Samuele Lenzi and Luca Bucarelli with their Cronos.

What had happened to Andrea Gennari? His second and third Round times were pretty abysmal, and with an overall position of 60th, Andrea was definitely not a happy chappie! The top Brit was Jamie Booth with the all new, first time out Turbo Inferno MP5, lying in a good 5th place.

So, back we then went to the Hotel for a quick

Lenzi Takes TQ!

Saturday saw quite a number of bruised Brits, after the evening's racing at the motor cycle track, but they were still determined to return for another go!

The last two qualifying Rounds of qualifying went to Samuele Lenzi, giving him a total score of 598 points. Zopelletto finished up 2nd and up to 3rd was Alex Laffranoli with his Inferno. As for the Brits, Jamie Booth was 8th overall.

The new rules state that the top qualifier goes straight through to the main Final, with the next

14 places are then split into the two Semis and so on down the order. Great Britain had four drivers in the Semi Finals.

To finish off the Saturday, the 1/256 and 1/128 Finals were run, this meant that Finals would be run for a total of 119 drivers. So, Great Britain immediately lost three drivers, these being Nick Simmerson - 123rd, Gary Marsden - 125th and Jon Hazlewood - 131st. Commiserations lads!

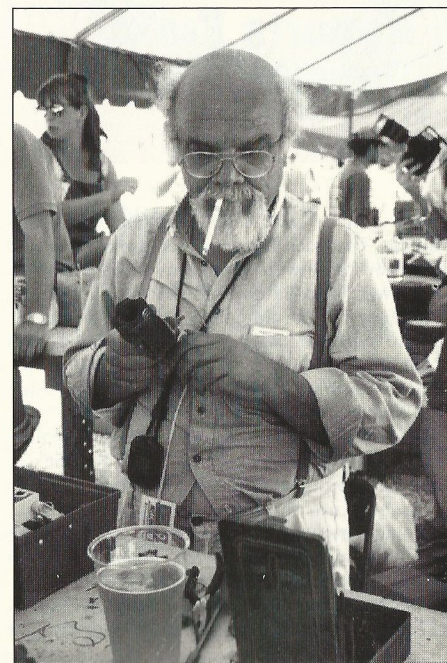
The Finals

The first British driver to appear in the Finals was Trevor Cadby, who started from pole in the 1/128 and flew through to win, promising a busy night ahead for Trevor as he would be out first on Sunday morning. Trevor progressed through the 1/64 nicely, but alas Nick Soothill did not.

Up to the 1/32 Finals and Trevor Cadby went through yet again. Danny Conway failed to progress because of engine problems and Mike Cradock also failed to go any further, but his problem was one of balance, as his car kept falling over...

Into the 1/16s the question was could Trevor travel any further? Sadly his luck finally ran out when his engine cut whilst lying 3rd. Looking back, Trevor had actually taken part in 80 minutes worth of Finals, let alone anything else! However, Laro were so impressed with his performance that they have

Franco Poldi (the owner of Mantua and honorary Brit), checks out one of Mark Stitson's Top Engines.



8th	JAMIE BOOTH	KYOSHO INFERNO MP5
11th	LAWRENCE HARRIS	KYOSHO INFERNO MP5
12th	DAVID CROMPTON	LARO RUSH
14th	MARK STITSON	S.G. EXTREME



The track before it began to resemble a bomb site. The track markings were 9" concrete pipes.

promised to supply him with a new car. Very nice too! Also in the 1/16s were Tommy Chung and John Zottl; Tommy was just off the pace with an ill handling car, but John made it through with his Mugen.

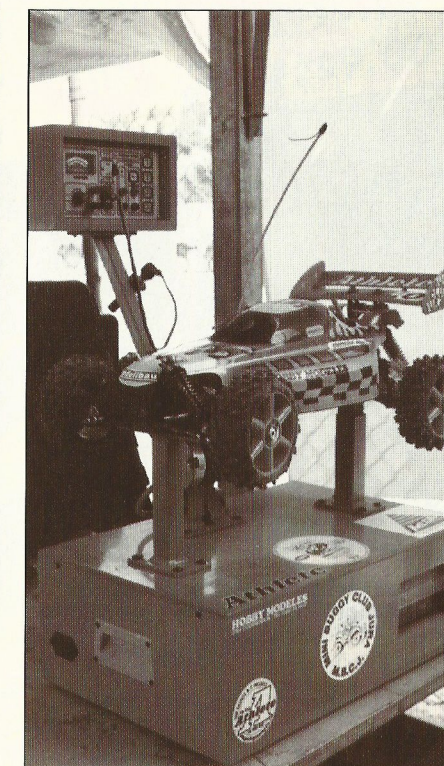
By the time we reached the 1/8s, we were midway through the day, and boy, was it warm! All week the temperature had been in the region of 110° and today was no exception, so everyone stayed in the marquee's shade or by the refreshment area where there was chilled beer or coke on tap. Sheer heaven!

Back to the 1/8 where John Zottl lined up in 9th place. His Mugen stormed through to take 3rd place and booked his place in the 1/4s. The right tyre choice was still being argued about, even at this late stage; Medial Pro rubber was the most popular, either Turbo Rats or Pulsars. Turbo Rats, although a spiked tyre, were very forgiving over the horrendously rough track that now resembled the Moon's Sea of Tranquillity, whereas the

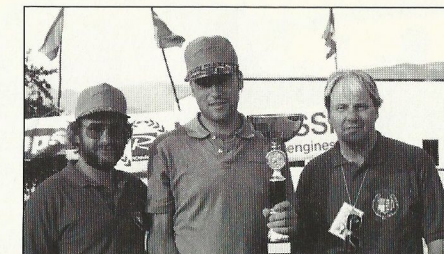
Pulsar's paddle type tread did give more traction.

Going into the 1/4 Finals, Great Britain had no less than 11 drivers still in there out of our total Team strength of 17, so we still had a good chance of pushing some through into the main A Final. The first 1/4 Final to be run had Justin Mackey on pole and Ian Oddie sitting on 5th place. Justin held the lead for a short while, but was being pushed very hard by Sweden's Magnus Palsson and his Laro. Justin wisely decided that it was better to let him go rather than to tangle, settling for 3rd place and comfortably finishing in front of Daniel Reckward, the F.T.D. man at the '94 World's in Austria, whilst Ian Oddie had a lengthy pit stop which put him out of contention.

In the second 1/4 Final we had Chalky Skidmore, Stewart Wilcox and John Zottl. Chalky retired after only two laps after losing a drive cup from his Thorsen diff, then John Zottl's rear suspension broke on lap 12, but Stewart flew the flag for Britain well by coming in 3rd.



This Mega starter box/stand was spotted in the Swiss pit area. It looks like a full size rolling road!

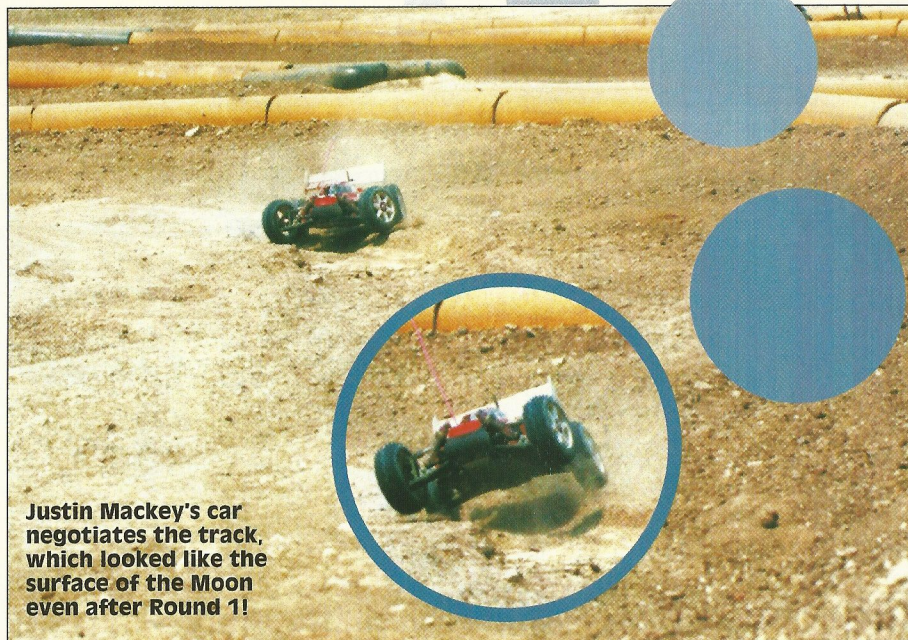


The top British Team: Justin Mackey (driver-centre), flanked by Kevin Griffin (left) assistant mechanic (! Ed) to the number one mechanic, Dave Mackey.

NAME	QUAL POS	FINAL POS	LAP SCORE	SPONSOR	MAKE OF CAR	ENGINE	FUEL	STEERING SERVO	TYRES		TRANS
									FRONT	REAR	
Samuele Lenzi Italy	1	4	58 45.07.87	Crono SVM	Crono	Picco	Roga	Futaba 9303	Pulsar	Pulsar	Futaba
Michele Baruzzi Italy	2	2	59 45.38.12	Crono SVM	Crono	Nova Rossi	Nova Rossi	KO 1006	SVM X	SVM X	JR
Daniel Vega Spain	3	5	58 45.11.64	Hisinsa	Mugen	Mugen Uno 7	Acro Modelo	KO 1003	Pulsar	Pulsar	Sanwa
Philippe Lachat France	4	1	59 45.34.25	Laro	Laro	OPS	OPS	KO 1003	Pulsar	Pulsar	KO Esprit
Alex Laffranchi Italy	5	8	57 45.02.49	Picco	Turbo Inferno	Picco	Picco	KO 1006	Kyosho X	Kyosho X	KO
Andrea Gennari Italy	6	3	59 45.38.97	Nova Rossi	Crono	Nova Rossi	Nova Rossi	Futaba 9303	Pulsar	Pulsar	Futaba
Roberto Ghedini Italy	7	7	58 45.40.98	Bergonzoni OPS	Flash	OPS	OPS	Sanwa ERGXZ	Pulsar	Pulsar	Sanwa
Alessandro Catozzi Italy	8	10	44 34.20.69	Tag, OPS	Tag	OPS	Tag Fuel	ERGXZ	Pulsar	Pulsar	Sanwa
Justin Mackey Great Britain	9	6	58 45.29.78	Ted Longshaw Mugen, Nova Rossi	Mugen	Nova Rossi	Modelltechnics 25% Duraglio	KO 1003	Pulsar	Pulsar	KO EX10
Jamie Booth Great Britain	10	9	57 45.32.61	Ripmax, Kyosho OS	Inferno MP5	OS	Modelltechnics 25% Duraglio	KO 1003	Kyosho X	Kyosho X	FF3



Phillipe Lachat hoists his winners trophy aloft. It's almost bigger than he is!



Justin Mackey's car negotiates the track, which looked like the surface of the Moon even after Round 1!



Justin Mackey chats with Sanada, Mugen's designer. There's a new car on the way...

The Semi Finals

We were now into the Semi Finals and again a change of rules for this year. As I've already mentioned, the TQ man goes straight through into the main Final, where he's joined by the top four out of the two Semi's plus the fastest fifth place finisher from either Semi.

It was now the middle of the afternoon, and the first Semi featured Lawrence Harris and Justin Mackey for Great Britain. Alex Laffranchi's Inferno won in convincing style, with Andrea Gennari's Crono 2nd, looking much relieved after a terrible start to his week. Alessandro Catozzi's Tag was 3rd, with our man Justin Mackey 4th. Lawrence failed to go through after finishing 7th, suffering a 10 second penalty awarded to him for corner cutting. The current World Champ,

Maurizio Monesi, also failed to progress after making a number of mistakes.

In the other Semi Final there were no less than four British drivers, all being willed on by 'The Force'! David Crompton was the first to retire after breaking a front shock, then Mark Stitson, who had borrowed an engine, had it expire on him, so exit Mark after what must have been his best ever Euro's. His car performed brilliantly, especially with the help of Franko Poldi, the man behind Mantua, who spent most of his time in the British pit area and even stayed in our Hotel with us! Stewart Wilcox was just off the pace, but Jamie Booth was well in the hot seat, for he crossed the line in 5th place, actually knocking over the race director Maurizio Calvari in his last blast to the finish line! Thankfully, it was enough to give him that 10th place in the main Final!

The 'Biggie'

The main Final had been scheduled to start at 3.30, but in typical Italian style, it wasn't until 5.30pm that the race began... Samuele Lenzi led the field away with his Crono after asking for a delay to the start because of a problem with his rear diff. After 5 minutes Lenzi was still in the lead, with Philippe Lachat's Laro in 2nd and Michele Baruzzi 3rd. The two Brits were bringing up the rear but there was plenty of time.

At the 1/3 distance mark of 15 minutes, Lachat had taken the lead, but was being chased hard by Baruzzi's Crono. Ghedini was the first to have problems, losing a lap with a failed servo horn, but his pit crew quickly got him back on the track. Justin was hauling his way up the field, excellent cool headed pit work keeping him well on course. Back at the front though, the battle was really on between Lachat and Baruzzi as they constantly changed places, with Gennari now very close in 3rd place after a slow start.

At the 35 minute mark Catozzi's car ground to a halt when his crankshaft snapped, whilst Jamie Booth was 9th with little hope of climbing higher up the ladder. Justin was now 6th, with Ghedini only 12 seconds behind Justin with his Flash. Justin's Mugen was performing brilliantly, and the Nova Rossi engine that he'd used all week wasn't missing a beat!

Back at the front, Gennari took the lead when the other two pitted for fuel, but he then proceeded to suffer total brainfade and was soon overhauled. In the closing stages, Philippe Lachat consolidated his lead with some very consistent and quick laps, letting the two Italians fight it out for 2nd place, the place eventually going to Baruzzi, with Gennari 3rd. Our man Justin Mackey, who was still on the same lap as the winning car, finished 6th, and Jamie finished 9th. Well done lads!

The awards ceremony was more than 2 1/2 hours late, but at least the event had eventually taken place thanks to Maurizio Calvari, the result being that we now have a new Euro Champion; Philippe Lachat, who fought hard, drove well and thoroughly deserved to win. With regard to the British Team, we performed well, getting two of our drivers into the main Final, which was more than any other country could achieve other than Italy, but then what could you expect after all that practice..!