

# The 2000 EFRA Off Road European Championships

# Swedish Sojourn

This year's event was hosted by Trelleborgs MK which is a very large motor club having some 500 members. Their main interest is full size car racing and particularly rallying where they organise one of the largest in Sweden. Their model car racing track is built in part of a farm complex that is owned by the local town community. Trelleborg itself is a busy major port at the south end of Sweden.

First impressions on arriving at the track were very favourable. The facilities looked superb. The club had the use of a disused barn, which made an excellent pit area and a further marquee outside to provide plenty of space. The rostrum, race control, catering and so forth were all of a very high standard. The cheeseburgers were very good and very reasonably priced - I know, I ate enough!

The Race Director was Joakim Berg, an exceptionally helpful individual who went out of his way to make everything work and ensure every-

Joakim Berg - Race Director



one was happy. He headed a full team of equally helpful people who all spoke perfect English. Puts us Brits to shame doesn't it?

## The Track

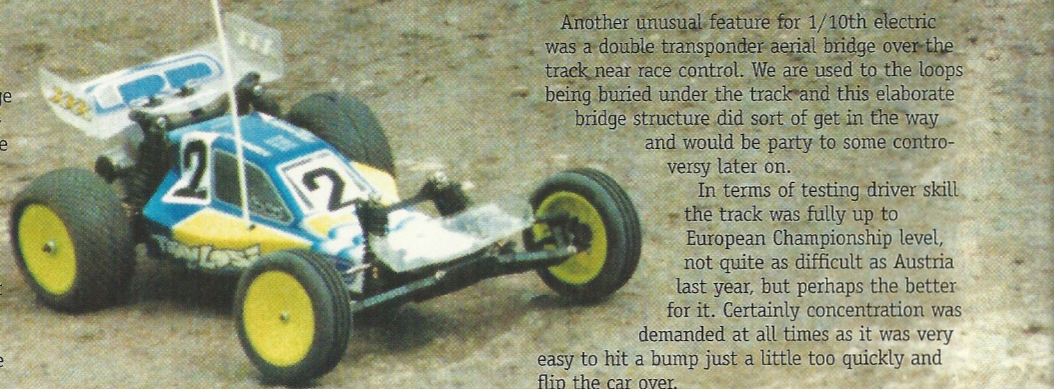
The track surface had been very well prepared and the natural dirt had been bound with molasses, which added a certain something when it got warm. There was a huge straight, plenty of fast sections, a superb double jump, a number of small bump type jumps and then the real killer - a 'washboard' section that nobody liked.

The track was generally a little narrow but complied with the 2.5 metre requirement. The big surprise was the almost total lack of any track markings or borders. The track edges had been painted white but there was nothing to stop competitors driving their cars off the defined track, avoiding the bumpy bits and then rejoining the track later on. This was quickly pointed out and the club very swiftly produced some wood pieces to make some barriers.



Jukka with spoils of victory

Chris Doughty going for a pass on Hubert Honigl



Another unusual feature for 1/10th electric was a double transponder aerial bridge over the track near race control. We are used to the loops being buried under the track and this elaborate bridge structure did sort of get in the way and would be party to some controversy later on.

In terms of testing driver skill the track was fully up to European Championship level, not quite as difficult as Austria last year, but perhaps the better for it. Certainly concentration was demanded at all times as it was very easy to hit a bump just a little too quickly and flip the car over.

## 2wd Qualifying

So, after the free practise day which gave everybody four ten minute sessions on the track, the five rounds of qualifying got underway. Round by round had been chosen which is really the only option when the event is split over two days. We then had a glitch over the understanding of first round starting order being by lottery. The guy calling the numbers was trying to invent a new order for every heat and occasionally got it wrong or called the numbers too slowly. This meant some cars started out of sequence or in one obvious case the last car wasn't started until after the first car had already completed a lap.

## Round 1

Peter Pinisch, the driver who took TQ in Austria last year was right on the pace and quite a bit quicker than anyone else. This confounded those that had been saying he was only any good on his own track. Benjamin Groschel from Germany was second fastest and then we had Ian Kenningley ahead of Jukka Steenari.

## Round 2

The Brits really got motoring in round 2 with Chris Doughty, at his first EC, going fastest and crucially quicker than Pinisch's time in round 1. Neil Cragg was right there in second ahead of Jukka, who was just ahead of Ian Kenningley.

## Round 3

Peter went quickest but still Chris had the fastest time set in round 2. Best of the Brits was Craig Drescher taking 5th in the round. So, as we went into the overnight break, Peter Pinisch was holding the top spot with two round victories,



2wd ceremony with Peter, Hubert and Chris

Jukka was looking well placed in second and Ian Kenningley had scored consistently well to be third.

Craig was in 6th and took a look at Peter's car to see if there was anything giving him such an awesome set up for this track. The shock was that Peter had fitted the front steering blocks on the wrong way round. The caster remained the same but the wheelbase and front end geometry was all different - could this be the secret? Peter hadn't realised the mistake but certainly wasn't going to change it now!

## Round 4

Another day and Peter was quick again but not fast enough to stop a flying Hubert Honigl from setting a new overall fastest time for the track. Jukka Steenari also had a great run but converting the car to Peter's specification didn't help Craig who was well off the pace.

## Round 5

All still very much to play for and most of the top drivers seemed to be in heat one. Peter decided to go into full attack mode and even his out lap was unbelievably quick. The luck and breaks were all his for that five minutes and the result was an astonishing time, 3.5 seconds faster than anything done before. In the shadow of this achievement great runs went in from Hubert Honigl, Chris Doughty and Craig Drescher.

## The Finals

### A Final - Leg 1

Tyres were a difficult call and the top ten were split between ProLine Bow Ties in M3 compound and Losi Big Shots in Silver compound. Motors were relatively restrained with nothing hotter than a 10 turn. This really hammers it home that traction and drivability matter more than outright horsepower.

Peter got away well but soon crashed out leaving Hubert in the lead. Chris Doughty must have had firewater in his veins as he was all over Hubert and put him under massive pressure. A couple of laps later and Chris found some traction from somewhere and powered past Hubert for the lead and then started to draw away. Hubert fought back, this was one of the best races we could wish for. Then disaster! Chris and Hubert touched going down the straight and Chris came off worst, upside down under those transponder bridges. The marshal at that point clearly had no idea what was going on, or what he was supposed to do about it, and it seemed to take an age before someone ran from another post to retrieve Chris' car. Hubert won with Peter in second, Chris ended up fourth.

### A Final - Leg 2

Peter did the same again, started well and then crashed. Neither of the previous European Champions, Jukka and Craig, looked like being competitive and four drivers were dominating proceedings. Chris Doughty came through a few

mishaps by others to lead from Peter who tried too hard to make up the gap and made costly mistakes. Chris took a famous victory, Peter was second again and Hubert third.

## A Final - Leg 3

So, Hubert and Chris had won one leg each with Peter second in both. This could go any which way! Peter got away well but Chris crashed out and fell back. Richard Barton made a famous start and all the way from ninth on the grid he got up into third. Hubert was putting Peter under pressure and this was the case for many laps. One minute to go and Peter seemed to be keeping his composure but then, in the final 30 seconds, Hubert found that something extra and achieved the pass. Peter made a return play over the washboard section and almost pulled it off but Hubert held on and took the leg. Richard Barton held on for third.

## 2wd Summary

Amazing racing and a very worthy winner in Hubert Honigl. He displayed true champion class and gave Losi another European title for the XXX and put LRP in the frame for the power and electronics. Chris Doughty - on the podium at his first ever EC - magic! The prize giving was a suitably splendid affair with all the flowers, medals, roses, trophies, handshakes, hugs, fanfares and of course, champagne spraying!

## 4wd Qualifying

The practise day started well enough but then the black clouds rolled in and by lunchtime the racetrack looked like a boating lake. The club did have a lot of covers but the rain was just too heavy. There was no chance of further practice that day and we all went home. The club guys waited for the rain to stop and then set to with huge sponge rollers and a massive Aqua-Vac to soak up all the water. They did a great job and what's more, they came back at 5.00 am the next morning with several propane fired heat guns. We arrived at the track to find them still hard at work burning off the last traces of moisture. An incredible effort and I am not sure if any other club I know would have been able or willing to do the same.

## Round 1

The track was being run the other way round which was fine but we just had to have the



The TQ winning Associated B3 of Peter Pinisch

glitch with the start order again! This time the announcer, who had tried so very hard in 2wd, had decided that 1-10 was going to be the order no matter what had been chosen in the lottery. It was soon sorted out and we got underway.

Jukka Steenari, the reigning World and European Champion, was clearly in the right mood and set a stunning first round time. The only one near him was Peter Pinisch and the rest were five or more seconds off the pace. Ian Kenningley showed best for Britain with fourth in the round.

## Round 2

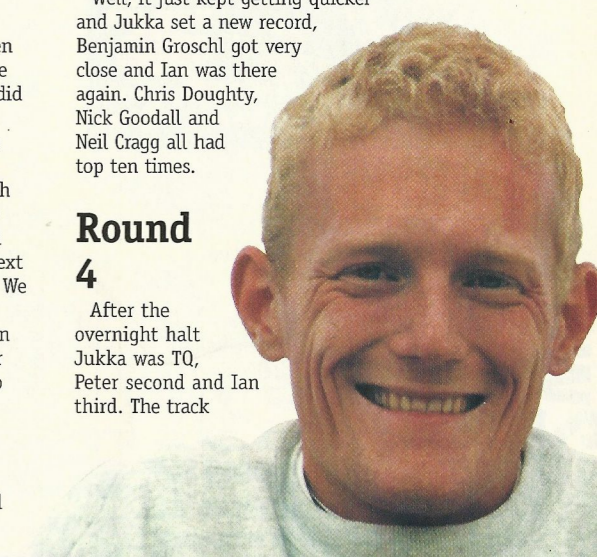
Peter Pinisch hit the pace in this one, beating Jukka's time in round 1. Hot on his heels was Ian Kenningley who also beat Jukka's time. Jukka himself had to settle for third in round 2.

## Round 3

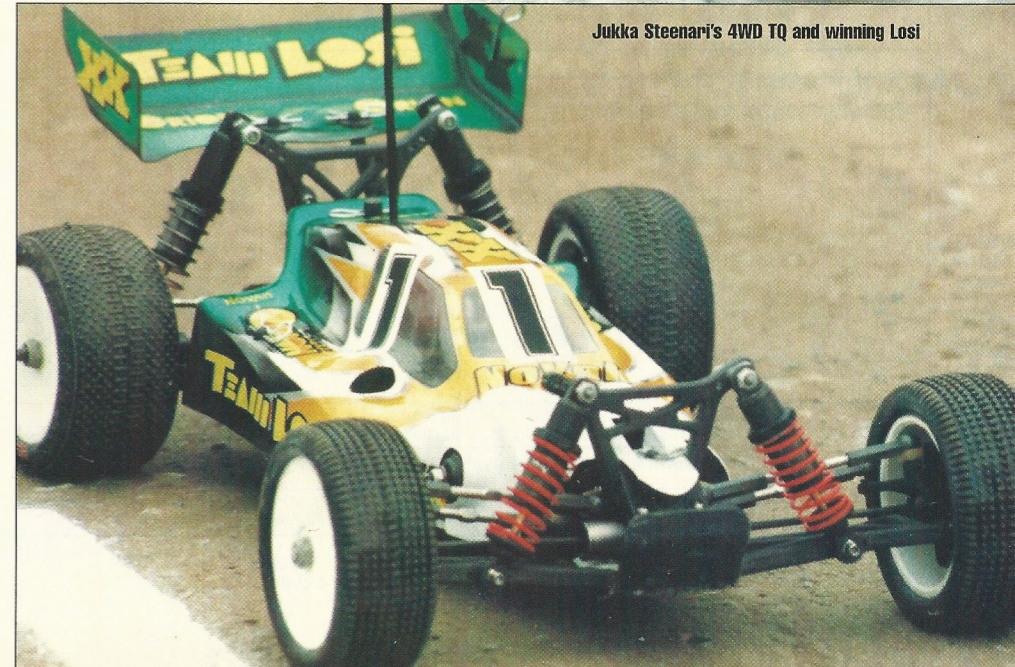
Well, it just kept getting quicker and Jukka set a new record, Benjamin Groschl got very close and Ian was there again. Chris Doughty, Nick Goodall and Neil Cragg all had top ten times.

## Round 4

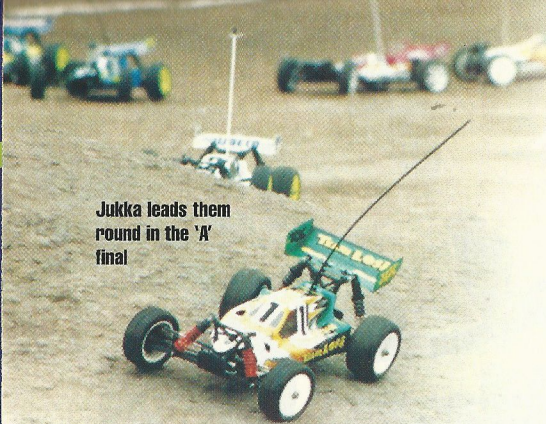
After the overnight halt Jukka was TQ, Peter second and Ian third. The track



Jukka Steenari's 4WD TQ and winning Losi







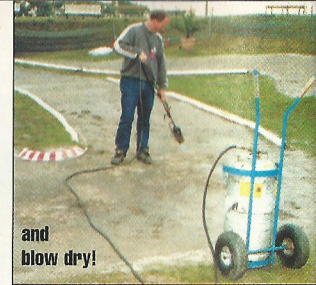
Jukka leads them round in the 'A' final



Wash...



vac...



and blow dry!

wasn't quite so quick in the morning, probably due to moisture but the Brits came shining through. Neil Cragg fastest in the round, Ian second and Nick fourth.

## Round 5

What a round! Jukka went out and made sure he stayed in the TQ spot by setting another track record. Hubert Honigl had a great run and then it was all the Brits again, Ian, Nick, Neil and Chris Doughty. What a great way to finish off.

Ian Kenningly - fast all week



Chris Doughty getting ready for that great A final run

## The Finals A Final - Leg 1

Jukka led this one from start to finish although Peter Pinisch did try and step the pace up. No one could match Jukka though and Peter gave up trying and settled for second. Neil Cragg gave Hubert Honigl a good race for third but Hubert just managed to resist.

## A Final - Leg 2

A bit of a mess at the start but Jukka emerged unscathed and a repeat of leg 1 took place. Peter managed to keep very close to Jukka but just couldn't find that little bit extra and had to settle for second place again. Ian Kenningly picked up third.

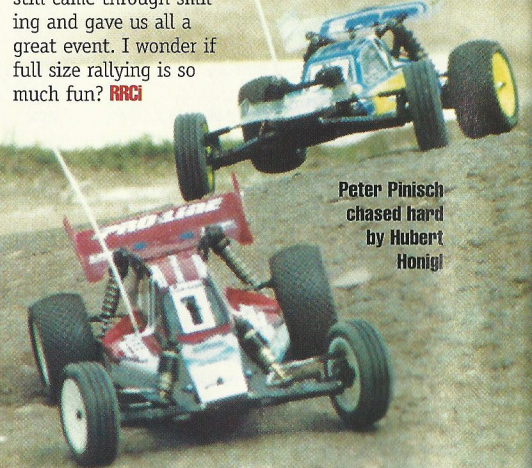
## A Final - Leg 3

Jukka elected to go despite having already won the championship. Peter crashed out early on which put Ian Kenningly into second. Ian pushed as hard as he knew how but even he didn't have an answer to Jukka's pace. Peter came home third which broke a remarkable run of second places. He had finished second in all three legs of the 2wd A final and second in the first two legs of the 4wd final.

all the pomp and ceremony. Jukka confirmed as European Champion again giving Losi another title with the XX4 and Orion another European Championship on the motive power front. Ian Kenningly drove very fast and consistently and placed on the podium in third - great job. Neil Cragg picked up fifth, Nick Goodall was eighth and Chris Doughty finished up tenth.

## Epilogue

An extremely enjoyable week in most agreeable surroundings, and with excellent hosts. Trelleborg MK made a fantastic effort and even in the most trying moments they still came through smiling and gave us all a great event. I wonder if full size rallying is so much fun? **RRCI**



Peter Pinisch chased hard by Hubert Honigl

## 4wd Summary

The final prize-giving was a grand affair with

Final	Qual	Driver	Car	Motor	Gear Ratio	Cells	Speedo	Radio	Servo	Front Tyres	Rear Tyres
2	1	Peter Pinisch	Associated B3	Reedy 10 x 2	19/81	Reedy R3K Panasonic	LRP ICP V7.1	Sanwa M8	Sanwa ERGZR	Losi Wide Body Rib Red	Proline Bow Tie - M3
1	2	Hubert Honigl	Losi XXX	LRP Fusion 11 x 2	21/84	LRP Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	Sanwa M8	Sanwa ERGZR	Losi Wide Body Rib Red	Proline Bow Tie - M3
3	3	Chris Doughty	Losi XXX	LRP Fusion 11 x 3	21/84	LRP Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	JR X756	K01001	Losi Wide Body Rib Silver	Losi Big Shot Silver
8	4	Jukka Steenari	Losi XXX	Orion Chrome 11 x 2	22/78	Orion Vmax+ RC2400 SP	Novak Cyclone	Sanwa M8	Sanwa	Proline Rib M3	Losi X2000 Red
4	5	Benjamin Groschel	Losi XXX	Trinity D4 11 x 2	23/82	Trinity Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	Sanwa M8	Graupner Digital	Losi Wide Body Rib Silver	Proline Bow Tie - M3
9	6	Ian Kenningly	Losi XXX	Trinity D4 10 x 2	23/78	Trinity RC2000	LRP IPC V7.1	Futaba FF3	K01015	Losi Wide Body Rib Silver	Losi Big Shot Silver
7	7	Neil Cragg	Associated B3	Reedy Fury 10 x 5	21/81	Reedy R3K Panasonic 3000	Novak Cyclone	KO Vantage	Airtronics	Losi Wide Body Rib Silver	Proline Bow Tie - M3
10	8	Craig Drescher	Associated B3	Reedy Fury 10 x 5	21/81	Reedy R3K Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	KO Vantage	Airtronics	Losi Wide Body Rib Silver	Losi Big Shot Silver
5	9	Richard Barton	Schumacher Fireblade EVO	Orion Chrome 12 x 3	24/84	Schumacher Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	Futaba 3VC	K01015	Losi Wide Body Rib Red	Losi Big Shot Silver
6	10	Teemu Leino	Schumacher Fireblade EVO	Orion Chrome 11 x 2	18/92	Orion V-Max+ RC2400 SP	LRP IPC V7.1	Sanwa M8	Sanwa	Proline Rib Red	Proline Bow Tie - M3

Final	Qual	Driver	Car	Motor	Gear Ratio	Cells	Speedo	Radio	Servo	Front Tyres	Rear Tyres
1	1	Jukka Steenari	Losi XX4	Orion Chrome 10 x 2	18/86	Orion Sanyo 3000	Novak Cyclone	Sanwa M8	Sanwa ERGZR	Losi Blockhead Red	Losi Taper Pin Red
2	2	Peter Pinisch	Losi XX4	Reedy Fury 9 x 2	19/87	Reedy R3K Panasonic 3000	LRP ICP V7.1	Sanwa M8	Sanwa ERGZR	Losi Taper Pin Red	Losi Taper Pin Red
3	3	Ian Kenningly	Losi XX4	Trinity D9 9 x 2	17/82	Trinity Sanyo 3000 Pro	LRP IPC V6	Futaba FF3	K01015	Losi Taper Pin Red	Losi Taper Pin Red
5	4	Neil Cragg	Predator ETQ	Reedy Fury 9 x 3	20/71	Reedy R3K Panasonic 3000	Novak Cyclone	KO Vantage	Airtronics	Losi Taper Pin Red	Losi Taper Pin Red
4	5	Hubert Honigl	Losi XX4	LRP Fusion Invader 9 x 2	17/86	LRP High Volt+ Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	Sanwa M8	Sanwa ERGZR	Losi Taper Pin Red	Losi Taper Pin Red
9	6	Benjamin Groschel	Losi XX4	Trinity D4 10 x 2	17/82	Trinity Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	Sanwa M8	Graupner	Losi Blockhead Red	Losi Taper Pin Red
6	7	Teppo Kauppinen	Losi XX4	LRP Fusion 10 x 2	18/84	LRP High Volt+ Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	Sanwa M8	Sanwa	Losi Blockhead Red	Losi X2000 Red
8	8	Nicholas Goodall	Schumacher Cat 3000	Reedy Fury 9 x 3	17/92	Reedy R3K Panasonic 3000	Novak Cyclone	KO Mars	K02015	Losi Taper Pin Red	Losi Taper Pin Red
10	9	Chris Doughty	Losi XX4	LRP Fusion 9 x 4	18/84	LRP High Volt+ Panasonic 3000	LRP IPC V7.1	JR X756	K02001	Losi Taper Pin Red	Losi Taper Pin Red
7	10	Teemu Leino	Schumacher Cat 3000	Orion Chrome 10 x 1	16/92	Orion Sanyo RC2400	LRP IPC V7.1	Sanwa M8	Sanwa ERGZR	Losi Taper Pin Red	Losi Taper Pin Red

2wd

4wd