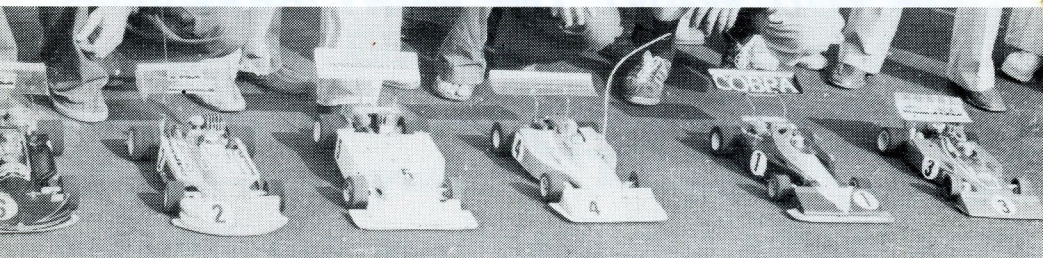




EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS

WITH FRANKE, Switzerland winning the Formula event and Per Gustafsson of Sweden taking the Sports/GT some surprising changes of fortune amongst the recognised ace drivers of Europe could be expected! British entries could not quite make the final of Formula but Keith Pledsted and Dave Martin were third and fourth respectively in the Semifinal run-off for the last two places in the final, and were ranked seventh and eighth respectively. Line-up for the Sports/GT showed a much stronger GB representation with Keith straight through to the final in number two spot and Ted Longshaw heading the Semifinal run-off followed by Phil Booth at 3 and Phil Greeno at 6, making a show at a Euro event whilst still a "first year driver!" Ted should perhaps have gone straight into final since there was strong disagreement with the final Formula line up : Left to right: Sabattini : Mares : Franke : Ruchat : Tassaux : Ron Ton.



heat result which displaced him, but Ted, as President of EFRA and on the Jury ex-officio, was in a delicate situation. He made his points very strongly but equally properly conceded to the majority jury view to uphold the otherwise excellent timekeeping team.

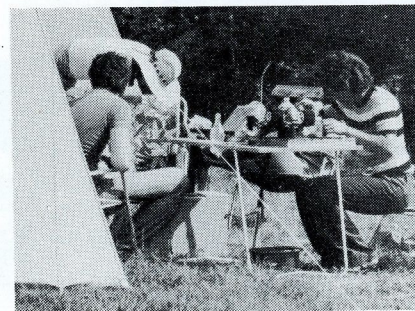
Formula Final provided a dingdong battle with Sabattini and Mares of Italy and Franke of Switzerland all on the same lap, until plug trouble beset the Italian and the struggle became a duet. Then Sabattini came back into the race with little chance of catching the leaders — but what a wonderful try. Driving like a madman with his minions male and female as extra marshals he fairly howled round to achieve a thoroughly deserved third place. Ron Ton of Holland was another casualty and never really showed after an early lead then dropping out at the halfway mark, though still placing fourth. Meanwhile Franke held on to his lap lead to the end, with Mares hard on his tail.

Only Mares and Tassaux achieved double placing by making the second final for Sports/GT. Again two Swiss were there Fiocchi and Zahnd, with Keith Pledsted for GB and Per Gustafsson of Sweden. A great driver the young Swede was tipped to me as the likely winner by Phil Greeno — and so he proved. Run clockwise it proved a faster race as might be expected with Sports/GT by some seven laps. For 107 of them the race was very much between Keith and Per Gustafsson with Keith momentarily taking over the lead at lap 90. Alas it was not to be, the demon of fuel mixture and plugs struck and Keith was out. Per coasted on steadily to make 124 laps, five ahead of second man Fiocchi of Italy.

It is interesting to note that winner in each case came from drivers who had run off for a place. Did that extra run of fifteen minutes prove of real value in assessing adjustments for thirty minute final? Or is this just a coincidence?

The Paul Ricard Circuit lies a few miles outside Lyons near the village of Lentilly in a clearing of a wooded area with banked up spectator levels on one side, splendid drivers stand opposite with awning covered pits alongside. Behind lie more woods, with clearings for a camping village where the Italians had a noble tented entourage, with Dutch, German and French tents and caravans of more modest style. An elegant ship's type flag mast carried the national flags of the fourteen EFRA countries. Final detail was the electronic score board giving lap by lap figures for contestants, relayed from the ground floor of the drivers stand which housed the six human lap counters with their recorders. This magnificent track is a replica in miniature of the full size racing

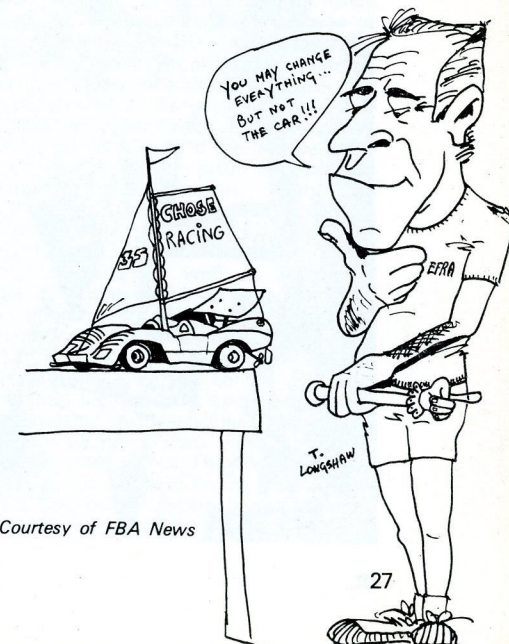
Heading: Quiet moment scene at Paul Ricard Circuit. Below: Glimpse of tenting in the woods behind — this is a French group.



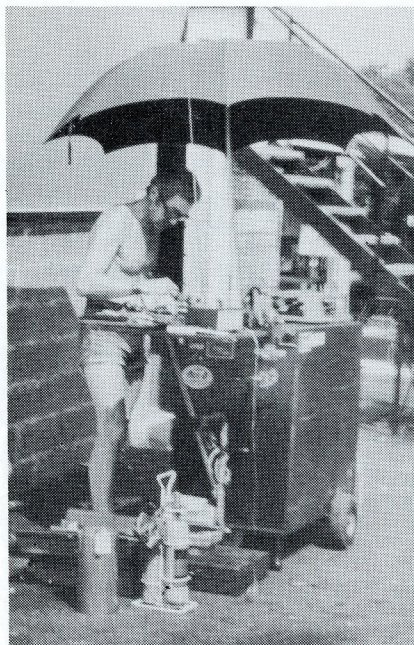
circuit of the same name, and has been achieved with the sponsorship and continuing support of the Paul Ricard company which sells that popular French tippie Arisette.

Teams began to assemble at the beginning of the week giving adequate time to learn the circuit. Everything had been laid on most efficiently with plenty of 220 volt sockets to plug in for power tools, accumulator recharging and the like (I was told that the Italians had brought a lathe though I did not actually see it!). Although finished in a tarmac surface the track was very bumpy with the faster cars apt to do wheelies along the straight and very very wearing on tyres. Panic calls to late arrivals on the British team were made for further supplies! As time wore on it was evident that harder and harder tyres were to be the order of the day.

Heat was also a problem. Temperatures were very much of a Mediterranean order, with the ladies wearing less and less each day though not achieving the topless condition which we enjoyed at the nearby swimming pool in Charbonnières, where some of the British were staying — others at another village just by, Dardilly. The hot weather made fuel adjustment a special anxiety. With engines running just right for five minute heats they were running lean in semi finals and finals, with frequent plug change stops but this did not manifest itself until virtually too late to cure!



Courtesy of FBA News



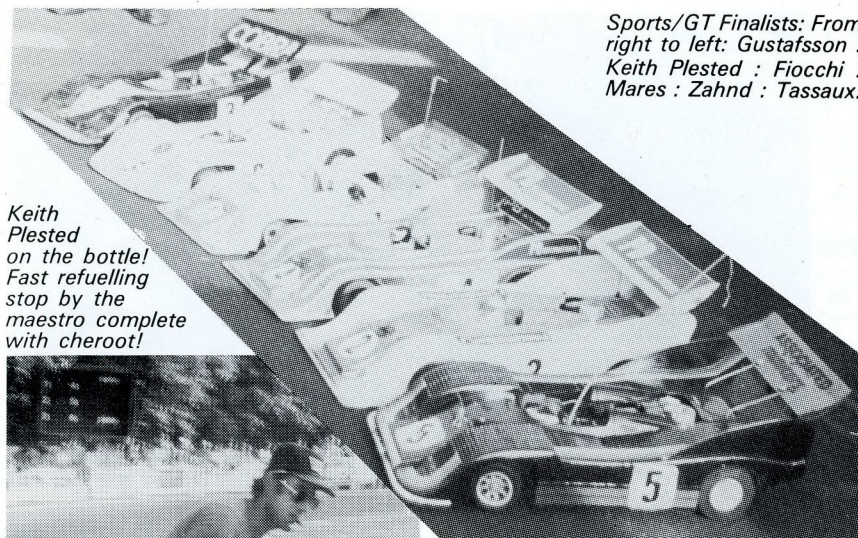
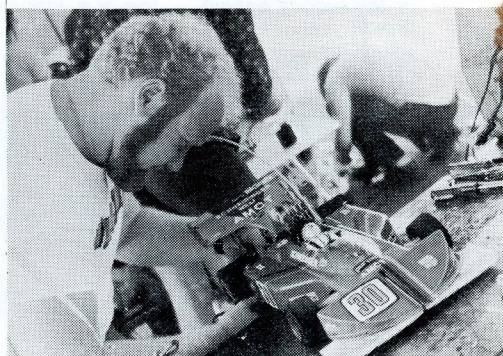
But what of the opposition? All the member countries (except Eire) put in entries which meant nearly a hundred cars to sort out with teams of seven to be slotted in. Heats were announced early, and a trial heat with fellow competitors run before the serious business began so that drivers could get an idea of who would be baulking them or not. Meanwhile the track was open for practice with considerable interest in lap times. Early 16 secs. gave way to 15, then 14 which seemed about par for the course, to break this would give rise to a buzz along the pits.

It was particularly pleasant to meet some of the entrants from countries new to the hobby but full of enthusiasm. We liked the Spanish approach who tended towards more interesting machinery, if not the fastest prototypes, such as the six-wheeled Tyrrell. Supply position was an evident problem, heat sinks, silencers and the like being home made rather after the American pattern with several small stack pipes seen a year or two ago. They also provided a couple of the simplest starter assemblies we have seen based on ex-car starter motors. One made up from a Spanish version of Dexion we shall certainly copy for simplicity and ease of construction. The other was mainly of wood and folded up when not in use. Both were ground and not table fixtures.

Joe's Models! This Belgian entry left nothing to chance with absolutely everything on his mobile workshop.

Per Gustafsson Sports/GT winner holding his Minicars prototype likely to burst on the market shortly.

Willi Schneidinger, West Germany, never got a run but had the nicest finished car. Pity there was no Concours Award.



Keith Plested on the bottle! Fast refuelling stop by the maestro complete with cheroot!



Indeed, variety of starting arrangements provided most of the novelties and will be subject of a special feature. In the car and mechanical line progress was very much along stereotyped lines. The mixture as before but just that little bit better. World Champs visitors had seized upon a very useful US filler cap for pressure tanks which allowed a large spouted filler to be inserted; did not leak and had a large spring loaded cap which lifted up and down like a kettle lid when pressure got too much. Keith Plested lost his ready made and had to knock up his own replica. Perhaps he will market a British version.

The other novelty — or fad even? — very noticeable was the use of paper filters for carbs. These are the typical concertina

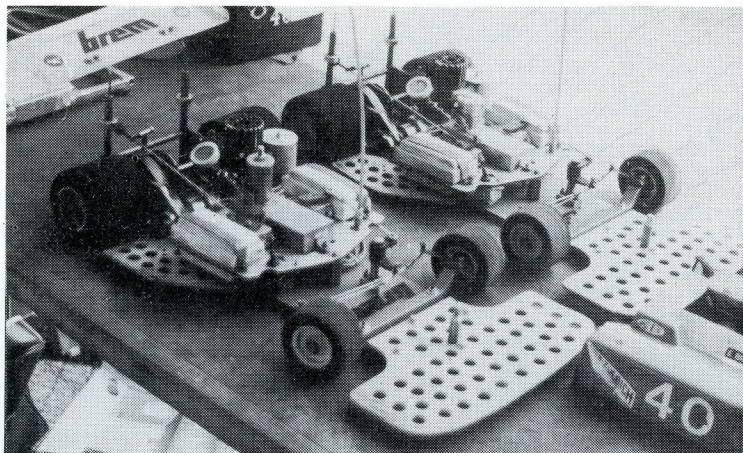
Sports/GT Finalists: From right to left: Gustafsson : Keith Plested : Flocchi : Mares : Zahnd : Tassaux.

folded paper filters used as oil filters in fullsize cars. They are about the size and shape of a cotton reel and are a Fram product. Similar filters offered in U.S. by Micro Racing. We will try to get the part number for those who would like to try them.

Scatch built cars continue to be rare. Virtually all were either pure kit or with very minor modifications, or, in some cases a mixture of two kits. PB International we were pleased to see was in good supply, with SG prominent and certainly *de rigueur* amongst the Italians! Other European products included the interesting Dutch Serpent, originally a fibreglass/alloy sandwich but now with conventional all alloy and the promise of a new Challenger design from Minicars of Sweden in the autumn. With Per Gustafsson a Euro champion it should be popular though not intended to be hot racing material.

American kits as well as American design influence very much to the fore. After winning at Pomona Associated again made a terrific showing at Lyons (we can hardly wait to put ours together!) — rather naturally their top car the RC 100. One or two Deltas were seen, and some Marker parts, but basically Associated.

The Swiss Brem cars were the most technically interesting. They are the only production kit (except Thorp in US) still using a belt driven racing layout. This is particularly curious since the chassis is not



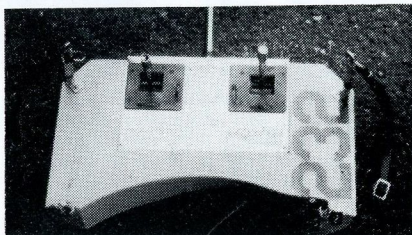
Brem cars in the pits. Note belt drive, disc brakes, and much boring of holes.

sprung (like a stock car model for instance) so that toothed belt drive would appear to be unnecessary. However, they are so beautifully prepared that one such car made the semi final!

Brem should certainly be given full credit as the first production car to provide disc brakes! Their version is further inboard than the PB variety and is lavishly pierced with holes. This same hole piercing fondness will be noted on the whole of their chassis — reminiscent of a well-known Swiss cheese! I do not know actual amount of weight so saved, and whether it is worth the effort of all that drilling.

Minor variations on the theme included a Delta with light clear plastic shielding all round to keep to radio clean on the shaker plate. This had to be re-stuck down every time the body was put on — sticking in part direct to it — so that it was something of a laborious task. Another little gimmick was fixing the wing mount on one side through the silencer dustbins. Some petrol

Chest harness favoured by some — notably German drivers. This holds a Simprop Alpha Tx.



tanks seen outslung behind the rear axle line to bring weight back.

General bumpiness of the straight was such that some people were bringing weight forward. Phil Booth found it necessary to add over two ounces of dead weight to the front body fixing mount to reduce wheelies engendered by the ramp-like bumps. With his great belief in a flexible front end this must have produced special problems for Franco Sabbatini. He evidently cured them for when he was going he was tremendously fast.

All in all it was a spendid meeting. I shudder to think what it would have been like in bad weather! August is the French holiday month, and half the places were shut, both restaurants, shops and hotels, and August 15th is a public holiday as well through most of Europe. Eating out was probably the great social problem, though the organisers did give a dinner but in somewhat haphazard fashion with some disgruntled would-be diners walking out . . . less said the better. Commemorative plaques by the way, beautiful and set a very high standard for future events.

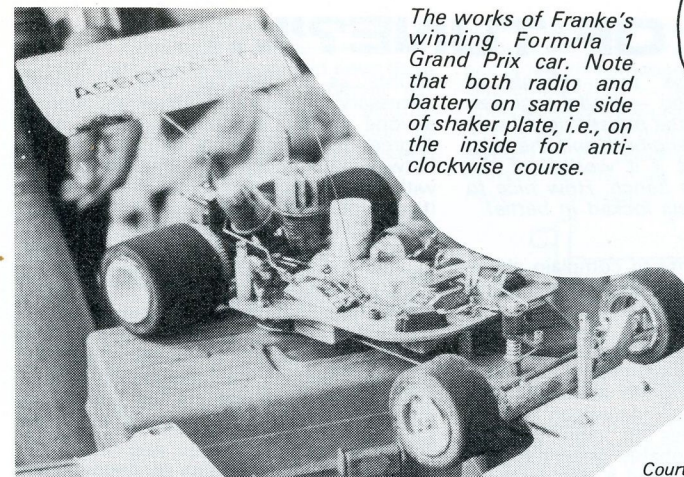
Results:

F1 Grand Prix Cars : Final

1. Franke, Switzerland, Associated, K & B, 117.
2. Mares, Italy. SG, ST X21, 116.
3. Sabbatini, Italy, SG, ST X21.
4. Ton, Holland, SG, ST X21.
5. Ruchat, Switzerland, Scratch + Ass. gears, K & B.
6. Tassaux, Belgium, Cobra (a mod of Associated), K & B.

Semi Final (1 and 2 into final)

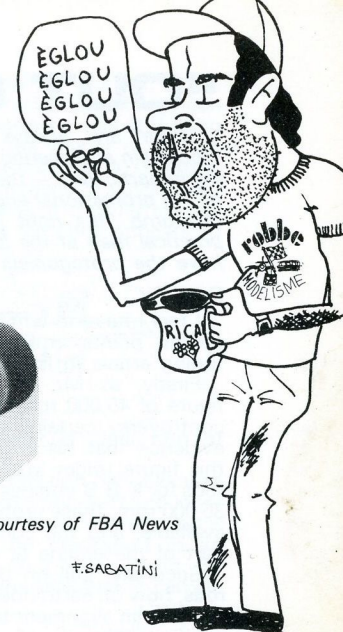
1. Sabbatini.
2. Franke.



The works of Franke's winning Formula 1 Grand Prix car. Note that both radio and battery on same side of shaker plate, i.e., on the inside for anti-clockwise course.

Courtesy of FBA News

F. SABBATINI



3. Keith Plested, GB, PB International K & B.
4. Martin, GB, PB International, K & B.
5. Meyer, Holland.
6. Zahnd, Switzerland, Associated.

Sports/GT : Final

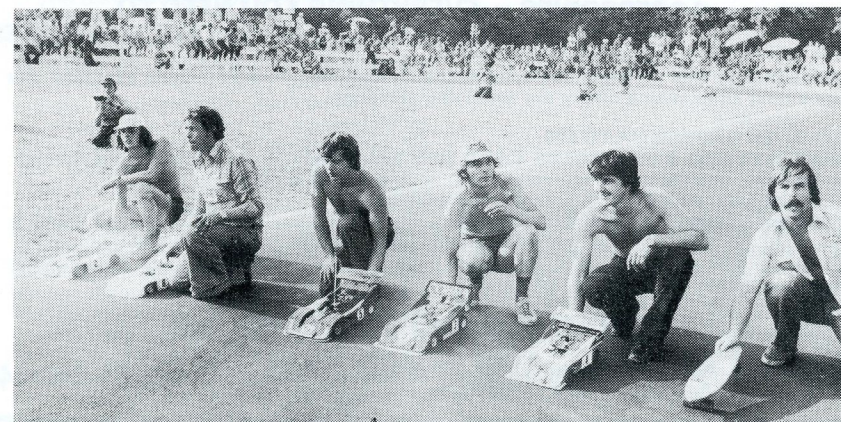
1. Per Gustafsson, Sweden, Associated (with Challenger wheels?), K & B, 124.
2. Flocchi, Italy. PB International, K & B, 119.
3. Zahnd, Switzerland. Associated, K & B, 114.
4. Mares, Italy. SG, ST X21, 113.

5. Keith Plested, GB. PB International K & B, 107.
6. Tassaux, Belgium, Associated, K & B (with PB carb), 78.

Semi Final (1 and 2 into final)

1. Gustafsson, Sweden.
2. Zahnd, Switzerland.
3. Phil Booth, GB. PB International, K & B.
4. Lemaitre, France.
5. Ted Longshaw, GB. PB International, K & B.
6. Phil Greeno, GB. PB International, K & B.

Light relief! "I can beat the lot of you on my skateboard!" Who was the late comer?



1977 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS



PER GUSTAFSSON — SWEDEN
SPORTS CHAMPION



UDO FRANKE SWITZERLAND
FORMULA CHAMPION