

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

at Watford Leisure Centre
on June 25th—27th, 1982

by Mick Langridge

As I drove to Watford the thought crossed my mind that it was just as well this important meeting was being held indoors on carpet rather than on asphalt outside. If you can recall that weekend, you may remember that on all three days the rain persisted down—oh to be in England now that summer's here!.

After an afternoon and evening's graft the hard working Ally Pally crew had transformed the main sports hall at the Watford Leisure Centre into a superb racing venue. The light grey carpet was a natural colour for a race track and the yellow and black hazard tape used to mark out the circuit was easily visible from the rostrum. With large diameter sand filled fire hose dividing the track and forgiving bott dots at strategic points, my own humble view was that this was as perfect a circuit as you will find anywhere. If the Editor has found space in our NEW super duper mag for a map of the circuit, you will see a layout that brought nothing but praise from the drivers for its nice rhythmic layout.

Plenty of pit tables were available. Each row was marked with a country so that our Continental friends were allocated sufficient space. A four plug power point was also provided on each row of tables (most of these were stolen afterwards) so everyone was well catered for (so it seems—Ed).

104 drivers eventually signed on, with by far the largest contingent from Britain. One or two notables did not turn up including Jorgen Anderson from Sweden. The vacant slots were soon snapped up by the British reserves—30 British drivers finally raced so we could look forward to seeing some familiar names in the results.

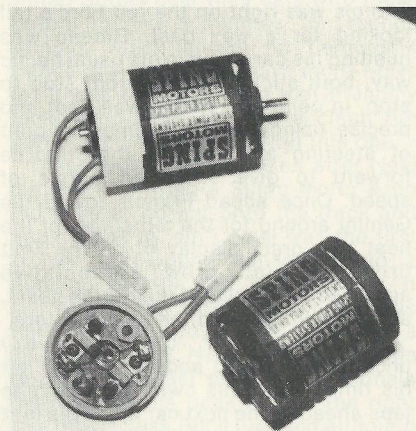
With over 10 hours of practise on Friday, taking to the track took a whole new meaning. At one time there were 25, yes 25 cars on the track (and one or two Italians off the track) as only the brave or foolhardy risked their valuable equipment. If a GPO detector van had driven past it would have gone up in a puff of smoke. I hadn't realized there were so many frequencies available.

One or two of our lads ventured out but not for long. They preferred to wait for the afternoon controlled sessions where they could expect to learn all about driving on carpet under racing conditions. As well as trying out tyres stop watches were very much in evidence as drivers tried out motors for duration.

Grip was not a problem at first with very soft rubber on the rears being the way to go, but as the track was used and a layer of tyre additive put down, balancing the car was proving to be difficult. By far and away the most popular tyre additive was TEAC fluid. This is a rubber cleaning solvent used for cleaning tape-recorder pinch wheels and really made the tyres tacky. If used on soft tyres there was too much grip so the trend was to use firmer grades all round. There was quite a knack to putting the right amount on and the fronts did not as a rule need quite so

much and in some cases none at all. It had to be worked well into the rubber and then left for a short while to have the best effect and the Danes who race on carpet regularly were noticeably fast straight away. A number of British drivers had experienced this type of racing in Denmark earlier in the year and were quickly warming to the track.

There are a couple of interesting stories about TEAC fluid. One of our more enterprising suppliers had acquired a large quantity of TEAC ready to help out those who had arrived unprepared. On the face of it not an unreasonable move but it transpired that there are two types of TEAC rubber cleaning fluid. One is imported by the official TEAC hi-fi distributor, originates from Japan and is an ethyl-alcohol which does nothing for model car tyres. The other comes from the USA and is imported by an r/c car company as a tyre treatment fluid. Guess which one our entrepreneur had bought! The other story concerns its effect on polycarbonate (lexan). If splashed on a plastic chassis it disappears. Evaporated? It doesn't leave a mark or make the surface sticky, so it must be harmless—right! Ask Tony Wells. He would appear to have run some right along one side of his chassis trough. How do we know this? Tony had a slight prang on the track with the result that one side of his chassis literally fell off—as clean as a whistle. So TEAC dissolves lexan internally—you have been warned. Meanwhile out on the track during timed practise—which was really untimed heats some very impressive looking drivers were appearing. Amongst the faster cars were those of Wayne Davis and Andy Dobson, both lapping in less than 19 seconds consistently, but falling off power-wise after little more than seven minutes. Of course driving conditions will change in the heats so perhaps with less prangs it may just be possible to go the full distance. We shall



Sping motor being developed by Olle Solderholm in Sweden and used by Bill Maisey and Neal Francis

see on Saturday.

Both the Phantoms of Bill Maisey and Neal Francis were circulating well, although Neal did not get his car balanced to his liking until his final run. In this run he was easily the fastest car on the track and as he packed his box he was quietly confident of qualifying, as was his team mate Bill.

Saturday 26th

Each driver was scheduled for four qualifying heats; three on Saturday, followed by a free-for-all practise with a final round on Sunday. This gave all day to hone the car ready for the flier on Sunday.

As the first rounds got under way it was obvious that driving standards left more than a little to be desired. Considering that the drivers present were supposed to be the best in their country, some of the cars were real liabilities. Not even our 0—15% drivers are as bad as some of the Europeans. Grading, was of course, not possible so it was a case of grin and bear it for most people.

Russ Giles was an early pace setter, lapping very quickly, but only for 7¼ minutes, which cost him at least a lap. Other British drivers to show good form early on included John Chamberlain and Andy Dobson who were in a very fast heat, featuring such notables as Finn Gjersø from Denmark—who won the early season Danish International—Terje (Terry) Haugen, Norway's BoLink driver and well known Dutchman Ronnie Ton. In fact all of these five were in the top fifteen after the first round with Finn Gjersø topping the list. Defending champion Neal Francis showed however that his Friday evening practice form was no flash in the pan and was only three seconds behind the Dane.

Heat 2 featured the European Champion duo of Phil Greeno and Neal

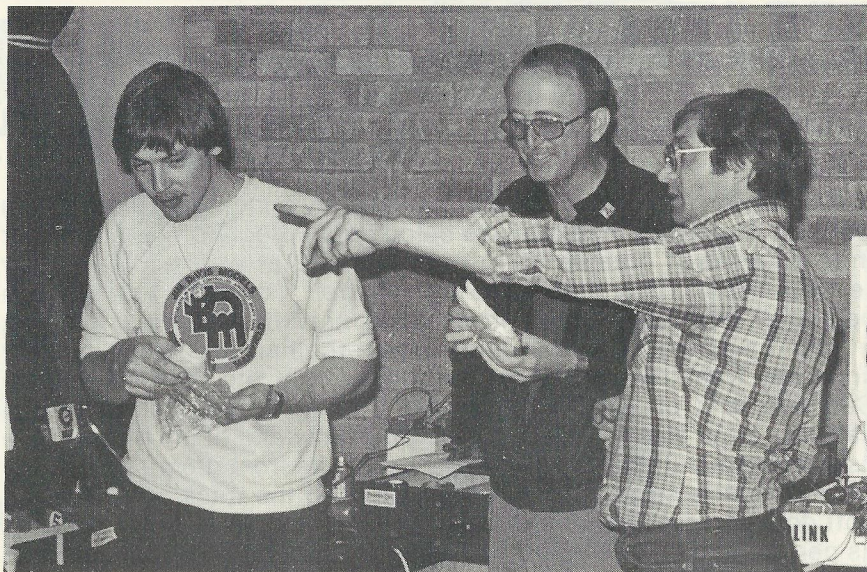
Francis—hard triers both. The pits emptied every time this heat was on as this featured potentially the fastest two drivers. The watching crowd were not to be disappointed. At the start Greeno stormed away from the line with Francis a little way back after picking his way past the usual pile-up. In no time at all Francis was right on the red Ford's tail looking for a way past. Greeno was hustling his car round in his usual hectic way, both sticks flashing from stop to stop. In contrast Francis was neat and precise, using only the minimum amount of steering and jabbing their throttle forward to give sustained bursts of speed. Once ahead Francis towed the Gemini around for the remainder of the heat in a great display of on the limit driving, which drew appreciative applause after each of their three heats, all of which followed the same pattern.

Fred Hatfield drew a very uncompetitive heat and had to set his times all on his own—two or three laps ahead of the next car up. In his first run he flashed round the track looking for a good top five time, when of all things a driver (foreign) waiting for the next heat switched his transmitter on while Fred was on his last lap. He never did finish that lap, turning round to sort out the dim twit only to be met with a shrug of the shoulders—ho hum!!

Nigel Hale, Bill Maisey and Geoff Peters were also well up after the first round, but the Associated cars of Jimmy and Wayne Davis were yet to feature; Wayne going flat after 7.5 mins and Jimmy unable to quite balance the car.

A look around the pits was next on my schedule and this was quite enlightening. Plastic monocoques everywhere as usual in the British sector, except of course for the Davis's and Alan Blakeman's Alpha. The same was found in the German and Italian sections; they also race on polished indoor floors. The French, Belgians and other mainland Europeans had a mixture of monocoques, twin plate and scratch-built chassis, while the Scandinavians pit area was like walking into a 1980 British Open. Associated, Lightning, Parma and BoLink kit cars were much in evidence, or scratchbuilt variations of these. Racing on carpet gives so much grip both for cornering and accelerating that the super flexible lexan monocoque that predominates in this country does not out-perform the less sophisticated cars. For this type of racing Japanese tyres such as AYK or Tamiya are the most popular on the rear being just firm enough when used with TEAC. Fronts however were generally a combination of hard on the outer edge and medium rubber on the inner, less loaded rim.

A visual check on motors revealed quite a variety. Associated, Parma, Trinity and MRP, modified Igorashi 05's, AYK GZ1200R and Sping seemed to be the most popular. The Sping was a new one on me and looked most business like—an oval can with a black crackle finish and mean looking slots. In Swedish and Norwegian hands they were really singing along the straight, so I set out to investigate their origin. It



"Go forth and win!" says Walt Bailey to JDM driver Nigel Hale while Mike Reedy looks on

transpires that they are made by an English speaking Swede, Olle Soderholm, so once I found him I should be O.K. I finally tracked him down and found him to be disarmingly chatty about the motors.

It would seem that Olle was one of the leading slot-racing motor builders anywhere, but tired of this he ended up working for BoLink in the United States. Returning to Sweden he started to prepare and tune motors for 1/12, culminating in the present set up. The modifications are quite extensive and as this is just a paying hobby supply is quite scarce. If they were available in this country the price would be some way above our £30.00 price limit. Briefly the magnets are removed and the can cut and lowered so that when refitted the magnets touch and form a continuous magnetic field. They are bored out to give clearance to the

armature, which is skimmed and balanced, as well as receiving different winds. The commutator is diamond trued and high quality ball races are fitted. The final mod is to the end bell which has fitted to it on the inside a Muira slot-racing motor brush assembly. This features sliding brushes which are shunted as well as having about half the contact area of standard Igorashi brushes. Softish springs are used to retain the brushes and the complete motor is carefully assembled and tuned to peak revs with minimum current draw.

After the second round of qualifying there had been a few changes to the top fifteen. Francis and Greeno had pushed each other round even faster and Maisey and Dobson had also shot into contention. Fred Hatfield and Chris Sheldrake had edged their way up the list and were handily placed, but the big surprise was the position of Swiss 1/12



SWISS TEAM—Jakob Buehler, Roland Erne, Karl Kuerfer, Peter Ladriere, Beat Schneider and Martin Stucki. Roland Erne was the winner of the best construction car



DANISH TEAM—Henrk Beck, Henrik Carstens, Finn Gerso, Erik Hansen, H. J. Jstesen, Peter Lindesham, Gert Olsen and Paul Erik Skov. Erik (centre bottom) generously shared a bottle of Schanpps with the organisers



ITALIAN TEAM—Codeluppi, Damon, Salvatori, Masnata, Colombi, Rotondi, Demarchi, Teseo, Zagatti, Teiturbe, Caligero, Daneu and Seveso

Champion Jakob Buehler using an AYK GZ1200R motor. Most of the people I had spoken to who had started out with one of these motors could not get the duration and had fitted something different. It must have been his IFF nicads. Still no sign of the Associated's though. One of the fastest cars was Henrik Beck's—very fast down the straight he just did not seem to lose any speed towards the end of the races—definitely one to watch.

Moving on to the third round the qualifying positions did not alter much, but the driving seemed to be getting a little cleaner. Mickey Booth put in a nice clean run to put himself in to contention for a semi place. The fastest two qualifiers would be automatic finalists, first and second in each of the two semis would also go straight through with the last two places coming from the next two fastest semi times. All very straightforward.

The biggest surprise in round three was the sudden emergence of Jimmy Davis. His union jack liveried car swept round as if on rails to a very clean 24 laps and 20 secs setting a new fastest time by 0.9 of a second. Associated's own Mike Reedy was present to look after the Davis boys and his methodical approach looked like paying off.

Halfway through the heat he was calling out to Jimmy to roll it—meaning keep the revs up, don't touch the brakes and take a wide line in the bends to keep the car in motion, at the same time trying to avoid contact with other cars. One or two motor stalls near the end of the eight minutes could mean the difference between finishing the race or not.

None of the other top few drivers were able to improve their times, so Jimmy went out on Saturday evening secure in the knowledge that with FTD under his belt things were certainly looking good.

At the end of the third round everything stopped for tea or to be more precise the buffet banquet, hastily disguised as a plate loading competition. During the banquet the raffle draw was held to find homes for all the lovely Cosworth engine parts kindly donated by Alan Peck Engines and Ken Tyrell.

Sunday 27th

Last chance time had arrived. Fourth and final round of qualifying heats started promptly at 10.00am and during the following two and a half hours quite a few changes took place. With Mike Reedy's guidance Wayne Davis finally coaxed his car round for the full eight minutes to qualify for the semis with

fifteenth fastest time. He had been reluctant to give up his blue spot motor, a hairy 27 turns of 20.5g wire and looked destined not to feature but at last had one more chance via the semi-final. By contrast Jimmy's red spot motor—29 turns of double 23/26g—seemed to be just perfect for the track. Drivers in the United States gear their cars with these motors to give 8 minutes 15 seconds running, which allows for perhaps 4 prangs at most; if you have more—give up! It was Mike's opinion that if Jimmy could keep clear and get a clean run then he could just about win this one.

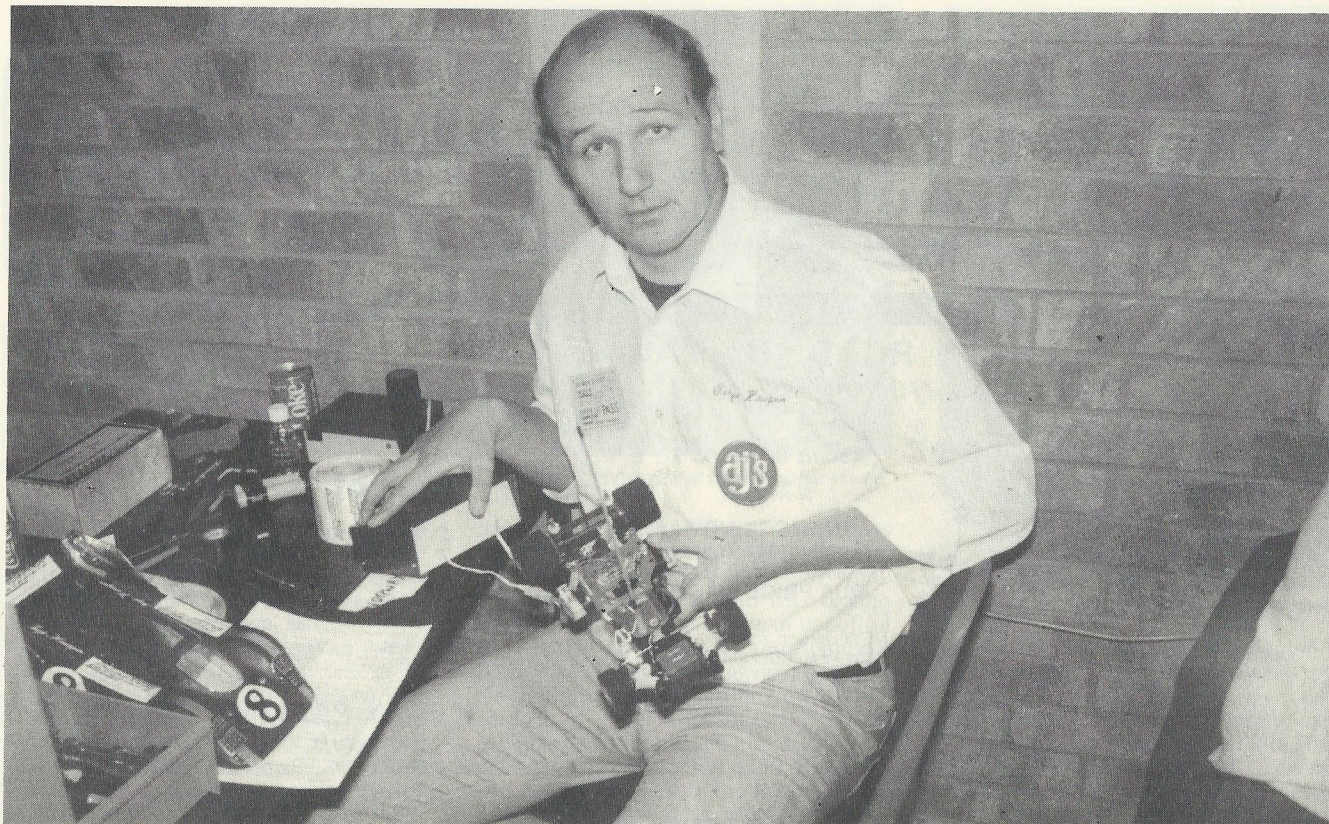
These words were spoken after Neal and Bill had fitted a Sping motor each and were to go out onto the track and really "sock to 'em". Neal was the first to run and wound himself up to a stunning 25 laps and 15.2 seconds. It was a beautiful drive. That motor was really singing down the straight—a delight to watch. Neal had regained his form over the last couple of Nationals and reached his peak at just the right time. Now it was Bill's turn and although it did not look as fast in a straight line, his car was perfectly in tune with the circuit as he scorched round after Neal's time. He missed it by just 13 seconds but for all that was perfectly happy to go straight through to the Final.

Henrik Carstens, the Danish 'works supported' Associated driver finally got his act together to qualify fifth fastest, whilst Phil 'Exocet' Olson shot from nowhere to a secure semi final place, by qualifying ninth after a really good dice with Wayne Davis.

The lap counting team, all eight of them had been doing a splendid job during Saturday and Sunday. Each car had an individual counter who as well as pressing a button also crossed off a score pad which was a really good foolproof system. I don't believe there were any queries about laps during the weekend which proves the effectiveness of the system. Backing this manual system was the Itomark computer which provided a full print out service. All areas of the organisation of this prestigious meeting had been well covered by Nick Adams and the Ally Pally team.

After a number of consolation finals the cars for the first semi final were brought to the line. With the first four finishers all with a chance of making the final—1st and 2nd in each plus the next two fastest—the semis could be more closely fought than the final. Good clean driving was on the cards with no 'jam' cars to get in the way.

Phil Greeno led the first semi straight from the line—easing up toward the end with more than half a lap up on the next man Terje Haugen. Fred Hatfield and Finn Gerso initially fought over second, but Fred had a succession of accidents and gradually fell away—finally ending up fifth. Finn meanwhile put on a spurt at the end to clinch last place in the final by 0.4 of a second. The start of this race was delayed while one of the drivers sorted out a frequency problem and this proved to be the undoing of Andy Dobson. All the cars on the grid were switched off or unplugged

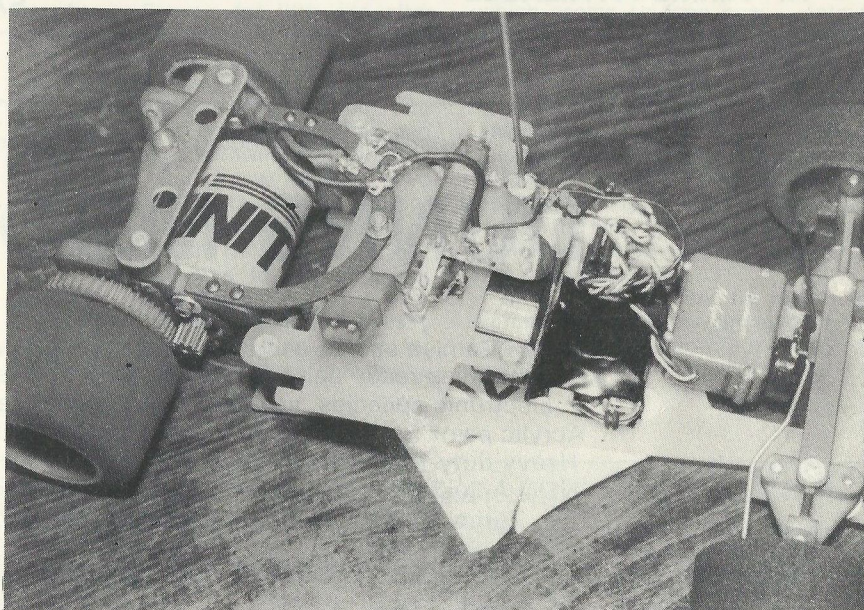


Terje Haugen, from Norway, placed third, driving a BoLink CHallenger

while they waited, but as they switched on again Andy's car was dead. A broken wire on his speed controller was quickly diagnosed but race director George Land would not hold the race again while the faulty component was changed—one screw and two wires. This was pretty hard on Andy who having battled for two days to get this far was denied a reasonable chance to repair his car. This was after all, the European Championship. It could be argued that the wire would have broken anyway and despite a call from some of the drivers for a re-run, it was decided that the result must stand. This was the only real incident of the weekend and although a few tempers flared it did not directly involve Andy, who could only shrug his shoulders and murmur 'c'est la vie', or some other EEC expression for 'bother'.

The second semi was led initially by Nigel Hale, but once Jimmy Davis had got past the melee, which he probably caused, he closed on Nigel and swept past him going onto the straight. Looking beautifully stable and well balanced on its standard, but well Teaced kit tyres, the RC12i took Jimmy to a very smooth 25 laps, making him third fastest and now definately in with a chance for overall honours. Henrik Beck and Jakob Beuhler followed Jimmy home to secure their places for the main event.

While the finalists prepared for the main event the last few consolation finals were run off, to establish the 19th to 26th places. The unlucky semi finalists were classified from 9th to 18th for award purposes.



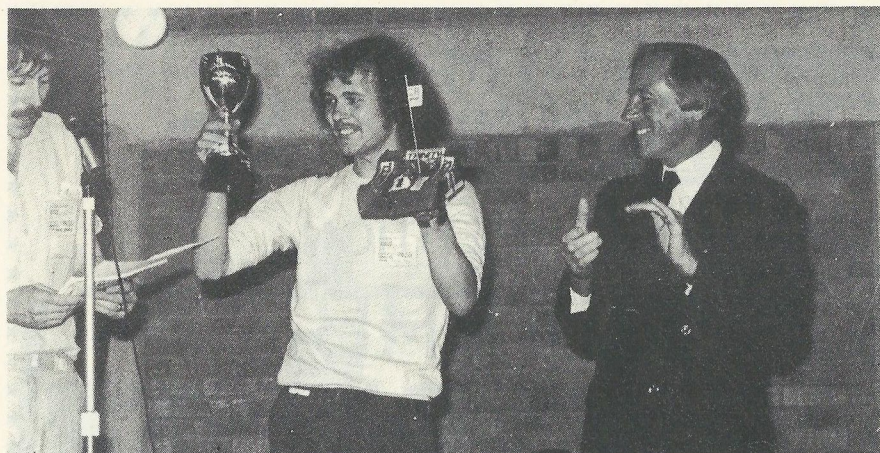
Henrk Beck's car—Lightning based on Associated RC12i style

As the cars were lined up in grid order and commentator Nick Adams started the build up, the atmosphere in the hall was electric (groan!). By this time there were probably in excess of 200 spectators to cheer on the drivers, as well as the competitors and helpers already looking forward to the climax of the weekends efforts.

After clearing the grid of photographers and mechanics—just like the real thing—we had that splendid sight of

four British cars filling the front two rows. Standing together on the rostrum, the four British drivers, right hands being wiped on trousers, looked relaxed and confident—any one of them a possible winner.

Neal Francis and Bill Maisey, Phantom team-mates in national racing, sat on the front row and we all knew that there were to be no team orders here. It was every man for himself and it was here at the start that the two Phantom



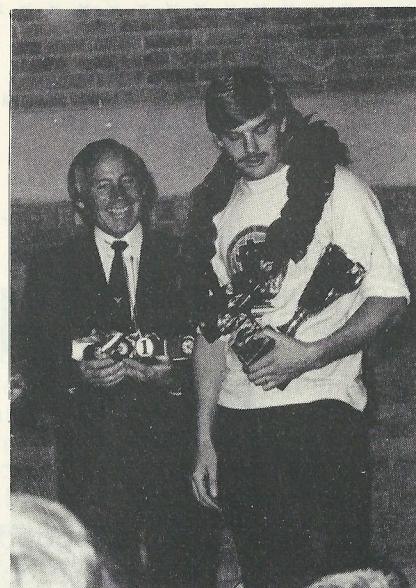
Henrik Beck, from Denmark, placed second accepting his trophy

drivers misunderstood each other and collided, letting Jimmy Davis through. As the cars streamed on to the straight it was Davis's union jack car followed by Beck and Gjersø after a brilliant start from the back row. Francis was fourth but as he went through the infield he was nudged by a hard challenging Phil Greeno. Francis kept his place and Greeno dropped back—not to feature again. A different set of front tyres had ruined the Gemini's handling. Meanwhile Beck had forced Davis into a small error going onto the straight and was alongside going into the wide sweep at the end, but Davis held the inside line to shoot through the tight infield. As the track opened up a bit before the start line Beck had another little nibble at the back of the Associated but Jimmy kept his nerve and pulled out a couple of feet as they came round for the third time. Terje Haugen was harrying Francis who had to give way and let the Norwegian through to fourth. The Phantom was not handling to his liking and Neal knew this was not to be his day, but he was not going to give up his crown lightly and hung on behind Haugen.

Although holding a good lead Davis was allowing his nerves to get the better of him, as he made a series of small mistakes to let Beck, who was driving through the tighter sections in beautiful style, close up on him at half distance. With Mike Reedy's 'roll it' uppermost in his thoughts, Jimmy settled down into a smoother rhythm letting the car's excellent handling draw him away from the ever-present Beck. Lapping Beuhler and Greeno with ease, the RC12i gained a little more ground as Beck got held up in the traffic.

Further down the field Maisey had caught up Francis for fifth and after following him for four or five laps, Bill was able to muscle past his team-mate to set off after Haugen. Before he could catch the Norwegian, Gjersø and Haugen had a coming together and swapped places, allowing Bill to catch up a little. Going into the last two minutes the positions up front had not changed; Davis led Beck by the length of the straight, with Haugen keeping in touch but not able to challenge for second.

Entering the last minute Bill Maisey slipped by a slowing Finn Gjersø for fourth, but up ahead all eyes were on the



Jim Davis, 1982 1/12th Eurochamp

leading duo. The crowd were beginning to rise to the occasion as Davis spun trying to lap a back marker. He calmly executed a neat three point turn to carry on but at a reduced speed—at this stage of a race there is precious little power to waste. 40 seconds and Beck is getting menacingly closer . . no sign of slowing down . . through the bends Davis keeps the gap stable . . down the straight—which seems so long now . . into the sweep and Beck is relentlessly closing in for the kill . . surely he must catch up, the crowd are on their feet . . seven seconds to go . . there goes the horn. They must finish the lap . . come on number one . . four is right behind him . . is he going to do it? He **must** do it . . 400 people are urging out the last volt . . there's the line . . four is right behind him . . there is no room to pass . . and number one crosses the line.

He's done it—there he is the new European Champion—Jimmy Davis—by a foot. It's serious now lads—forget the water skiing, this is the **real** thing.

Pos	Name	Nat	Laps	Time	Chassis Make	Material	Motor	Wind	Differential	Gear Ratio	Controller	Front Tyres	Rear Tyres	Ni-Cads	Body	Radio
1	JIM DAVIS JR	GB	25	20.5	ASSO RC12i	FIBRE GLASS	REEDY RED SPOT	29T 25/260	ASSOCIATED CARBON FIBRE	10:48	DEMON 2c	ASSO SOFT	ASSO STD KIT	SANYO	ASSO LOLA T600	FUTABA C
2	HENRIK BECK	DK	25	20.6	JOHAC SUSP	FIBRE GLASS	TRINITY	27T 21G	JOHAC CARBON FIBRE	10:48	BOLINK RESISTOR BRAKE END	COMBO PT/JOHAC	AYK	SANYO	ASSO McCRAE	FUTABA BANTAM
3	TERJE HAUGEN	N	24	1.4	BOLINK	CHALLENGER CARBON FIBRE	SPING	28T 22 1/2 G	PARMA/ASSO CARBON FIBRE	10:46	BOLINK RESISTOR BRAKE END	AJ 802	AJ 812	SANYO	SCHKEE	KO DIGIACE BANTAM
4	BILL MAISEY	GB	24	5.4	PHANTOM	FOLOED LEXAN	SPING	28T 22 1/2 G	PHANTOM/ASSO HOLLOW STEEL	10:48	LASER TURBO	PHANTOM NARROW C	UFFRA WHITE	BYV	ASSO TOT	FUTABA M
5	FINN GJERSO	DK	24	10.2	PARMA PANTHER	FIBRE GLASS	PARMA FERRARI	26T 22G	PARMA/ASSO TIGER HUBS	10:46	PARMA SHORT STROKE RESISTOR	COMBO SOFT/NEO	PARMA MED SOFT	SANYO	PARMA LOLA S30	FUTABA BANTAM
6	NEAL FRANCIS	GB	24	21.2	PHANTOM	FOLOED LEXAN	SPING	27T 25/26	PHANTOM/ASSO HOLLOW STEEL	9:48	LASER TURBO	PHANTOM NARROW C	UFFRA WHITE	BYV	ASSO TOT	FUTABA M
7	JAKOB BUEHLER	CH	23	3.1	ASSO PARTS	SCRATCH CARBON FIBRE	AYK GX1200R	STO	ASSOCIATED CARBON FIBRE	10:48	DEMON 2c	UFFRA COMBO S & M	UFFRA WHITE	IFF	ASSO TOT	SINAPRO
8	PHIL GREENO	GB	23	4.0	GEMINI	FOLOED LEXAN	MRP 553	HOT!	GEMINI/ASSO CARBON FIBRE	10:48	DEMON 2c	GREENO X FOAM	GREENO SPECIAL RACING	SANYO	MRP FORD C100	FUTABA T3EGX