

The 1985 1/8th I.C. European Championships



Serpent take first five places. O.P.S. power takes first three.



The four British team finalists L to R Bob Errington, Phil Hague, Gary Culver and Paul Cook.

One really nice touch that was organised during the finals for spectators was a speed trap on the main straight. A signal was picked up by two wires from the normal lap counting transponder in the car and then a large strip board showed the car number and the speed at which it passed over the signal wires.

The weather on Friday was pleasant was a strong breeze helping to keep the track dry and with grip increasing saw the drivers battling through the first set of qualifying heats and the slow process of dialling in their cars to suit the track conditions. The new Nova Rossi motor was very much in evidence and turning out some incredible power. However, as one would expect, not to be outdone both OPS and PICCO had new motors being raced that were equally fast and it

seemed quite apparent that though a number of drivers had the power they were not able to usefully control it, even with four wheel drive. At the end of the second series of heats, the fastest man of the day was Rody Roem, being the only person to achieve 18 laps. This was, in fact, to remain the fastest time throughout although four other drivers (Calpista, Buehler, Errington and Bahr), were all to get 18 laps by the end of the 4th round of heats.

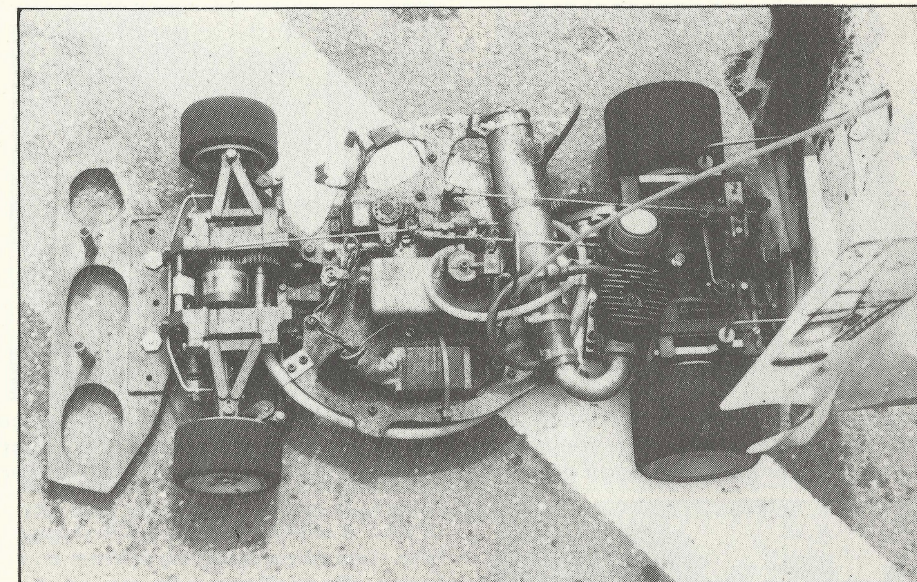
Saturday was a grand day — windy but with plenty of sunny periods attracting many spectators for this well-publicised event. The dry track conditions were really ideal and by this time you could really feel the atmosphere building as drivers psyched themselves up. At the end of round 4 it was Roem, Calpista, Buehler and Errington

who were the four fastest drivers who automatically would go straight through to the finals, so for them at least Sunday morning would be a time when they could at least try and relax while for the other drivers the battle was on to gain the remaining six places in the coveted final for the European Championships. The British team had given a good account of themselves with Bob Errington being the fastest English driver driving his very fast Nova Rossi powered SG straight through to the final. He was followed by Phil Hague and Gary Culver who were 17th and 18th respectively.

The time for the testing and trying had now passed and Sunday was the day when it all counted.

By way of relaxation the Club had organised a beach barbeque with buggy racing which enabled the competitors from all over Europe to enjoy themselves and compare notes.

Sunday — the day started bright and sunny but with little or no wind and a poor forecast everyone kept looking towards the skies and keeping either their umbrellas or wet weather tyres close to hand. The finals followed the by now familiar Christmas tree system with odd and even sub-finals. The first three drivers of each sub final then automatically progressed up to the next sub final and so on until the semis. This system could, in theory, allow a driver who was last in the qualifying heats to progress all the way through into the finals! Serpent driver, Colin Strauss did, in fact, do exceptionally well, at the end of the qualifying heats he was placed 66th. He then changed over to using one of the new Nova Rossi motors and promptly won the next three sub-finals! The big problem with this is it only allows you a short period of time while the next sub-final is racing for you to prepare your car and so, in fact, Colin and his car had 20 minutes racing, 20 minutes off, 20 minutes racing, and so on. In the 8th sub-final, problems struck and his steering servo gears failed. Fortunately during a short delay while some radio interference was dealt with, Colin with the aid of many helpers changed the servo and just managed to get his car finished in time for the start. By this time the clouds had come and the first drops of rain could be felt, necessitating the use of wet weather tyres. Sadly for Colin Strauss this was to be his last race of the day as following a number of collisions he lost his wing, a drive belt and stripped gear finally forcing him to retire. The rain now had really started to come on and the track was becoming more like an ice rink as cars desperately tried to find some more grip, with many drivers now using the grooved MRC Slik tyres that have been seen to work so well in the wet.



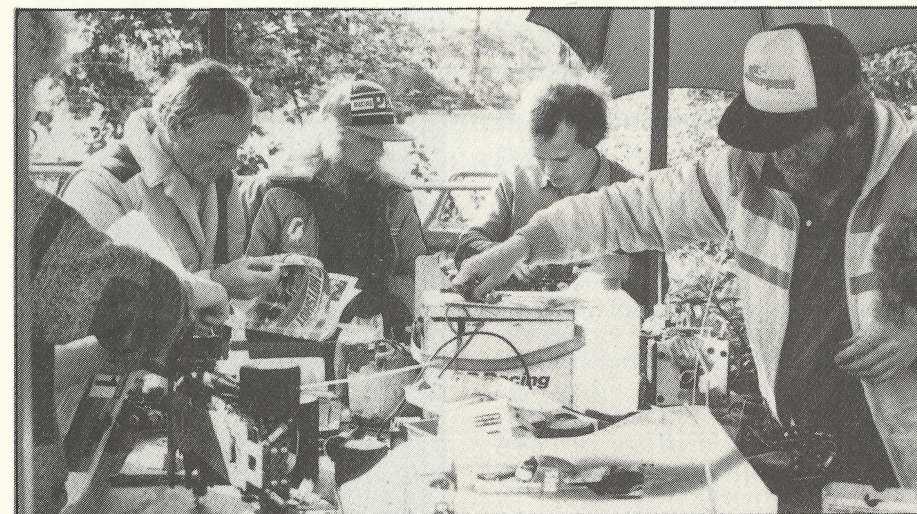
This Delta or Delta lookalike was spotted in the pits. It is 4WD with a flexible drive to the front axle. It is certainly different.



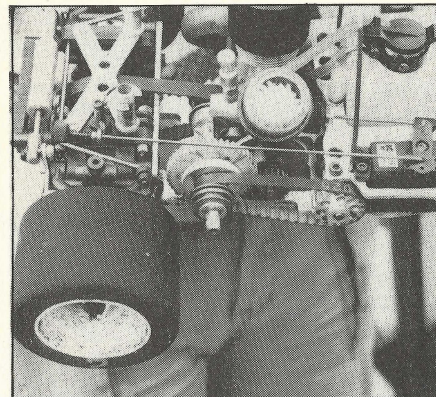
In the semi's the track became very wet as the rain arrived.



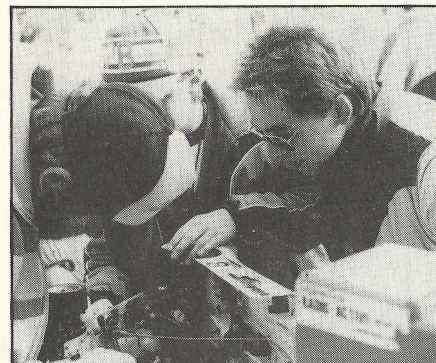
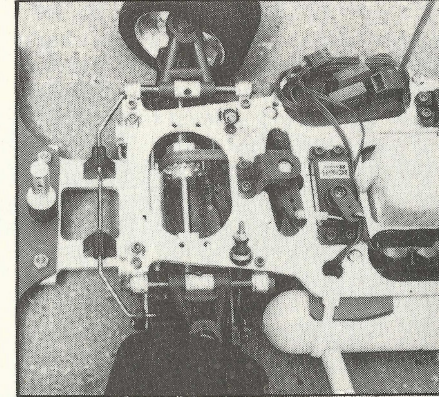
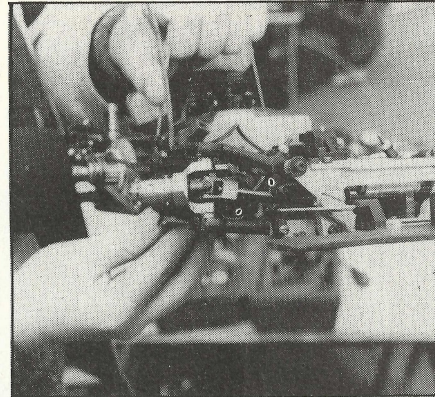
Nice idea, board shows car number and its speed down the straight.



The GB pits. Gary prepares Debbie's car under her watchful eye. Phil Hague about to rummage in pit box for another lager while Ted Longshaw catches up on his reading.



Interesting car driven by Vittorio Orazi from Italy. A 4WD conversion for the successful SG Columbia. Belt drive to the front axle via two layshafts. Note the use of a "slipper" on the rear layshaft to adjust the torque to the front wheels. Neat CV joints transfer power through one way bearings to the front wheels. The conversion kit should be available soon.

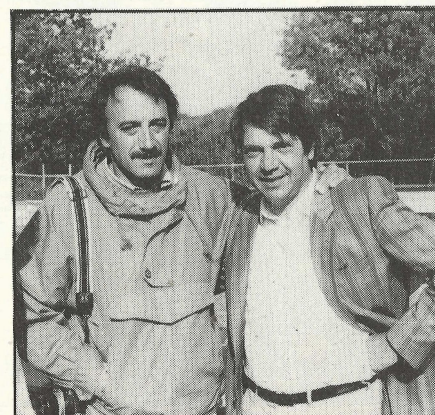


Frantic activity in the pits to repair Colin Strauss's broken steering servo.

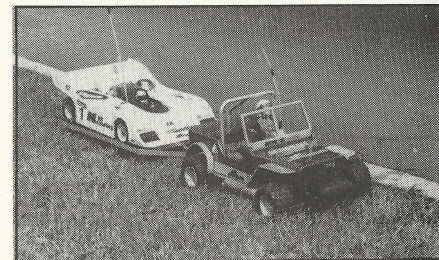
Because of the change in weather conditions between the semis, it was decided that the first three drivers from each semi-final would go up to the final. It was during one of the semis that disaster struck for Pieter Bervoets during a hard battle for the coveted 3rd place with Gary Culver. Gary managed to slip past on the infield after Pieter made a mistake. As Pieter tried to accelerate away the slippery conditions allowed the car to rapidly spin with the engine screaming. A track marshal then completely misinterpreted what was happening and no doubt thinking that it was radio interference quickly flipped the car onto its back and jumped on it to stop the motor, causing Pieter and the Serpent pit team to look on in horror as his chance of getting into the final was swept aside. Gary Culver then was able to maintain his third position to go on through into the final.

The weather had by now, fortunately, changed yet again and even the sun was managing to shine. The track was again dry and with plenty of grip. This event had been given both local newspaper and television coverage and the persuasive power of the media was very apparent as the crowds of spectators swelled almost to bursting point as excitement mounted for the final. The start was to be of the Le Mans type, down the straight with the fastest car at the front in the pole position. This obviously makes for a much better start as it gets rid of the lottery

of who is able to get into the first bend first. This often resulting in total confusion. Rody Roem, driving on his home track, had consistently maintained the fastest time and took pole position. He was followed by Calpista (I), Buehler (CH), Errington (GB), Cook (GB), Lecat (F), Bahr (D), Culver (GB), Haig (GB) and Guiette (B). A quick warm up round the circuit allowing both the drivers to settle their cars and the press to take some photographs, and then the start of the 45 minute final was started in earnest. Roem's OPS powered Serpent streaked away followed by the pack as drivers started to settle down and jockey for position. Bob Errington unfortunately, caught up in a collision, severely damaged the front end of his car after only 10 minutes into the race, forcing him back into the pits for extensive repairs. Roem was consistently lapping in the low 17 seconds and his very rapid pit stops of only around 6 seconds a time enabled him to maintain his lead for some time. Lap times were now again very fast with all drivers lapping in around the 17 seconds. During the semi finals in the rain, lap times had slipped to 22 or 23 seconds on the wet track. Thirty-seven minutes into the race Jacob Buehler, the Swiss Serpent driver, had now gone into first place and was being chased by Roem. In the final stages of this exciting race



Mr. Stanzani, Editor of ECO magazine, seen here with "Mr Picco".



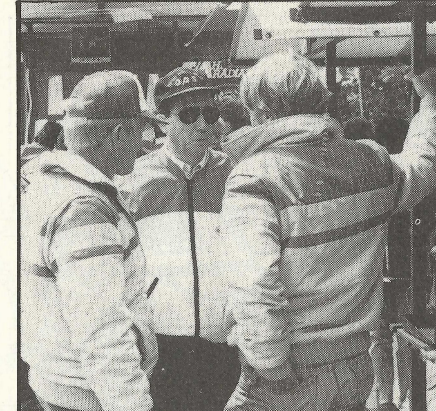
Prior to the final all the cars were transported around the track on the trailer. Seen here is Rody Roem's car.



Rody Roem, Serpent No. 1 driver, "wired for sound". This system enables the driver and his pit team to communicate.



Second fastest after the qualifying heats Stefano Calpista.

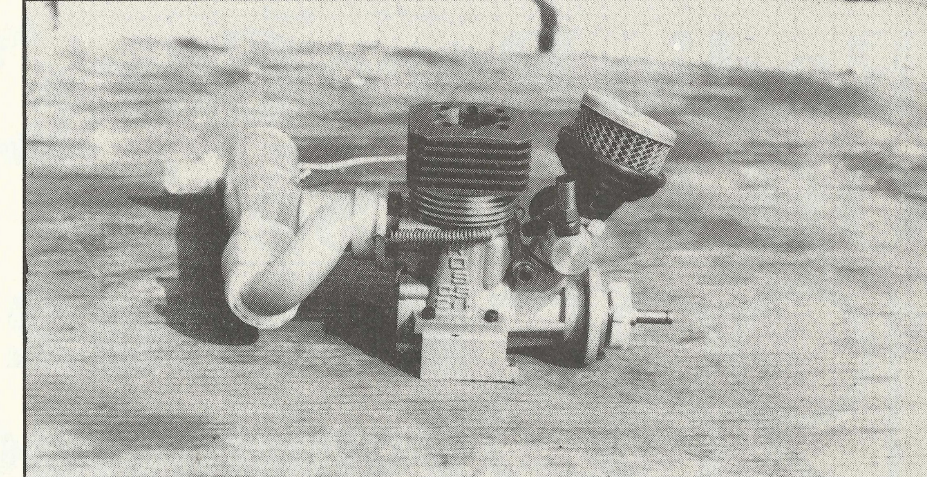


Piero Muzio, Mr OPS, was checking the performance of his motor both with the drivers and on the track.

Buehler increased his lead to 5 laps, Roem experiencing difficulties in the final stages allowing Jurgen Bahr to slip through into 2nd place leaving Roem in 3d position as the chequered flag fell. Examination of Roem's car at the end of the race showed that his rear tyres had worn down dramatically and perhaps a decision to have a tyre change during one of his pit stops should have been made.

For Pieter Bervoets, who must have been very disappointed to have had to retire from the semi final in the way that he did, the final results must have been more than adequate compensation with Serpent cars occupying the first five places. The British team put up an excellent battle, with four getting into the final. The driving of relative newcomers to international racing, Phil Haig and Paul Cook, really does deserve recognition as they drove superbly throughout the event. The final positions of the British team were: Phil Haig 4th, Paul Cook 5th, Gary Culver 6th, Bob Errington 7th, Steve White 11th, Paul Pagdin 12th, Walt Bailey 26th, Colin Strauss 36th, Debbie Preston 40th, Chris White 51st, Phil Greeno 63rd, Charlie Dudfield 654th, Nigel Sayles 71st, Steve Fagg 78th, Michael Drury 86th, Andy Stafford 87th.

The car of the meeting was obviously the Serpent 4x4. It performed so well and so consistently with a tremendous turn of power. This is, of course, its home track with the Serpent factory not far away and so I have no doubt that the car and the track have developed over a period of time together and no doubt complement one another. This, however, doesn't remove any of the credit for excellent performance and reliability. PB's new four wheel drive Nova performed well but was obviously down on power. The fastest PB driver, Gary Culver, felt that he was consistently .25 of a second down on laps. Serpent was the only car to widely use the two speed gear box and it could possibly have



The new Nova Rossi motor that was causing considerable discussion around the pits.

been this which just gave it the slight edge, helping with top speed down the straights and the lower gear helping it to come out of the bends at speed. In the past traction on just rear wheel drive cars had sometimes been a problem but perhaps now with the new four wheel drive car this allows the power to be put down onto the

track for rapid acceleration out of the bends.

Full congratulations to the club at Heemstede for putting on the excellently run and organised meeting and one that was I am sure enjoyed by both spectators and contestants alike. Congratulations to Jacob Buehler, the new European 1/8 Champion.



The 1985 Eurochamp Jacob Buehler from Switzerland shares his champagne with the crowd! L to R. Roem, Buehler and Bahr.

1985 Euro Championships at Heemstede Final Results

Name	Country	Car	Motor	Laps	Time
1 Jacob Buehler	Switzerland	Serpent	OPS	151	45.00.3
2 Jurgen Bahr	Germany	Serpent	Mondial	146	45.05.0
3 Rody Roem	Netherlands	Serpent	OPS	145	45.22.2
4 Phil Hague	Great Britain	Serpent	Nova Rossi	109	45.06.2
5 Paul Cook	Great Britain	Serpent	Nova Rossi	99	45.03.9
6 Gary Culver	Great Britain	P.B.	OPS	92	45.14.4
7 Bob Errington	Great Britain	SG	Nova Rossi	77	45.14.8
8 Stefano Calpista	Italy	SG	Nova Rossi	73	45.00.0
9 David Lecat	France	PB	Nova Rossi	62	45.00.0
10 Etienne Guiette	Belgium	Serpent	Nova Rossi	52	45.00.0