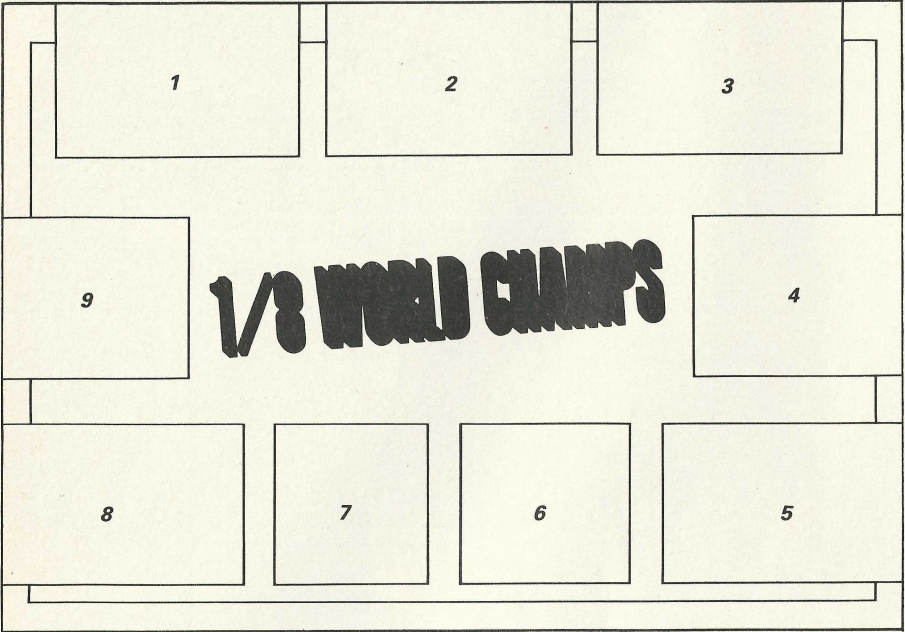


# 1/8 WORLD CHAMPS





GENE HUSTINGS reports from the 1/8 World Championships at Pamona.



This year is the tenth anniversary of 1/8 scale World Championship racing time does fly, it only seems like yesterday that the first World Championship event was held right here on this track, then called Thorpe Raceway. Now the track is part of the Ranch Pit Stop and there have been a great many improvements made since the old days.

The 1987 1/8 World Championships would see 80 drivers competing from abroad and 40 drivers competing from the U.S.A. It seemed that the earliest drivers to arrive all came from Singapore, Ermes Tadiello, David Quek and Randy Swan arrived three weeks in advance and spent all that time practicing. Almost everyone else came with four days to spare. The Serpent team all arrived with lightweight cars, this caused a stir as only Roem, Ton, Berovoets and Hippe were supplied leaving Losi, Keyes Baehr and Bueler out in the cold. There was some explaining to do.

During practice it was impossible to pick favourites. Normally here in the U.S.A. four minute heats are used for qualifying, but for this race the qualifying heats were ten minutes long, which meant that you had to run five minutes plus on one tank of fuel. Now that, these days is getting hard to do, especially with 4wd cars, so during practice some cars were using carburettor restrictors.

There was a lot of motor testing taking place, the new S-Power being tried by the Serpent team, however they didn't race with it as they were still under contract with O.P.S. Mr Cesare Rossi was at the trackside complete with Piero Muio of O.P.S and Albert Picco of Picco motors. Our team, Associated were running 50/50 Mondial O.P.S. and Novarossi.

In all drivers from twenty one countries were taking part in the qualifying events, there were two rounds each day giving each driver six chances to do his best. At the start of qualifying traction was good and most drivers could not believe how long tyres were lasting. All qualifying heats were set up so that there was a mixture of nationalities in each heat. Finally the

weather a little cool, low 70° to 80°, at least 20° down on the norm.

**Wednesday**  
Wednesday was the first day of qualifying and the first driver to turn 35 laps was Ralph Burch Jr, he made a couple of mistakes so he knew he could go even faster. The next heat saw current World Champion Rody Roem turn an identical time of 35-10.16.8. On his next round Ralph ran out of fuel leaving Rody T.Q. F.T.D. honours. Barry Grossenbacher U.S.A. was third and Tony Neisinger U.S.A. fourth. Top four drivers all go through into the A Final.

**Thursday**  
The drivers rotas all swopped around now, that is drivers who ran in the morning yesterday run in the afternoon to day. Thursday really saw times start to improve Burch timed 35-10.12.4 to take top spot and Gil Losi Jr turned 35-10.13.9 to take second. Gil had been struggling for a year to get the car just right, it seemed today he finally managed just that.

A new starting system was used in qualifying for the first time in the U.S.A., with each cars time starting when they start their first lap or as they cross the transponder line to be exact.

What this means is that as the countdown gets to three the cars may start and may continue to start until the first car away recrosses the line. This idea eliminates the first corner melee.

First Semi Main				
Driver	Country	Laps	Car	Motor
1 Barry Grossenbacher	USA	100	Associated	Novarossi
2 Butch Kloeber	USA	96	Associated	Paris-Mondial
3 Albert Grob	Switzerland	94	Serpent	OPS
4 Jurgen Baehr	West Germany	94	Serpent	Mondial
5 Stewart Grant	Australia	92	Serpent	Novarossi
6 Roger Sahli	Switzerland	90	SG	Rossi
7 Gary Culver	England	89	Serpent	Novarossi
8 Dana Smeltzer	USA	34	Associated	Novarossi
9 Michele Baruzzi	Italy	18	—	—
10 Michael Salven	West Germany	11	Serpent	Mondial



- One Australian team member and his travelling box of tricks.
1. Gil Losi's car, finally set up and running perfectly.
  2. All action in the pits and just look at the facilities available.
  3. A section of the Pamona Raceway circuit.
  4. The new 1/8 World Champion Re-Pete Fusco.
  5. Trophy winners line up at the race banquet.
  6. Rody Roem selects just the right part to rebuild his car with.
  7. Gary Culver complete with drill threatens his car.
  8. View of the circuit, look at the crowds!
  9. Peter Bervoerts Mr Serpent himself in a pensive mood.

Losi and Roem knew exactly how to work this system to their best advantage, at the countdown Rody took off with an empty track in front of him, Gil waited until Rody was three quarters of a lap clear and then went, this allowed both of them to go very fast without getting in each others way. In the end Gil had just beaten Burch's time and turned 35-10.12.0 to take over top spot. Eventually qualifying finished and places looked like this.

The Top 18 Qualifiers

Driver	Country	Time
1 Gil Losi Jr	USA	35-10.12.0
2 Ralph Burch Jr	USA	35-10.12.4
3 Rody Roem	Holland	35-10.15.8
4 Tony Neisinger	USA	35-11.18.2
5 Barry Grossenbacher	USA	34-10.05.2
6 Gary Kyes	USA	34-10.07.1
7 Dana Smeltzer	USA	34-10.09.2
8 Jakob Bueler	Switzer land	34-10.10.3
9 Butch Kloeber	USA	34-10.11.5
10 Repete Fusco	USA	34-10.11.7
11 Gary Culver	England	34-10.13.8
12 Domenico Calce	Italy	34-10.14.8
13 Juegen Baehr	West Germany	34-10.15.1
14 Curtis Husting	USA	34-10.17.3
15 Michele Baruzzi	Italy	34-10.17.5
16 Sinichi Yamaguchi	Japan	34-10.17.7
17 Stewart Grant	Australia	33-10.01.6
18 Ron Rossetti	USA	33-10.01.7

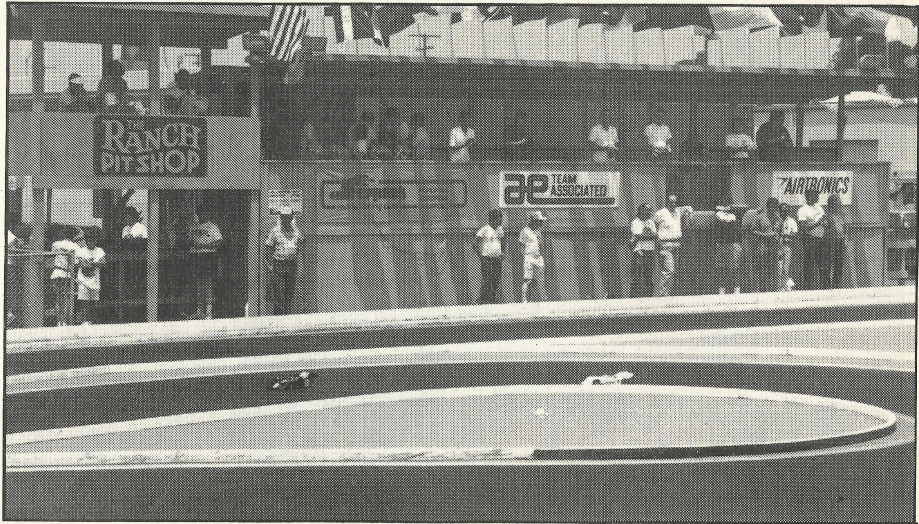
**First Semi Main**  
The first semi saw Barry Grossenbacher jump into the lead with only Dana Smeltzer keeping in touch, Butch Kloeber was in third. After the second pit stop Dana came out of the pits and was hit, knocking his silencer off. Barry was still flying a clear two laps ahead of Kloeber, eventually Barry was four laps ahead and finished by turning 100 laps.

**Second Semi Main**  
Gary Kyes went straight into the lead from his number one position on the grid with Curtis Husting right behind him and Repete Fusco in third. After the first few laps Repete passed Curtis with Ron Rossetti in hot pursuit, by this time Repete was flying and passed Kyes who clipped a dot and lost a pin from the rear end of his car. The race ended with Repete winning from Rossetti in second and Curtis in third.

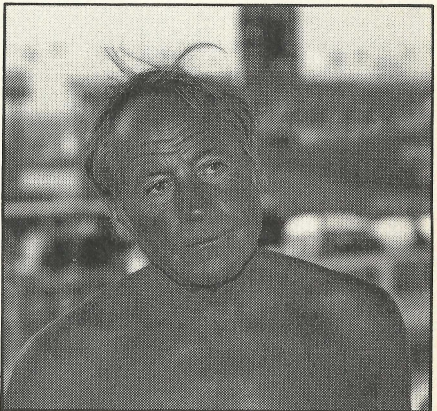
Driver	Country	Laps	Car	Motor
1 Repete Fusco	USA	98	Associated	O'Donnell Novarossi
2 Curtis Husting	USA	97	Associated	Paris-Mondial
3 Ron Rossetti	USA	97	Serpent	Paris-S
4 Kevin Mercandante	USA	97	Serpent	Paris-S
5 Hernan Matticoli	Argentina	94	Mantua	Picco
6 Domenico Calce	Italy	86	Serpent	Novarossi
7 Maurizio	Italy	85	Serpent	OPS
8 Gary Kyes	USA	83	Serpent	Paris Mondial
9 Jakob Buehler	Switzerland	80	Serpent	OPS
10 Sinichi Yamaguchi	Japan	6	Serpent	—



Above, Tony Neisinger and his Associated, below Kevin Mercandante holds his Serpent.



Above, the drivers rostrum what a great place Pamona raceway is, complete even with workshops housing metalwork machinery.



Ted Longshaw Mr Racing himself enjoying the meeting and the Californian sunshine.

**Final**  
Sunday was perfect, temperature was a steady 85° and the crowd was huge. The day started with a twenty minute practice session, finally the cars were called to the line for a Le Mans type start, the horn sounded and away they went. Gil Losi Jr took the lead followed by Ralph Butch Jr. Rody Roem, Barry Grossenbacher, Curtis Husting and Butch Kloeber.

Grossenbachers car was the fastest on the track but it didn't seem to have any brakes, he came up on Burch to fast and hit his rear tyre causing a crash that only Grossenbacher drove cleanly away from.

Five minutes and time for the first pit stop, Losi and Burch pull in together and Burch's pit stop is much faster allowing him away first but he lost the car and span into a wall, losing a wheel. So coming out of the pits it was Losi, Roem, Hustings and Grossenbacher.

By this time Grossenbacher in fourth place ran out of fuel and pulled out of the pits again behind Roem catching him at the start of the long straight. Neck and neck they turned into a corner and touched, Roem's car appeared to be having some

steering problems after that tangle, a short while later Roem dropped out, his engine blown.

Gil was now in the lead by about a quarter of the track with Repete catching by about three seconds every pit stop, thanks to Steve O'Donnell's skill.

Losi started to run into problems now, first running out of fuel and his two speed locked in first gear for some time. By now the race order was Repete, Mercandante, Neisinger and Curtis with Losi challenging him for his fourth place. Time after time the two tangled for fourth place, the crowd loved it, but for Losi, all to no avail as thats how the race finished.

Driver	Country	Laps	Car	Motor
1 Repete Fusco	USA	195	Associated	O'Donnell Novarossi
2 Kevin Mercandante	USA	188	Serpent	Paris-S
3 Tony Neisinger	USA	181	Associated	Paris Mondial
4 Gil Losi Jr	USA	174	Serpent	Paris Mondial
5 Curtis Husting	USA	174	Associated	Paris Mondial
6 Rody Roem	Holland	153	Serpent	OPS
7 Ralph Burch Jr	USA	143	Associated	Paris Mondial
8 Barry Grossen	USA	116	Associated	Novarossi
9 Ron Rossetti	USA	102	Serpent	Paris-S
10 Butch Kloeber	USA	61	Associated	Paris Mondial