

Top: the perfect setting - the circuit used for the championships was excellent. Centre: the top three cars in the final. Left: one of the quarter scale cars raced in one of the pre-championship final support races.

# WORLD

## Colin Teake rounds up the World Championships

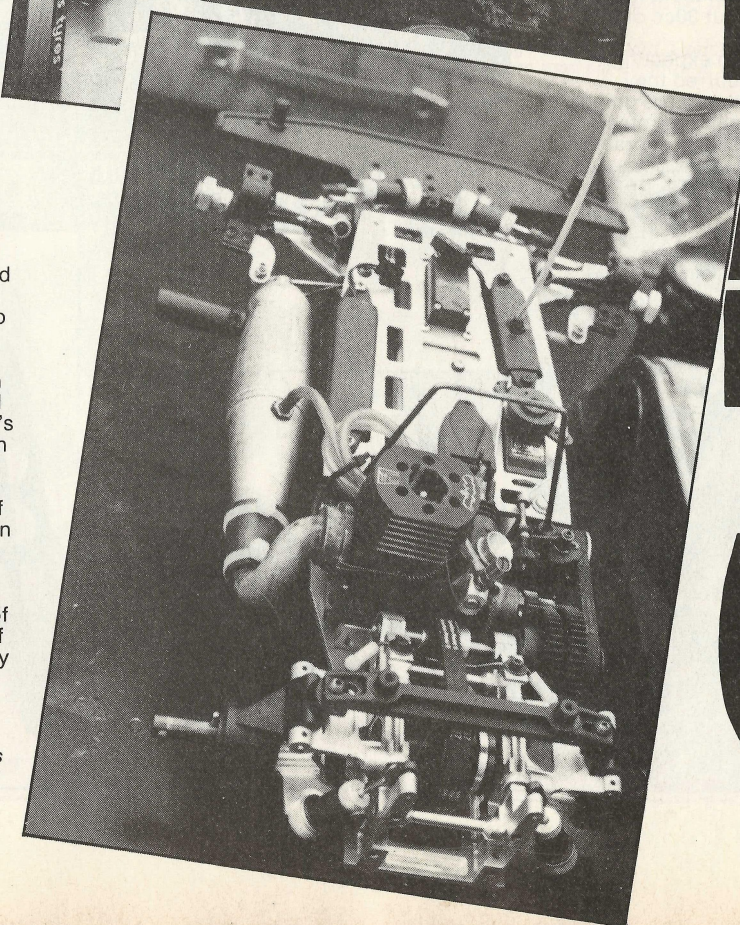
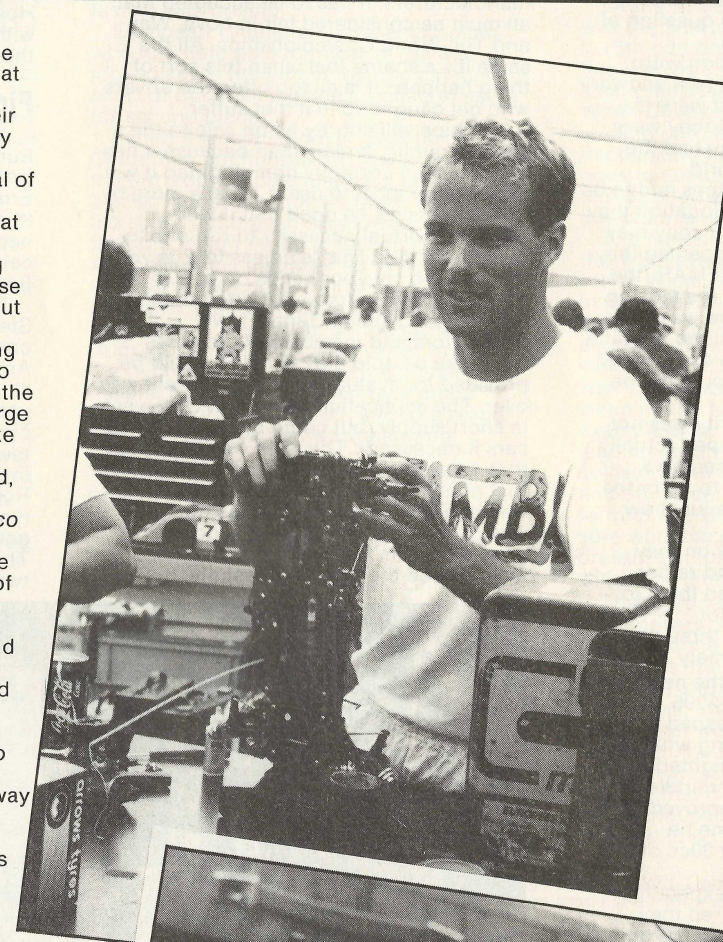
**A**t any World Championships the major manufacturers put a great deal of time and effort into achieving success. Such is their commitment to winning that it inevitably makes things difficult for private individuals, often leading to a great deal of complaining. Yet at the same time it should not be forgotten that some of that effort does go into helping individuals. Most of the drivers there were receiving varying degrees of support, and for those enterprising enough to go and seek it out more was available.

It seemed that Rex engines were being loaned out to any reasonable driver who needed one. With the present failure of the *Serpent* engine there was certainly a large number of drivers only too happy to take advantage of that offer. Mr. Picco was quietly going round the pits all weekend, peering over his half-framed glasses making sure that anyone running a *Picco* engine was looked after. Equally Mr. Muzio at OPS and Mondial had a mobile cabin out the back where, with the aid of one of his mechanics, he was quietly rebuilding engines for drivers. I was partaking of a refreshing beverage round there one evening when a Japanese gentleman brought an OPS engine fitted with an OS carburettor in for a rebuild. "Why are you using this?" asked Mr. Muzio. "Because it's better and easier to set," he replied. I expected to hear an outburst of Italian and see him going away with his engine part rebuilt in a plastic bag. Not so. They calmly carried on finishing the rebuild and handed him his engine back, destroying my image of Italian temperament in the process for ever.

### The Serpents

The policy was to drive near standard cars. A reasonable enough decision on *Serpent*'s part. They clearly figured they could win on their home track using the standard product and it would obviously be beneficial to do just that. What angered the British drivers was that Dutch works *Serpent* driver Rody Roem then turned up with a car that had been extensively modified. Basically the areas where the components of the car made contact with the new 4m thick chassis had been milled out to a depth of 1mm to increase the car's ground clearance back to what it was with the original chassis. Much of the car had been lightened, especially at the rear and with the rotating parts. A large quantity of lead had then been firmly planted between the front wheels to help reduce the understeer that seems to effect all *Serpents*. One could visibly see that his car was able to turn in better than those of other drivers. No doubt with the benefit of hindsight *Serpent* now recognise that they underestimated the opposition and wish

Top: Rody Roem works on his *Serpent* prior to the main final. Right: one of the Works Blitz cars with hand produced alloy suspension.



# OF THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS



that they had chosen to let the top UK drivers use similar cars.

The second problem for many of the *Serpent* drivers was that, in the light of the problems with the *Serpent* Eight Port engines, they were given clearance to use alternative makes of engines. Given that the problems with the eight port engines were known for some time it would have been better if they had been allowed to use other engines somewhat earlier. Dave Dixon was actually modifying his Rex engine on the campsite in the evening. Hardly an ideal situation.

The third, and perhaps most significant, problem to have hit the British *Serpent* drivers was the controversial question of the new *Serpent* tuned pipes.

Basically Paris, in association with *Associated*, had developed a new and very effective tuned pipe. So great were the benefits of this new pipe that they were determined to make sure they had the exclusive use of it for the World Championships. Since the pipes had to be submitted to EFRA for homologation they were worried that a European copy may be made. To prevent this happening they clearly established through IFMAR (the World organising body) that the closing date for pipes to be submitted was to be March 15th. They duly submitted the pipe at a date very close to this to ensure that copies from other sources could not be submitted in time.

Much as they feared security was not that good and one of their pipes actually turned up at a point being used on a *Serpent* car. *Serpent* having to try the pipe were quick to recognise just how good it was.

In what was an obvious try on they quickly made some crude and rather obvious copies and submitted them to EFRA (the European body) for homologation on one of the three closing dates that EFRA had set, namely June 1st.

They then turned up with the new pipe, designated S-Power muffler 2295, at the World Championships and issued it to *Serpent* drivers. Little realising what had gone on the drivers were delighted. The pipe was giving much better middle and top end performance and improved fuel economy. Steve White told me he reckoned it saved him about 30cc of fuel in five minutes.

The Americans had been expecting such a try on. When it occurred they craftily let *Serpent* think they were going to get away with it, saving their protest until lunch time on the last day of practice,

confident that by the time the officials had considered the protest, made a decision and communicated it to the drivers practice would be over.

So it was that many of the European *Serpent* drivers found themselves in the position of having practised all week with a pipe and engine combustion that they were not able to use in qualifying. So different were the characteristics of the pipe in question that this effectively meant that the gear ratios and gearbox change points they had worked so hard to optimise were now all wrong.

One cannot really blame the manufacturers, it has to be accepted that all must be considered fair in Love, War, and The World Championships. All the same it's a shame that when this sort of thing happens it is all too often the drivers who get caught up in it that suffer.

The pipe will shortly be on sale to the general public, and by then because it has already been correctly homologated it will be perfectly legal to use it. What's more by all accounts it's so good that it will become a virtual necessity to run one to be competitive. That is unless like us you managed to lay your hands on one of the Paris originals before returning home.

One has to smile. Quite a few distributors and members of the press were, like us, told that samples would be provided for evaluation after the event was over. The implication being that they were in short supply, but could be taken off the cars if necessary. The truth was of course that *Associated* wanted to make quite sure that none of these legal pipes found their way onto rival cars. As soon as the final was over new samples were suddenly produced from a very large box! After all, having used them so successfully, the

next priority was to generate sales of the pipes.

## Concours

Before the serious business of the qualifying started a Concours Competition was staged. The winner was Stewart Grant from Australia with a very impressive Lancia Group C Car, based on a *Serpent* Quattro. So detailed was the attention to detail that even the wires at the back of the dashboard had been included! The award for the most realistic body went to Leonardo Leite of Brazil with a very detailed paint job. Jacky Ermin, from Holland won the most original section with a body that had a globe painted on the front.

## First day qualifying

At the end of the first day of qualifying European Lamberto Collari was fastest with his *Blitz* followed by young Jacky Ermin with Michael Salven from Germany third. Michael could well have been fastest had his engine not cut in the Omega curve causing him to have to coast across the finish line.

The fastest *Associated* driver was Italian Stefano Colombini. The strong British contingent were nowhere and the American *Associated* drivers were having all sorts of problems. They are simply not used to racing on relatively fast open circuits like this one. As one driver said to me, "You could put two of our tracks inside this one." To add to their problems Ron Paris had built their engines to suit a typical American circuit and was unable to get the fuel consumption they needed. This meant that they were having to make two fuel stops in the ten minute qualifying

heats instead of the one that the European drivers were making.

On the second day of qualifying things remained much the same. Germany's Jurgen Baehr managed to move up to fourth place and Frenchman Thierry Guillemer moved into fifth.

The British contingent were still having problems as were the Americans. Defending Champion Re-Pete Fusco (his father's name is Pete Fusco. Get it?) was having a terrible time. At the end of the day he was classified 114th and had managed to complete only eight laps. Neither his car nor its O'Donnell tuned engine were working at all. To make matters worse they managed to roll their rental car in front of their hotel, dislocating Ross Kloeber's shoulder in the process!

The fortunes of the American team were about to change however as they prepared to deliver what amounted to a second sucker punch to their European rivals. They busied themselves on the Wednesday going round the pits persuading all and sundry that they needed more time to practice. With so many drivers experiencing problems there was no shortage of takers, and they quickly managed to gather enough support to get the organisers to agree to an extra 20 minute practice period.

What the Europeans had failed to notice was that whilst the Americans were having problems with their *Associated* cars, that of Italian Stefano Colombini was handling like a dream, and the Americans had spent most of the day deep in conference with him. They had obviously learned all they needed to know from him and just wanted track time to confirm it. Come the start of the extra practice they were all out with

cars that had been transformed. They put in a few very rapid laps then packed up heading back to their hotel laughing whilst the rest were still trying, in the main unsuccessfully, to improve the handling of their cars. Nice one Gene.

Only on the final day of qualifying did things start to go right for some of the more fancied runners. *Associated* driver Ralph Burch finally emerged as the fastest qualifier with an electrifying run in the fifth round. His pole position was made all the more remarkable when one considers that he was having to make two fuel stops to the other drivers' one. It shows just how fast he was driving.

European Champion Lamberto Collari, who had held pole for most of the week looked set to hold it but lost the car just short of the finishing line and had to settle for second place.

Italian *Associated* driver Stefano Colombini put himself into third place in the fifth round and could have been placed higher had not his faster time for the sixth round been disallowed due to his fuel tank being found to be 3cc over size. A problem this that seemed to be plaguing the *Associated* drivers all week. One particular tank was found to be undersize, correct and oversize all on the same day! Rody Room was the fourth driver to make it straight through into the main final, despite being handicapped by a motor that was not working well, and as a result of that a gearbox that was changing unpredictably.

The Brits were still having problems. Steve White was the highest placed at the top of one of the quarter finals, followed by Gary Culver halfway down the other quarter final.

Bob Errington, Nigel Sayles, Chris White and Dave Dixon all found themselves in the same eighth final, with the prospect that Dave Ashton could come up from his sixteenth final to join them.

At the end of qualifying we had two *Associated* cars, one *Serpent* and one *Blitz* straight through with three Rex motors and one S-Power. In the 14 semi-final places there were eight *Serpent* cars, five *Blitz* cars and one *Associated*. They were using seven Rex motors, three OPS, three S-Power and one Picco motor.

In the quarter finals it was nine *Serpents*, three *Blitz* and two *Associated* cars, powered by seven Rex motors, four S-Power, two OPS and one Picco motor.

Friday was kept clear as a day when drivers could relax and get to see a bit of Holland or work on their cars. Only the two lowest levels of finals were run.

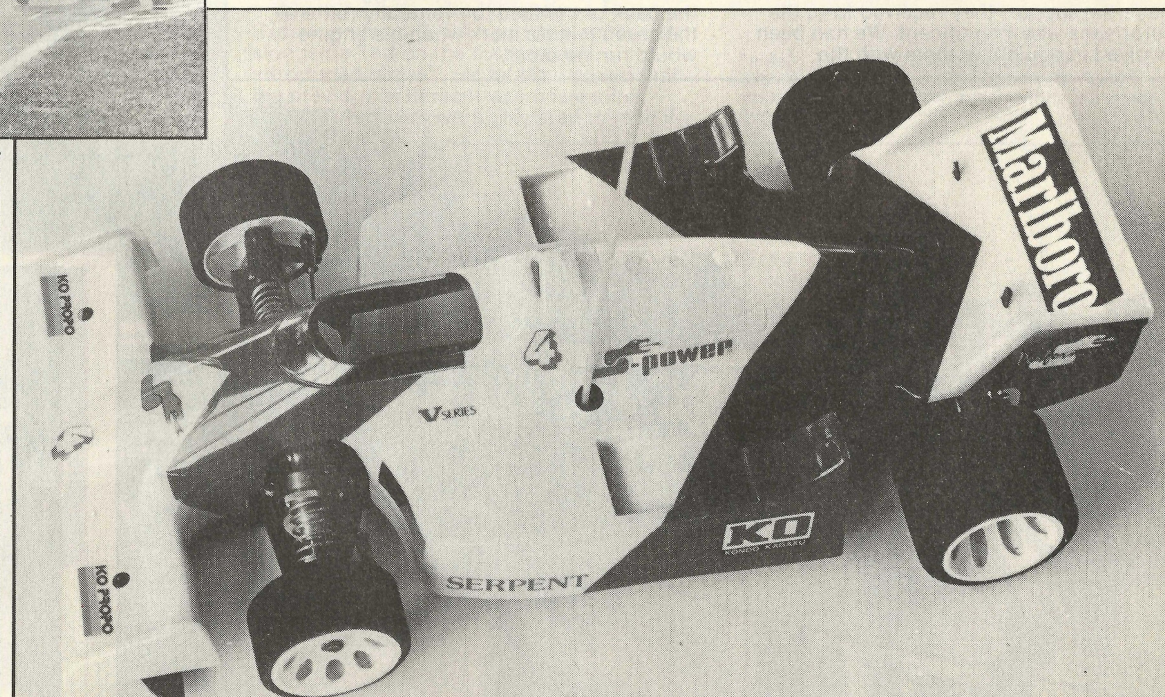
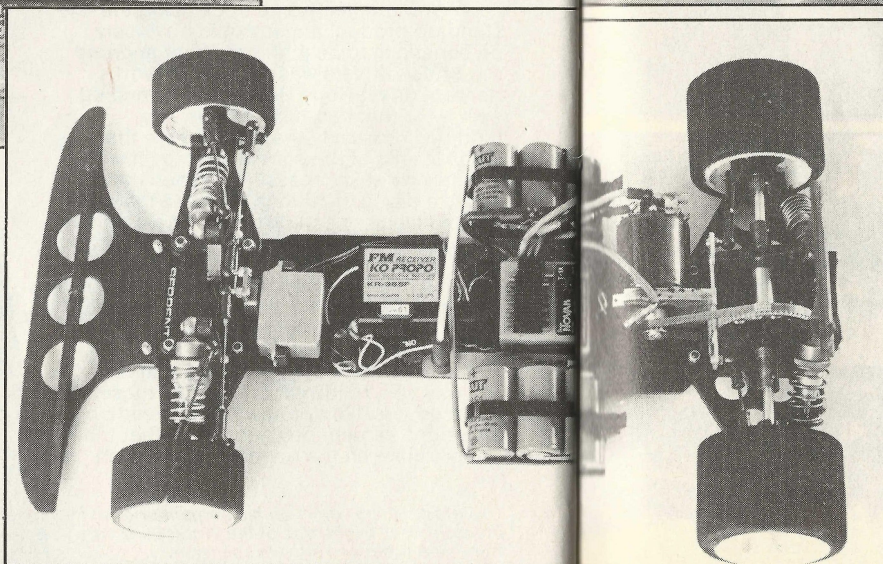
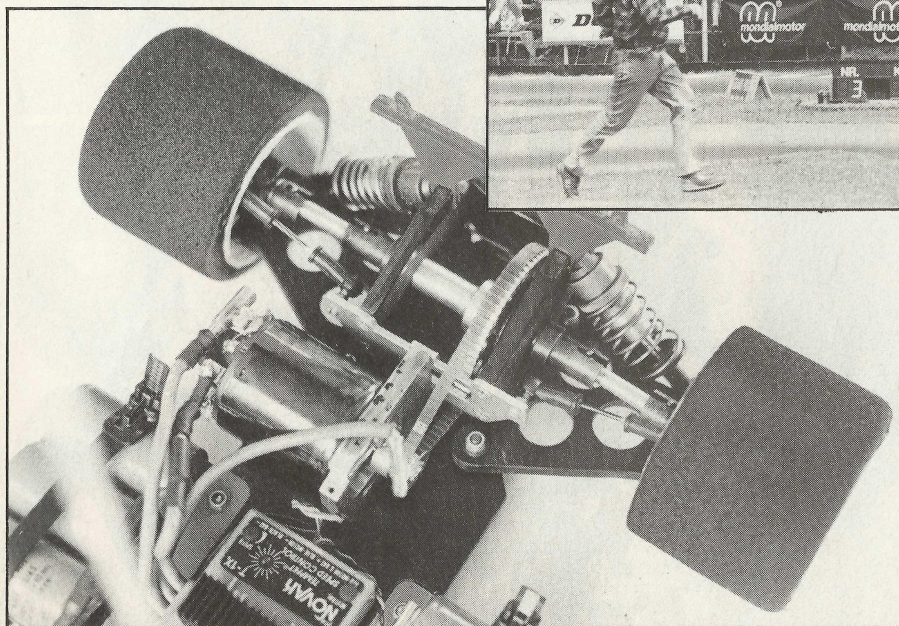
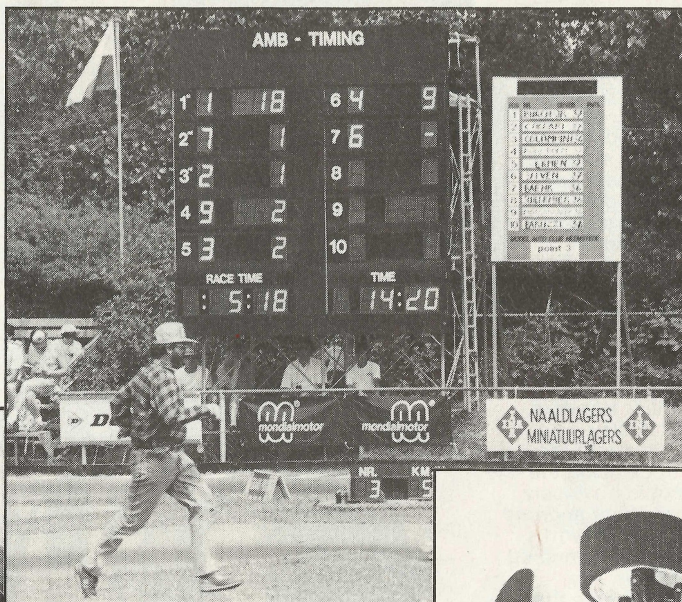
## Serious stuff

Saturday was the start of the serious finals through which those drivers who had failed to qualify straight through into the main final had to work their way.

Of the British contingent Dave Ashton was the first to take to the track in the 1/16th odd finals. For the first 15 minutes it looked as if Dave was going to make it in a safe third place. Alas it was not to be. When Dave ran wide at the sweeper leading onto the main straight and ran into the banking his engine cut. It took three goes to get it started again thus pulling him back down to sixth and destroying any chance he may have had of qualifying.

The next final with a British interest was the 1/8th even. With Dave Dixon, Chris White, Nigel Sayles and Bob Errington all in the same final it was inevitable that at least one of the British drivers would be eliminated. From the start Bob Errington, with his *Blitz*, pulled clear of the field and was looking certain to qualify comfortably when he too followed Dave Ashton's example and ran wide at the sweeper leading onto the straight. The resulting collision with the fence wrote the back end off his car. Exit the second Brit in the form of one Bob Errington. Bob is still not sure what happened as he was under no pressure at the time and was driving well within the limits of the car.

That particular bend seemed to catch a lot of drivers out. On looking at it later it seemed to me that whilst the new Arrows Pink tyres, that most drivers were using, wear well and produce good grip on the racing line, they do tend to shed the rubber that wears as a dry powder which settles on the track off the racing line to produce areas of no grip at all. I rather suspect that if you were a fraction off the line in that particular bend you were doomed to hit the fence. Certainly the



Left: the fantastic AMB timing system used this large display board. Opposite: start line action from qualifying. Bottom: *Serpent* had their 1:10th scale on road car on show at the championships.



race organisers seemed to have come to the same conclusion and were regularly sweeping the circuit to try and remove the offending powder.

Back to the final. British hopes were kept alive for much of the middle part of the race by Dave Dixon, who worked his way up from a terrible first five minutes into a strong second place. Chris White and Nigel Sayles looked good for some time but slowed and dropped out of contention for the latter part of the race.

As the race approached its finish the position was that Maurizio Busardo from Yugoslavia was in the lead with Dave Dixon second, driving the last few laps carefully with a car that would suddenly not handle at all. Curtis Hustings from America looked all set to relieve Dave of his second place when with less than 30 seconds to go he unexpectedly ran out of fuel letting Herge Valliet of France through into third place. Four Britons out of three left.

### In the quarters

Next out to do battle for a semi-final place was Steve White in the quarter even final. Very fast this one with some of the cars regularly clocking over 105kph through the speed trap on the straight. After the first five minutes it was young Oliver Mack, from Germany, continuing his spectacular run through the finals in the lead followed by Stefano Calpista and Fabio Domanin, with Steve White fourth. As the race progressed Stefano began to slow eventually letting a relieved Steve White up into third place to secure a place in the even semi-final.

The next quarter final featured Gary Culver and Dave Dixon. After 13 minutes it was rained off just when Gary Culver was looking certain to qualify for a semi-final with a very strong third place.

Predictably the Americans immediately announced that they were not prepared to race in the rain. However as it became clear that the weather was not likely to clear good old fashioned American sportsmanship took over and they were persuaded to race, though they still sensibly retained the right to decide later what to do about the main final. I happen to know that in reality more than a few of them were secretly looking forward to having a go at some wet weather racing.

Once the announcement had been made the support they received from the Europeans was magnificent. We had been involved in equipping them with the

necessary tyres for wet weather racing long before the championships even started and I was in the pits helping to prepare their cars prior to the announcement being made. When it was made they were positively showered with equipment and advice. Wet weather air filters, strong balloons, and sprays for both the circuit boards and the cars immediately appeared.

With Supreme General Gene Hustings and first lieutenant Ron Paris organising things the way the entire American contingent pulled together as a team to get their cars ready in time was impressive. So too was the fact that in the short time available they managed to prepare their cars so that they ran reliably and handled well. The speed with which Cliff Lett adapted his driving style to such strange conditions for him was truly remarkable. Indeed I still find it hard to believe he had never driven in the wet before.

We even managed to learn a few new tricks from them and those who had gathered to help. A few years ago it used to be common practice in the UK to drill holes in the wheels when MRC tyres were used. We stopped when the new low profile tyres came out as it seemed to produce an unstable tyre. It also often resulted in the tyre getting filled up with water. The Americans taking advice from some source drilled small holes in the tread. We have not had a chance to verify their findings yet but Gene Hustings told me they found that tyres so treated were marginally better than those with no holes drilled in them.

I had also advised them to fix something round the head of their motors to help keep the engine temperature up. What they in fact did instead was to cut new bodies with the cut-out for the engine only partly removed and the material folded up as a flap in front of the engine to keep the water off it. This worked just fine.

With the reputation that Gary Culver and Dave Dixon have for wet weather driving most of us were confidently looking forward to seeing them both go through to the semi-final with ease. It was not to be. After all those wet races Dave Dixon has won in the UK he just could not get his engine to run well. Even a cut up coke tin round the head did not enable him to get his Rex engine up to the correct operating temperature. He struggled on at the back of the field to eventually retire at the seven minute mark when his engine would run no more.

With twelve minutes of the race gone the order was Stefan Habbeck in the lead, Cliff Lett from America, looking like no one had told him it was raining, second and Gary Culver seemingly in a comfortable third place. The order remained the same until the last lap when a combination of a mistake by Gary and some slow marshalling put Gary back into fifth place letting Herge Valliet through into third place. Six Brits down now. Only Steve White was left for us to pin our hopes on. I wonder what happened to that bottle of champagne Dave Dixon had cooling in his fridge.

### The semis

Steve was in the even semi-final. With his legendary ability to drive in the wet we were all quite confident of having the consolation of seeing at least one Briton in the main final. Who knows if it keeps raining we thought he may even win and emerge as the new World Champion. For a time it looked as if he could do it, but just as he was about to move into second place at the ten minute mark a minor collision knocked off his very effective but vulnerable wet weather air filter. For the next five minutes we could see his car getting slower and slower as the engine began to go off. With 15 minutes left to run it was all over for Steve when he was forced to retire with a re-occurrence of the radio problems that seem to have dogged him all season. There was to be no British driver in the final.

Because of the difference in weather conditions between the two semi-finals the organisers decided that the first three from each semi should go through into the final.

The line up was much different from that which any of us would have predicted. No drivers from the strong German, French, Far Eastern, or British teams made the final and only one from Holland got through. The Americans,

driving under conditions they had not previously experienced, did well to get one driver in and were very unlucky to not to have a second in Cliff Lett who only just failed to make it when he ran out of fuel on the last lap of his semi. The relatively small Swiss contingent did well to have two drivers make the final and the Italians with no less than six drivers through looked all set to dominate the final.

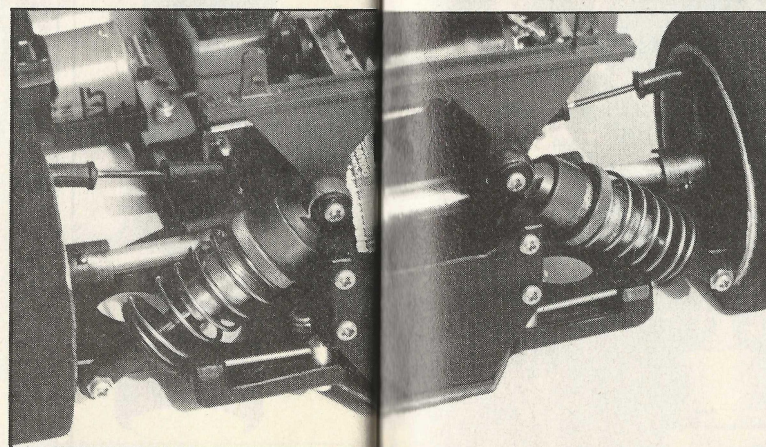
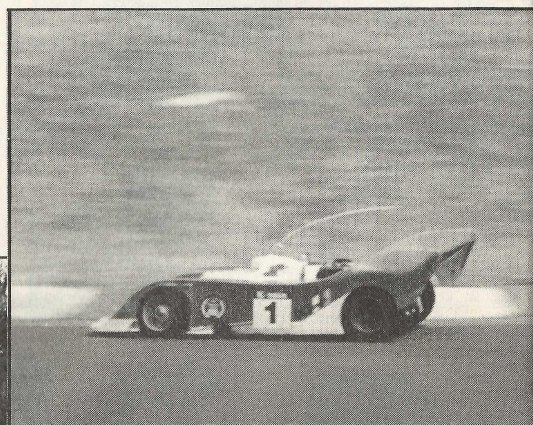
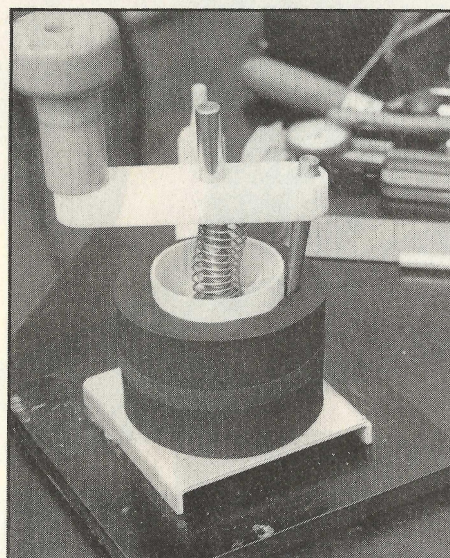
The cars consisted of two *Associated* cars, three *Serpents*, and five *Blitz*.

On the engine front the power was provided by one S-Power, four OPS, and five Rex engines.

As usual a few drivers made progress through the finals worthy of note. In the odd finals Michael Pesek managed to win both the 1/64th and 1/32nd finals before getting knocked out in the 1/16th. Herge Valliet worked his way right up from the 1/16th to the semi-final with one second and two third places.

In the even finals Mikael Kjellson drove his way up from the 1/32nd final to the quarter final with three consecutive second places.

Undoubtedly though the talk of the paddock was the stunning performance of 14 year old Oliver Mack, from Germany. He worked his way up from the 1/16th to the semi-final, where he finished fifth with three first places on the way. What was most impressive was the way he did it. Standing on top of an upturned bottle crate he looked totally relaxed and happy as he carved his way through the field. His car always looked impressively stable and was obviously very well prepared. I watched his progress through the 1/16th, 1/8th, and quarter finals and quite simply never saw him make a mistake. If ever there was a future World Champion in the making he must be it.



### Near the Final

The lead up the grand final, which would decide who was to be The World Champion for the next two years, was full of drama. The fact we all knew that that in the end the race would take place made it possible to enjoy the proceedings. The large crowd were happily cheering or booing each successive announcement as was appropriate, and IFMAR president Ted Longshaw, up on the rostrum taking the part of MC, was revelling in the situation.

Bearing in mind that the Americans had not yet agreed to race the final in the wet, Ted announced that the final could only start if the track was dry, and the latest time at which it could start was 7.00pm. He informed the crowd that the criteria for deciding if the track was dry was that a 19 second lap should be possible, and invited drivers who wanted to race to have a go at proving it could be done.

Rody Roem with his *Serpent* was the only driver to take up the challenge. To heighten the drama as his car circulated the lap times were announced. 20.8 seconds for the first lap, 20.4 for the second, cheering, 20.2 for the next, more cheers from the crowd. Back to 20.6 for the next and to groans of disappointment from the crowd Rody heads back to the pit lane. A deadly hush descends on the crowd only to be replaced by more cheering when Rody appears back on the circuit after a tyre change. 20.4 seconds, 20.2, 19.8, and back to 20.2. Has he done it, will 19.8 seconds count? The crowd wait in an expectant silence. "No," announced Ted Longshaw, "it must be 19 seconds dead." More groans from the crowd, are replaced by cheers as Rody, with yet another set of tyre compounds on, comes out for a third attempt. This time it's 19.8 seconds, 19.4, 19.2, and finally, to the accompaniment of much cheering, flag waving, whistling, and the sounding of car horns, he manages the magic 19 second lap before heading straight back into the pits.

The race is on. Or is it? Too much booing and whistling from the crowd Ted explains that the three governing bodies have met and have unanimously decided that the completion of a single 19 second lap does not mean the track is dry. They are unanimous in not allowing their drivers to race.

When the outcry had died down Herr Grossman from EFRA suddenly appeared alongside Ted on the rostrum and introduced himself. He told the crowd that the previous statement was misleading. The EFRA drivers were prepared to race in

any conditions as long as they could be guaranteed that the final would be allowed to run the full distance. More cheering, from a crowd that was loving every minute of this.

When his initial statement did not produce a response Herr Grossman was back at the microphone. This time he announced that if drivers from other organisations were not prepared to race then to avoid disappointing the crowd EFRA would organise a final of its own. To back up his threat top EFRA drivers had already been despatched back to the camp site to fetch their cars.

Suddenly out of the blue came the announcement that the race would start in six minutes time. The fact is that whilst all this had been going on the track surface had been steadily drying out and was now virtually dry so it had all been a pointless, if highly entertaining, exercise. I must say in fairness to the sportsmanship of the drivers concerned I got the impression that they were only indulging in delaying tactics hoping the circuit would dry and that most would have raced in the end no matter what happened!

### The Final!

With the hour long main final underway it was Lamberto Collari, with his *Blitz*, who went into the lead followed by the *Associated* of Stefano Colombini, the *Serpent* of Rody Roem and the *Associated* of top qualifier Ralph Burch.

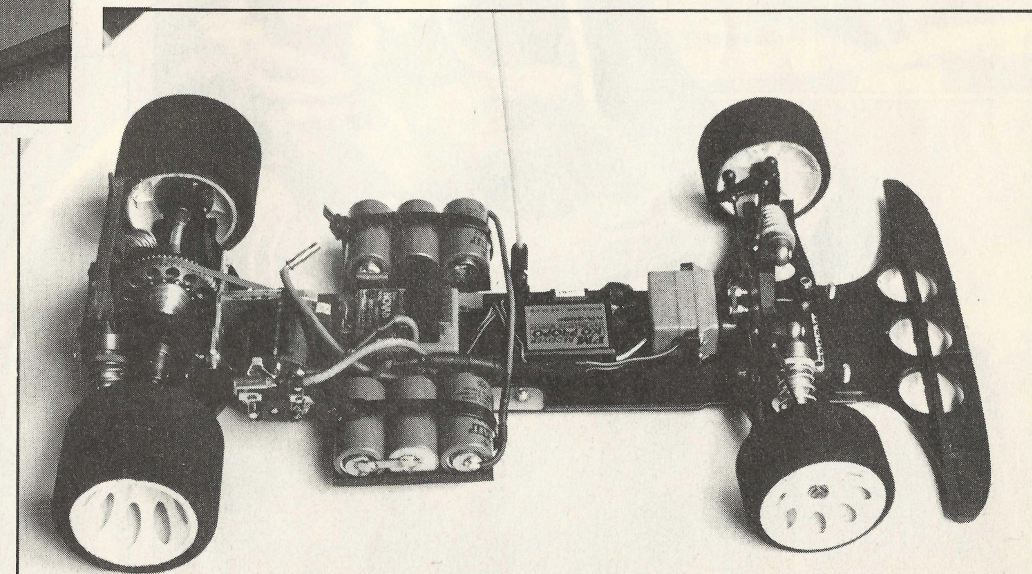
Rody Roem was having to use soft front tyres to get the degree of steering he needed. He knew before the race started that he would have to make two long pit stops to have all four tyres changed. With this in mind his only option was to push the leaders hard at the start and either try and pull out a lead or alternatively pressurise them into making a mistake. With this in mind he quickly moved up into second place and for the first 20 minutes of the race he tracked Lamberto Collari round occasionally taking the lead until he pitted for his first tyre change. This first tyre change was effected reasonably quickly, but still dropped him back into third place.

Far left: Alain Prost's championship winning car was on show during the meeting. Left: Rody strips down prior to the final. Bottom: the novel *Serpent Pro 10* car.



RADIO CONTROL MODEL CARS

NOVEMBER 1989





With half the race run Rody suddenly found himself in the lead. Stefano Colombini had slowed and Lamberto Collari had stopped to change tyres.

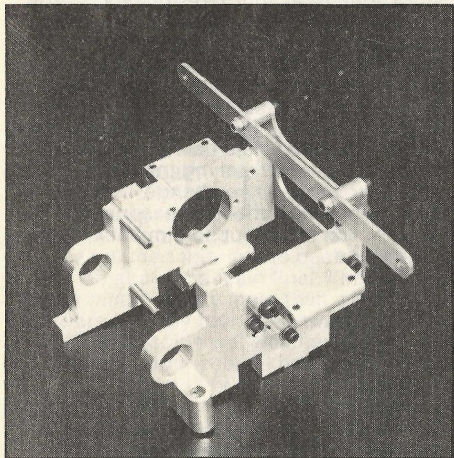
Rody managed to effectively hold onto the lead until he was forced to make his second stop for tyres at the 46 minute mark. We were not allowed into the pit lane so I don't know what went wrong but something must have, as it was an inordinately long stop that cost him three laps, though he still managed to hold onto second place. Ralph Burch was now third, having managed to get past Stefano Collari.

The pattern looked set for the rest of the race. With five minutes to go Lamberto came up behind Rody, and to the great excitement of the Americans, who hoped the pair of them might take each other out and let Ralph Burch through to win, attempted to liven things up by inviting Rody to indulge in a scrap for the last few minutes. Despite the fact that Lamberto goaded Rody by alternately passing him then letting him through Rody would have none of it and kept out of trouble looking for a safe second place.

Just as it looked to be all over, as so often happens, drama suddenly, and unexpectedly, struck in the closing minutes of the race. Rody Roem's *Serpent* spluttered to a halt on the circuit out for fuel reducing him to fourth place, and moving the two *Associated* drivers American Ralph Burch and Italian Stefano Colombini up into second and first place.

## Round up

On the car front the meeting was a



resounding victory for the BMT *Blitz* cars, though to be fair it must be said that it was the Italian BMT cars that did so well. Not all *Blitz* cars at the meeting were by any means so successful. The winning car had been highly modified and bore little relationship to the car as sold through Kyosho. The modifications they had made to the rear driver train were especially significant. Their domination was helped as well by the fact that the extremely talented line up of Italian drivers had managed to make sure that they had the best possible engines and tyres.

With their cars finishing second and third *Associated* had every reason to be pleased. We always assume that because they come from America there must be thousands of them racing over there. In fact nothing could be further from the truth. The fact is that they have very few circuits over there and not much eighth scale circuit racing takes place. What is more Gene Hustings tells me that out of every five cars sold over there four are two wheel drive. So their success was all the more remarkable. I'm sure that in some

measure it was helped by the way they all pulled together as a team. Certainly they had a great deal of help from Italian driver Stefano Colombini.

I saw one Delta being used and there were a few *PB* cars being raced but neither make were represented in the final.

It's easy for me to sit here and detail where *Serpent* went wrong with the benefit of hindsight. The fact is that they seriously underestimated the strength of the opposition. It had more or less been assumed that with the track record of their cars to date, their massively talented driver line up and their home track to drive on they would annihilate the opposition. Indeed one Ted Longshaw was even rash enough to take an even money bet with Dave Dixon that there would be no *Blitz* cars in the top ten! I can't help thinking that if their drivers had been given modified cars and been freed to drive with alternative engines earlier the results may have been very different. No doubt the fact that many of the factory personnel, and management, were having to devote much of their time both during and in the period

leading up to the The Championship did little to help.

## The meeting

Whilst on the subject of the organisation a word of appreciation from all of us is due. The meeting went off virtually without a hitch. Having to report the meeting I must say that the provision of a press-box along with a fridge that was kept stocked with cold drinks was a blessing. I also found it particularly helpful to be able to get hold of whatever information I needed on the day's racing so quickly.

On the engine front there is now doubt that the most popular and fashionable engine was the new Rex made by Nova Rossi. Much of its popularity was due to the enthusiasm with which the manufacturers promoted the engine. Having said that it must also be said that its popularity is by all accounts well deserved. It was being used in both works and standard form, and it was also the engine that Ron Paris had chosen to modify for the American team. All the engines seemed to go well, and I never heard any driver complain about his Rex engine during the whole meeting, which illustrates the speed, consistency and reliability that Nova Rossi seem to have found with this engine. In many ways I am reminded of the similar position that they enjoyed with the Red Head when that was first introduced. With the withdrawal of the *Serpent* eight port engine Walt Bailey, of Elite Models was looking for an engine to import. It took a lot of hard work on his

part which occupied much of his weekend but by the time he came away from the meeting he had reached agreement that he would be the UK importer for this engine. He has subsequently told me that the price will be £159.95. A little more expensive than the *Serpent* engine he used to sell, but not unrealistic for an engine that is virtually guaranteed to be

competitive straight out of the box and seems so far to be both durable and consistent. I'm told also that he will be offering this engine as part of a deal with *Serpent* kits but an increased price that has yet to be fixed. *RCMC* will be bringing you a full review of this popular new engine in the very near future.

A few *Serpent* engines were being used but most were either the old five port design or eight port castings with six or seven port internals. Indeed it proved to be very difficult to get to the bottom of just what they were using. The current position on *Serpent* engines is that the troublesome eight port engine has been discontinued. You can rest assured however that *Serpent* will be back with a competitive engine, probably with six or seven ports. They already have designs what will fill the bill. All they have to do is to decide which one to use and get the engines back into production. No doubt this time there will be some very extensive track testing done before the engines are released.

As ever there were a considerable number of OPS/Mondial engines being used, Mr. Muzio smiles quietly and has been known to refer to them as his old fashioned engines. A little deceptive this. Whilst they may look the same as they did years ago externally they have undergone many changes inside and are a thoroughly up to date and competitive engine. I was lucky enough to come away at the end of the meeting with one of the unused reserve engines he had taken along to the meeting. It was interesting to see how they had gone about mildly modifying the motor to improve its performance without sacrificing reliability. I don't normally like to encourage drivers to modify their motors but there will always be a few who will have a go. In the interest of at least trying to ensure they don't wreck their engines I shall be covering the work that had been done in a future issue, probably over the winter when more space is available. It is my understanding that these motors were very much development motors and that at least some of the changes made may in due course find their way into production motors.

OPS are about to launch what may best be described as glow heads for their engines. I have no idea at this moment what the price will be. I'm told that they do give a very real improvement in performance but tend not to last very long. They are intended as aids to qualifying

and I was warned not to risk using one for a final.

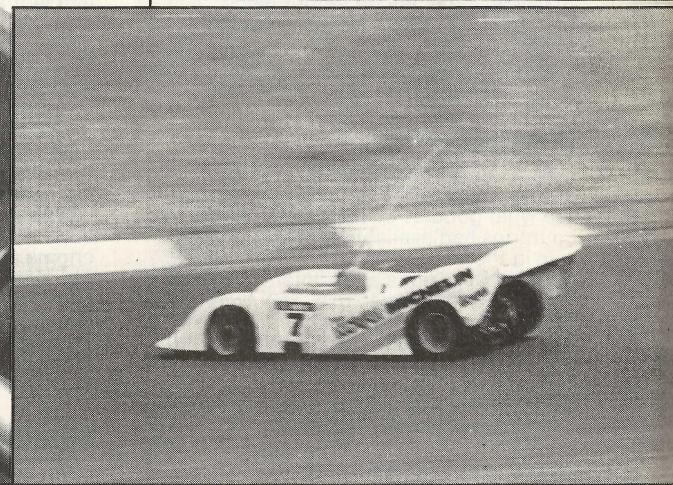
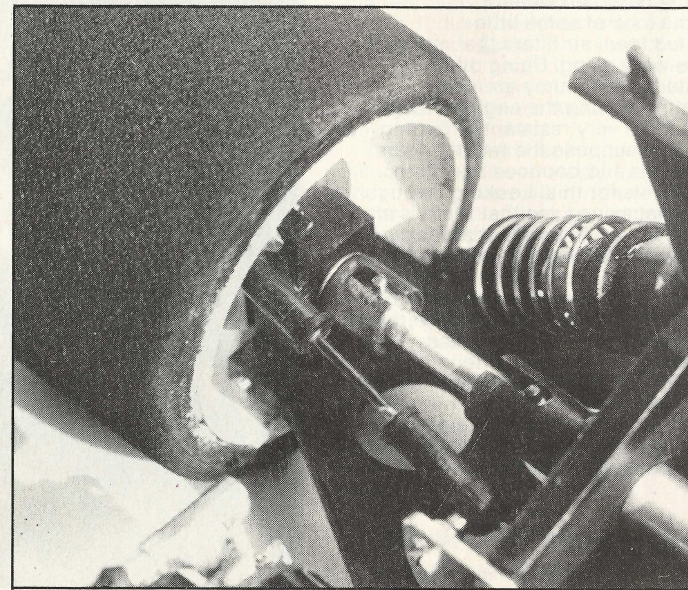
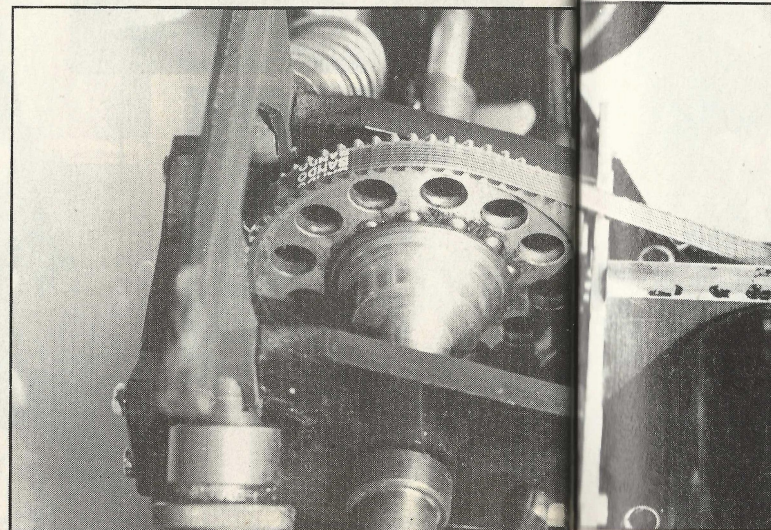
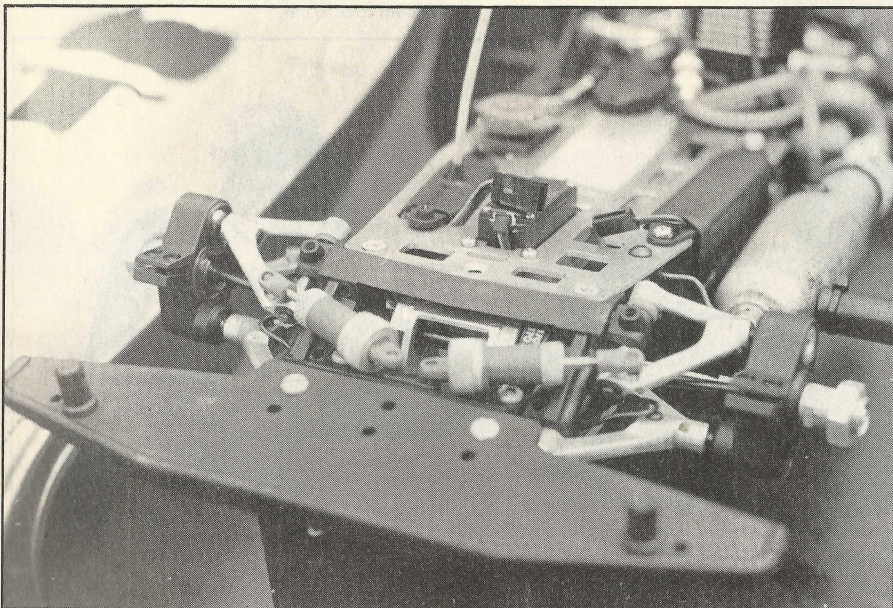
For some reason they seem less fashionable than certain rival motors but there were a few *Picco* motors being used. I've always held that they have been under rated. Those that were in use seemed to be both powerful and reliable. They were using a brand new carburettor. As my Steve uses *Picco* engines I tried to ask Mr. Picco, who speaks no English, what squish band clearance they were using. He replied October-November. As I had just photographed the new carburettor I assumed he meant that this was when he expected it to be available!

As ever the *Picco* in Alberto Picco's much modified *Blitz* car with its all alloy suspension arms was awesome. He managed to qualify straight through to the even semi-final but once there was totally unable to cope with the wet conditions. The massive punch that all *Picco* engines seem to have at the bottom end, which is so desirable in the dry, must have made the car a nightmare to drive in the wet.

There was one car at least which caught my attention using a Japanese OS engine. The only surprise was that more drivers from the Far East were not using this engine. Certainly from what I could see it was giving away nothing in the power stakes to the Italian engines and its exhaust note sounded particularly sweet and unstrained.



Far left: all alloy rear end for the *Associated* car. Bottom left: Works *Blitz* detail. Three more shots of the neat *Serpent* Pro 10 car. Right: Ralph Burch receives his trophy from Ted Longshaw.





As far as tyres go it was Japs as usual on the front, but for some unknown reason the *Serpent* drivers were finding that they needed to use tyres as soft as 25 deg on the front to get enough steering. On the back most competitors were using the new Arrows Pinks. These seemed to handle very well and exhibited the ability to last longer than other tyres. The only peculiarity being that whilst it looked as if a black racing line was being laid down it was very different from that laid down by the tyres we have all been hitherto using. Whilst it was black it was a dry black rather than the sticky black line that normally develops. They also produced a great deal of dry tyre dust that settled off the racing line and made conditions impossible for cars that strayed onto it. I even heard it suggested that the almost universal use of these tyres was one of the reasons that the *Serpent* cars in particular were unable to find any steering.

### Round, black and boring

At the asking price of £18.00 the original importers were charging these tyres were unlikely to achieve much success in the UK, indeed there was even talk of banning them as being just too expensive. Now that Walt Bailey of Elite Models is bringing them in at £12.99 it may well be that drivers will decide that the extra running time they give will make them worth the price.

There were also a few tyres being used about which manufacturers seemed strangely vague! Some of the *Serpent* cars had tyres made from three rings of Jap rubber for which there are no plans for production due to the very high price that would have to be charged. Many of the Italian *Blitz* driver enjoyed the use of an equally mysterious tyre designated greens and made by Arrows. Inquiries revealed that these were made from a batch of hard Silver rubber that was said to have been accidentally produced and would be quite impossible to reproduce. It seems it also just happens that the entire batch was mounted on *Blitz* wheels! One thing is certain they did work very well. Whatever problems the *Serpent* drivers were having with lack of steering were not affecting the Italian *Blitz* drivers with these tyres.

As ever when it rained it was out with the MRC tyres on all cars. The Americans stood agog watching the cars. They simply did not believe how well the cars could be made to go in the wet with these tyres.

On the subject of wet weather tyres I had a chat with Arrows about their Whites. The fact is that whatever you may have been told about further supplies of these tyres being imminent they are not and Arrows have no plans to produce any more. Now that I have explained to them that MRC tyres are no longer being manufactured they have promised to review the situation. In other words if they can be convinced there is a market for these tyres they will make some more.

### Bits and pieces

As usual at these events it was interesting to look round the paddock to see what goodies drivers from other countries had available that are not on sale in the UK.

There were quite a few interesting and effective tyre truers in use. The Americans took the prize for the most impressive machine. They had a simply massive 110 volt hunk of equipment that was so large and powerful they were able to use a fullsize industrial angle grinder as the means of removing the rubber.

They also had available a very professional looking belt driven unit that

used what can best be described as a small round cheese grater to remove the rubber. Once again it was 110 volt powered. It was beautifully made but much too expensive to be imported into the UK.

The Australians had an equally well crafted unit that used the traditional spike to remove the rubber but carried it on two crossed dovetail slides, with the travel being provided by screws as on a lathe.

The most interesting one from our point of view in the UK was a modification made to a standard unit by some continental drivers. It first came to my attention one evening when I noticed many of the British drivers taking their tyres over to be trued. All they had done was to mount a cheap largish Mabuchi motor, such as is often used in model boats, in place of the spike and fitted a suitable routing cutter to it. It worked fine producing a perfectly true tyre, and of course had the benefit of being able to take off as little rubber as was needed to produce an accurately sized tyre.

I have subsequently experimented with the same idea on my small lathe. The first powerful two pole motor I used worked fine but overheated with the high loads imposed by the inevitable out of balance forces and melted the plastic bearing mount. I cured this by changing to a much slower five pole motor which I arranged to rotate in the opposite direction to the tyre. Once again this worked fine but I did find that the surprisingly abrasive foam rubber quickly took the edge off the cutter. Finally I located a white aluminium oxide grindstone that was intended for use in a drill sharpening machine, and was about the same diameter as the motor. I used this instead angling the motor to let the leading edge of the stone do the work. Providing a slow cut is taken this produces a perfect result removing the rubber with ease. It does not clog up nor go blunt. The total cost was about £8.00.

One of the Americans was balancing wheels in the pits with the aid of a model aircraft prop balancer. He used short thick panel pins as balance weights which he pushed into the rubber near the wheel, securing them in place with a drop of superglue. I asked him if it did any good. "Well," he said, "I figured it must help a little and at this level every little helps." "Maclaren do it," he added. Prop balancers are quite cheap and like our American friend I figure every little helps so I've ordered one from my local model shop. Of course it will only produce a statically balanced wheel. Now I wonder what would be needed to produce a totally dynamically balanced wheel?

I liked the look of some little oil impregnated foam air filters that many of the drivers were using. Being oil impregnated I'm told they are very efficient at protecting the engine. They also seem to be very resistant to getting knocked off. I suppose the fact the foam simply deflects and bounces back into shape accounts for this. Looking through a German magazine I see that there is also a neat little wet weather cap that fits over them. They should be particularly suitable for use in the wet, as unlike the paper filters currently in use, the filter element will not swell up with the moisture in the air and restrict the air supply to the engine. As far as I know no one in this country is currently selling them. If the manufacturer is reading this perhaps he may like to send a couple of samples over for my attention. No doubt after this some one in the trade will be willing to import them.

### Stopping for fuel?

One of the features of the meeting was

the rapidity of the fuel stops that were being made. Much of the amazing speed with which the cars were being refuelled was due to the use of some very efficient fast fuelling guns that are either marketed or possibly even made by O'Donnell from the USA. I know Walt Bailey brought one back and is considering importing them if he can manage to negotiate a deal that will enable him to sell them at what he thinks is a reasonable price. They do tend to be a bit expensive but taken in the context that they are very well made and should last for years I would consider one a very worthwhile investment. Given that races are very often won or lost by a very small margin anything that saves time in the fuel stops must be worthwhile. In fact as I write this I'm kicking myself for not buying one whilst I was over there.

Finally on the list of goodies there were the inevitable tyre gluing machines. I'm still not convinced about these. A number of drivers keep telling me how good they are yet I have not seen one used with complete success. It may that this is because they are best used when bolted firmly down on a bench rather than used in the field. One thing is certain if you do use one it is essential to make sure you use one of the slower acting types of superglue.

It's not the sort of thing one would dash out and buy, but AMB had both a giant electronic scoreboard and speed trap in use that added greatly to the spectators' enjoyment and made the racing easy to follow. It was much appreciated by the likes of me who have to be able to follow the racing to report on it.

### Demonstrations and displays

During the lunch breaks on several days the DWA organisation kept us amused with demonstrations of their quarter scale cars and motorcycle. Seeing these driven at speed by drivers who were used to them gave a much better impression of their abilities than the demonstrations I have seen in the UK.

The cars looked and sounded great though it must be said that they would have benefitted from being driven on a larger track. The way the motorcycle

handled was unbelievable, especially when he opened it out down the straight. It was nearly as fast as the eighth scale cars. They failed to catch on in the UK but are very popular in Europe. I can well understand the attraction of racing them as they are both exciting to race yet at the same time very cheap to run.

Someone from the factory took a very large model aeroplane up to photograph the circuit then with heaven knows what value of Nikon camera gear still on board bravely went on to give us an aerobatic display!

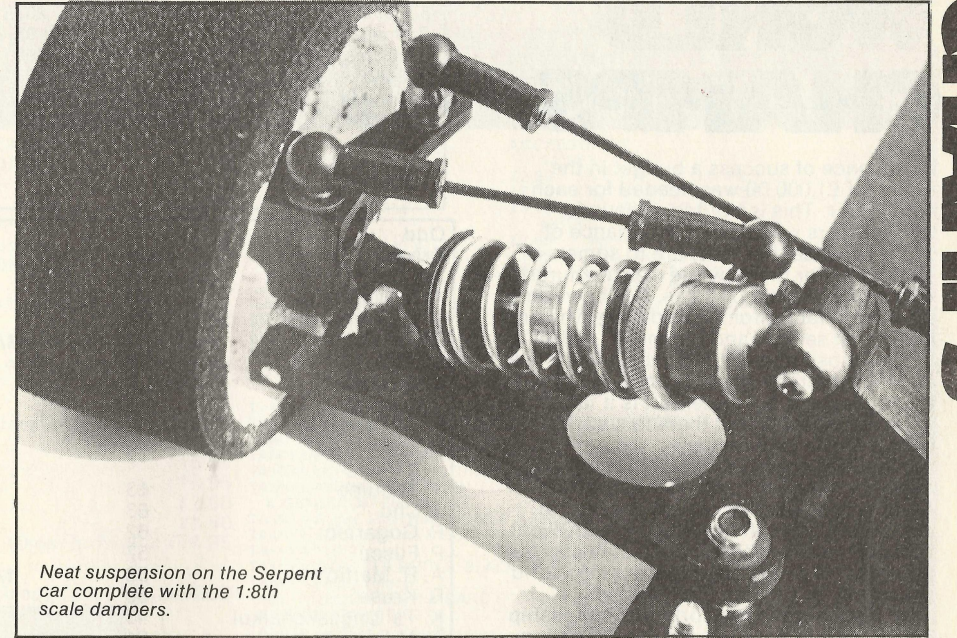
Marlboro had one of Mr. Prost's one scale cars on display. They said I could have given it a track test if only they had brought the starter with them.

### IFMAR

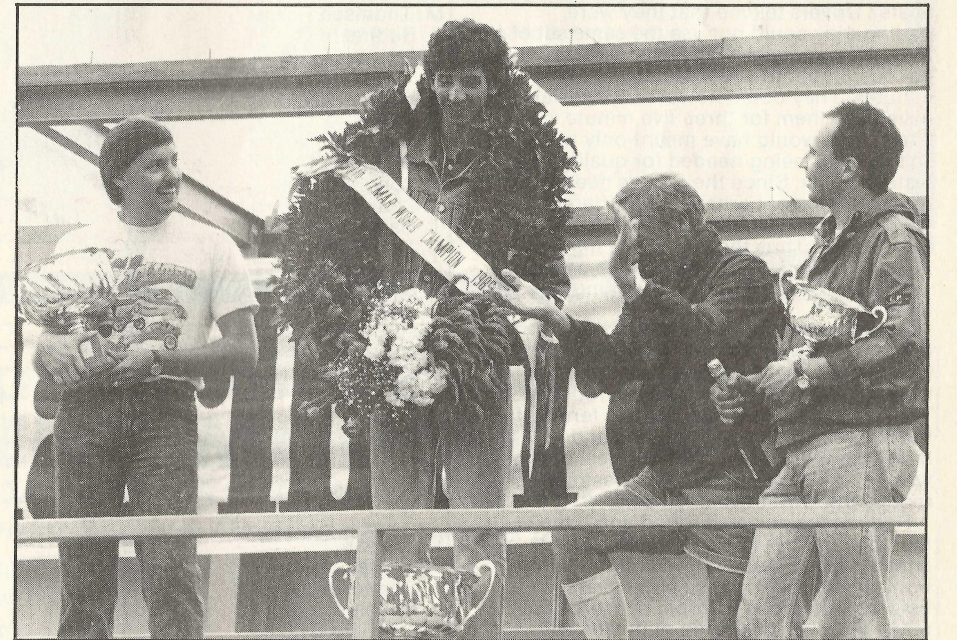
During the course of the Championships what can only be described as an acrimonious meeting of IFMAR took place. The EFRA representatives had been threatening even before the meeting to split off and go their own way. Indeed at one point in the meeting they actually walked out.

The main two causes of contention were that EFRA, who are by far the largest of the three organisations in IFMAR were fed up with being outvoted by the other two, especially with reference to rain rules. Although they had turned it to their ultimate advantage, the Americans through ROAR were equally upset at the way the details of their new pipe had been leaked.

In the event the break up of IFMAR was avoided with a compromise solution to the various problems. The atmosphere after the meeting was however far from satisfactory. A situation of hostile neutrality being the best way to describe it. I can see that the various bodies' representatives must uphold the interests of their members but they would do well to do so in a less hostile manner. Tact and diplomacy were not much in evidence. They should remember that the setting up of IFMAR by the founding fathers of the sport was a considerable achievement. Now that it has been done surely we can manage to keep it in one piece.



Neat suspension on the *Serpent* car complete with the 1:8th scale dampers.



Lamberto Collari – the 1989 1:8th circuit world champion receives the spoils of winning.

A lot of detailed decisions were made so I'll just outline the significant ones.

Firstly it was agreed that a fourth block be allowed to take part in eighth scale matters. This block to be the rest of the World. It is not yet clear what exactly it will consist of, who will run it or what it will be called! Each of the four blocks will have an equal vote but it will still be necessary to have a two thirds majority for any decisions taken.

It was decided that the new block be allocated 30 places in any future event but that these places will not be re-allocated in the event that they are not taken up. It was also decided that no re-allocation of places could be made to the host country in future events. This could mean some very small entries for certain future events that could leave the organisers financially embarrassed.

It was agreed that at future events rain rules similar to those used by EFRA be employed.

In future EFRA will not be the sole body able to homologate pipes. It was agreed that ROAR can now also homologate pipes.

### Sneak preview

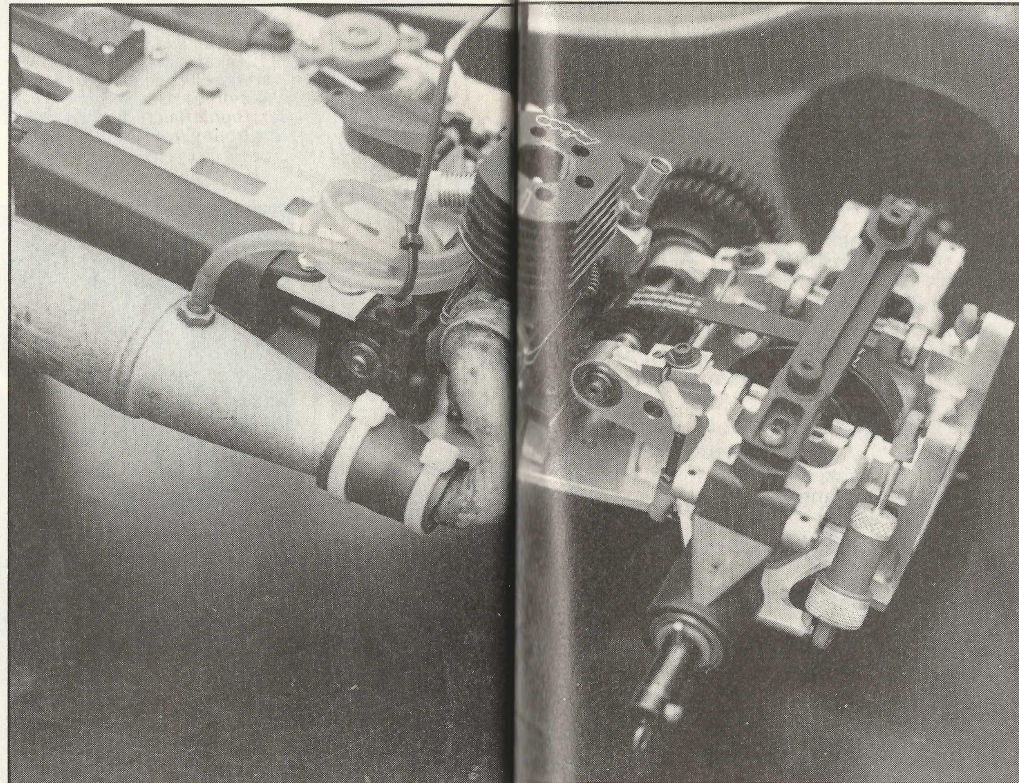
I was privileged to be able to both see

and photograph *Serpent*'s new and somewhat controversial tenth scale circuit car, with its all independent successive suspension. Hopefully we shall be able to bring you a full review before its launch date which I'm now told should be around Christmas time. Rody Roem has been testing the car. He tells me that what little it loses out to rival cars in a straight line it more than makes up for in cornering power and that it is very easy to drive. For the first time I can reveal that the name by which it will be known is the 'Ten Force.'

### Reflections

There is no doubt that it was a spectacular meeting. However I can't but help think that, as each successive organising body seeks to outstrip the efforts of those who have gone before, the whole thing has become over inflated and very expensive. Perhaps it's time IFMAR settled down and took a logical and dispassionate look at the format of the event.

It was generally reckoned that to have





# WORLD CHAMPS

any chance of success a budget in the region of £1,000.00 was needed for each competitor. This is not too serious for those drivers who have most chance of success, since their cost are to some extent met for them by the manufacturers, who in turn pass it on to us. It is however a significant factor for those drivers who are not in that select band but make up the bulk of those present. Sure, because it is a once in a lifetime situation they will find the money and compete. But is it fair or even necessary to put them to such a considerable experience?

I would suggest that the format could easily be changed to shorten the whole event and drastically reduce the cost of competing, yet still finish up with an event that carries every bit as much status as the present one and produces a worthy World Champion at a fraction of the cost.

Just because it's a World Championship do we have to have ten minute qualifying heats? Drivers tell me that they were finding they could not use the same set of tyres for two heats as they would just not be too competitive for the second ten minutes. They could however conceivably have used them for three five minute heats. This would have meant only two sets of tyres being needed for qualifying instead of six. Since the drivers needed to have a choice of perhaps four different types of tyres available one has to multiply this by four. Thus the use of five minute heats would mean a considerable saving yet be an equally fair way of finding the finalists.

Adopt the five minute heats, in conjunction with the new rain rules that have already been agreed, and the time taken to run the meeting can be reduced. Thus reducing the costs, both in terms of the expense of accommodation and travelling. We used a 120 hour deal that was being offered by P&O to drastically reduce our own travelling costs.

Reduce the costs all round and it may then be possible to stage the event annually. As it stands now with four bodies involved it will be eight years before it returns to Europe, by which time many of the current crop of drivers will have retired.

The other noticeable feature was how expensive everything was from entry through to camping space and food. The reason is simply that the organisers had to strive to cover the considerable financial investment they need to cover the facilities that are expected to be provided. If a venue could have been found that already had those facilities in place no doubt the costs could have been kept down.

On this score I noticed a few of the Mendip committee members present taking a look at what was needed. They tell me that they intend to have an application in to stage the event when it next returns to Europe. When one looks at the superb circuit they already have with its permanent covered rostrum and pits, ample parking space adjacent to the circuit for caravans and tents, the fact that they will shortly have a new clubhouse come restaurant available, and their proven ability to organise major events, it is clear that they must be considered one of the front runners for the honour. One thing is certain, with all the facilities already in place and paid for, the charges they will need to make to competitors will be substantially less than those we have come to expect of late.

## Main Final

Driver	Car	Laps	Engine	Nationality
L. Collari	BMT Blitz	209	Rex	Italian
R. Burch Jr.	Associated	205	Paris Rex	American
S. Colombini	Associated	203	Rex	Italian
R. Roem	Serpent	199	S-Power	Dutch
A. Hachler	Serpent	195	OPS	Swiss
R. Sahli	Serpent	193	OPS	Swiss
S. Solaroli	BMT Blitz	144	OPS	Italian
M. Fantini	BMT Blitz	128	Rex	Italian
D. Calce	BMT Blitz	53	Rex	Italian
M. Baruzzi	BMT Blitz	21	OPS	Italian
FTD: R. Burch Jr.				

Odd Driver	Laps	Even Driver	Laps
J. Chu	63	M. Runge	58
A. R. Martin	60	Z. Matosic	56
A. Budiman	56	Lai Pun-Huang	55
J. Sjahlim	54	R. Vogel	45
M. Finley	53	A. A. Salim	35
I. Kristanto	9	Sutantyo	Disqualified
J. Sullivan	0	R. Paris	0
H. Indradjadya	0	E. Nidiffer	0
R. Lee	0	M. Jones	0
Y. Tanuma	63	A. Warren	64
J. Chu	63	L. Campfield	62
P. Gogarten	62	M. Tanu	55
P. Fusco	57	A. Eman	46
A. R. Martin	56	B. R. Riber	27
R. Kruse	50	Z. Matosic	20
K. Tanongsakchaikul	43	C. Ratanarat	3
C. Miguel	31	A. Tangchitnob	0
M. Thomsen	0	M. Runge	0
A. Budiman	0	Lai Pun-Maung	0
M. Pesek	66	B. Kloeber	68
M. Tadashi	65	K. Tsunoda	66
C. Moon	65	Choy Chi-Keung	64
Y. Tanuma	64	V. Ampaivorn	64
P. Gogarten	63	A. Warren	62
P. Pongrai	63	L. Campfield	61
J. Chu	60	M. Tanu	56
T. Hamalainen	60	S. Duthie	54
O. Formisand	59	R. McArthur	17
C. Carrasco	56	R. Androetti	0
M. Pesek	68	P. Warfvinge	68
T. Hasegawa	68	M. Kjellson	68
Lee Kai-Fai	68	E. Guiette	68
R. Davis	67	K. Tsunoda	68
H. Kessler	67	F. Carillo	67
P. Lind	66	K. Moons	66
T. Haugen	66	S. Burgess	66
M. Tadashi	64	C. Chi-Keung	59
C. Moon	64	B. Kloeber	45
E. Ijzerman	64	R. Husband	0
G. Dejean	68	O. Mack	70
H. Valliet	68	M. Fransson	70
L. Sonnerud	67	H. Hippe	68
J. Buehler	66	M. Kjellson	67
Lee Kai-Fai	66	E. Guiette	66
D. Ashton	64	T. Ishijama	64
K-H. Schaefer	62	P. Warf	43
T. Hasegawa	61	L. Leite	39
R. Stokpa	56	B. Grossenbacher	14
M. Pesek	56	R. Hoffman	11
M. Busnardo	69	O. Mack	71
D. Dixon	68	M. Franson	70
H. Valliet	68	M. Swauger	69
G. DeJean	67	M. Schouten	69
C. Husting	66	R. Kuijper	68
C. White	66	G. Fraioli	68
L. Sonnerud	65	H. Hippe	68
N. Sayles	62	E. Vandereydt	67
P. Harder	51	S. Koenders	66
R. Errington	29	A. Grob	66
S. Fiabbecke	55	O. Mack	72
C. Lett	55	F. Domann	71
H. Valliet	52	S. White	70
M. Busnardo	52	E. Nougier	66
G. Culver	52	M. Swauger	65
R-P. Fusco	51	M. Mielke	65
R. Schar	50	D. Cantarella	65
C. Aygon	50	S. Calpista	61
D. Dixon	29	M. Fransson	58
S. Grant	0	J. Mouton	1
M. Fantini	89	D. Calce	77
S. Solaroli	86	A. Hachler	77
R. Sahli	81	M. Baruzzi	77
C. Lett	80	T. Guillemier	75
J. Ermen	80	O. Mack	65
J. Baehr	77	A. Picco	48
T. Schar	77	S. White	46
H. Valliet	77	F. Domanin	25
S. Habecke	75	M. Salven	4
K. Mercadante	2	M. Tenthof	0