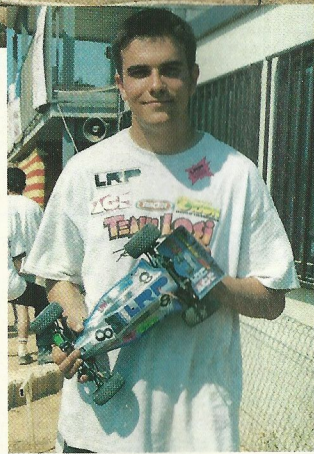


1:10 OFF ROAD

REPORT BY SYD EVANS



The top three in 4WD are presented with their trophies.



Richard Cree - 3rd in 4WD.

Well, here goes with a not so boring race report! The 1997 1:10 Off Road Euro's was hosted in Spain by RACBSA in the city of Barcelona.

THE TRACK

The track was literally across the road from the Olympic Stadium. Now that was really awesome, but unfortunately the track wasn't. It looked very good when we arrived, being a huge dirt 1-18 Off Road track, measuring 210

metres long by 4 metres wide, but as soon as practice started on Tuesday the surface cut up very badly. The main feature to the track was a large double jump. Most tried to take it in one, but no-one could jump it consistently and everyone came to grief at one

time or another. The 0.3 second that was gained was quickly lost by just one mistake, so everybody took the easy option. By the time practice was over it looked as if it had been run on with a tractor and plough, as the track had cut up so rough.

PRACTICE

Practice was to be of three 15 minutes sessions, but was altered to four 10 minute slots instead. This would give everyone the opportunity to change tyres, cells and set-ups in their practice runs. Some of the mechanics were changing wheels so fast they would not have looked out of place in the Williams F1 pits. A surprise to most people was the appearance of Gil Losi Jnr. He could only make it over for 2WD but he managed to give his

expertise to the Team Losi drivers. When Kevin Moore went on to practice, they didn't just change tyres and cells, they changed cars. They had prepared two for practice and swapped between them to find the ultimate set-up.

2WD QUALIFYING

There were five qualifying rounds with everyone's best three runs to count. In 2WD, the system used was 141 points for 1st in each round, 140 for 2nd etc., but the TQ man received one extra point, making 142. Consistent 11 or fast 10 lappers were needed to make the A-final and 11 laps were achieved by few drivers. Not only were drivers qualifying for their finals, but also rostrum positions. Such was the position of the rostrum, most of it being in the top right hand side of the track, that to get a good overall view you needed to be at the left hand side.

In qualifying, the Associated B2's of Craig Drescher, Rob Gammon and John Tucker were looking pretty good and seemed to be getting to grips with the awful track conditions. Jukka Steenari and Vincent Helgoin were getting the Fireblade sorted out, but other Schumacher drivers were struggling.

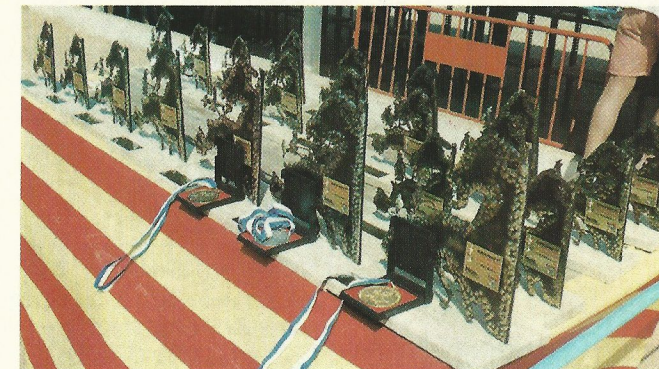
The Losi XXCR, in the hands of William Mitcham and Richard Cree, were looking better the more qualifying went on. In fact, Gil Losi Jnr was so impressed with Williams set-up, he made a note of it to take back to the States with him. Apparently, the XXCR has not been handling bumpy, low grip tracks too well Stateside.

The Brits were definitely not having it all their own way in 2WD, as they have done in previous Euro's, but after qualifying was completed, it was Craig in top spot, Jukka 2nd and William 3rd. This gave us three different chassis in the first three places.

2WD FINALS

In the finals, the first up for Britain was Adam Skelding, who had a comfortable win in the K-final. Then we had a 3rd place for David Burton and 5th for Ian Joyce in the H-final. Next up was a win for Philip Murton, 2nd for Mark Scott and 10th for Danny Sweetie in the G. Rich Meredith took the F-final with Craig Coxall 7th, Steve Lawson 9th and James Smith 10th. Simon Delph finished a creditable 9th in the E-final and in the D, Ian Flynn had a good run to take the win, with Ryan Coxall in 3rd, Mark Smith 5th and Graham Alsop 9th.

At the end of the D-final, there were some arguments going on with the EFRA referees over an incident that happened during the race and the C-finalists could not get on the rostrum properly. But, this did not stop the Spanish officials still carrying on with the finals. Everyone assumed that the C would be held up until the discussions had been resolved, but how wrong they were. As the 10 second countdown sounded, drivers were still checking trims and slipper clutches. You have never seen so many mechanics throwing cars on the grid and 'legging it' in your life. In this race we had Dave Duggan, Matt Needham, Karl Marsden, Jamie



The European Championship trophies.



The 4WD top ten cars of Jukka Steenari, Ian Kenningley, Ellis Stafford, Kevin Moore, William Mitcham, Ramon Gonscha, Richard Barton, Richard Cree, Sascha Falter and Karl Marsden.

Booth and Kevin Moore. Most of the guys treated this final as play time. They had not made the A-final so they didn't really care about the outcome.

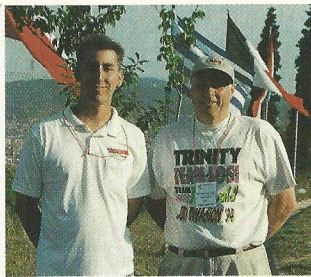
Jamie and Kevin, in particular, were just trying to out jump each other over the double. It was a crowd pleaser and great entertainment value, as again, was the B-final. We had a glut of Brits in this one and all were gutted with not making the A Main. Teemu Leino, of Finland, eventually won this one, whilst Rob Gammon came in 2nd, just in front of

Christophe Boulain from France, followed by John Tucker 4th, Dan Marson 6th, Ellis Stafford 7th, Richard Barton 8th and Ian Kenningly 9th.

Now for the one the crowd had been waiting for. With Craig on pole, Jukka 2nd and William 3rd, we had three world class drivers, each with a different car to fight it out with and when the bell went for the start, Craig shot into the lead and was never to be headed. Jukka made a mistake on lap two which dropped him down to 5th. Sascha Falter climbed up to 2nd

CRAIG 10 JUKKA 3

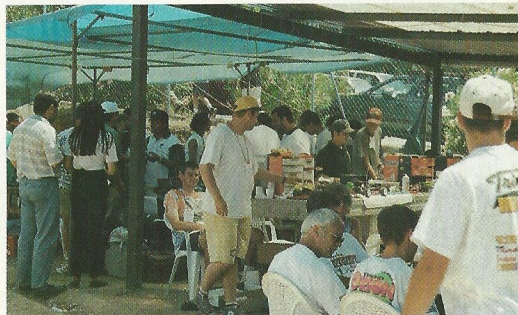
The 1997 Off Road European Championships took place in Barcelona, Spain on a less than ideal track. Craig Drescher was in his usual Euro winning form and took his tenth title, whilst Jukka Steenari won his third



Gil Lusi Jr., Designer of the XX4 and XKCR, and Lusi's British distributor George Land of Helger Racing.



The track looked really nice from a distance. There was also a good view out over the city and of the Olympic Stadium.



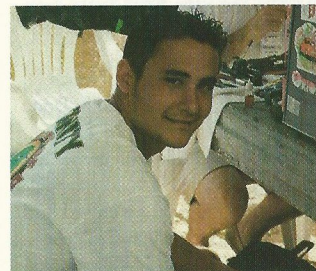
In the pits at the Euro's.



Ellis Stafford's Lusi XX4.



Craig Drescher's Yokomo YZ10.



Ian Kenningley looking very pleased with himself.

and held on to this position to the end. Jukka was pushing really hard and determination saw him get back to 3rd. William had no rear end grip and never really got going and he finished 7th. Richard

Cree got caught up in the pack and eventually finished 8th. So Craig had an easy start to finish 1st leg victory in what was really an unexciting race.

The 2nd leg saw Craig, again, disappear into the distance. Jukka led the rest round and he stayed in 2nd place to the end. William, who was using Proline M2 'Bow tie' tyres, took the advice of Gil Lusi Jr, cut off both the inside and outside two rows of bow ties. This gave William the extra rear grip he was after, due to the fact that it gave a flatter tread pattern and allowed the tyre to work better. In this leg, William lost a place

Mike Drescher.

With two wins under his belt he became European Champion again. This now gives him 10 Euro's victories and it was this 2WD Championship that he really wanted. It's difficult to win a Euro Champ's at the best of times, but to win 10 is a phenomenal achievement, and knowing Craig he will definitely want to add to his tally. Who knows he may even be World Champion soon.

We have several drivers in this country who are capable of living with the best and William Mitcham, Jamie Booth, Kevin Moore and Ellis Stafford will

certainly not be going to the States to make up the numbers. These and one or two others are capable of making the A Main if everything goes OK for them. I imagine Craig has one of the countries longest sideboards, at home. He must have, to keep all that silverware on!

After the trophy presentation and champagne spraying, all the Brits celebrated by covering Craig with buckets of dust. They then proceeded to wash him down with gallons of water (as you do). The end result was not a pretty sight.

4WD PRACTICE AND QUALIFYING

We then moved on to 4WD. Some drivers were a little worried that their cars would not handle the bumps as well as their 2WD but others were quietly confident that they would have things sorted, and they would make up for their disappointing 2WD results. In timed practice it was that man Craig Drescher who was looking good with his Yokomo, but unfortunately this was to be short lived. With a series of breakage's and a car whose handling seemed to deteriorate with the track, then any thoughts of adding the 4WD

GOOD POINTS

1997 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS GOOD POINTS

- 1: Barcelona itself. It's a wonderful city and has an awesome night life (just ask some of the boys).
- 2: Brian Harris for his non-stop work as British Team Manager. He spent more time in race control trying to get the meeting run to EFRA regulations instead of the rules seemingly being made up as it went along.
- 3: The Olympic Stadium. What a magnificent sight, overlooking Barcelona itself.
- 4: Meeting old and new friends which you would not otherwise do.
- 5: The camaraderie of 45 people on a 49 seater coach for 27 hours and managing to sleep even with Brian Mitcham next to you (Bless him).
- 6: The performances of some of the drivers. Craig and Jukka for obvious reasons. Ian Kenningley who could quite easily have won 4WD. Him and his car certainly looked good enough. William Mitcham for the same reason. Richard Cree, like William, made both A-finals. It would be great to see him at our Nationals, as he would be sure to ruffle some, of the more established drivers, feathers if he did. Graham Alsop, who, when he gets it right, really gets it right. Philip Murton, who drove five, absolutely faultless races and just missed out on the A-final.

during the race but fought very hard to hang on to 4th. Richard Cree did not have the luck with him and again finished 8th. Craig never put a foot wrong and made it look so easy that the race appeared to be boring, except for, obviously, Craig and

BAD POINTS

1997 EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS - BAD POINTS

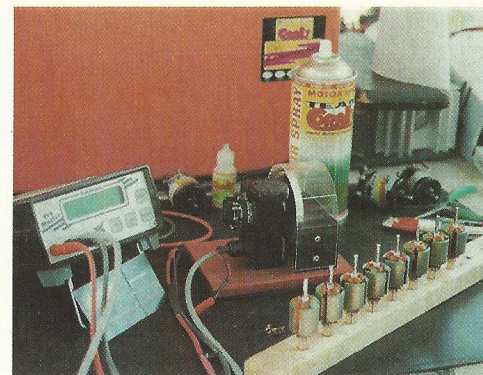
- 1: The organisation was very poor. Every time there was a problem they held a Team Managers meeting, some of which were very petty and some went on for ages. This threw the timetable (what timetable!) out of the window.
- 2: The late finishes, due mainly to the above. There was even a fire behind the car park as 2WD finals started and as a result the finals were almost abandoned. The last leg of the A was run at 8:30pm and by the time the presentations finished it was almost 9:30pm. We went out for dinner at 10:45pm that evening.
- 3: The track. Just not up to it for 140+ drivers to race on it for a week. I've seen better bomb sights.
- 4: The refereeing. (What refereeing?)
- 5: The pits. Although they had electric mains, the concrete pit tables were too high and there were too few of them. We had 31 Brits racing, but only pit spaces for 20. If the Schumacher team had been allowed to pit in their inflatable 'Blimp', then there would not have been a problem, but it against the rules, so everyone struggled.

The Spanish officials tried their best and were very helpful where they could be, but they had obviously not run a meeting on this scale before. Therefore I suggest that a club such as Southport or Teeside or anyone please, please, put in for this meeting next year and show how well the BRCA can run an event like this. They do our Nationals several times a year without a lot of hassle, so I'm sure they could teach the rest of Europe how to do it properly.

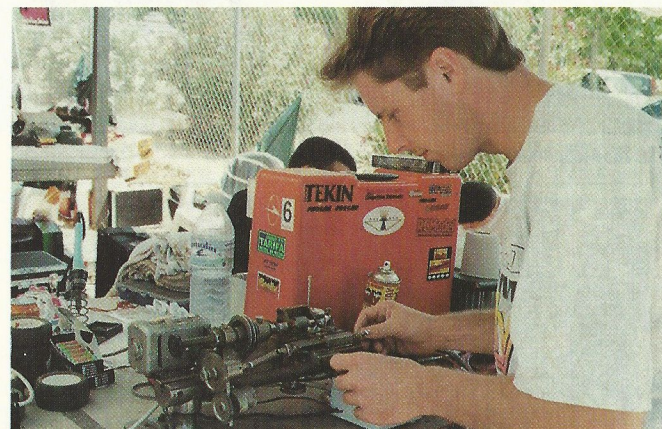
title to his impressive lists of wins was not to be. The Yokomo did not look at all happy with the conditions as the meeting went on and few drivers managed to achieve a decent set-up. On the other hand, the Lusi XX4 almost appeared to be at home on this abysmal track. Ian Kenningley seemed to get it right from the word go and he was brimming with confidence, especially after winning his first BRCA National earlier in the season. Would he be the man to take the title? we would soon find out. Several other Lusi runners were also looking good, amongst them the usual UK big guns of Kevin Moore and Ellis Stafford, as well as Richard Cree and Richard Barton, who at times appeared to have the best set-up car of them all. It was hard to believe that he could drive his car through the roughest parts of the track so easily whilst most everyone else had to modify their lines and take the least rutted route.

Schumacher's reigning 4WD Euro champ, Jukka Steenari was not about to give up his title without a fight and TQ was to be his after some very consistent qualifying runs. Karl Marsden was putting in some steady runs to keep him in contention for an A-final place. Graham Alsop had a barnstorming drive in the fourth round and that gave him TQ for that round. If he'd had another top ten place in the last round he would have secured himself an A-final place, but it was not to be. He managed an 18th place which was good, but as they say 'close, but no cigar'!

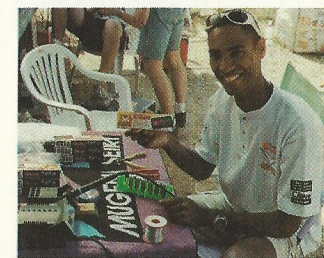
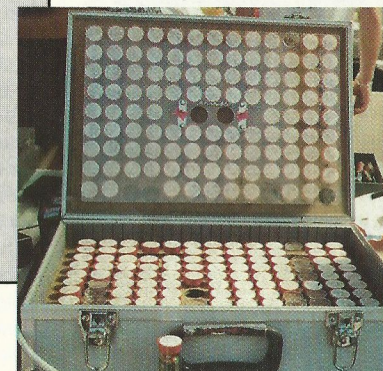
Tech's Richard Weatherley was concentrating most of his efforts into William Mitcham's Predator XK5 and it was seeming to pay off. The car worked better as the meeting went on and William was confident of a win and I don't think that many would have bet against him, particularly with the season he is having in UK Nat's.



Corally armatures and the small and compact Robitronic dyno used by Team Corally.



Corally's Oscar Jansen skimming on the mobile team lathe.



Left: LRP suitcase full of armatures. Above: Team Orion's Didier Boulmier assembling cells.



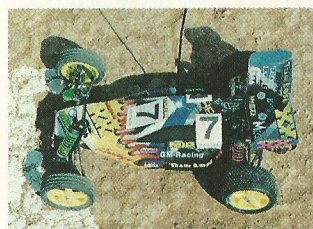
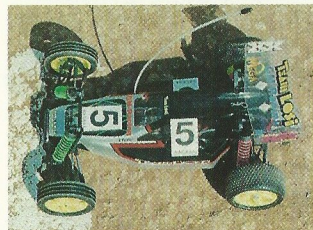
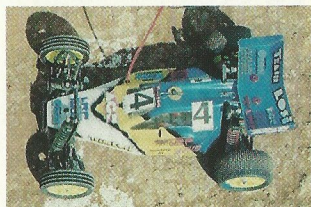
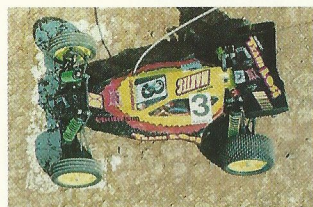
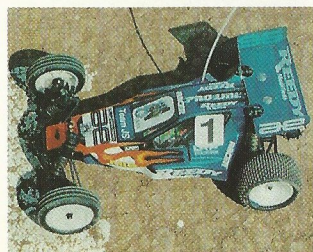
LRP's motor preparation pit table.

The unluckiest driver in 4WD had to be Philip Murton. He drove his XK5 brilliantly for five rounds of qualifying and never made one mistake. He was in the A-final right up until the last round and just got pushed out by Karl Marsden, resulting in Philip taking

pole in the B. We were trying to work out before then if Philip would have been the first British driver to make a Euros A-final without actually making a BRCA Nat's A-final, but in the end it was not to be. The points scoring system for 4WD was altered to



The 2WD A-finalists awaiting the start.



The top ten 2WD cars of Craig Drescher, Jukka Steenari, William Mitcham, Richard Cree, Sascha Falter, Vincent Heligoin, Holger Rabenseifer, Geoffrey Petit, Arnaud Collet and Daniel Vega.

give one point for TQ in each round, two points for 2nd, three for 3rd etc. This did not prove to be a problem, but it only became

known after the 4th round that TQ, for the round, did not score the extra point as they did with 2WD i.e. TQ scored no points at all and

second place scored two points. If this had happened then Ian Kenningley would have been pole in the A and not Jukka Steenari, due to Ian taking top spot in two rounds and a third place, which would have given him three points in total. Jukka had a TQ and two 2nd places which would have made him five points, therefore equating to 2nd on the grid. As it was, both drivers finished up on five points, but Jukka had a better count back than Ian and so took top spot.

Almost half the field, at some stage or other, cracked the 11 lap barrier and a smooth driving style was needed to get three good runs in. After qualifying was over we had seven Brits in the A, which was more like previous years. Craig could only manage 23rd place so he would not be making it title number 11.

4WD FINALS

Onto the finals and first Brits up were Danny Sweeby who was 2nd in the G, followed by David Burton in 6th and a very disappointed Jon Tucker in 8th. Next up were Ian Joyce (4th) and Mark Scott (6th) in the F. Adam Skelding won the E-final, a bit better than his 2WD result, and a breakdown saw Craig Coxall come in 10th. The D featured Mark Smith (2nd), Jamie Booth (3rd), Rich Meredith (4th) and Stuart Davison (5th), whereas the C-final had Ian Flynn taking the race win, Steve Lawson 3rd, Alan Harman 4th, James Smith 6th, Ryan Coxall 7th and poor old Craig, with yet another breakdown, last.

Philip Murton was hoping to convert his pole position in the B-final in to a win, but unfortunately this was not to be. He had a front shock mount break after a very heavy shunt on the first lap and even though he carried on he

finished 10th. The win was taken by the local hero, Spain's own Daniel Vega. He was disappointed not to make the A, as he had in 2WD, as was second place man Arnaud Collet, who also featured in the 2WD A main. Coming in 3rd was Rob Gammon with Dan Marson 5th, Dave Duggan 7th, Graham Alsop 8th and Matt Needham 9th.

With the Cat of Jukka on pole, followed by three very competitive Losi XX4's and a Predator XK5 in 5th, Schumacher would have their work cut out to take the win, but World class drivers like Jukka and Craig always manage to go up another level in top flight competition. This is what makes them the champions that they are. The first leg of the A saw Jukka shoot off in front followed very closely by Ian Kenningley and William Mitcham. On lap 4 Jukka made a mistake which spun him round. In his desperation to retain his lead he drove head on into Williams car, which dropped William down the field. No penalty or even a warning was given. From then on the 1st leg was Jukka's followed by Ian and a good run by, double A finalist, Richard Cree saw him pick up 3rd spot.

Leg two saw Ian Kenningley having interference on the line, but the organisers refused to hold the race and this more or less put an end to Ian's quest for the title, with him finishing an understandable last in this one. Jukka, again, made a good start and was followed by the 'Brit Pack' of Ellis, Kevin and William. They all managed, at some stage, to pressurise Jukka and the crowd was going wild with excitement. The only trouble was, they spent more time getting in each others way than the leaders. Nonetheless, it was probably the best race of the week and it was great to hear all the British get behind their drivers, no matter which camp they were from. The race finished with Jukka taking the win and therefore retaining his 4WD title. Ellis took 2nd place, William 3rd, Kevin 4th and Richard 5th.

With the win already under his belt and the other rostrum places still up for grabs, Jukka did not take up his place on the grid for the final leg. Ian led from the start and managed to keep in front for

TECH CHARTS

1997 OFF ROAD EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS - 2WD

Pos	Name	Car	Motor	Speedo	Batteries	Front Tyres	Rear Tyres	Servo	Radio
1	C. Drescher	Assoc. RC10 B2	Reedy 10x3	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Pro M3 Rib	Pro M2 Bow Tie	Airtronics 94157	Sanwa
2	J. Steenari	Schumacher Fire Blade	Corally 11x2	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Pro M3 Rib	Pro M2 8086	KO 1002	Sanwa
3	V. Heligoin	Schumacher Fire Blade	Corally 11x3	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Losi Silver Rib	Pro M2 8183	KO 1001	Sanwa
4	S. Falter	Losi XXCR	GM 12x4	GM Galaxy	GM Vis	Losi Silver Rib	Losi Sil. Big Shot	KO 1004	Sanwa
5	D. Vega	Assoc. RC10 B2	LRP 10x6	LRP IPC	LRP HiVolt	Pro M3 Rib	Pro M2 8081	KO 1002	KO Vantage
6	W. Mitcham	Losi XXCR	Maxtec V Tec	LRP IPC	Maxtec V Tec	Losi Silver Rib	Pro M2 Bow Tie	KO 1001	KO Vantage
7	R. Cree	Losi XXCR	AGR 10x3	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Losi Silver Rib	Pro M2 Hole Shot	KO 1001	JR X756
8	A. Collet	Assoc. RC10 B2	Peak 11x3	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Losi Gold Rib	Pro M2 8186	KO 1002	Airtronics
9	G. Petit	Losi XXCR	Peak 11x2	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Losi Silver Rib	Pro M2 8186	KO 1002	Airtronics
10	H. Rabenseifer	Losi XXCR	GM 13x2	GM Galaxy	GM Vis	Losi Silver Rib	Losi Sil. Big Shot	KO 1002	KO Marrs

1997 OFF ROAD EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIPS - 4WD

Pos	Name	Car	Motor	Speedo	Batteries	Front Tyres	Rear Tyres	Servo	Radio
1	J. Steenari	Schumacher CAT 2000	Corally 11x3	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Losi Sil. Stud	Losi Sil. Stud	KO 1002	Sanwa
2	I. Kenningley	Losi XX4	Trinity 11x2	Prodigi	Trinity Vis	Losi Sil. Stud	Losi Sil. Stud	KO 1001	Futaba
3	R. Cree	Losi XX4	AGR 11x2	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Losi Sil. Stud	Losi Sil. Stud	KO 1001	JR X756
4	E. Stafford	Losi XX4	Trinity 10x2	Novak Cyc.	Trinity Vis	Losi Sil. Stud	Losi Sil. Stud	KO 1012	KO Vantage
5	W. Mitcham	Predator XK5	Maxtec 11x2	LRP IPC	Maxtec V Tec	Losi Sil. Stud	Losi Sil. Stud	KO 1001	KO Vantage
6	S. Falter	Losi XX4	GM 11x3	GM Galaxy	GM Vis	Losi Sil. Sprint	Losi Sil. Sprint	KO 1004	Sanwa
7	K. Moore	Losi XX4	LRP 11x2	LRP IPC	LRP Hi Volt	Losi Sil. Stud	Losi Sil. Stud	KO 1001	KO Vantage
8	R. Guascha	Losi XX4	LRP 11x2	LRP IPC	LRP Hi Volt	Losi Sil. Stud	Losi Sil. Stud	KO 1001	KO Vantage
9	R. Barton	Losi XX4	Trinity 11x2	Prodigi	Trinity Vis	Losi Sil. Stud	Losi Sil. Stud	KO 1001	Sanwa
10	K. Marsden	Schumacher CAT 2000	Corally 11x2	LRP IPC	Orion V Max	Losi Sil. Pin	Losi Sil. Pin	KO 1012	Sanwa

the rest of the race, while we had the usual chopping and changing for the other positions. This leg finally ended up with Richard in an excellent 2nd and Ellis 3rd, whilst William had a coming together with Richard Barton, that put him well down the field. He eventually recovered to 5th which is where he finished overall. It was initially thought that Ellis had finished 3rd overall but he had tied on points with Richard and the Irishman had a better count back. The finishing positions were, eventually, Jukka 1st, Ian 2nd and Richard 3rd.

WHAT WAS USED?

All the major European manufacturers were in attendance to look after their drivers and these included Schumacher, Team Orion, LRP, Corally and GM. On the equipment front, most people plumped for either Losi Silver rib fronts and Stud rears or Proline M2 rears in various patterns and M2 and M3 rib fronts. M3 rears and Schumacher Pinks were tried in practice but were found to be too soft. The tyres to run in 4WD

were Losi Silver Studs if you could get hold of them, otherwise Losi Silver Minipins, whereas motors were mostly 11 Doubles or Triples. On the car side, Ttech were using the saddle pack version of the XK5 as it gave a better balance especially over the jumps.

There were very few new products here. Novak had sent over some uprated FET Cyclone speedos for use by the British drivers. These were a more efficient version of the production ones, but because of low grip and such bad track conditions, duration was not a problem. They also had available the long awaited 'Pit Wizard'. This is the hand-held Cyclone profile customiser, as opposed to the Profile Software which requires a PC to operate it. Nick Marson had managed to acquire the settings that Brian Kinwald had used at the Reedy Race in the USA and was seen to be downloading this profile to any Novak users that wanted it. Team Orion had their guy Didier Boulmier, ably assisted by his lovely girlfriend, Laura, on hand to dish out cells to any driver loyal to Orion. The Sanyo

RC2000 was the only cell that was used by Orion, but power or capacity was not needed on this track anyway.

This was also the case with the LRP, GM and Trinity drivers. On the motors front, some were using 10 turns, whilst, according to Oscar Jansen of Corally, most of his drivers were using 11 and 12 turns. The same appeared to be the case with the drivers spoken to from the LRP and Trinity camps, while several GM guys had fitted 13 turn motors in their cars. Maxtec, of the USA, had sent some new motors over for William Mitcham, but unfortunately they were not legal for this meeting. Maxtec are, I believe, the first American company to produce a home built motor in the last 17 years. Initial impressions were that they appeared to have very strong magnets and a very small air gap, which should produce loads of torque. William claimed that in testing in the States in 2WD, they were ballistic, but were still perfecting the motor for 4WD.

Controversy always seems to surround electronics wizard, Ralph Helbing of Germany. This year he

was disqualified from the meeting after scrutineering saw a device in his car which they thought was an electronic steering aid. The previous year he had brought out the steering Gyro which was promptly banned as it gave a very unfair advantage to the GM drivers that it was available to. The scrutineers had seen this new device tucked underneath a driver figure in his car. This, obviously, aroused their suspicions as it appeared to be hidden. What it actually turned out to be was a very tiny prototype speedcontrol. After he proved it was an ESC he was subsequently reinstated.

Most of the new items from the various manufacturers were being kept under wraps for the 'biggie' in Pomona, California, i.e. the Off Road Worlds. Rumours were that Yokomo were bringing out a totally new car and the only bit retained from the old car would be the servo saver. Also, Associated would have an uprated B2 with, maybe, a longer chassis and other bits. Gil Losi Jr. brought over a new tyre, developed for the World's, and it was a new X-pattern Silver