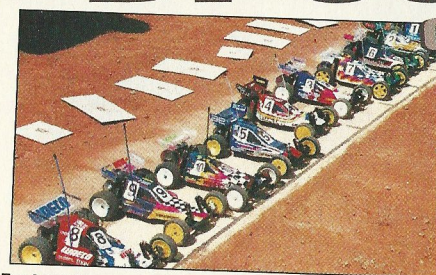


Drescher and Steenari reign in Spain



Top heat line-up.

Practice

Round 1 of practice and first to show their speed are Jukka Steenari and Craig Drescher who are demonstrably faster than anyone else. Dan Marson went very well and was 4th fastest.

Round 2 and the times are much slower due to the track breaking up and debris everywhere, a lot of drivers were beginning to feel that this wasn't the best track they had ever driven on. It was no surprise to find the Team Managers voting for Round by Round qualifying which at the Euros means 3 rounds to count from the five.

Qualifying

Throughout qualifying Jukka Steenari and Craig Drescher showed why they were regarded as pre-tournament favourites, dominating the five rounds of qualifying, with Craig taking FTD from Jukka by four points. With Craig gradually going faster as qualifying progressed, one extra point was awarded to him as round top qualifier, thus totalling 142 in one round. If you think the numbers look strange then it reflects the actual number of drivers registered to race, i.e. 141.

The final top ten after five rounds and taking the best three scores is shown in the qualifying table.

Associated on pole and two more RC10B2s in the A, two Schumacher Fireblades and five Losi XX.

There now followed a lengthy delay while all the qualifying times were collated and checked. Better to get things right, but it again just seemed to stop the flow of things. Eventually the N final got under way just after half past two in the afternoon but while this was running we were informed over the PA system that a bush fire had broken out in the hills behind the pits and this fire was being fanned by a breeze, straight in our direction.

As soon as the N final finished we were ordered to pack up all our gear and move it from the pits to the centre of the track. The fire was quite spectacular with flames leaping into the air and trees popping and bursting into fire. Well over an hour passed while the Fire Service got the fire under control and we were allowed back into the pit area. The first leg of the A was rescheduled for 5.00 PM. but the organisers got cold feet over the late running of the event and decided to call yet another Team Managers meeting to discuss

race: 1/10th
off-road european
championships
venue: barcelona
date: july '97

1/10th Off-Road European Championships '97

'A' Final action - on the double.

Qualifying

	Total	Rnd 1	Rnd 2	Rnd 3	Rnd 4	Rnd 5
1. Craig Drescher	421	142	133	108	139	140
2. Jukka Steenari	417	140	140	137	134	19
3. William Mitcham	415	130	136	135	137	142
4. Richard Cree	414	137	139	138	128	126
5. Sascha Falter	409	136	138	122	129	135
6. Vincent Heligoin	408	133	142	109	119	133
7. Holger R'seifner	405	132	137	131	136	122
8. Geoffrey Petit	402	118	119	134	131	137
9. Arnaud Collet	400	110	126	142	132	120
10. Daniel Vega	400	139	129	120	101	132

options. Brian Harris was quickly out to get the British opinion on the options which were; 1. Continue racing despite the late hour, 2. Stop all racing and declare the result on qualifying, 3. Just run the three legs of the A. Remarkably the British Team voted heavily in favour of option 3 and this because Craig wanted to race for his title rather than get it by default. Nice one Craig!

The A Final

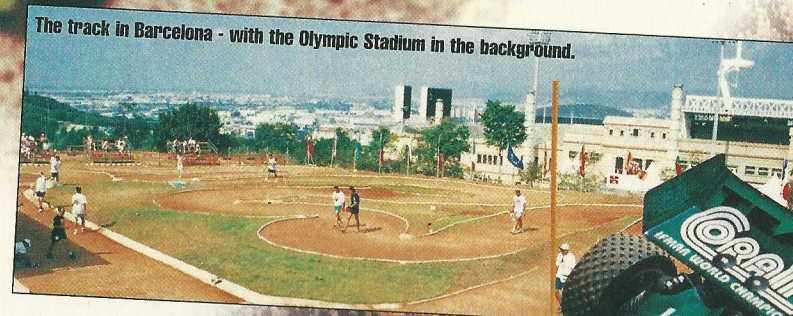
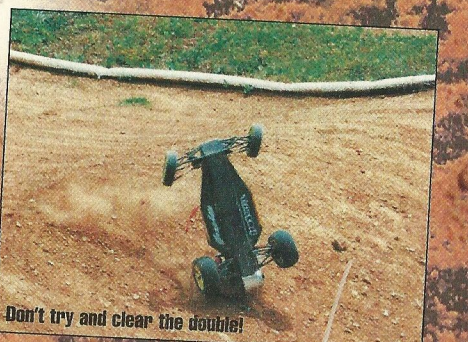
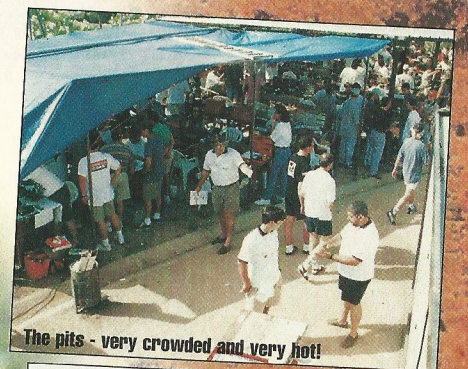
Leg 1 and Craig uses the pole position to full effect and leads away from Jukka. William Mitcham showing well in fourth. Lap 2 and Jukka crashes leaving Craig with a very healthy lead and Sascha Falter in 2nd place. William gets caught up in a pile up on lap 4 and drops down the field. Craig is circulating untroubled at the head of the pack and by lap 6, Jukka has pulled back to 3rd but is making no impression on Sascha Falter, much less on Craig. Craig could enjoy the luxury of a roll on lap 7 but is so far ahead he is marshalled and still has a good lead. He goes into maximum care mode not wishing to roll over again but

still holds his lead over Sascha and Jukka. This is how it stays up to the flag - 1st leg to Craig Drescher.

Leg 2 and we see Jukka on Pro-Line Flat Stubbies but Craig deciding to use modified Bow-Ties. He takes a horizontal cut across the tread taking three rows of spikes out of the circumference. Glue the tyre back together and this tightens it's fit on the 2.2" rim and gives a lower profile. Takes away some of the shock absorbercy but enhances the handling especially at the end of the straight. This was a place on the track that Craig felt he could make some time compared to the other drivers.

The start and Craig pulls out an immediate lead over Jukka and steadily pulls away. Vincent Heligoin in the Fireblade made a good start and is running in third. Mid point and Craig looks to be going slower and Jukka is definitely catching him. Maybe the tactic is to try and get Jukka to try too hard and crash, but if so that is a very dangerous way to play, you could easily fall over yourself. The rest of the leg is about Craig doing just enough to stay safely in front and he even timed his last lap to ensure he didn't have to go round for another lap - such control and confidence!

Every 12 months the very best off road drivers from every country in Europe come together for a head to head contest. Just to qualify for this event is an achievement, to do well and get in the top ten carries world wide recognition, to win outright and become European Champion is the preserve of the stars and fame is assured.

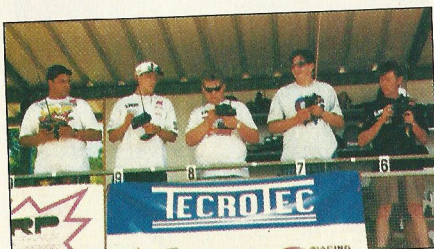


Winning machine, Craig Drescher's RC10B2.

Jukka Steenari's Fireblade - 2nd.

Vincent Heligoin's Schumacher Fireblade - 3rd.

Driver	Qual Pos	Final Pos	Sponsor	Car	Motor	Cells	Speedo	Front Tyres	Rear Tyres
Craig Drescher	1	1	JS Racing, Associated, LRP, Orion Reedy, Proline, MIP, RCPC Kimborough	Associated RC10B2	Reedy Trisonic 10 x 3	Orion RC2000 V-Max	LRP IPC	Proline 2.2 Rib M3	Proline Flat Stubbie M2
Jukka Steenari	2	2	Schumacher, Corally, LRP, Orion Pienais Malli	Schumacher Fireblade	Corally 11 x 2	Orion RC2000 V-Max	LRP IPC	Losi Wide Rib Silver	Proline Holeshot M2
William Mitcham	3	6	Losi, LRP, Maxtec, KO Innervations	Losi XXCR	Maxtec 11 x 6	Maxtec V-Tech Gold	LRP IPC	Losi Wide Rib Silver	Proline Bow Tie M2
Richard Cree	4	7	Losi, LRP, AGR, Orion Helgar Racing	Losi XXCR	AGR Pro Series 10 x 3	Orion RC2000 V-Max	LRP IPC	Losi Wide Rib Silver	Proline Holeshot M2
Sascha Falter	5	4	Losi, GM Racing, Sanwa	Losi XXCR	GM Evo II 12 x 4	GM VIS 2000	GM Galaxy	Losi Wide Rib Silver	Losi Big Shot Silver
Vincent Heligoin	6	3	Schumacher, Corally, LRP ORIN, ACT, Select Models	Schumacher Fireblade	Corally 11 x 3	Orion RC2000 V-Max	LRP IPC	Losi Wide Rib Silver	Proline Holeshot M2
Holger Rabenseifner	7	10	Losi, GM Racing, KO	Losi XXCR	GM Evo II 13 x 2	GM Vis 2000	GM Galaxy	Losi Wide Rib Gold	Losi Big Shot Silver
Geoffrey Petit	8	9	LRP, Orion, Peak Performance Apex Models, ECT, PRP	Losi XXCR	Peak 11 x 2	Orion RC2000 V-Max	LRP IPC	Losi Wide Rib Silver	Proline Bow Tie M2
Arnaud Collet	9	8	Associated, LRP, Orion, URCII JS Racing, Select Models	Associated RC10B2	Corally 11 x 3	Orion RC2000 V-Max	LRP IPC	Losi Wide Rib Silver	Proline Holeshot M2
Daniel Vega	10	5	Associated, LRP MIP, KO Proline, DIS Models	Associated RC10B2	LRP Psycho	LRP RC2000 Hi-Volt	LRP IPC	Proline 2.2 Rib M3	Proline 8081



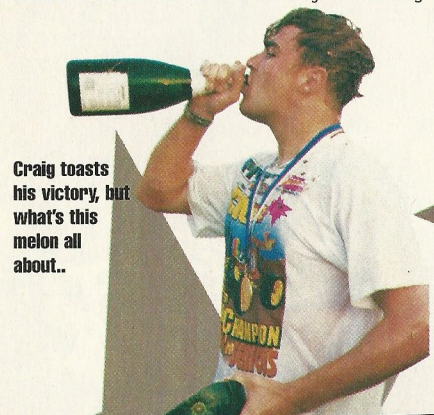
A' Finalists.



The bush fire - which halted proceedings.

That was it - race over and Craig is European Champion again and had made it look all too easy!

Leg 3 - Craig comes out and places his car on the grid but just before the start, his car is removed and he watches the race from the rostrum. Mike told me that Craig has always wanted to do that at a big meeting and now he took his chance and enjoyed the moment! Jukka led from the off all the way to the flag



Craig toasts his victory, but what's this melon all about...



...Oh that's what it's for!



2wd podium. Left to right: Jukka Steenari (2nd), Craig Drescher (1st), Vincent Heligoin (3rd).

and was showing off a little by pulling wheels on the last lap. The British Team can be very proud of these results, as we are certainly not used to driving on tracks as difficult as this. Talking to the French and other Europeans made me realise why they had gone so much better at these championships. 1/8th Rallycross is much more the dominant form of racing in France and mostly the electric cars have to run on the Rallycross tracks.

It's 8.30pm and time for the trophy presentation. Every final winner gets a trophy, along with a concours winner. All the 'A' finalists were presented with a trophy and then the top three stepped on to the rostrum for the playing of the British national anthem. This was followed by the Champagne spraying which soon degenerated into mayhem! Craig was rugby tackled to the ground and then drowned in champagne, beer and water. Just to finish him off, he was allowed to get up only to have half a giant melon smashed over his head - what a sight!

Nice one Craig - that's his 10th European Title. Another one for Associated, Reedy, Orion

2wd podium. Left to right: Jukka Steenari (2nd), Craig Drescher (1st), Vincent Heligoin (3rd).



and Pro-line.

After a long, hard day many crashed out back at the hotels, others found the energy to do the clubbing thing, I don't blame them as the night life in Barcelona is all that you would imagine - at least so I am told, I was far too tired to find out myself!



European Championship

1. Craig Drescher
2. Jukka Steenari
3. Vincent Heligoin
4. Sascha Falter
5. Daniel Vega
6. William Mitcham
7. Richard Cree
8. Arnaud Collet
9. Geoffrey Petit
10. Holger Rabenseifner

British Placings

B Final

- 2nd Rob Gammon
- 4th Jon Tucker
- 6th Dan Marson
- 7th Ellis Stafford
- 8th Richard Barton
- 9th Ian Kenningley

C Finals

- 3rd Dave Duggan
- 5th Matt Needham
- 6th Karl Marsden
- 7th Jamie Booth
- 9th Kevin Moore

D Finals

- 1st Ian Flynn
- 3rd Craig Coxall
- 5th Mark Smith
- 9th Graham Alsop
- 10th Ben Rayment

E Final

- 9th Simon Delph

F Finals

- 1st Richard Meredith
- 7th Craig Coxall
- 9th Stephen Lawson
- 10th James Smith

G Finals

- 1st Philip Murton
- 2nd Mark Scott
- 3rd Alan Harman
- 10th Danny Sweezy

H Finals

- 3rd David Burton
- 5th Ian Joyce

I Finals

- 2nd Stuart Davison

K Finals

- 1st Adam Skelding

4wd

Registration and Practice

We get to the track bright and early and find the organisers have again filled in the worst of the craters with the loose dirt and stones and thoroughly watered the track. OK - it looks better but will it last? Apart from concreting the whole area there is nothing the club can do about the situation, but I can't help thinking that they must have known that the track would break up like this even before they applied to run the event. Contrast this track with that fabulous smooth, consistent track at the 1995 Euros in Finland.

Practice is delayed, no reason given, and there is a Team Managers meeting to sort out the timetable. Our proposal was to have the four rounds of ten minute open practice followed by one round of timed practice in our race heats. Saturday would have the second timed practice and all five qualifying rounds, leaving Sunday just for the finals and assuring a sensible finish time. We would even forego the second timed practice if need be, bearing in mind drivers starting order in round one of qualifying was determined by their time in the controlled practice round. This made the practice round quite important and if there was only one round and you had a problem, then you were starting at the back of the pack.

Whilst this delay was going on I did realise that our drivers who were on the reallocation list were in difficulty as they were not being allocated any places in the practice sessions. As far as I could see there were a total of 15 drivers from all countries waiting to be slotted



That's the way to jump - Craig Drescher.

into 20 available places. The organisers seemed quite incapable of fitting these drivers in quickly and it was not until the second round of free practice was almost over, that they got placed. Considering that reserves pay 50% more for their entries, then they should have been treated much better. In the end some of them only got one practice run compared to everyone else who ended up on three.

It was decided to run one round of timed practice that evening and drop the second timed round altogether. Saturday would be four rounds of qualifying with the fifth round on Sunday and then finals. Also discussed was the option of rotating the heats to make track conditions fairer for all. Because the track broke up so badly, those in the first few heats, i.e. heat numbers 1 to 6, always had the best conditions, whilst those in heat 15 were always running after 140 cars had torn up the surface. Rotation means round two of qualifying starts with heat 4, runs through to 15 and then heats 1 to 3 are run last. Round three starts with 7, round four with heat 10 and round five with heat 13. Good idea but the jury wouldn't vote for it, so drivers in the earlier heats would be favoured and this included most of the seeded drivers.

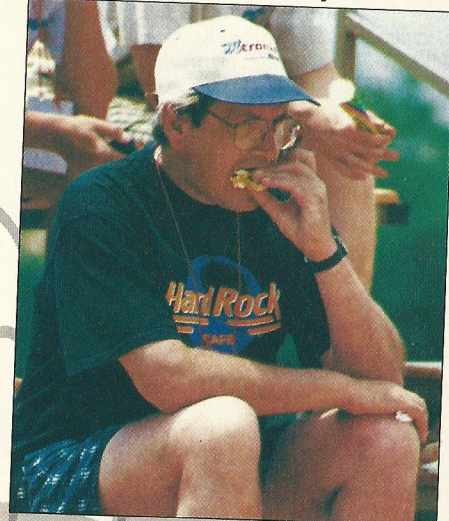
Saturday & Qualifying

Delays again blighted the start of the day. Problems arose with a disagreement on which radio frequency Craig should have been using, they appeared to be sorted out, but then came the crazy bit. A club official began to go down the rostrum line asking the drivers what frequency they were using, during the race! Understandably, he was kindly asked to leave! But he was so determined he started tapping on Craig's shoulder and shouting in his ear! The result, a crash that spoiled Craig's run and many others were put off by this

Ian Kenningley grabbed 2nd with his Losi XX4.

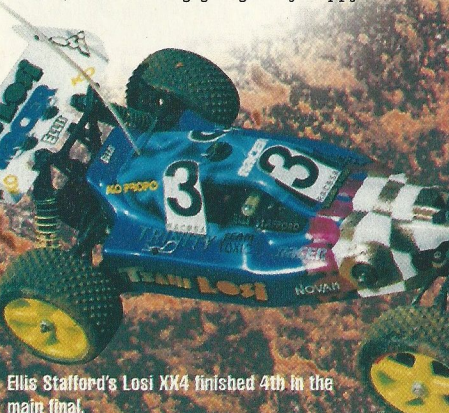


Brian Harris did get the time to eat - just!



scene. Guess what, this resulted in another delay and another manager's meeting!

There's more - Ralf Helbing was disqualified from the meeting as the scrutineers found all sorts of electric wiring concealed under a driver figure inside his car. This all looked suspiciously like the banned steering gyro that Helbing had developed and Helbing offered no explanation when asked. Once the story had well and truly circulated, Helbing then went along and told the organisers that the wiring was only a dummy and there was no device concealed or otherwise. He had only put in this wiring as a joke and to gain attention. The officials further inspected the car and withdrew the disqualification, with Helbing going away happy that he



Ellis Stafford's Losi XX4 finished 4th in the main final.

4wd



Top heat in 4wd.

had drawn such attention to himself. Strange to say the least!

Anyway qualifying did finally get underway with five rounds, best three to count. The positions from each round of qualifying of the top ten drivers are as per table:

Top Ten after all rounds with the best three to count.

A great result for Schumacher with Jukka on pole but Losi very pleased to have seven cars in the A. Commiseration's to Philip Murton who ended up pole in the B.

The practice final eventually got under way at 12.30 and you should bear in mind we have all been at the track since 8.00 am and have had only one 5 minute run in four and a half hours! Anyway Ian Kenningley starts off looking very good and so too does Ellis Stafford until he rolls and

this is only the practice. The way the Losi cars go over the bumps is quite awe inspiring but William's Predator looks quite good too. My money was on Ian or one of the other Losi drivers to get the win because they could push that much harder and were the only cars that could actually race on this surface rather than carefully pick their way round. William's XK5 ground to a halt but it seemed that this was only a practice car on which something had been tried that didn't work. No problem - back to the qualifying car.

A Final Leg 1

Pole position was to be crucial and Jukka didn't squander the advantage. He led away from the start with Ian right behind and William passing Ellis and Kevin for third. Lap three and everyone seems to be crashing including the race leader. Somehow he keeps the lead but it's Sascha second and Richard third. By lap six Jukka has built up a huge lead, Richard still second but Ian making up time and into third. Ian seemed to be trying just that little bit too hard and made too many errors but still is quick enough to pass Richard for second place on lap nine. Ian puts in a blistering last three laps taking nearly four seconds out of Jukka's lead but it is not enough and Jukka wins by just over a second, Richard third.

Qualifying

	Rd1	Rd2	Rd3	Rd4	Rd5	
1. Jukka Steenari	5	1	3	2	2	2
2. Ian Kenningley	5	1	3	1	134	3
3. Ellis Stafford	8	2	5	46	11	1
4. Kevin Moore	11	4	6	3	10	4
5. William Mitcham	12	7	2	7	3	12
6. Ramon Guasch	14	39	4	5	5	5
7. Richard Barton	15	3	13	10	6	6
8. Richard Cree	20	6	125	6	8	98
9. Sascha Falter	24	126	9	14	7	8
10. Karl Marsden	27	38	8	22	9	10

breaks a front shock tower. Jukka looks like he is going backwards but we must remember that

Star Brit Ian Kenningley's Losi XX4 - No.10.

A Final leg 2

This time Ellis makes a good start and the 1,2,3 order is preserved. Into lap two and Ian is all over Jukka but this Finnish driver is ice cool and will not be rattled into a mistake and indeed it's Ian who makes the mistake and everyone else drives past the upturned car before it is marshalled.

Lap three and Jukka is pulling away from Ellis and William is in third. Ellis changes gear

and makes the big push for Jukka on lap four and William is right there too. For two laps Ellis is all over Jukka, rolls and gets back up, slides wide and gets back, hits bumps, everything, and gets away with it all. Jukka must have nerves of steel to not be phased by this lot. Even when Ellis stuffs the car, William hits him and knocks him straight back on, still in second - unbelievable stuff.

A bit later Ellis makes a dramatic bid for the lead and tries to pass Jukka on the short start straight but they collide and Ellis comes off worst, gets hit by William who, this time, knocks him out of the way and goes second. William then chases Jukka hard and at the last minute mark is looking like he could pass Jukka. It comes to grief with a roll and this lets Ellis back through for second. The positions stay that way to the flag and with a second leg win for Jukka, that makes him overall winner and European Champion for the second time.

A Final leg 3

Bit of fun and games before this one. Once the B Final had finished, the A Finalists come up for their third leg only to find the rostrum taken over by all sorts of strange people. It was the celebrity race involving all Team Managers and race officials, the majority opinion was that they should not give up their day jobs! Onto the 3rd leg please!

Jukka emulates Craig and has his car taken off just before the start, and stands and watches the race from the best position in the house. The cars get under way with dreadful noises coming from Ramon Guasch's car. Ian gets away with Ellis in second and Kevin third. It stays like that for a couple of laps and then Ian crashes and takes Kevin with him, leaving Ellis with a nice lead. So it's Ellis, Kevin and Ian with William making a charge and also Richard Cree looking strong.

Lap five and Kevin falls over letting Ian past, William does a full 360 degree spin and keeps going, all this leaving Ellis with a huge lead. Kevin crashes again and drops back and we see Ian making up some ground on Ellis, maybe three seconds behind at the halfway stage. Ellis then crashes and Ian goes back into the lead but Ellis hasn't given up and charges back as only Ellis can. Ian is desperate to keep the lead and even accidentally cuts a corner - luckily the refs didn't see it! Richard Cree looking good in third and then Ellis goes for a ride over a corner, still no comment from the refs! Last lap but one and Ellis is on his roof again and this puts Richard Cree in second. Last lap and Ian nearly falls over but hangs on in there and takes the leg, Richard second and Ellis third.

Putting the three legs together the final result was:

1. Jukka Steenari
2. Ian Kenningley
3. Richard Cree
4. Ellis Stafford
5. William Mitcham
6. Sascha Falter
7. Kevin Moore
8. Ramon Guasch
9. Richard Barton
10. Karl Marsden



Epilogue

Barcelona is a super city to visit and the weather was hot, hot, hot! The hotel was just

The top three. Left to right: Ian Kenningley (2nd), Jukka Steenari (1st) and Richard Cree (3rd).

The closing ceremony commenced with speeches and acknowledgements for officials in both English and Spanish. After EFRA chairman, Mike Drescher, was warmly thanked, the winners of each race received their very nice trophies and then the 'A' Finalists came up to be presented. Much champagne spraying ensued and all three on the podium got drowned in the stuff. Craig Drescher added immeasurably to their pleasure by chucking a fire bucket full of sand at them. It looked like Jukka Steenari was above caring at that point and he just had a silly grin on his face. He had successfully defended his European Title and given Schumacher four consecutive European wins. He's worth his weight in gold and will no doubt have many offers coming his way.

Brit Placings

- B Final
3rd Robert Gammon
4th Dan Marson
7th Dave Duggan
8th Graham Alsop
9th Matt Needham
10th Philip Murton

C Final

- 1st Ian Flynn
3rd Steve Lawson
4th Alan Harman
6th James Smith
7th Ryan Coxall
10th Craig Drescher

D Final

- 2nd Mark Smith
3rd Jamie Booth
4th Richard Meredith
5th Stuart Davison

E Final

- 1st Adam Skelding
10th Craig Coxall

F Final

- 4th Ian Joyce
6th Mark Scott

G Final

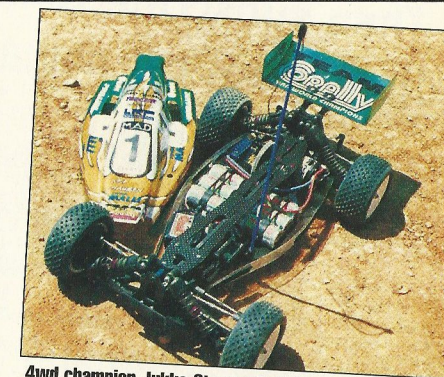
- 2nd Danny Sweeby
6th David Burton
8th Jon Tucker

spot on and with the pound being so strong, everything was cheap to us and you could (and did) get completely blotto for not a lot.

The track had promised so much but turned out to be well below par and certainly was not suitable for a European Championship. The pits were cramped but were thankfully well shaded. The rostrum was superb but was not sited centrally to the track, a driver near the referees end had a difficult job seeing the far left side of the circuit. Even the end of the rostrum was only just in the middle of the track.

Despite a huge organising team, there were difficulties in race control, which led to frustrating delays and the inevitable late finish on each day. With well over 150 entrants it does take a lot of sorting out, but many drivers will go away with the feeling that things could have been better. We wait to see what EFRA picks as the venue for 1998.

I'll end by heaping praise on our Team Manager, Brian Harris, for organising all our entries, the coach, the hotel and for representing our interests at the



4wd champion Jukka Steenari's Schumacher Cat 2000EC.



Let the celebrations begin!

International Jury meetings. Cheers Brian! Lastly a big "WELL DONE" to all the British drivers who acquitted themselves admirably and despite having no experience of driving on such a difficult track, still managed to pull through and show Europe who's best in depth. **RAC**

4wd