



The top three in 4WD



Double top Finnish!

1999 EFRA Off Road European Championships

Willkommen in Traiskirchen. Yes, the 1999 European Championships were being held in Austria with the host club being MAC-ASKO. Their track is built in part of a large sports centre in the small town of Traiskirchen, which is just a twenty minute drive south from Austria's capital city - Vienna. This proximity to Vienna coupled with an excellent and cheap tram service, meant that most of us spent at least one night on the town. The ladies spent many of the days there too, much to the distress of their credit cards!

First impressions on arriving at the track were very favourable. The facilities looked superb. The club had hired a huge marquee for us all to pit in. Plenty of space and power laid on for all. The rostrum, race control, scrutineering, catering and so forth were all of a very high standard. The food was good and very reasonably priced.

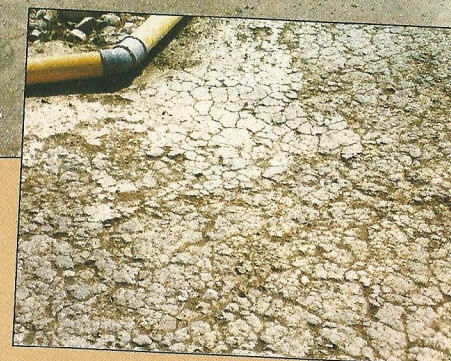
The Track

The track had been soaked with water, levelled and smoothed and then allowed to dry out. Being dirt rather than clay, the surface did take on the appearance of a dried up riverbed with cracks everywhere. This was also one hell of a big track and despite the speed of the top drivers it was only just possible to get



The MAC-ASKO track - looking good in the sunshine

12 laps in. Degree of difficulty? It ranked as one of the toughest I've ever seen outside the USA and there was absolutely nowhere on the track that the drivers could relax. It was sheer 100% concentration for the whole five and a half minutes. The dirt surface did hold up, contrary to expectations, although a lot of loose 'marbles' appeared. This meant that the racing line was only about one metre wide and if cars went off this line and hit the 'marbles' then they spun out or crashed. There were bumps, ramps, tabletops, bunny hops and a vicious quadruple jump that had most drivers guessing as to what was the fastest way to take it. Throw in every type of corner you can imagine and I think I've painted a fair picture of how tough it was.



Close up of the track surface

The hot spot on the track was a devilish chicane just before the main straight. On the final apex was a stout pipe sunk into the ground and, of course, every driver tried to 'straight-line' the chicane to get onto the straight as fast as possible. Get it even slightly wrong and you hit this pipe at high speed and under full power. I soon lost count of the number of wrecked cars and broken wishbones.



Lined up ready to go - just look at the track surface

Qualifying

The race director had the choice of FTD or round by round qualifying. Because the event was to be over two days for each class it was very difficult to be absolutely sure that the track and weather would remain consistent for all five rounds. Even though the weather was glorious round by round was pretty much the only choice. Rules for 1999 were amended such that only the best two round scores counted rather than the three we had last year.

Round 1

Benjamin Groeschel from Germany was the only driver to get a 12 lap run and he was driving one of the new Losi XXX cars. Gil Losi Jnr. was over from California to lend support, and Team Losi were very keen to make up for their disappointment at the World Championships and come away with the European title. A huge



Kevin Moore - so nearly there

effort would therefore be put behind their star driver, Jukka Steenari from Finland. The British drivers made a good early showing with Ellis Stafford and Craig Drescher in the top ten and Dave Duggan just out in eleventh place.

Round 2

Tyres were very much a talking point. The Austrians had said that a ProLine 8081 in XTR was the one to use. Some stocks of these were available but they are an old tyre that some thought were out of production. In the end most drivers finished up on Losi Silver Studs with either Silver or Red ribs on the front. Topping off round two was local Austrian driver, Peter Pinisch driving an Associated RC10B3. Peter lives right alongside the track and it can safely be assumed that he knows his way around the bumps and jumps very well indeed. Jukka Steenari got the pace right and was second in the round, he and Peter the only drivers on 12 laps. Defending champion, Craig Drescher made third.

Round 3

Jukka was really motoring and took the round win. Peter Pinisch was second and three more drivers got into that exclusive 12-lap club. Still just Ellis and Craig in the top ten for Britain.

Round 4

Another day but the weather was still absolutely glorious. Peter Pinisch stormed round to set the fastest qualifying time yet seen, to top off the round and go a full three seconds faster than second place man, Jukka Steenari. Craig Drescher did not seem able to match this pace but he was the only Brit. to still be in the top ten.



Gil Losi Jnr and Jukka - some great teamwork brought a dream result

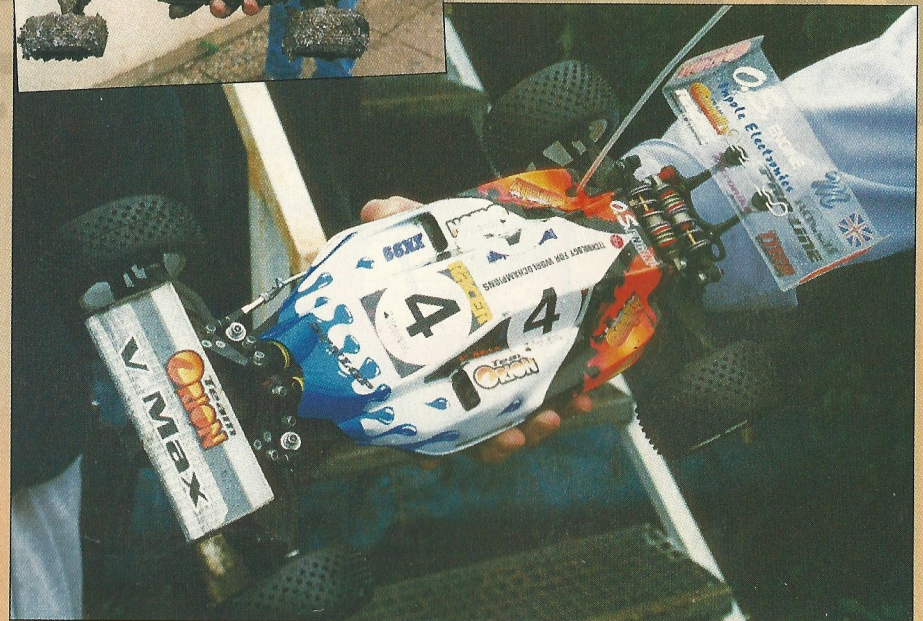
Round 5

Peter Pinisch broke his car after just 5 laps and Jukka put in another fantastic drive to win the round. It wasn't fast enough though, because Peter and Jukka both had two round wins each and the tie break is which of the winning times was fastest. Peter had that one from round four and so took the top qualifying position. One can just imagine the thoughts in the Losi camp at that time. Craig Drescher ended up qualifying seventh and at least in with a slight chance of retaining his title, but it would be very difficult from his eventual grid position. Ellis Stafford the unlucky man in pole position for the B Final.

The Finals A Final - Leg 1

Checking out the cars saw that the pole man was using a Losi Hydra-drive on his B3 whilst Jukka made do without on his XXX. Peter was using a rather hot Reedy Sonic2 11x3 and Jukka a much milder Orion 13x2. Grip was very hard to come by and many drivers chose mild motors to avoid breaking traction. Others would dial in torque limits on their speeds, exponentials on their transmitters or just try

The immaculate Predator of Graham Alsop, before and after the run





A sight to cheer the Losi contingent

and drive around the problem. Short wheelbase was the order of the day and loads of anti-squat to get good drive through the bumps. I know the Associated guys went up to 4 degrees anti-squat which is a far cry from the 1.5 degrees normally used.

The club's starting horn decided to go on the blink just as we were about to start. The race director ended up shouting 'GO!' instead! Peter Pinisch got the hole shot but soon crashed out and it was mayhem out there. Everyone was trying too hard and most fell over in the process. A very messy race that was eventually won by Jonas Kaerup from Denmark in a Losi XXX.

A Final - Leg 2

Peter got the hole shot again, Jukka just not able to get away fast enough from his 'dirty' side of the grid. Maybe the psychological pressure was getting to Peter Pinisch and he just

Peter Pinisch and his Associated RC10 B3 took TQ



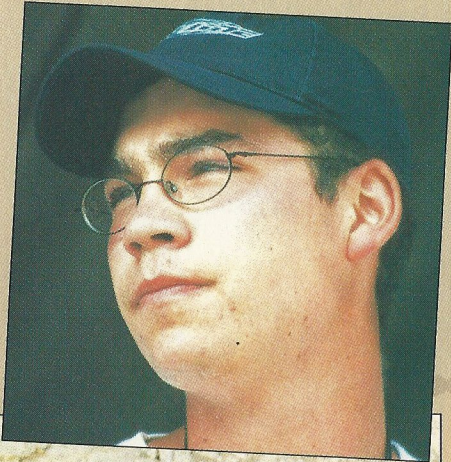
could not handle the challenge. He would crash out again and hand a huge lead to Jukka. Jonas Kaerup put a huge effort in to catch up and eventually pressured Jukka into a mistake. Jonas would lead for a short time but Jukka then moved up a gear (or two!) and made an incredible pass to lead once more. Hubert Hoenigl joined in the fun and we had a three-way dash for the line. Hubert and Jonas tried hard but could not shake the ice-cold resolve of Jukka and so it was Jukka who claimed the second leg win.

A Final - Leg 3

Peter away yet again and stayed on his wheels this time. Jukka turned up the heat in second place but Hubert and Jonas were both still there. Peter eventually crashed out, let Jukka into the lead and Hubert and Jonas tried everything they knew to keep in touch. Hubert managed to push Jukka all the way to the line but there was no doubt who was the best under pressure. Jukka took the third leg and so took the 1999 European 2wd Championship. An honourable mention for Craig who ended up a very worthy fifth overall.

2wd Summary

Very tough track that was difficult to race on as witnessed by the number of crashes in the Finals. Absolutely fantastic job by Jukka Steenari and Team Losi to come through all that and take the win. Smiles all round at the prizegiving and great fun with the champagne spraying!



4wd Begins - Qualifying

The track was identical to 2wd and no attempt was made to introduce any changes. The problem now was the weather as it had been raining solidly all night and the track was an absolute mess. The dirt was now thick sticky mud! Many drivers elected not to practice reasoning that the rain should stop and the track dry out. Friday was pretty much written off as a result. Saturday dawned with better weather and the first two rounds of qualifying were completed in near dry conditions.

With the 4wd traction 12 laps was definitely the order of the day and it was of no surprise to see Jukka Steenari in the Losi XX4 taking the lead in round 1. Jukka had after all won the 4wd World Championship and he was more than three seconds quicker than the next guy. Kevin Moore, Ellis Stafford and Dan Marson all figured in the top ten in round 1.

Round 2

Jukka made it look easy and Ellis Stafford placed an excellent second in the round. Teppo Kauppinen from Finland was third making it something of a Losi benefit. After 2 rounds we had Ellis, Kevin, Rich Meredith and Ryan Coxall all in the ten.

Round 3

The rain had started again, Jukka broke his car but Kevin Moore got it all together and took the round by storm. In fact this was the quickest time to date and would be highly significant later on. Neil Cragg moved up into the top ten with his Predator.

Round 4

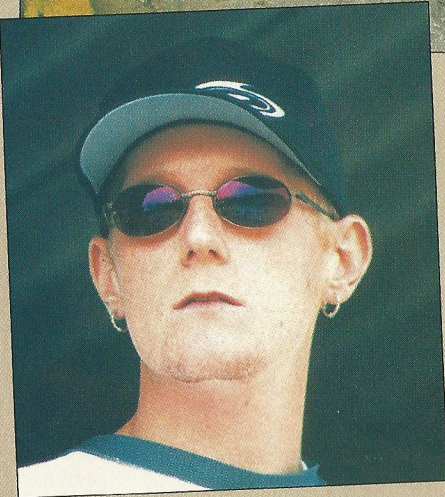
It had rained all night and was still pouring down on Sunday morning - the Austrians were accusing the British of bringing our weather with us. The mess was incredible - it was impossible to walk on the track without pulling up great clumps of very sticky mud. A team manager's meeting was held but no suggestions were forthcoming and it was left to the drivers to decide whether they raced or not. Marshalling was the real problem as their safety was a major concern. Marshals were instructed to move slowly and carefully! This did mean that any driver who crashed had a disproportionate time loss and therefore not crashing was vital to get a good round position. Many drivers didn't go out in round four but others thought that this would be a golden opportunity to get a good round score. Vincent Heligoin from France did just that, he hadn't figured at all in rounds 1 to 3 but went out and took 1st place in those diabolical conditions.

Round 5

Another Team manager's meeting but nothing new as no one could see any solution but to let the drivers race if they wanted to. The rain had eased and if anything a racing line had appeared. Staying on it was essential and not crashing equally important. To say that conditions were difficult must be the biggest understatement of the year. The only consolation was that the racing line had compacted down and was providing the best grip we had seen.



Mr Cool himself Jukka Steenari and his winning Losi XXX



Before this round started Jukka was in pole position but very mindful that Kevin had one round win and that time was faster than Jukka had done. Should Kevin TQ the last round then Kevin would be in pole. It was very clear that this situation was not acceptable to Jukka.

Watching Jukka in his last heat was amazing. How he made such incredible lap times, did them consistently and never crashed is almost beyond belief. It was rumoured that Orion had supplied an awesome 9-turn motor to power this challenge. The car did slow on the last lap, the batteries wilting under the sustained pounding, but crucially it was enough. Jukka topped the round and most

Driver	Qual Pos	Final Pos	Sponsor	Car	Motor	Cells	Speedo	Front Tyres	Rear Tyres
Peter Pinisch	1	4	Associated, Reedy, GM	Associated RC10B3	Reedy Sonic 2 11 x 3	Wacco PP	GM V12	Losi Rib Silver	Losi Ifmar Studs Silver
Jukka Steenari	2	1	Losi, Orion, Novak	Losi XXX	Orion Chrome 13 x 2	Orion V-Max	Novak Cyclone	Losi Rib Red	Losi Ifmar Studs Silver
Hubert Honigl	3	2	Losi, GM	Losi XXX	GM Evo III 12 x 4	GM-Vis	GM V12	Losi Rib Red	Losi Ifmar Studs Silver
Jonas Kaerup	4	3	Losi, Trinity, Novak	Losi XXX	Trinity D3.5 12 x 2	Trinity Vis 2000	Novak Cyclone	Losi Rib Red	Losi Ifmar Studs Silver
Marcus Lubke	5	7	Schumacher, Orion, LRP	Schumacher Fireblade Evo	Orion Chrome 10 x 2	Orion V-Max	LRP IPC V7.1	Losi Rib Silver	Losi Ifmar Studs Silver
Teppo Kauppinen	6	9	Losi, Orion, Novak	Losi XXX	Orion Chrome 13 x 2	Orion V-Max	Novak Cyclone	Losi Rib Red	Losi Ifmar Studs Silver
Craig Drescher	7	5	Associated, Reedy, LRP, Proline	Associated RC10B3	Reedy Trisonic 11 x 2	Orion V-Max	LRP IPC V7.1	Proline 4 Row M2	Proline 8081 XTR
Benjamin Groschel	8	8	Losi, Orion, Novak	Losi XXX	Orion Chrome 11 x 2	Orion V-Max	Novak Cyclone	Losi Rib Red	Losi Ifmar Stud Silver
Thomas Rossler	9	10	Associated, Reedy, Orion, GM	Associated RC10B3	Reedy Trisonic 10 x 4	Orion V-Max	GM V12	Losi Rib Red	Losi Ifmar Stud Silver
Hans-Jurgen Tormann	10	6	Schumacher, CS-Magnetic	Schumacher Fireblade Evo	CS-Magnetic	CS-VMX	Rocket 2000	Losi Rib Silver	Losi Ifmar Stud Silver

Driver	Qual Pos	Final Pos	Sponsor	Car	Motor	Cells	Speedo	Front Tyres	Rear Tyres
Jukka Steenari	1		Losi, Orion, Novak, Sanwa	Losi XX4	Orion 11 x 2	Orion V-Max	Novak Cyclone	Losi Ifmar Pin Silver	Losi Ifmar Pin Silver
Kevin Moore	2		Losi, LRP	Losi XX4	LRP 10 x 2	LRP	LRP IPC V7.1	Losi Ifmar	Losi Ifmar
Vincent Heligoin	3		Schumacher, Orion, LRP	Schumacher Cat 2000EC	Orion 12 x 3	Orion V-Max	LRP IPC V7.1	Medial Pro	Medial Pro
Teppo Kampinen	4		Losi, Orion, Novak	Losi XX4	Orion 11 x 2	Orion V-Max	Novak Cyclone	Losi Ifmar Pin Silver	Losi Ifmar Pin Silver
Benjamin Groschel	5		Losi, Orion, Novak	Losi XX4	Orion 11 x 2	Orion V-Max	Novak Cyclone	Medial Pro	Medial Pro
Ian Kenningley	6		Losi, Trinity, LRP	Losi XX4	Trinity D3.5 11 x 2	Trinity Vis-2000	LRP IPC V7.1	Ballisti Buggy Mini Pin Green	Ballistic Buggy Mini Pin Green
Hans-Jurgen Tormann	7		Schumacher, CS Magnetic	Schumacher Cat 2000EC	CS-Magnetic 12 x 2	CS-Vmax	Rocket 2000	Medial Pro	Medial Pro
Peter Pinisch	8		Losi, Orion, GM	Losi XX4	Orion Chrome 11 x 2	Orion V-Max	GM V12	Losi Ifmar Pin Silver	Losi Ifmar Pin Silver
Marcus Lubke	9		Schumacher, Orion, LRP	Schumacher Cat 2000EC	Orion Chrome 11 x 2	Orion V-Max	LRP IPC V7.1	Medial Pro	Medial Pro
Ellis Stafford	10		Losi, Trinity, LRP	Losi XX4	Trinity D3.5 10 x 2	Trinity Gold Gold Dust	LRP IPC V7.1	Losi Ifmar Pin Silver	Losi Ifmar Pin Silver

importantly set a new fastest time in the process. What an effort and under the greatest possible pressure. Kevin was to come home a magnificent second which underlined exactly what Jukka had feared. Had Jukka not gone out and set that amazing run then Kevin would have been in pole.

The Finals

What finals? The heavens opened again and so much rain came down that we had standing water on top of the mud. In an attempt to make the track driveable the club brought on bags and bags of wood chippings and sawdust and spread these all over the place. This was a disaster and nobody had any inclination to take their cars out on the resulting double mess. The last Team managers meeting reached an easy decision and that was to abandon the meeting and declare the result on qualifying. The only person we felt sorry for was Kevin Moore as he has been runner up many times before and would really have liked the opportunity to race Jukka for the title.

Epilogue

The final prizegiving was a grand affair with various dignitaries turning up including the Burgermeister (Mayor) of Traiskirchen. The MAC-ASKO club was congratulated on their effort and organisation and everyone commiserated with them over the rain. Finally Jukka Steenari was crowned double European Champion, something he has been striving to achieve for quite a few years. The persistence and hard work finally paid off - very well done indeed. **ARCI**