

## Interview

# Mike Reedy

**RRC interviewed the World's top 'motor man', Mike Reedy, at the recent 1/10 World Champs in Detroit.**

photographer for 'Life' magazine, travel all over the world, go to the war zones, but that ambition soon disappeared!

I worked as an industrial photographer for about 11 years and then as an electrical designer/engineer and from there into Associated. Oh, in between there I had two years where I built and raced boats professionally — full-size boats.

### **What makes a good motor?**

Efficiency! It's not necessarily the motor that is the fastest for the first two minutes of the race that wins the race, it's the motor that delivers you the power all the way through.

A lot of the time if you watch, especially World Championships where it's close, you'll see motors where it looks like a guy's really been out-horsepowered for the first two minutes but he may well win the race because at three minutes he is as fast and at four minutes he's pulling away from the other guys. So you've got to have the overall picture and that's what I look for, not necessarily speed for the first one or two minutes, but a motor that's efficient all the way through the race.

### **What is the best way to keep motors in 'tip top' condition?**

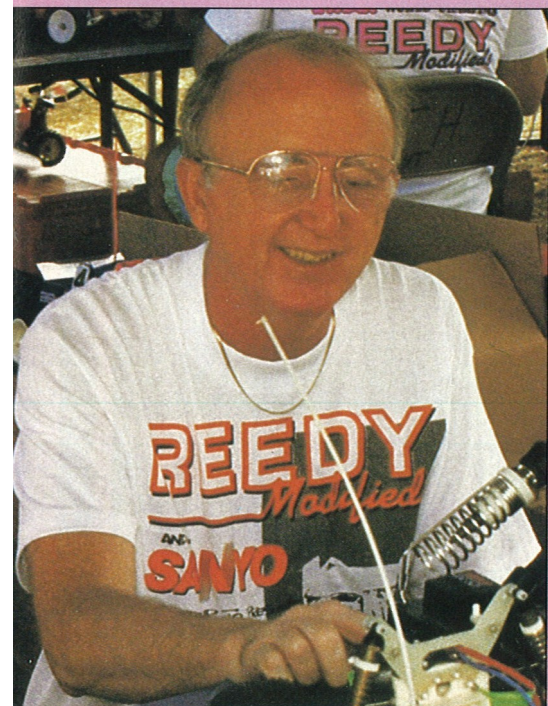
I take a motor out in between runs at the big races and check the commutator to see if it is still true, and the brushes to see if they have burned on the tip. If both those items check out okay I take the comm, and something like a comm stick, and lightly touch them up. I put them back together and run the motor up on a battery pack or some sort of power supply at low voltage. While it is turning I lightly hit the brush area only with just a little bit of spray to take any residue off the comm and brushes, and lightly oil with a good oil like Mobil 1 on the bearings, and go run!

### **How did you first get started in building electric R/C car motors?**

OK, in the 1970s I played around with slot racing for a long time, mostly as a hobby and making motors, but I got out of it for about ten years. Then Gene Husting from Associated, a long time friend of mine (we have been friends for about 30 years), asked me if I would look into the electric motors they were getting into for 1/12 scale electric racing, and if I would help and work with him a little bit. I did and I started enjoying it, and the next step was that we came out with Reedy Modifieds as a division of Associated Electrics, and it has gone from there.

### **What was your profession/job, ie before you made electric motors?**

I graduated from college after studying photo journalism, I wanted to be a



### **What is the best way to clean the motors?**

I spray mine out including the bearings, flush them out really good with triflor — that's what's in Reedy in a can. I make sure anything I use doesn't have additives in it, any silicone or oil additives or lubricants, just straight triflor, I just want to wash the motor out. Then I lightly oil the bearings with real good oil like ten weight Mobil 1. Mobil 1 is a synthetic oil, it doesn't break down with heat. You've got to get rid of the grease that's in the regular bearings. The main thing is just to flush all of that dirt out of there, skim the comm, put in a fresh set of brushes and go racing.

### **How long before brushes should be replaced?**

I replace them every time I true comms, and I also replace them if it looks like they are getting burned. I don't just look at the tip, I look at the edge and the side. If it's starting to turn gold and blue going backwards from the tip I replace the brushes. When it does that it means you've burned the lubricant out and they've become hard and will just destroy the comm, so take them out before you destroy the comm.

### **How often should a motor be trued?**

A good way to test the comm to see if it's good is whenever you see that the brushes are bouncing. A good way to test this is to take a jeweller's screwdriver, the type that got the free rotating ball on the end, and just rest the tip on the motor, on the brushes while the motor is running, and if the ball bounces round, true the comm. If it just sits there and you don't feel any movement, the comm's fine, don't touch it. Why touch a good thing when it's working? I don't necessarily true between runs, I true as necessary.

### **Which are the best types of brushes for each different class, and why?**

Okay, all my brushes have basically the same amount of lubricant. The differences are in the copper itself. In one brush the copper and silver tends to go to the surface and ride against the comm which drops resistance and gives more power, but it also gets hotter quicker, burns up quicker and does more damage to the comm under heavy load. My other brush tends to have lubricant on the tip which puts a film against the comm. It gives a little less power but when you're running at high current it doesn't burn up and you can get the run, that's the difference.

For 1/12 scale I run the one that puts the copper against the comm. 1/10 scale off-road I run the one that puts lubricant against the comm. If you run the 1/12 scale ones in the 1/10 scale winds you will have a lot of power for about two minutes and then you'll see the motor start to slow down because the brushes have glazed over. But with the other one the first two minutes it might be a hare down on the straightway, I really doubt whether you'd notice the

# REEDY

## Modifieds

difference in the car but it will run better through the end. They also last longer!

### **When do you plan on retiring?**

Ha, ha! I don't know about retiring but I would like to slow down. I don't think I'll ever retire, I would get bored, when they put me in a casket I'll retire!

### **Who will you pass all your knowledge on to when you stop making motors?**

I'll take it to the grave (*laughter in distance*). Okay, ha, a laugh out of Chris Doseck over there. I don't really know. I would like to start working with some people to get them, like I work with Darren Westman, he was a big help to me at Singapore and early in the race at this World Championship, helping me work on motors so that I can take care of everyone plus my official duties. I'd like to take somebody and work with them and train them because sooner or later I'm not going to be able to go to all the races. I can't go to them all now.

### **Who do you consider to be the best driver/drivers in the World, and why?**

Well you could make me a lot of enemies on this one! Masami Hirotsuka's got to be one of the best. Look what he's won, he's won three off-road world championships, four world championships right now, he's got another shot here, and he's just got second in the race we've just had. By virtue of his record and obvious talent, he would be on the top of any list.

Cliff Lett — he's always right there on top, and he won the world championship here earlier in the week.

Jay Halsey — he's always there. He's always one of the fastest drivers you can imagine. He's a little rough on his equipment sometimes but that's Jay's form of driving. Put him on a dirt track and he's in seventh heaven, reverse lock through it and loose the dirt.

Joel Johnson — very consistent, smooth driver, one of the best especially on-road. He knows how to drive a line, he knows how to stay out of trouble. Off-road you put him on a driver's track where it's a little bit slippery Joel's hard to beat, like when he won the world championship at Romsey.

Jurgen Lautenbach — I have a lot of respect for this guy, he not only is one of the best drivers, very competitive every time he goes on the track, but he has the time to take care of his team motors too. I couldn't do that.

Christian Keil — He's very fast. Hasn't quite got the hang of off-road yet but put him on an on-road course and he's another one that's hard to beat.

Chris Doseck — 1/12 scale world

champion. Probably the smoothest driver I know in the world. He could probably put three more pinions on his gear on his motor than you can on anybody else's motor and he will go out and finish for you. That helps in the end, he will have power there to spare.

I know I've missed a lot of people but that probably got most of them. I think the best ambassador and driver overall for racing is Phil Davies. He's always got a smile, he's always helping and he's come through and done real good for me the years he's been racing. Phil is always a surprise. I think he is the most under-rated driver in the world.

### **How can 'Joe Public' best look after his motors?**

Basically by doing what I said earlier, take them out in between every run or two and check the brushes to make sure they're not burned. When you get a burned brush it just tears up the comm, and the more the comm gets torn up the more the brush burns, the more the comm gets torn up and you just start a vicious circle. So, if you eliminate the damage before it starts you save your motor.

### **Which world championship using Reedy motors means the most to you?**

That's hard to say, I still feel the Grand Prix of electric racing is 1/12 scale. I know right now that would mean an awful lot to me because I lost the last one and I want to win it. They all mean a lot, the satisfaction of seeing the work of myself and the team rewarded.

**Thank you very much Mr Reedy.**  
Okay, thank you. ●

