

WORLD R/C CAR CHAMPIONSHIPS

THORP RACEWAY : POMONA : CALIFORNIA

WITH 107 total entries, 38 from Europe, two from S. Africa, two from Japan, two from Hawaii and no less than 63 Expert Drivers from USA the recipe for the first ever World R/C Car Championships looked good.

The venue, Thorp Raceway, Pomona, California would be an unknown quantity for the foreign entries and probably 50 per cent of American drivers. Our only indication of track shape and condition would be a small sketch of the track which appeared in the American car magazine "Racing Circuits" and one simple line from the organisers saying traction good, bring all the horsepower you can carry. Well we would arrive with nearly a week available for practice before qualifying and the three main finals so we would have plenty of time to get things right, or so we thought!

We arrived at Thorp Raceway late Sunday afternoon for just a LOOK at the track but with Franco Sabatti and Ronnie Ton and a few of the fast American drivers already practising like mad it was too

much of a temptation and within half an hour every one of the British team was hammering around, Thorp intent on blowing an engine or wearing a car out as soon as possible or so it seemed.

Initial impressions of the track were of fantastic traction and I mean fantastic traction, the like of which none of the British team and most of the European and foreign competitors had ever experienced before, the grip available was so good that it was practically impossible to spin out in a turn regardless of how much power you had and the power you had available also became very relevant indeed.

With Phil Booth, Dave and Debbie Preston, Ted Longshaw using highly re-worked S/Tigre x 21's, Phil Greeno, Keith Plested and Mike Wickens running K. & B. 21's and Doug Blair using an OPS 21 it was quite interesting to see which engine delivered the necessary horses.

On this and next page are shown a goodly proportion of the hundred plus entries in a wide variety of colour schemes even if mainly K & B powered within!

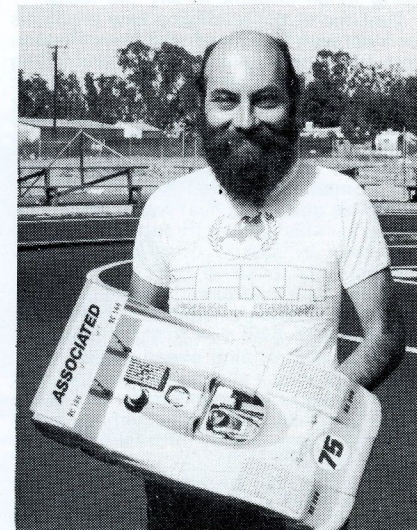


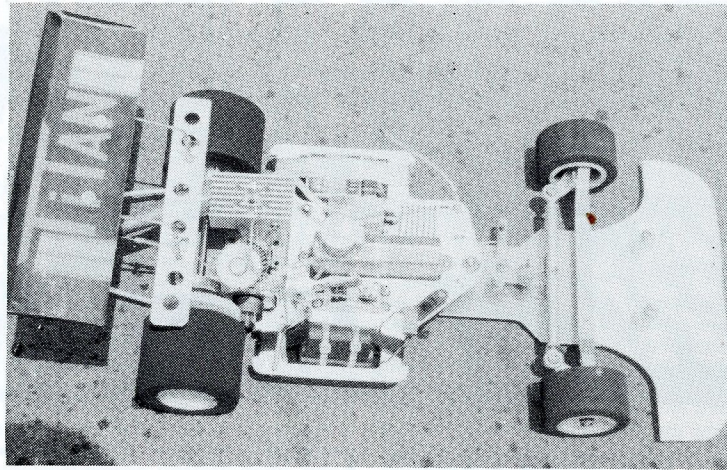
Well from the very beginning it was quite obvious that the K. & B. 21 suited this track with all its bottom end torque that at last could be put down and used. The Super Tigre's x 21's just could not match that K. & B's acceleration out of the bends and it wasn't long before all the British Team with the exception of Doug Blair were running K. & B. 21's. This need for acceleration out of the bends became apparent when one looked at the top USA competitors, especially the Associated Works team (all ten of them). They were using K. & B. 21's all right but with a 6:1 final drive — yes 6:1. "It's not fair, PB don't make a 6:1 gear ratio" was one of the GB team's remarks; another was: "They're using a Perry 61 pumper carb on a 3.5cc motor without a pumper and it works". More to the point was that the associated works drivers were super fast. Bill Jianas and Chuck Phelps were regularly cutting laps around the 17 seconds mark while as a comparison Phil Booth and Ted Longshaw were regularly lapping in the 19's with an occasional lap in 18 sec. mark but when Bill Jianas went out and lapped with best time of 16.7 secs. the writing was on the wall.

The competition itself was a three-day event with the Saturday and Sunday being devoted to qualifying only. Each competitor was allowed only one ten minute qualifying heat each day plus five minutes' practice before hand. The best heat time would then count towards the finals. The

Winner Butch Kroells with happy victory smile. A man with the mark of genius — an infinite capacity for taking pains!

STORY & PICS BY OUR MAN ON THE SPOT PHIL GREENO + ADDITIONAL PICS BY THIRD MAN GENE HUSTING AND HIS OWN ACCOUNT OF A MAIN RACE . . . MORE ON CHAMPS NEXT ISSUE.





Bob Titterington's Titan, basically an Associated car (2nd in C Main).

finals or "mains" as our American friends called them were split into three groups. The 'A' Main was for the top ten qualifiers, the 'B' Main for qualifiers 11-20, and the 'C' Main for qualifiers 21-30. Obviously with 108 competitors of the world's best drivers (of the 63 USA entrants only expert drivers were allowed to compete) getting into the top 30 was going to be difficult to say the least.

Day one of the qualifying saw problems for most with Phil Booth and Dave Preston both suffering engine problems and failing to record times; Phil Greeno had a terrific start in his heat but was called to a re-start after the timing gear failed to work. After the re-start he suffered several very bad shunts to retire with body work damage. Ted Longshaw decided that 20 minutes before his qualifying heat was a good time for a ride in his 22 foot three-ton Ford LTD Battleship in search of a pair of sunglasses, only to arrive back at the track while his heat had already started. Lucky for Ted he actually arrived back before the time his heat was due to start, the time table actually running ahead of schedule. He was allowed a second chance the next day. All was not gloom though as Debbie Preston drove beautifully with a super smooth drive to qualify 19th overall at the end of the first day.

The second day of qualifying saw some better driving for the British and European entrants. All the British drivers with the

exception of Mike Wickens, managing to have trouble-free runs and complete all 30 laps of the qualifying heats. At the end of the day everyone waited patiently for the results of the top 30 qualifiers. The top ten were total USA benefit with nine West Coast divers making it with Bill Jiansan being top qualifier with a fantastic run of 542.6 secs. for 30 laps, Chuck Phelps (556.9), Matt Azzara (561.9), Rich Lee (561.8), Gene Husting (569.0), Jeff Rold (569.7), Arturo Carbonell (571.8), Mike Rowland (575.5), Butch Kroells (576.1) and Gary Buriani (580.0) make up the 'A' Main top ten.

The 'B' Main saw Garry Grosenbacher (USA) (578.0), Bill Campbell (USA) (589.4), Rick Davis (USA) (590.5), Debbie Preston (GB) (590.9), the fastest European qualifier, a school-girl and only 14 years old — a really fantastic achievement; Reiner Dosch (Germany) (592.00), Bill Coalson (USA) (592.00), Dave Dawson (USA) (592.8), John Thorp (593.00) (USA), Phil Booth (GB) (596.6) and Franco Sabattini (Italy) (601.00).

The 'C' Main saw M. Queller (USA) (601.3), D. Stewart (USA) (602.2), J. Kimbrough (USA) (603.5), J. Pretorius (S. Africa) (603.5), B. Welch (USA) (603.7), C. Hallam (USA) (604.6), T. Longshaw (GB) (605.2), R. Curtis (USA) (605.5), G. Kyes (USA) (606.1), B. Tittering (USA) (606.9).

The remaining drivers were just not fast enough and would have to be spectators for the three finals on Monday, 4th July.

Monday morning saw last minute adjustments made to most cars after the

early morning practice session.

In the British camp Phil Booth, Ted Longshaw and Debbie Preston had made it to the finals but Phil and Ted both felt they were down on power and were worried that their engines would not last the 100 laps finals in the heat of Southern California. Phil Greeno who without a doubt had one of the quickest K. & B. 21's outside the American Team kindly lent Phil Booth his best engine for the 'B' Main and Ted Longshaw quickly snapped up Phil Greeno's No. 2 K. & B. to keep in the running.

Young Debbie Preston who had been driving beautifully all week had a very strong but perfectly standard K. & B. 21 in her PB International and felt quite confident as she was.

'C' MAIN

The first event of the day was the 'C' main run over 100 laps. Roger Curtis (USA) took an immediate lead from John Pretorius (SA), Jay Kimbrough (USA), Bob Tithington (USA), Ted Longshaw (GB) with the rest of the pack in close pursuit. After the first fuel stop it was Curtis followed by Longshaw, Welch, Kimbrough, Queller, Pretorius, Hallam and Titherington. By half distance Roger Curtis was building up a sizeable lead with Bob Titherington up in second place, Ted Longshaw in third, and that was the way it stayed until the finish. Roger Curtis won by over ten laps, Bob Titherington second, and good old Ted Longshaw in third.

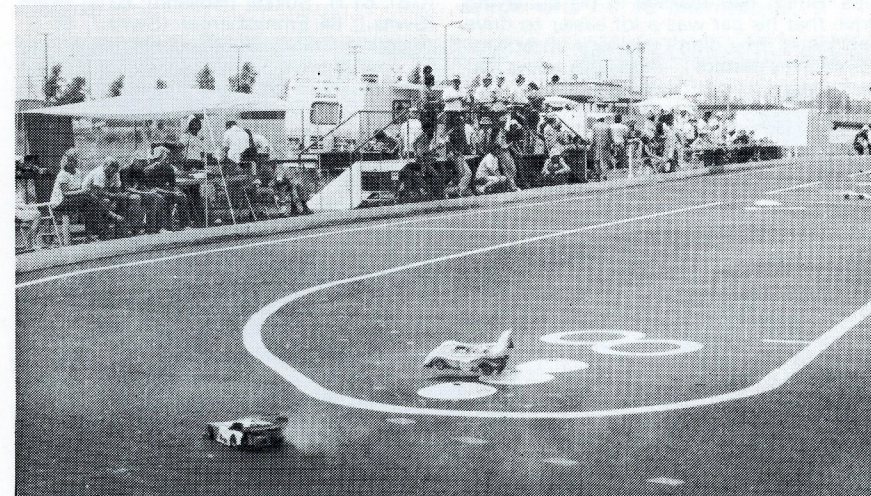
'B' MAIN

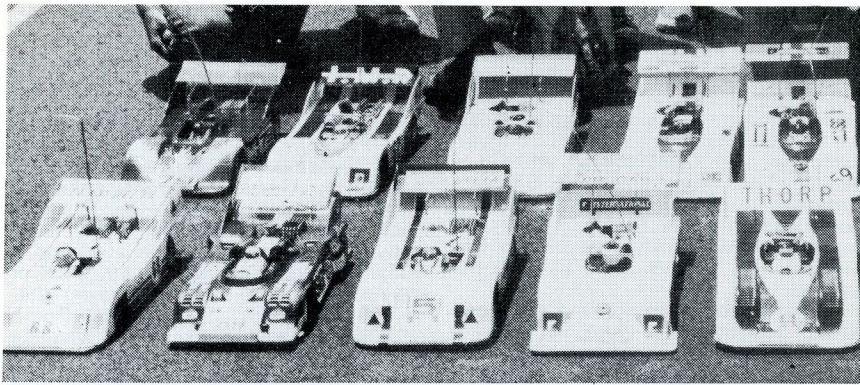
'B' Main was over 110 laps and for 11/20 placed qualifiers. It was somewhat more interesting with four Europeans and six Americans making the numbers. After two jump starts they got going cleanly with Phil Booth in the lead followed by Davis, Grosenbacher, Preston and Dosch. After 25 laps Grosenbacher was in the lead just from Phil Booth and Davis, and it became apparent then that if the times between refuelling could be stretched a real advantage could be gained. Most of the American drivers were re-fuelling after only 5½ minutes, whereas Phil Booth refuelled at 6½ minutes. At half distance Phil Booth took the lead again and stayed there to the end. Gary Grosenbacher was second and young Debbie Preston a fantastic third. Reiner Dosch of Germany was sixth, Franco Sabattini of Italy 8th; after stripping a gear cog and then blowing his engine. Phil Booth's win in the 'B' Main was a terrific result considering the opposition and track conditions. Debbie Preston also drove superbly and can rightly be classed as the fastest lady driver in the world.

'A' MAIN

The final event of the day was the 'A' Main for the World Champion driver, with

Typical track picture. Note pits, drivers' rostrum, "plow discs" to deter corner cutting and those "rideable" wooden walls!





A Main left to right (back) Buriani : Rowland : Rold : Kroells : Jianas, (front row) left to right: Azzara : Husting : Phelps : Lee : Carbonell.

the top ten qualifiers (all USA) fighting it out for the title. It seems therefore a suitable occasion to pass over race report to Associated Chief Gene Husting (who came third):

Cars were flagged off to a perfect start with Butch Kroells taking the lead. I was right behind Butch, and Butch opened up a lead as I too started to put some distance on the other cars. About the 10th lap a red, white and blue car was coming up on me — it was Bill Jianas who passed me and took over 2nd. About lap 20 Bill caught Butch and took over lead; two laps later on his pit stop the engine died and he lost two laps. Butch had realised in his qualifying drive that his car was a lot easier to drive and faster if he didn't use lock up brakes. His car was perfect . . . just plain going fast and looking good. I was still holding 2nd when Bill passed me and Butch and then me again to take over 2nd, but his engine died again in the pits . . . another two laps. After about 60 laps, Butch had a one lap

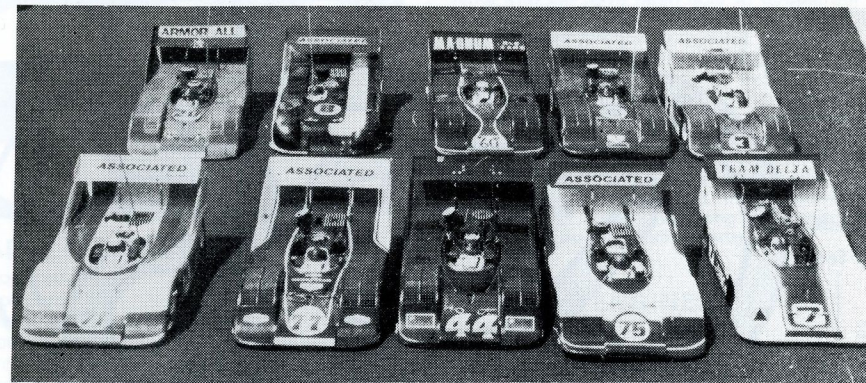
lead. I was still 2nd, but Mike Rowland, Matt Azzards and Rich Lee were right behind on the same lap. Here came the red, white and blue car to pass me again. With 110 laps down and ten to go, Butch now had a two lap lead. Jianas passed me again to take over 2nd place.

On the last lap with only three corners to go Mike Rowland passed me, but I re-passed him in the next corner as Butch Kroells took the chequered flag with Bill Jianas 1 1/2 laps down in 2nd, myself 3rd.

Other European placings: 33 Phil Greeno (GB); 40 Dave Preston (GB); 41 Frank Cromberge (Holland); 42 J. P. Ruchat (Switz.); 45 K. Plested (GB); 50 Mares (Italy); 55 K. H. Will (Germany); 60 D. Blair (GB); 61 H. Sukkel (Holland); 63 E. Brem (Switz.); 64 Emmisberger (Switz.); 66 S. Agostino (Italy); 69 Bo Japlin (Sweden); 71 Sommgraver (Switz.); 75 U. Franke (Switz.); 77 G. Stanzani (Italy); 79 U. Bisi (Italy); 80 W. Collina (Italy); 82 R. Sahlberg (Sweden); 86 H. Muller (Switz.); 89 E. Bopp (Switz.); 92 FvHelden (Holland); 93 K. Urs (Switz.); 94 Krusberg (Sweden); 97

'A' MAIN

Place	Name	Laps	Qual. Time	Country	Car	Engine
1	Butch Kroells	120	576.1	USA — CA.	Associated	K & B
2	Bill Jianas	118	542.6	USA — CA.	Associated	K & B
3	Gene Husting	117	569.0	USA — CA.	Associated	K & B
4	Mike Rowland	117	575.5	USA — CA.	Associated	K & B
5	Rich Lee	116	561.8	USA — CA.	Associated	K & B
6	Matt Azzara	116	561.8	USA — CA.	Associated	K & B
7	Chuck Phelps	112	556.9	USA — AZ.	Associated	K & B
8	Jeff Rold	112	569.7	USA — CA.	Magnum	K & B
9	Gary Buriani	41	580.0	USA — CA.	Associated	K & B
10	Arturo Carbonell	34	571.8	USA — FL.	Delta	?



B Main, left to right (back): Davis : S. Anderson (Switz.); 101 R. Persson (Sweden); 103 H. Crispin (Sweden); 106 R. Ton (Holland); 108 P. Rigot (France).

B Main, left to right (back): Davis : Dawson : Grossenbacher : Booth : Preston, (front row): left to right: Coalson : Sabbatini : Campbell : Dosch : Thorp.

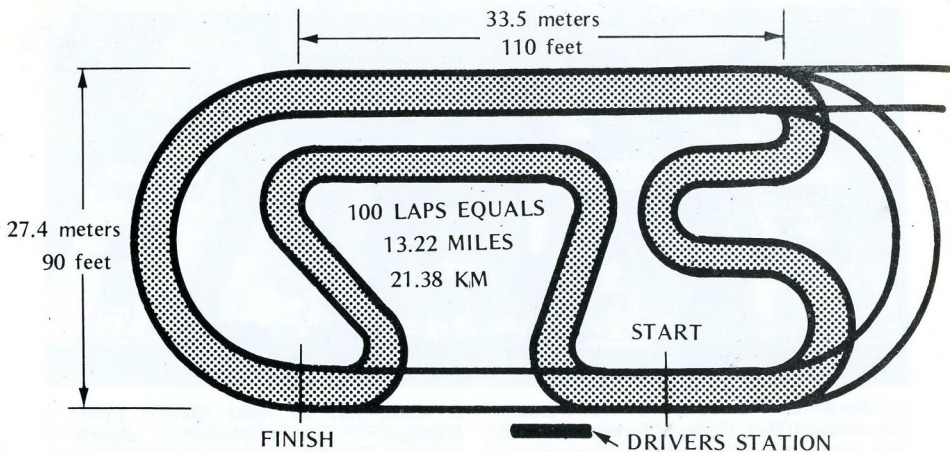
'B' MAIN

1	Phil Booth	110	596.6	England	PB	K & B
2	Gary Grossenbacher	109	598.0	USA — AZ.	Associated	?
3	Debbie Preston	106	590.9	England	PB	OPS
4	Bill Campbell	103	589.4	USA — MO.	Delta	?
5	Dave Dawson	101	592.8	USA — IN.	Delta	K & B
6	Reiner Dosch	92	592.0	Germany	PB	K & B
7	Bill Coalson	90	592.0	USA — MO.	Delta	?
8	Franco Sabbatini	60	601.0	Italy	SG	S. Tigre
9	Rick Davis	55	590.5	USA — MI.	Scratchbuilt	?
10	John Thorp	40	593.0	USA — CA.	Thorp	K & B

A lovely life! Messrs. Booth, Blair, Plested and Preston toy with their cars by the poolside!

ON THE COVER: That man again! Phil Booth, B Main winner and top man from Europe with his PB International.





'C' MAIN

1	Roger Curtis	100	605.5	USA - CA.	Associated	K & B
2	Bob Titterington	89	606.9	USA - CA.	Titan	K & B
3	Ted Longshaw	87	605.2	England	PB	K & B
4	Mike Queller	85	601.3	USA - TX.	Delta	K & B
5	Bob Welch	80	603.7	USA - WA.	MRP	K & B
6	Johan Pretorius	73	603.5	S. Africa	Associated	K & B
7	Chuck Hallum	51	604.6	USA - CA.	HRE	K & B
8	Jay Kimbrough	41	603.5	USA - CA.	Associated	K & B
9	Don Stewart	8	602.2	USA - CA.	J-Car	K & B
10	Gary Kyes	DNS	606.1	USA - CA.	MRP	?

Typical Team Associated works car (Chuck Phelps). Note latest Associated disc brakes, McCoy silencer and quick action spring filler cap much admired by the European contingent (PB might even make some!).

