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SEPTEMBER 1983

\$2.25 U.S.



radio control MODELER

WORLD'S LEADING PUBLICATION FOR THE RADIO CONTROL ENTHUSIAST



OFF-ROAD RACING

Gene Husting

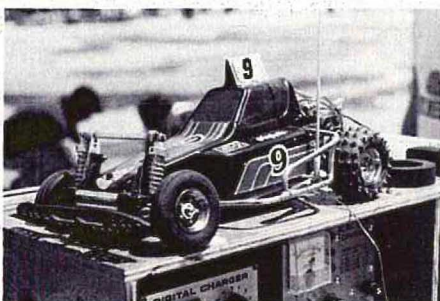


There's a saying among mechanics that the race is won in the garage, meaning that the very best driver still needs a good car to win. Mechanics feel car preparation is as important as a good driver, and winning drivers know how true this is. So Gil Losi Jr. spends painstaking hours setting up his cars to handle good and be very reliable. When his car is put on the track, it's ready to race.

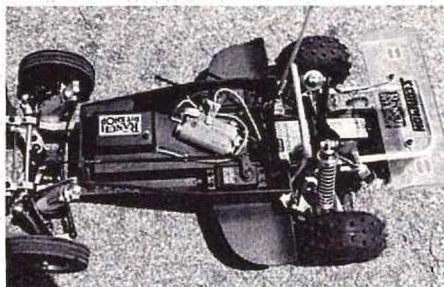
The hottest driver of off-road cars in Southern California, would have to be Gil Losi Jr. Gil just won both the Modified and Open classes at the big Score Off-Road Show, which is the biggest off-road race in Southern California. Gil didn't just happen to be lucky enough to win, he totally earned both wins with meticulous car preparation and an uncanny driving ability developed through countless other race wins leading to this race.

Twenty year old Gil Losi Jr. started racing about four years ago, quite by accident. His dad, Gil Losi Sr. bought a Tamiya off-road car at the Mini Baja track in San Fernando Valley, which was run by Lou Peralta. Pops Gil thought it would be a lot of fun for him and his two sons, Gil Jr. and Alan, to play with. Well, it turned out to be so much fun, that it wasn't long before the Losi's were opening up their own off-road track in Colton. This lasted for a couple years when Gil Sr. heard that the Thorp track was going on sale in Pomona.

The Losi's bought the raceway and changed the name to the Ranch Pit



The Tamiya is still the most popular car. This one features Kyosho shocks, custom polished aluminum nerf bars, polished wheels, special knobby rear tires.



Gil is currently racing a Cox Scorpion car. The immaculately prepared car features Associated racing shocks on the front end, Kraft radio, Parma twin barrel resistor, Kyosho rear shocks and Checkpoint motor.

Shop. An off-road track was immediately put in behind the 1/8 gas asphalt track. This is a fantastic off-road track with a very large covered driver's stand and a super lighting system for weekly night races, which has become very popular, in addition to the weekend racing. The whole family literally built the track by hand while Mom, Janet Losi, ran the well-stocked R/C car sales room. I think she actually runs the whole business, because every time I've been to the track all the guys are out racing their cars. I can just hear my wife, Midge, saying, "Well, who do you think runs your business?"

Gil started with the Tamiya off-road car, then last year switched to the Cox car, then an RCH prototype car and then back to the Cox car. He says the Tamiya car is more reliable and easier to drive, but that the Cox car is a faster car.

When Gil was asked what kind of advice he would give to new drivers he said they should learn to drive before driving too fast, and you must learn to pass before you can start to win. Having watched Gil in a number of races now, in off-road, as well as 1/8 gas and 1/12 electric, I would have to say that he is a very smart racer, who has learned patience in racing. Nine



Some racers have it made in the shade. This racer uses a canvas covered flat bed truck for his super clean pit area.



out of ten racers seem obsessed with the notion that they just have to beat the guy they're racing to the next corner at all costs. They can't wait for the 2nd or 3rd corner, it has to be the next corner. Watching Gil race with off-road, gas, or electric, he never overshoots a corner, he always seems to shut off at just the right point for the next corner, he uses just enough power to take the inside line around a corner and the car never looks squirrely. In other words, he never looks fast on the track. Some people think you can't be going fast if you're not out of shape halfway around the track. Gil sure proves this theory wrong.

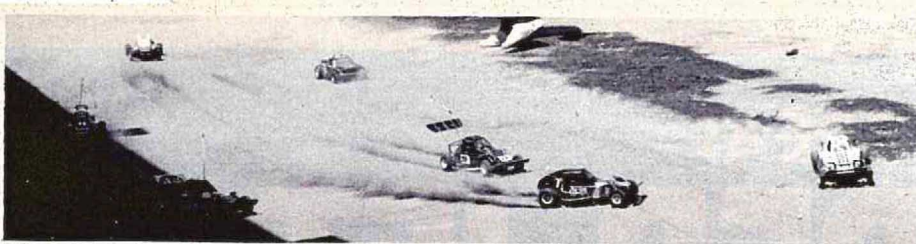
Another thing that most of the truly great drivers are good at, Gil included, is passing. Gil mentioned that beginners should learn to pass before they can learn to win. Actually, there's the finesse type passing with no car contact, and then there's the banzai charge pass at the next corner, which generally entails running into the back of, the side of, straight through, or under the car in front of you. This obviously seems to be the most popular method and is, of course, the reason we have a black flag rule.

I've heard people say Gil is the luckiest racer they've seen. If you call apexing the corners correctly, using the correct amount of power and brakes, passing safely and winning races — luck — well, you're entitled to your opinion, but I call Gil's winning performances pure skill, which takes many hours of preparation and practice to achieve. It's true, he does have more track time than the average racer, but you'll also find that all winners have more track time than the average racer. It takes a lot of work to look lucky.

The first time I actually noticed the Losi's was at a 3 hour enduro race at



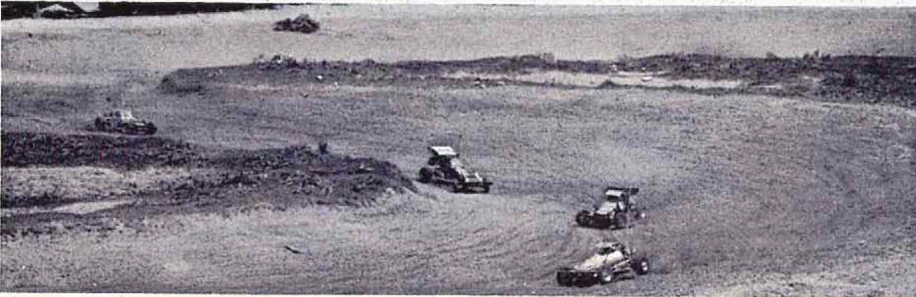
Do you recognize that guy on the left? That's Arturo Carbonell. He was here for 1/8 gas practicing, but this day was off-road racing, so he thought he'd give it a try too. Next to Art is Cory Barana, publisher of Competition Plus magazine.



One of the reasons off-road racing is so popular with the spectators is that there's always a lot of action happening. Right from the start it's impossible to tell where that other guy is going.



Down the straightaway and into the sweeper the cars dirt track it through the corner. There's six cars there, can you see them?



Out of the sweeper, through turns 2 and 3 getting set up for the jump.

Thorp Raceway a couple of years ago. I was fortunate enough to be a member of the winning team along with Rich Lee and Chuck Phelps, but I remembered this Thorp car that was running along in 3rd place without missing a beat. These guys were doing a super job and I didn't even know who they were! After the race I told Gil Sr. how impressed I was with their performance. Little did I know at the time how much driving talent there was in this family! Gil Jr. said he thinks his brother, Alan, has more pure driving talent than he does. However, Alan's interest has been more into skateboarding where he has been a National Champion and even had a production skateboard named after him. I've seen some of the things

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In a close race you take the jump flat out and hope the car lands on all four wheels because you've got an immediate right hand turn to make yet.

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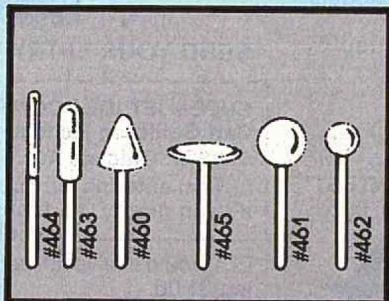
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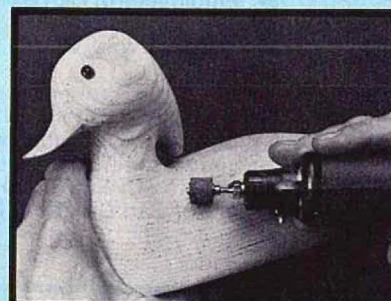
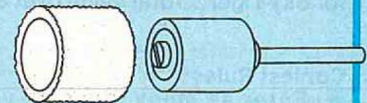
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OFF-ROAD RACING

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he can do on a skateboard, and I still don't believe it.

Gil was asked what type of racing he considered most challenging and he said he thought the 1/8 gas was the toughest. He had been spending most of his time lately working on his RC500 car getting ready for the World's Championships in France this summer. Somebody else working hard on the upcoming World's Championship was the current World's Champion, Arturo Carbonell, who was at the Ranch Pit Shop for a week practicing. But this 1/8 gas club race belonged to Gil Jr. as he easily won with his RC500. He must be lucky.

Roar 1/10 Scale Electric Off-Road Rules

ROAR now has a set of Off-Road Rules, thanks to the greatly appreciated help of ORRCA officials Gil Losi Sr. and Mike Tobey, as well as ROAR Rules Committee members, Bob Rule and Gene Husting.

These new rules are very similar to the current ORRCA rules, with a few changes being consistent with the ROAR 1/12 electric rules.

Off-road racing is starting to grow very fast around the country, and now ROAR is in a position to offer a nationally accepted set of rules for everyone to race by. This will allow Regional as well as National races to be run, which will further the growth of off-road racing. The Ranch Pit Shop in Pomona, California, has put in their bid to hold the first ever ROAR Off-Road Nationals in 1984.

Any clubs that would like an advance set of ROAR's new Off-Road Rules please send me a request for a copy of the rules through R/C Modeler Magazine.

See you at the races.

HERE'S HOW

from page 58

12 V air compressor? You bet it is! With just 6 or 7 strokes of the pump you have 100 psi in your air tank. Try that with your hand pump. The secret, of course, is the pump cylinder is much

larger in volume than the air tank. It delivers a large volume of air with each stroke and can be monitored on the gauge which, by the way, comes with the pump. I was amazed at how quickly the air tank was filled. And, with no guesswork on my part.

The foot pump is easy to use with far less exercise than the hand pump. It is compact and heavy duty in design. A 24" hose with thumb lock and valve adaptor allow for easy hookup. Obviously this pump has many uses besides filling retract air tanks. Other things like tires for bicycles, motorcycles, automobiles, rubber rafts and air mattresses should give you some justification for owning one. The foot pump can be purchased at any Target store for less than \$10.00. I have seen them on sale for less than \$5.00 so it will pay you to shop around. Other discount stores may handle them, however, you can get them for sure at Target.

In order to use the foot pump to fill your retract air tank it is necessary to change the air supply fitting. Although the valve adaptor will hook up to this fitting, it will leak air considerably. What is needed is a check valve. This can best be fabricated from an automotive tubeless tire valve stem. Most of the places that sell and fix tires usually have valve stems available. Very little effort is required to modify the valve stem for your use. Remove the rubber and grind down the brass stem some to get rid of the bulk. Drill out the hole, opposite the valve, with a 1/8" drill. Insert a short piece of 1/8" O.D. and 7/64" O.D. brass tubing, as shown in sketch, and solder. This will provide the correct size tube with which to slip on the high pressure air line.

Once you try one of these inexpensive pumps I'm sure you will be pleased. It provides for a quick and easy way to fill your retract air tank. No guesswork, no drying out of seals or cold weather pressure loss because of freon. And, best of all, the whole system can be yours for less than \$10.00. In this day and age of high prices **cheap** is the name of the game!

ENGINE CLINIC

from page 39/33

unit?

Do I simply need a larger displacement engine such as the Evra? With the Evra, could some weight be saved by using an electronic ignition? Can you recommend a unit?

Could I reduce heating in the Tartan