



Off Road World Champs

By Chris Chan

With a World Championship at stake
it's more than playing in the dirt.



Open class champ Gil Losi, Jr. had his car flying over the infamous water jump (top). The field lines up for the photographers just before the Open A-main. Losi's winner is car number 62 at the extreme right (above).

FLYING MODELS

Three days of 1:10 scale, radio-controlled off-road competition in three different classes. Over 150 racers from as close as Southern California and as far away as Canada and Ohio. An off-road expo featuring BoLink, Parma, Kraft, MRC-Tamiya, MRP, RCH, CRP and R/C Race Prep. Big name factory road racers like Kyes, Thorp, Case, Bartos and Tentschert. And an enthusiastic throng of over 40,000 SCORE show spectators.

The 1982 Off-Road World Championships may not have been a "real" World Championship, in the sense that the Asians and Europeans did not make the show, but it hardly made a difference. This was the biggest and most impressive R/C car racing event of any kind that I have ever seen. *Off-Road R/C has arrived!*

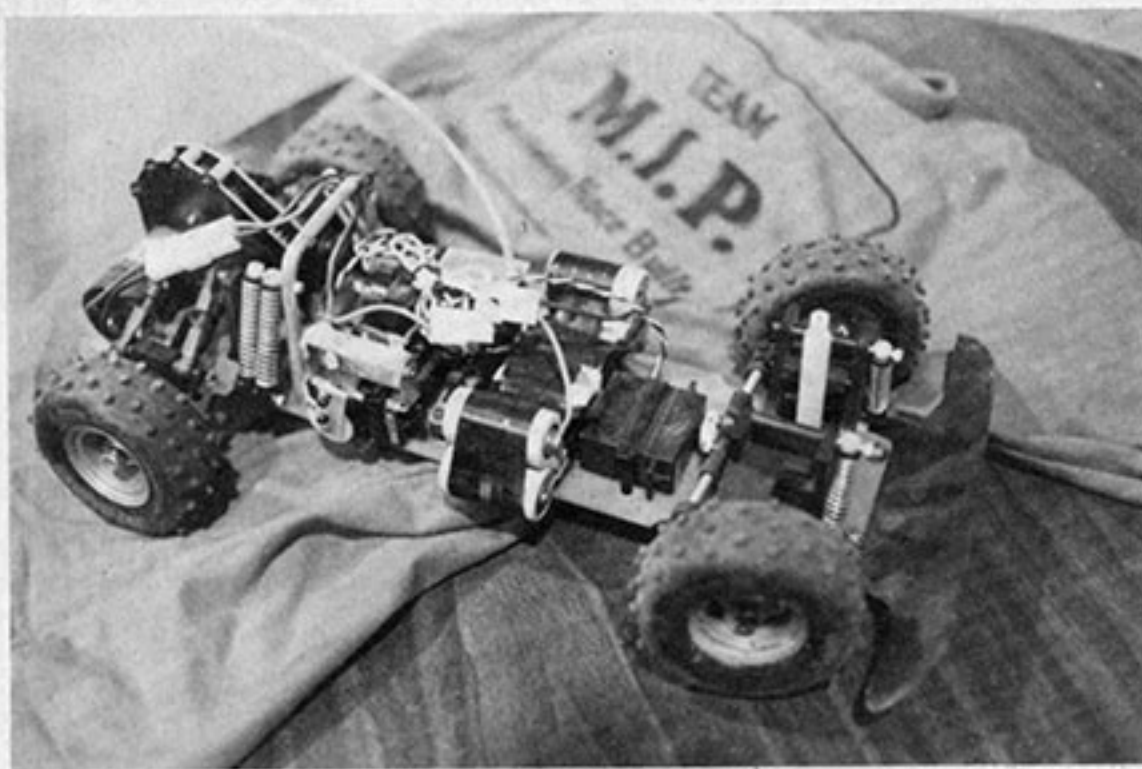
Primarily on the initiative of a tight group of Southern California entrepreneurs, led by Lou Peralta, Larry Van Osten and Gil Losi, off-road competition has grown conspicuously in the face of a slowdown in many R/C hobbies.

Starting with the basic Tamiya-designed 1:10 scale buggy I reviewed a year or so back, the tuners in the hobby gradually began the process of bullet-proofing and turbo-charging the breed into true race cars.

Next began the legendary SoCal circuit, a half-dozen off-road tracks, including the Ranch Pit Shop (still Thorp's to me)/Pomona, Peralta's Mini-Baja/Reseda, Radio Control Hobbies/Costa Mesa and Century Models/Anaheim.

As the sport rapidly grew, one thing was apparent, a total lack of rules. I remember

R/C racing cars



Eustace Moore drove this interesting M.I.P. car in Open class (above). Very sophisticated machine. Lou Peralta, of Mini Baja raceway, does announcing chores for Open A-main (below). Nice driver's stand.



Mark Thomsen took second in the Stock class with this slick Funco/Mears buggy. Note the fancy polished wheels and nerf bars. Addition of scale drivers to the cars really enhances their scale appearance.

the first efforts of Colin Thompson's Electric off-road cars, successfully raced by Bobby Schatz several years ago. Colin's cars were 1:12 scale and used one size (.075) motor, while most 1:10 scale Tamiya cars ran another.

The early races I saw also revealed no restrictions on weight, modifications or number of cells in your battery pack!

Originally the off-road industry turned to ROAR for some guidance, but ROAR really wasn't in much of a position to help and finally ORRCA (Off-Road Radio Control Association) was formed to sanction competition and establish rules.

Currently ORRCA has three classes of competition: stock, modified and open. Basically, stock is entry level racing, out-of-box kits allowing no suspension or motor modifications (they use Mabuchi RS540's). Surprisingly, ballbearings are allowed in stock, and a Tamiya car uses 10 of 'em. There is also a six-cell max on NiCads, but most racers carry two or three extra sets with them because there is not always enough time between heats to charge. Nobody said R/C off-road was cheap.

Moving up, you find the modified class. You still run the Mabooch in modified, but now you can run seven cells and toss out the receiver battery pack. Modified also lets you really put the demon tweak on your suspension with trick coil-over shocks, dual shocks, cantilever shocks, beefy roll cages, direct steering and chassis reinforcement.

And then there is Open. The open class is, well, open. Rewinds. As many Sanyos as you can charge. The open class is very fast, very exotic and very expensive. For additional information don't write to us, write to ORRCA/P.O. Box 411, Woodland Hills, California 91365.

In a stroke of genius, the 1982 R/C off-Road World Championships (R/C ORWC) were scheduled in conjunction with the already well-established SCORE Off-Road Show at the Anaheim Convention Center. This provided the event, and R/C off-road racing in general, with an enormous crowd and excellent exposure.

With the assistance of Eric Grisham, Ralph Winkler and "the Good Guys" several tons of dirt were dumped into the southwest corner of the cavernous exhibition hall and was carefully sculpted and graded into a 35x70 maze of jumps, bumps, berms and even a crowd-pleasing water hazard.

Having decided that this race would be a good way to see just exactly what was going on in off-road, I entered the stock class event scheduled for the first day of competition. I also figured that it would be more interesting if I raced something a bit different, so I decided on the new AYK 566B Super Trail. Unfortunately, four straight weeks of rain kept both car and driver off the track prior to the big event. Finally, the week prior to the World's, I got my first taste of dirt driving at Mini-Baja, putting in about a dozen slow but fairly consistent laps and doing one massive cartwheel off the big jump. So much for practice.

Sensing that the pot-metal, cast gears could be a real problem, I replaced the top

end set with brass and the bottom bevels with machined steel gears that AYK sells as options. Then I tightened everything again, packed up my tool kit and headed towards Disneyland.

The stock class was broken down into 4 groups of 8 or 9 drivers and I immediately recognized the names of several local hot-shots like Voeller, Gudvangen, Brophy, Mark Thomsen and Vince Ito. Southern California dominated the field, but I also noticed Gordon Tom's Yuba City contingent and Shane Gardia all the way from Ontario, Canada. Much to my surprise, I also found A.J. Kyes and Parma's Bud Bartos on the frequency board, a pair of road racers making their off-road debuts, as well.

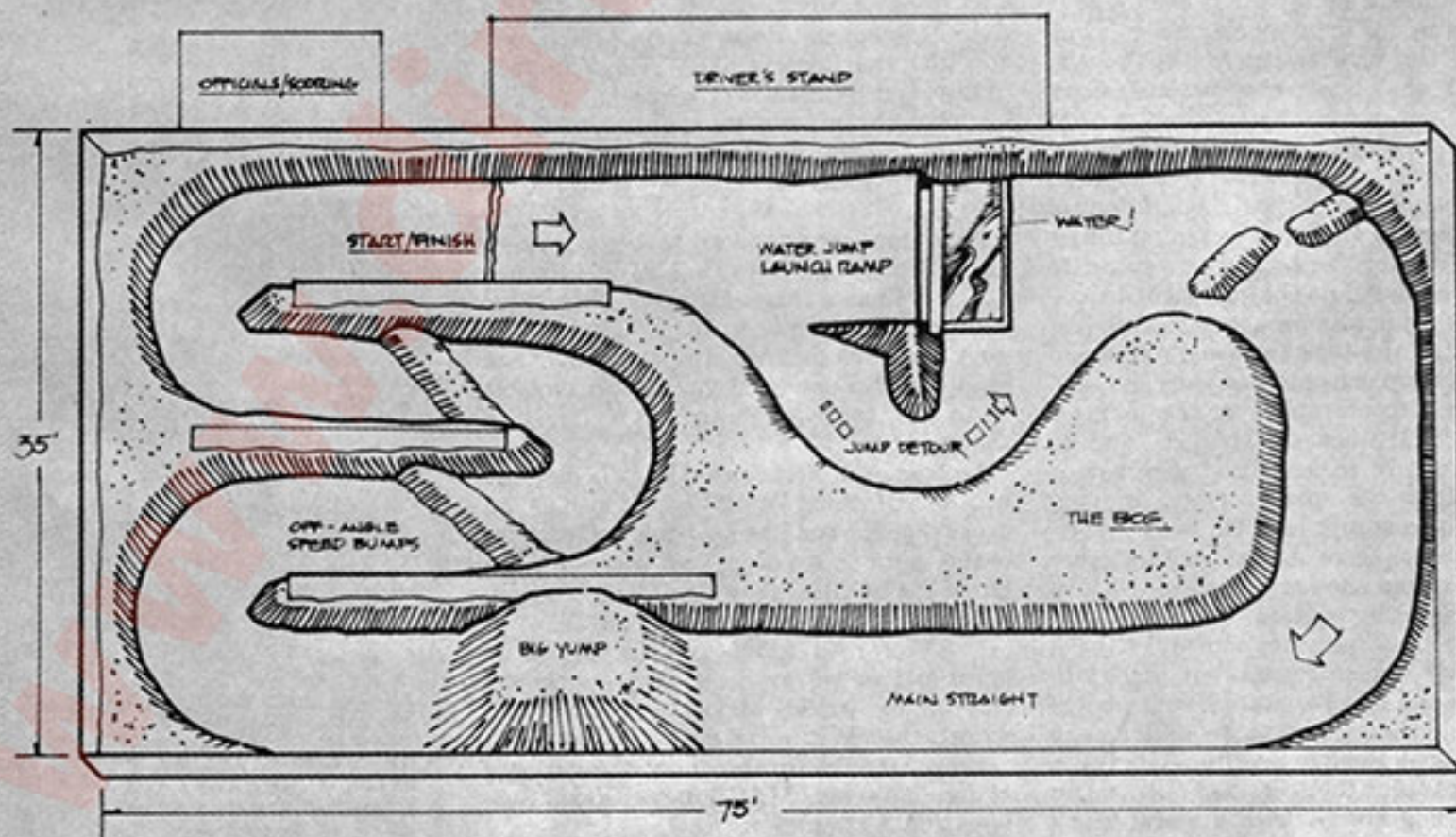
Each group was given two seven minute practice runs and then three heats in order to qualify. ORRCA rules are simple, you race for place in eight lap heats, you toss out your worst finish, and you see which main you make. I do not think this is the best way to determine finalists, for the obvious reason that some heats are faster than others, but when in Rome

As it turned out, the untested but well-engineered AYK was more than up to the task. After having first a rear wheel and half shaft, then a servo-saver ball joint rattle off in practice, I got it all together and won my first heat race going away. Naturally, I let that go to my head and I spent Heat 2 bouncing from berm-to-berm upside down, cart-wheeling through the water jump and finally decapitating my driver before finishing last. So much for the heat you throw out. Despite



Even "old guys" can win at Off Road. Although not coughing and wheezing his way to the rest home, Gary Kyes (above) was one of the older winners. Gary, a R.O.A.R. Nats champ, took Stock.

1982 R/C Off-Road World Championships Track Layout





the temptation to go for the B-main gold, I managed a second in my final qualifier, winding up as the final sit-out in the A-main, along with that other over-30 relic, Gary Kyes.

Like the heats, the 8-lap main happens real fast, but not fast enough. Taking a cue from Ito and Donn Rice (my crew chief), I dodged the water jump/start fiasco by taking the escape road detour. The maneuver worked to perfection as all but one of the other cars collided over the jump as I grabbed second, just ahead of Ito (who took the same route) and nearly half a lap ahead of everyone else. Unfortunately, I could shake neither Vince's Baja Bug, or the new car gremlins, and by lap five a poorly soldered lead wire parted company from the speed control, bringing the AYK to an abrupt halt. Oh well, at least they knew I was there. And at least the other old guy won and showed those kids they've still got something to learn.

I had to miss Saturday's modified bash due to other commitments, but thanks to Gary Kyes and Lou Peralta, we have photos and results. I did manage to get back for the open A-main on Sunday, and I was glad that I did. By this time the event had taken on an R/C happening status, with a literal who's who of R/C cars in attendance.

In addition to Bob Rule (BoLink), Bob Novak (Bantam Bob), John Thorp and Kyes

who were already there, came Associated's Gene Husting and Roger Curtis, Mike Lavacot, Lou Del Rosario (HIA), Bill Campbell (Delta), and Ken McDowell (Parma). You can bet that these guys were not spending a beautiful, sunny day indoors at an off-road show to check out Mickey Thompson's 4x4's.

Following Gary's and my lead, road racers Thorp, Novak and Jerry Case all made it into the open final, a rough and tumble race won by off-road vet Gil Losi, Jr. The only disappointment was that top open competitor and constructor, Eustace Moore (M.I.P.) got bit by the new car bug, too, and wound up out of the money.

So went the first, and definitely not the last R/C Off-Road World Championships, an event that showed just how bright the future of this sport is. An event that was easily the hit of the SCORE show and in all likelihood, will be asked back again next year.

If R/C off-road sounds good to you, let us know and we will try to get more technical and tuning articles about these low-flying models that do it in the dirt.

Special thanks are also due to the sponsors of the '82 event, MRC/Tamiya, Kraft Systems and Airtronics.

(Late Bulletin: Lou Peralta has confirmed the event for next year, April 2, 3 & 4, 1983. Start practicing!)

Results

Stock A-main

1. Gary Kyes (Redmond, WA)
2. Mark Thomsen (Fountain Valley, CA)
3. John Gudvangen (Whittier, CA)
4. Mike Glem (Arleta, CA)
5. Vince Ito (Los Angeles, CA)
6. Bernie Ricco (Whittier, CA)
7. Kurt Kiesow III (Yuba City, CA)
8. Richard Beggs (Pasadena, CA)
9. Chris Chan (Santa Monica, CA)

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Modified A-main

1. Eric Grisham (Sepulveda, CA)
2. Jeff Cruzon (Costa Mesa, CA)
3. Gil Losi, Sr. (Rialto, CA)
4. Mike Dunn (Canoga Park, CA)
5. Jason Garcia (Tarzana, CA)
6. Terry Wallace (Los Angeles, CA)
7. Mike Deming
8. Chris Hawkes (Temple City, CA)
9. Bob Novak (Santa Ana, CA)

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Open A-main

1. Gil Losi, Jr. (Rialto, CA)
2. Allen Losi (Rialto, CA)
3. Eric Grisham (Sepulveda, CA)
4. Mike Dunn (Canoga Park, CA)
5. Bob Novak (Santa Ana, CA)
6. Gil Losi, Sr. (Rialto, CA)
7. Ron Anthony (Burbank, CA)
8. John Thorp (Pomona, CA)
9. Jerry Case (LaHabra, CA)

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