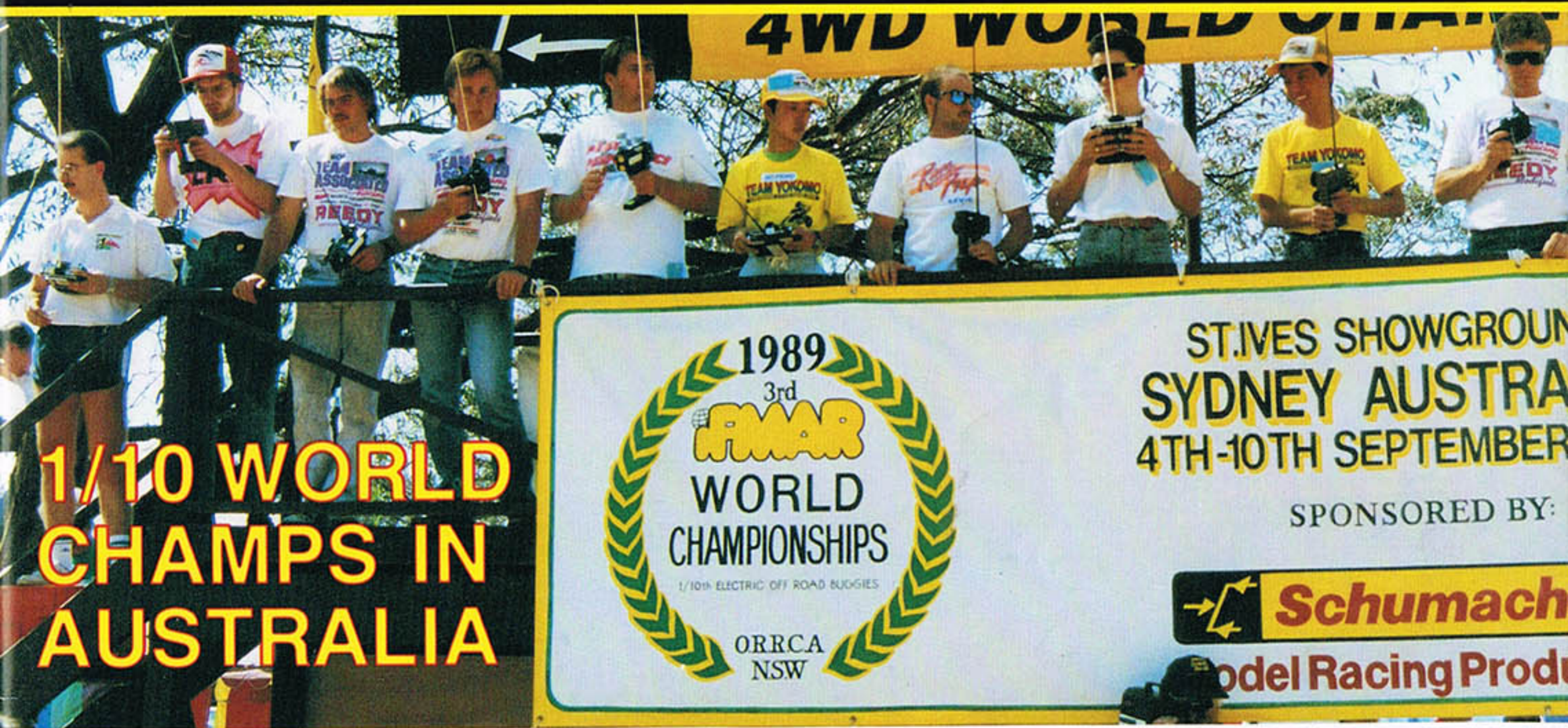


R/C NEWS

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1/10 WORLD CHAMPS IN AUSTRALIA





THE THIRD ANNUAL IFMAR 1/10 OFF ROAD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Story by R/C NEWS staff
Photos by P.P.

August 28-September 11, 1989
Sydney, Australia

In only the third-ever 1/10 Off Road World Championships, this year's IFMAR gathering in Sydney, Australia, proved to be the best so far!

The first 1/10 World Championships took

place in 1985 in Del Mar, CA, where Jay Halsey, then an up-and-coming rising young star, was beginning to make his name well known. Halsey captured the 2WD title, while an already-known entity among all types of R/C racing, Gil Losi Jr., surprised no one by taking the 4WD World title.

Two years later, in 1987, the second IFMAR 1/10 World Championships took place in Romsey, England. Joel Johnson dominated the 2WD division, and a young unknown (at least in

American racing circles) by the name of Masami Hirosaka, of Japan, captured the 4WD Class title. Little did anyone expect that the name Hirosaka would come back to haunt them again two years later!

In 1989, as summer was about to give way to fall (actually spring was ending and summer was just beginning "Down Under"), the young lion has become a full fledged beast — at least among those racers considered the best in the world.

Masami Hirosaka not only repeated as the 4WD World Champion, but just to make sure there was no doubt in anyone's mind as to who he is and what he had set out to do, he also took the 2WD category! Making it a clean sweep for himself and Japan, Hirosaka also put a feather in the caps of Associated (he won the 2WD Class with an RC10) and Yokomo (his car in the 4WD category).

The event, run at the St. Ives Showground park near Sydney, was sponsored by Schumacher, the current 4WD champion in England. Cecil Schumacher must be congratulated for a first-class job at a very important race!

To prove just how important the Off-Road World Championships are considered, most of the top drivers in the world arrived a full week before official practice began! Although there had been plenty of publicity about the type of track that was going to be used, many racers arrived early enough to make sure they got plenty of time to dial their cars in to the surface and nuances of the course.

The track was considered very big by most standards, with one large jump and several small ones. The dirt was solid and hard packed, very similar to the track that was used in Romsey, England, two years ago. The surface was so hard, in fact, that repairs were made with cement and nobody noticed it!

Pre-race jitters and activity ran rampant. Everyone was trying different setups for their cars. A controversy of sorts loomed with the tire situation. It seems that the Yokomo tires and wheels that Masami Hirosaka and the rest of the Associated Team were using were working too well, and people began complaining that the Yokomos and RC10s were going too fast. While the wheel size would have been too big according to ROAR rules, they were perfectly legal under IFMAR rules, which has no limit on wheel size. Some of the racers recalled the same situation occurring two years ago in Romsey, England, when Kyosho came up with excellent tires that only Kyosho drivers had. The song was the same, but now it was sung by a different group!

Fortunately, it never got ugly and, in fact, it was funny at one point, when Gil Losi Jr. and Ron Rossetti both tried a full-size monster truck tire setup. Obviously, they didn't work too well, but most everyone had a good laugh and the tire



While 1989 World Champ Masami Hirosaka (right) was busy giving his speech in newly learned English, Cliff Lett and Jay Halsey get ready to pop the champagne corks!

matter was pretty much left alone.

Qualifying consisted of six rounds in both the 2WD and 4WD divisions. The 2WD Class was run first, culminating with three finals (the best two of the three were used to determine the final positions), followed by the 4WD program, run in its entirety.

A random-start procedure was utilized, using the AMB system. The cars were sent off at one-second intervals to eliminate a big pileup in the first turn, giving everyone a shot at a clean qualifying run. It worked well and the two IFMAR judges who were present on the track at all times made sure that slower drivers moved over whenever the faster ones were ready to pass.

Racers were then placed in their order of qualifying for the next rounds, again insuring much safer and cleaner qualifying runs.

The track was maintained nightly; holes were filled and the surface was well watered. Nevertheless, the qualifying rounds were rotated so

that everyone got a chance to run on the same type track. Heats were also set up with two or three well-known drivers in each group, along with a mixture of racers from different countries.

2WD QUALIFYING

Eventual World Champion Masami Hirosaka, of Japan led the first qualifying round, turning 15 laps in 5:00.28. Jay Halsey, from the U.S., qualified a close second with 15/5:00.55. Just one second behind was Cliff Lett, also from the U.S., with a 15/5:01.81; followed by Craig Drescher, from England, with 15/5:08.16.

By the time the second qualifying rounds were completed, Hirosaka had beaten his first time with a run of 16/5:12:69. Jay Halsey had also managed to break into the 16-lap range with a time of 5:17:77. Following suit, Craig Drescher turned the third-fastest qualifying run with 16/5:18:94.

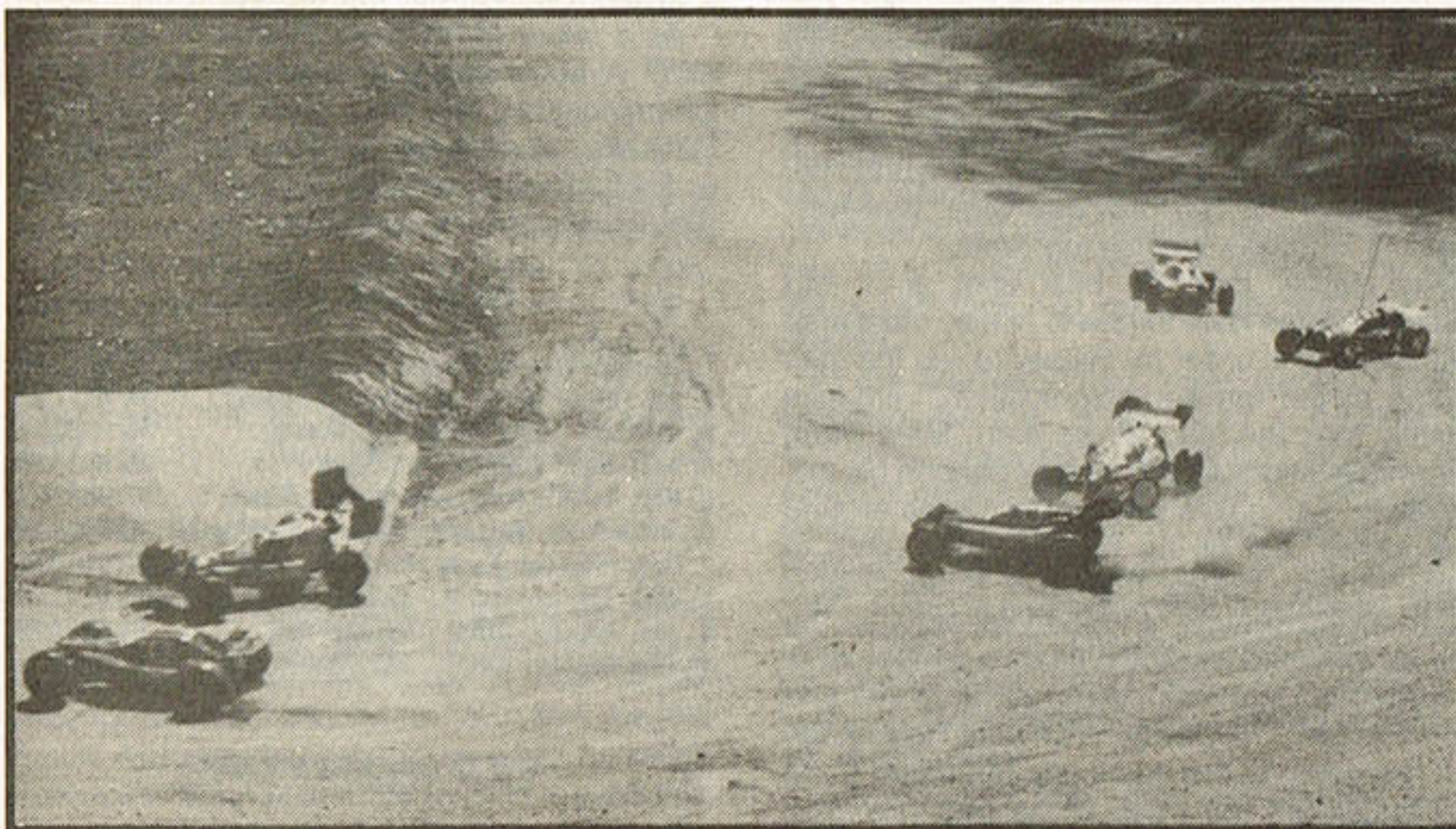
The only two drivers to turn 16 laps in round three were Hirosaka, who remained dominant with an even faster run of 16/5:12:50, and Cliff Lett, who managed to maintain his runner-up status with 16/5:18:67.

The first three rounds would prove to be the fastest of the day, as the track conditions deteriorated during the latter stages. Although Hirosaka had TQ'ed in each round so far, his lap/times began dropping to the low 15s.

USA's Mike Dunn moved into the runner-up spot in round four, followed by Rick Vehlow. During the final round of the day, Lett emerged as the fastest for that round, followed by Halsey and Hirosaka, who was definitely off his pace!

Although everyone expected the times to drop back down the next morning after running on a freshly groomed track, that just didn't happen. Dunn proved to be the fastest for the round with a 16/5:16.04, placing him second overall, just behind Hirosaka. Lett and Vehlow turned identical times of 16/5:18.21, followed by Hirosaka with a 16/5:18.42.

It became quite obvious that after six qualifying rounds, no one racer had a clear cut advantage — although Hirosaka's consistency clearly made him the odds-on favorite.



The corner at the end of the straightaway was fun to watch, particularly when Hirosaka was driving. He would punch it down the straightaway until he reached the cement berm, throw the car sideways in a four-wheel slide, and upon clearing the berm, he would punch it again!

IFMAR

1/10 WORLD CHAMPS

2WD MAINS

Normally an A Main driver, it seems defending 4WD World Champion Gil Losi Sr. neglected his turn-marshaling duty and was therefore penalized his best finishing time. Nevertheless, his other times placed him in the 2WD C Main, where he didn't waste much time, as Losi shot into the lead at the start and never looked back!

Following the leader across the line was Ric Bartolozzi of Australia in second, Rory Cull of England rounded out the top three. Finishing fourth through ninth were USA drivers Don Jones, Kurtis McElroy, Mike Burnette, Chris Allec, Mike Ebert and William Silver; while the 10th spot was filled by Klaus Wilhelm of West Germany.

Imagine just missing the A Main by half a second! Although Butch Kloeber didn't like it, he decided to make the best of a bad situation. Taking charge from his pole position in the B Main, Kloeber showed the people on hand that he *should* have been among the World finalists.

His win didn't come easy, however, as he spun out at one point and was relegated to sixth place, where he began his charge past the likes of Steve Dunn, Chris McElroy, Rick Hohwart and Kris Moore, who had inherited the lead. Kloeber picked them off one by one to complete the five-minute final atop the field. Fellow USA drivers Kris Moore, Rick Howart, Chris McElroy, Steve Dunn, Darin Strump followed in second through sixth, respectively; while West Germany's Christian Keil, USA drivers Joe Schmitz and Gary Kyes, and Australia's Mike Geddes rounded out the top 10.

A total of three A mains were run between the other mains; the best two finishes would be used to determine the final world championship spots.

First off the line in A Main I was pole-sitter Masami Hirosaka, followed by second-fastest qualifier Mike Dunn. However, Dunn took too wide a line in the first corner, allowing Hirosaka to break free, while Jay Halsey dove under Dunn. Hirosaka was gone, opening up a 25-foot lead ahead of Halsey! Running in third, Dunn was followed by Cliff Lett. However, Lett rolled on lap six, allowing Craig Drescher and Jamie Booth to get by. Lett was later able to recover one spot from Booth, but that's it. Hirosaka, the Japanese wonder kid, went on to win the first "final" with 17/5:11:23, followed by Jay Halsey in second with 17/5:13:04 and Mike Dunn, five seconds behind, with a 17/5:18:74 — the only three drivers to turn 17 lap runs. Finishing fourth through 10th were Craig Drescher (16/5:02:70), Cliff Lett (16/5:02:88), Jamie Booth (16/5:04:90), Rick Vehlow (16/5:06:40), Jack Johnson (16/5:07:81), Joel Johnson (16/5:09:75), and Ron Rossetti (16/5:15:53), in that order.

Sitting in the pole position once again for the second A Main final, Hirosaka headed for the first turn. Unfortunately, he took it wide and left the door wide open for Mike Dunn to steal the lead. However, Dunn's lead was short lived, as he repeated Hirosaka's mistake on lap two. Drifting much too wide, Dunn gave Hirosaka the chance he needed to recapture the lead. Jay Halsey also managed to slip past and into



Finishing third overall among the 2WD contingent, Cliff Lett sported an Airtronics radio, Novak speed control, Reedy Sanyo batteries, and, of course, a Reedy motor in his RC10.

second, where he then made an attempt to steal the lead from Hirosaka on the straight. However, when Halsey got out of shape on the "loose stuff," Dunn was able to reclaim second. While Halsey was still trying to recover, Cliff Lett and Rick Vehlow also managed to slip past. Third-place Lett then began closing in on the runner-up, and when Dunn rolled his car after hitting a big bump, both Lett and Vehlow took advantage of the situation.

Taking his second A Main final with a time of 17/5:16:65, Hirosaka was followed across the line by Lett (17/5:18:79), Vehlow (16/5:01:34), Dunn (16/5:04:69) and Craig Drescher (16/5:11:25), in the top five spots. Jamie Booth (16/5:12:21), Joel Johnson (16/5:15:30), Jack Johnson (16/5:17:26), Jay Halsey (16/5:18:09) and Ron Rossetti (16/5:23:68) rounded out the top 10.

It went down to the wire, as the third A Main final event would determine the 2WD World Champion. Everyone knew who they had to beat, but there were still several drivers with a mathematical chance of stealing the World title. By virtue of his two previous wins, however, Masami Hirosaka was sitting pretty.

Jay Halsey had the best shot at it, but Hirosaka would have to lose to him by more than two seconds in order for Halsey to win the title. Sitting in the familiar pole-position, Hirosaka quickly took the lead at the start. Mike Dunn followed in second, with Halsey right on his tail. However, Dunn was driving tight lines around the course, not giving Halsey much room to pass. Finally, Halsey managed to shoot past Dunn on the straight, and then set out after the leader, who had already built up a 50-foot lead. Meanwhile, Dunn went wide, allowing Lett and Booth to gain two positions on him. Halsey had put the pedal to the metal and appeared to be the fastest on the track as he began reeling Hirosaka in. Halsey cut the leader's advantage to 25 feet, then to 10, until Halsey was right on Hirosaka's tail. Going into the last lap, Hirosaka and Halsey were side by side on the straight-

away, as the crowd went wild! They sensed an upset in the making, as both drivers went into the corner as if they were glued together. All of a sudden they bumped and both spun out! Halsey was able to recover first, with Hirosaka right behind him. When they crossed the finish line, Halsey had taken the win by less than one car-length, followed by Hirosaka in second. However, Halsey's lap/time of 17/5:14:29 wasn't quick enough to wrestle the World Championship title away from Hirosaka, who finished with 17/5:14:45.

Crossing the line for third in the final 2WD A Main was Cliff Lett with a time of 17/5:16:45, followed by Jamie Booth (16/5:06:46) and Jack Johnson (16/5:09:49) in the top five positions. Rick Vehlow (16/5:09:55), Mike Dunn (16/5:11:67), Craig Drescher (16/5:14:78), Joel Johnson (16/5:17:13) and Ron Rossetti (16/5:01:25) rounded out the top 10.

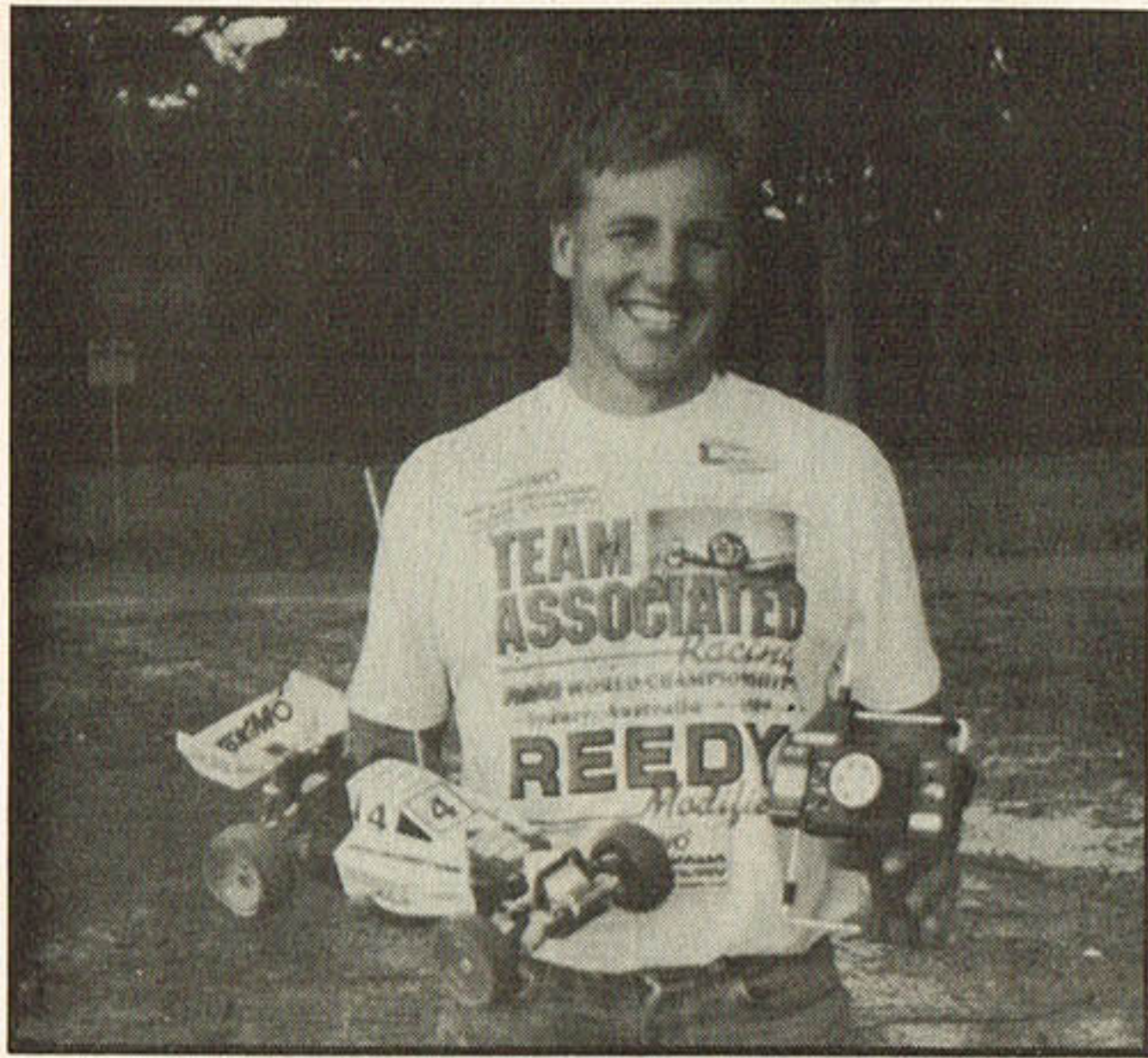
As a result of his high finishes in the three 2WD A Main finals, the overall 2WD World Championship title was awarded to Masami Hirosaka, giving the young lion the added distinction as the only person to have won *three* IFMAR World Championships!

OVERALL 2WD RESULTS

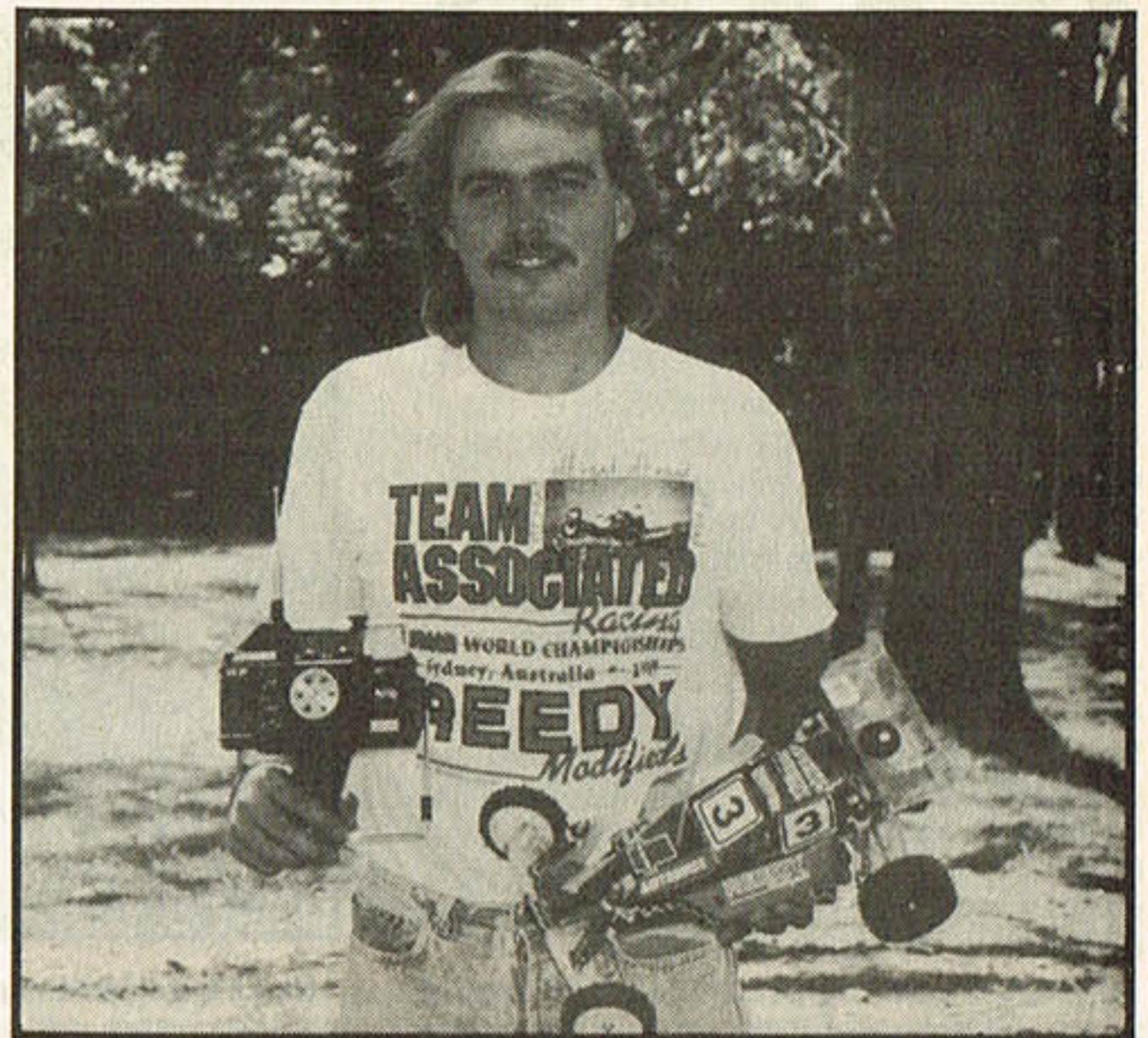
1. Masami Hirosaka (Japan) - Associated/Reedy .34/10:25:68
2. Jay Halsey (USA) - Associated/Reedy34/10:27:23
3. Cliff Lett (USA) - Associated/Reedy34/10:35:24
4. Mike Dunn (USA) - JRX2/Race Prep33/10:23:43
5. Rick Vehlow (USA) - Associated/Reedy32/10:07:74
6. Jamie Booth (England) - Schumacher/Reedy . .32/10:11:36
7. Craig Drescher (England) - Associated/Reedy . .32/10:13:95
8. Jack Johnson (USA) - JRX2/Revolution32/10:17:30
9. Joel Johnson (USA) - Ultima/Trinity32/10:25:05
10. Ron Rossetti (USA) - JRX2/Revolution32/10:39:21

4WD QUALIFYING

If any track were made especially for 4WD cars, it was this one! Following the 2WD finals, the fast boys took charge, and one more day of practice was squeezed in before qualifying



Butch Kloeber came close to capturing the 4WD title but was awarded runner-up honors for his effort with his Reedy-powered Yokomo, featuring Airtronics radio, Novak speed control and Reedy Sanyo batteries.



"Jammin' Jay" Halsey captured a well-deserved second-place finish among the 2WD contingent, piloting his Reedy-powered RC10 with an Airtronics radio, a Novak speed control, and Reedy Sanyo batteries.

began. And guess who set the fast times for everyone to go after in qualifying? None other than Japan's own Masami Hirosaka, who set a blistering pace in the first round with a 17/5:12:00 and backed it up with a 17/5:12:96 in round two of qualifying. However, the Americans were right on his tail as Butch Kloeber turned a quick 17/5:13:58, followed by Cliff Lett's run of 17/5:18:00 in round four.

Still leading after round five was Hirosaka with 15/5:14:02, followed by Mike Dunn with 17/5:18:08 and Rory Cull with 17/5:17:74.

One final round of qualifying followed the next day, and Cliff Lett managed to turn the fastest time in that round with 17/5:13:02; followed by Rick Hohwart with 17/5:13:16 and Butch Kloeber with 17/5:14:93. Jay Halsey joined the group qualifying fourth fastest in the round with 17/5:14:24. Going in the A Main, however, Hirosaka, the terror from Japan, would once again lead the pack out of the pole position.

THE 4WD MAINS

Joel Johnson managed to hold on to the 4WD C Main lead, finishing a mere second ahead of Australia local Andrew Bolton! They had fought it out tooth and nail throughout the "C" Main, but the American prevailed. Runner-up Bolton was followed by former Gas World Champ Gary Kyes of the U.S. Finishing fourth was Hiroyuki Matsumoto (Japan), followed by Darin Stump (USA), Kurtis McElroy (USA), Ralf Helbing (West Germany), Koichi Ishikawa (Japan), Craig Drescher (England), and defending 4WD World Champ Gil Losi Jr., in fifth through 10th.

The 4WD B Main was a runaway for Jamie Booth (England), as he took charge and never looked back, winning by a margin of more than six seconds ahead of second place! In fact, the real battle was for the runner-up spot, in which America's Rick Vehlow managed to prevail over Japan's Katsundri Kondo. Finishing fourth and fifth, respectively, were America's Kris Moore and Australia's Peter Philibosian. The sixth through 10th positions were captured

by Don Jones (USA), Jack Johnson (USA), Joe Schmitz (USA), Ron Rossetti (USA) and Reece Birtles (Australia).

Was it possible that Masami Hirosaka could capture the second World title up for grabs? Nine other racers were sure he would not. Nevertheless, Hirosaka was the odds-on favorite as the first of the three finals in the 4WD category got underway.

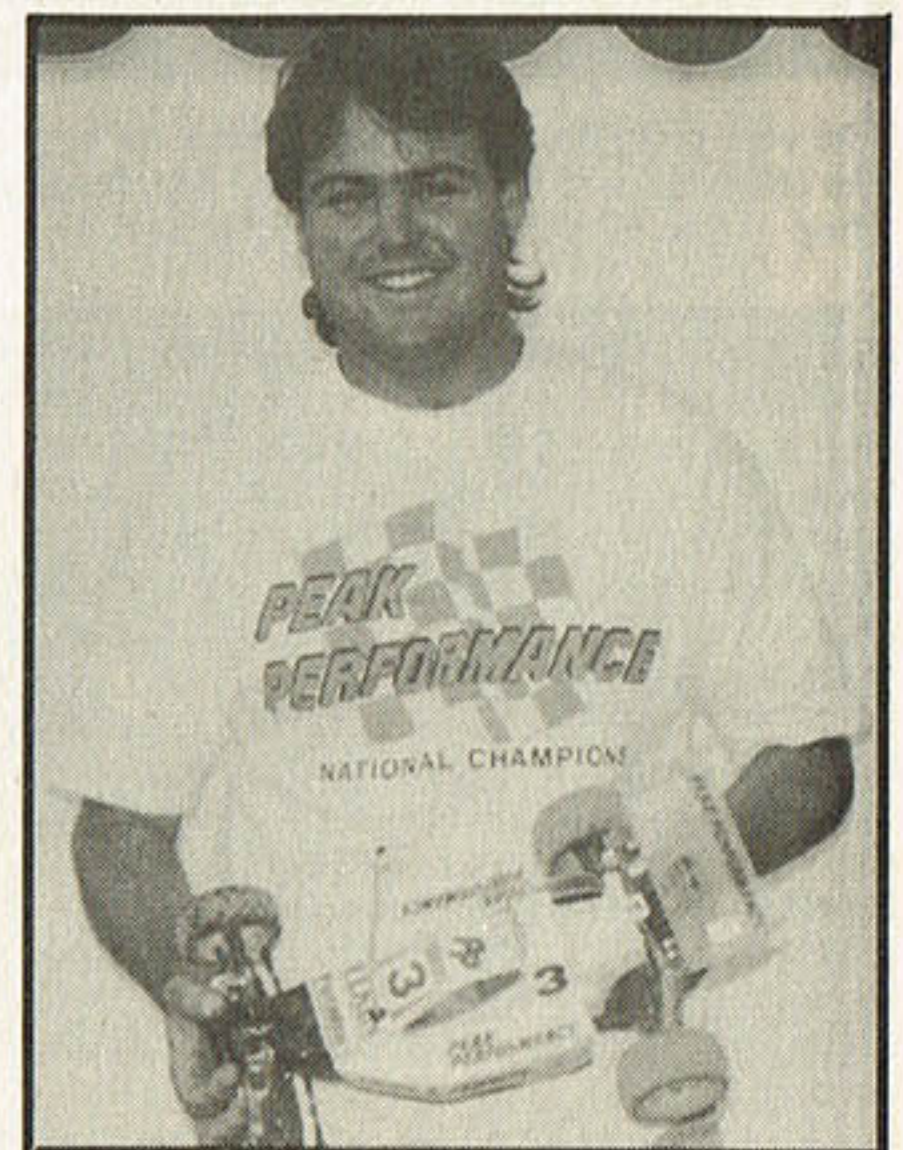
From his now very familiar pole-position, Hirosaka wasted no time in taking charge of the situation. Grabbing the holeshot, Hirosaka was followed by Cliff Lett and Butch Kloeber. However, the two runners-up bumped each other, allowing Rick Hohwart and Jurgen Lautenbach to move into second and third, respectively. Lautenbach had excellent power and managed to slip past Hohwart, who then rolled, allowing Jay Halsey to move into third. Butch Kloeber and Cliff Lett followed suit, passing Halsey to move into the fourth and fifth spots. Kloeber looked and managed to pass Halsey on the inside sweeper; two laps later he passed Jurgen for the runner-up spot. Kloeber then started pressuring Hirosaka for the lead and got within two feet before rolling his car. Meanwhile, Lett had also managed to get past Jurgen to assume third and was ready to pounce! When Kloeber left the door open, Lett took that opportunity to move into second.

At the checkered flag, it was Hirosaka again crossing the line in first with a lap/time of 17/5:01:67, followed by runner-up Cliff Lett, four seconds behind with 17/5:05:98. Butch Kloeber finished third 17/5:09:91, followed by Rick Hohwart (17/5:10:57) and Jurgen Lautenbach (17/5:14:27) in fourth and fifth, respectively. Mike Dunn (17/5:17:39), Satoshi Kayano (17/5:19:19), Phil Davies (16/5:00:61), Rory Cull (16/5:02:91) and Jay Halsey (13/4:13:25) rounded out the top 10, in that order.

The second A Main final featured the same cast of characters vying for the lead, with Hirosaka leading the pack once again. Cliff Lett, Butch Kloeber and Jurgen Lautenbach were forced to fight it out for second place. It took

Kloeber four laps to get around Lett, and once he did, he set his sights on the leader, who once again appeared to be long gone! Try as he might, Kloeber was unable to catch the young phenom, and Hirosaka wound up winning by more than 14 seconds, with a 70-foot margin. In fact, he became the only driver to log 18 laps with a time of 5:15:56! No one had been able to reach that mark yet.

Second place went to Kloeber with a 17/5:02:12, followed by nemesis Lautenbach in third with 17/5:09:23. Finishing fourth was Cliff Lett (17/5:11:41), and rounding out the top five was Phil Davis (17/5:11:68). Following in the remaining five spots were Rory Cull (17/5:16:10),



Rick Hohwart finished a strong third in the 4WD Class with his Peak Performance-powered Kyosho Optima, using Futaba radio, Tekin speed control and Peak Performance Sanyo batteries.

IFMAR

1/10 WORLD CHAMPS

Mike Dunn (17/5:17:45), Satoshi Kayano (17/5:17:63), Rick Hohwart (16/5:04:25), and Jay Halsey (5/1:27:00), in that order.

Going into the third and final A Main, eight drivers had a shot, however slight, at stealing the 4WD World title away from Hirasaka. But they would have to go faster than they had ever gone before, because Hirasaka seemed unstoppable!

Once again, a familiar sight was seen leading the pack. The crowd had grown so used to seeing Hirasaka in the forefront, they were ready for something different. In contention at that point were Cliff Lett, Butch Kloeber and Rick Hohwart, in second, third and fourth. However, Kloeber didn't waste much time and quickly made his way through the leading pack and past Lett, setting his sights on Hirasaka.

In fact, Kloeber appeared to be the fastest driver on the track! Closing in on Hirasaka, he soon managed to pass him. The crowd was



Under the Associated tent, Rick Vehlow gets his motor cleaned by Mike Reedy. Amazingly, Reedy motors not only won both mains, but an unbelievable 13 out of the 20 motors in the finals were Reedy!



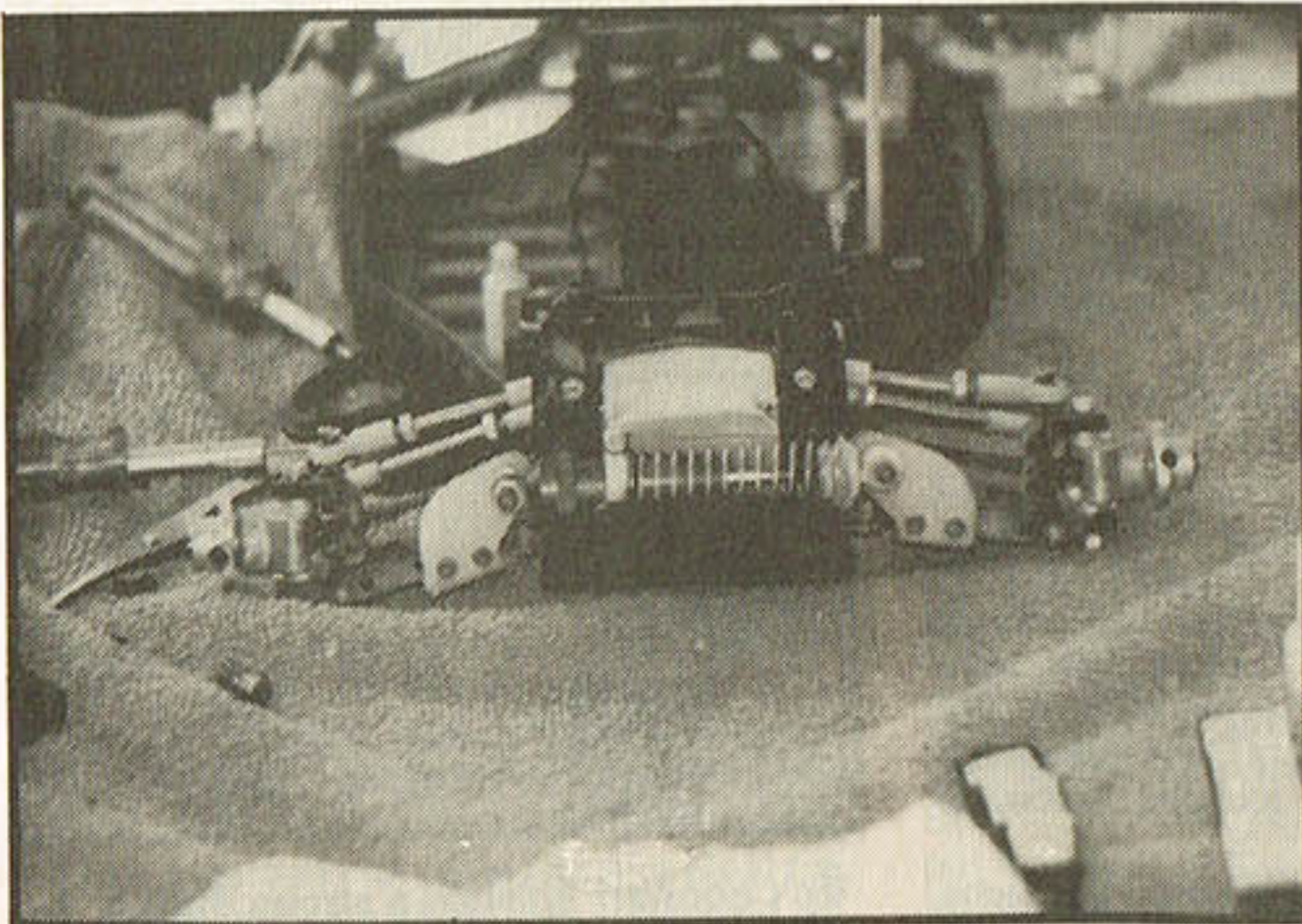
The very busy Curtis Husting — who made every piece on the seven original RC10s (including the chassis), and who does all the prototype work for Associated, as well as run the machine shop — came along to assist Cliff Lett and Butch Kloeber.

ecstatic, as they had witnessed a sight rarely seen during the two weeks of racing. As Hirasaka was passed, the spectators went wild!

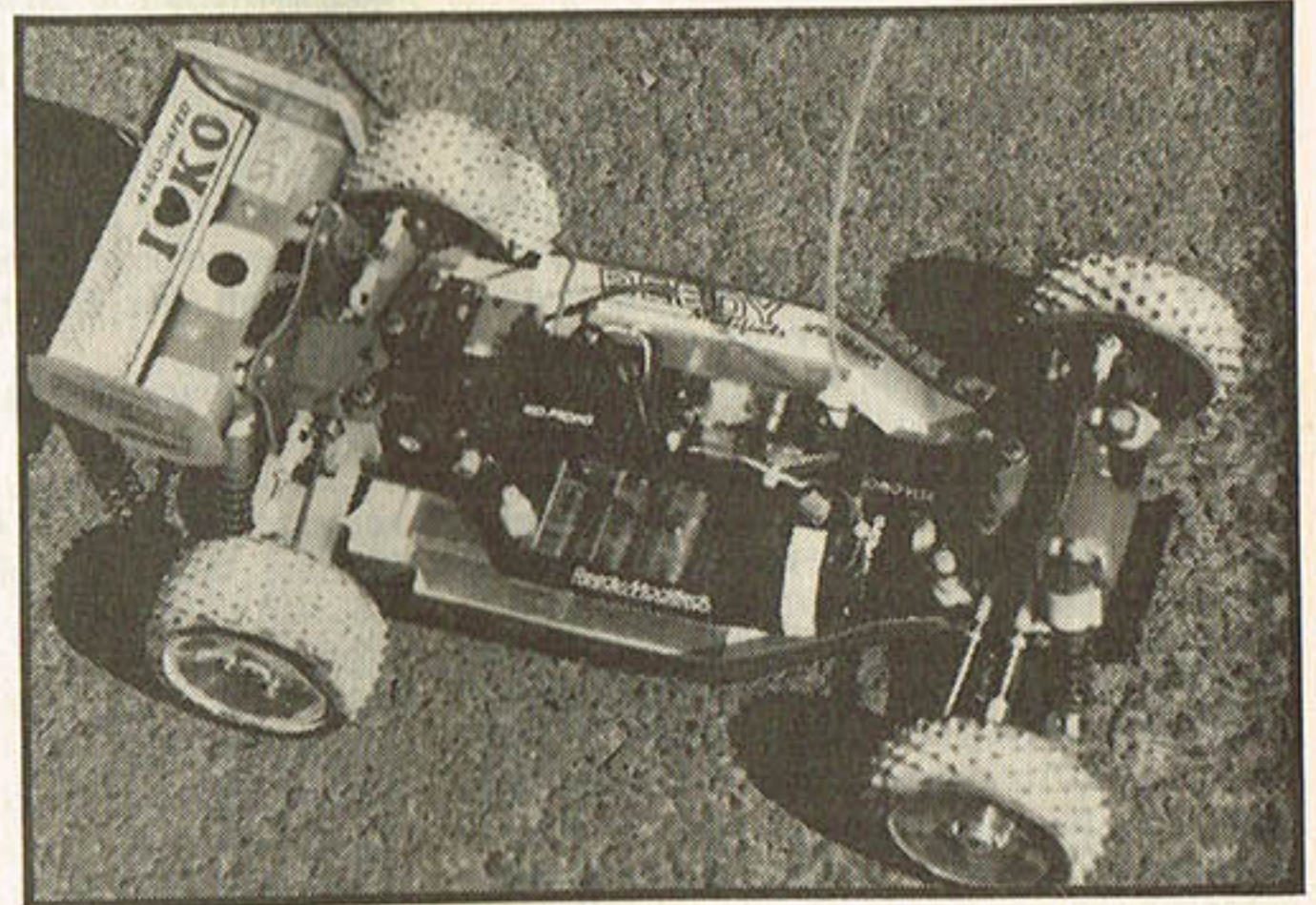
To show how much poise and ability this young Japanese driver has, instead of getting flustered and immediately trying to regain his lead, Hirasaka remained on Kloeber's tail with the knowledge that unless he made a mistake, he would have his second World title in as many attempts, as long as he stayed close behind.

Kloeber, on the other hand, knew he had to push hard and win by a wide enough margin if he had any hopes of stealing the World title. However, Kloeber pushed too hard it seemed, and he rolled it. Nevertheless, Hirasaka decided to play it safe and was content to remain close behind him, safely in second.

Kloeber went on to cross the finish line first and managed to turn the second 18-lapper of the event, finishing with a time of 5:18:50. Hirasaka was right behind him, finishing in second with 18/5:18:72. The time differential of a little over 2/1000ths of a second was not enough, however, to wrestle the title away from Hirasaka. The Japanese driver had garnered his second IFMAR World Championship title for



Jay Halsey came up with a mono-shock setup for his Yokomo car. When fellow Americans Kloeber and Lett copied it, both agreed that their cars worked better.



The world's fastest 4WD car is a Yokomo! Hirasaka also used a KO radio, Reedy motor and Reedy Sanyo batteries. The tires were treated with a special anti-dirt spray.

1989, and his fourth in the last four years — a feat no one else is even close to accomplishing! (Hirosaka also owns the 1/12 World Championship title, which he picked up in Holland.)

Third place in the last final went to Rick Howart (17/5:05:27), followed by Jay Halsey in fourth (17/5:08:87), and Jurgen Lautenbach (17/5:10:92) in fifth. Rounding out the top 10 were Phil Davies (17/5:19:01), Satoshi Kayano (16/5:03:82), Cliff Lett (16/5:08:51), Rory Cull (15/5:02:01), and Mike Dunn (9/2:44:19), in that order.

If there was any consolation for Butch Kloeber, who really put forth a great effort, it was that he was the only other driver (other than 4WD World Champion Hirosaka) to complete 18 laps during the entire two-week event. And his second-fastest status in the world is not too bad, either!

4WD OVERALL RESULTS

1. Masami Hirosaka (Japan) - Yokomo/Reedy...36/10:35:28
2. Butch Kloeber (USA) - Yokomo/Reedy...35/10:20:62
3. Rick Hohwart (USA) - Kyosho/Peak Perf...34/10:15:84
4. Cliff Lett (USA) - Yokomo/Reedy...34/10:17:39
5. Jurgen Lautenbach (W.G.) - Schumacher/LRP...34/10:20:15
6. Phil Davis (England) - Schumacher/Reedy...34/10:30:69
7. Mike Dunn (USA) - AYK/Race Prep...34/10:34:84
8. Satoshi Kayano (Japan) - Yokomo/Reedy...34/10:36:82
9. Rory Cull (England) - Schumacher/Reedy...33/10:19:01
10. Jay Halsey (USA) - Yokomo/Reedy...30/9:22:12

In the final analysis, the USA drivers dominated most of the top spots in both the 2WD and 4WD IFMAR World Championships. Unfortunately, they failed to dominate the spot that really counted. Masami Hirosaka kept that for



The World Champ's father, Masaki Hirosaka, busy preparing the RC10 for another run. Along with Hiroyuki Watanabe, the Japanese team proved to be quite a formidable force!

himself, for his country of Japan, and for his sponsors Associated, Yokomo and Reedy. Hirosaka's success was, in no small part, shared by his father, Masaki, and by Hiroyuki Watanabe, who wrenched on his cars. They proved an unstoppable combination — a team which will be hard to beat at the next Off-Road World Championships in 1991. Congratulations to all!

Congratulations also to Jack Greneger and the entire Australian club for hosting the event and running a near-flawless World Championship event. Every practice round, qualifier and main was run smoothly and on time. And, no small feat, they managed to hold off the rain for the two weeks of World Championship competition. Unbelievable! ●R/C●

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