

# ***Shifter Kart***

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**COMPLETE  
SUPERNATIONALS  
RESULTS**



**BEGGIO SCORES BIG  
IN CHARLOTTE**

**Italian wins fourth World Championship**







#### *Gianluca Beggio.*

One name, four World Championships and an arguable post as the best shifter kart pilot on the globe.

When this talented Italian arrived in Charlotte, NC at the end of October for the first American running of the FMK/FIA Formula C World Championships, he was a three-time champ of the event with the ultimate goal of continuing his dominance of the sport. When he left however, North American karting had enjoyed an exhibition in perfection, a display of what can happen when all the pieces of a puzzle are brought together during motorsports competition.

When it comes to Formula C kart racing, Gianluca Beggio left Charlotte as the "King of the World".

It would take almost a week for Beggio to secure this honor as after significant practice and engine break-in, three official days of racing were on the schedule at the World Karting Complex. Surprisingly, this championship event was paired with a national level contest, the final round of the three-race North American Karting Championships. While the FC Worlds should have received top billing in this mix, they did not, and were forced to run their Final on the Saturday, almost as a support class. The additional omission of an official Driver Parade for the Formula C pilots was also a topic of discontent, one that left a sour taste in the mouths of many involved.

Despite these shortcomings, the racing that was offered on the track

was excellent and the U.S. location allowed for many North American drivers to finally enjoy the experience of running in such a prestigious event. While they performed well, it was the top level Europeans that led the way, although the defending champion did not come out of the gate as a major force, as expected.

From the opening timed session, it did not appear that the eventual outcome would have been in the cards. Many big names highlighted the upper half of the time sheets, as surnames like Rossi, Pantano and Maggio were found, as it was certain they would be. Sprinkled in between these superstars of gearbox competition were new faces, possibly the next generation of Formula C headliners. Beggio was in there, but he did not stand out of the crowd at this early point in the weekend.

### **QUALIFYING**

Steering his CRG to the point in qualifying was 1997 FMK Formula Super A World Champion Danilo Rossi, the Italian recording a stunningly quick time of 39.425 seconds to sit atop the list. Rossi has been to the World Karting Complex circuit before to run in past NAKC events and on this occasion, he was immediately up to speed. At this level of competition however, any advantage he had over the pilots that were new to the track disappeared as they went deeper into the heat races. At that point, a mix of skill, preparation, and equipment took over.

BRM's Ennio Gandolfi has experience at the facility as well, and





# King of the World

**Gianluca Beggio reigns  
supreme after winning his  
unprecedented fourth  
consecutive FMK/FIA  
Formula C World Championship**

By Rob Howden

followed Rossi through qualifying, taking the runner-up position with a strong 39.539 second lap to edge Vitantonio Luizzi (CRG) by just 0.169 seconds. Fourth and fifth went to PCR teammates Nico Biasuzzi and Andre Belicchi, the duo clocking times within 0.009 seconds of each other, taking 39.734 and 39.743 second laps respectively.

As it always does, the importance of qualifying became apparent as the actual racing began, a driver's time trial effort determining his starting position in all three motos. With 51 competitors in the pits, four groups would be needed and Beggio's unassuming qualifying session notched him ninth on the list after a 39.796 second outing. It was Thursday afternoon and if Beggio had anything up his sleeve, he definitely wasn't showing it at that time. Yet when you've won the last three World Championships, your strategy is always respected and as such, no one thought for a second about counting the Italian out of the fray.

Vancouver, BC's Michael Valiante (Ital) led the North American contingent with an incredible qualifying run, the brilliant Canadian scorching the Charlotte circuit in 39.769 seconds to take an amazing sixth. Valiante has been to World Championship competition before, although never on his home turf. He has a good handle on the Charlotte track and was excited about using the result to springboard even closer to the front. A podium finish was realistic, a win, not out of the question.

Valiante's fellow countryman J.P. Guindon (Birel) was the next homegrown pilot in line, tripping the timing beam for a 20<sup>th</sup> place run, taking 40.282 sec-

onds to complete his fastest lap around the circuit. Valiante and Guindon had battled throughout the year in the WKA Elf Fuels Constructors' Championship Series (CCS) and it was not surprising that they began the weekend so well.

The top American qualifier was Alan Rudolph, the Birel pilot just edging fellow U.S. hotshoe Darren Elliott (CRG) for 21<sup>st</sup>, posting a 40.417 to Elliott's 40.515.

These four drivers aside, a majority of the North American contingent laid on the underside of the middle mark, struggling to become more familiar with either the characteristics of the Formula C powerplant or the vastly increased level of grip that the additional high horsepower classes (Formula A and Formula Super A) had presented. It was a foreign environment on Charlotte's 16-turn facility for sure and without adequate experience on this type of sticky surface, our troops suffered greatly.

Canadian pilots garnered the next five North American results with Quebec star Marc Poisson (BRM) qualifying in the 24<sup>th</sup> spot. U.S. FF2000 Rookie of the Year Marc Camirand (CRG) was next in line in 27<sup>th</sup>, followed closely by WKA CCS regular Paul Rozolowsky (Birel) and First Kart's Francis Macri in 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> respectively. Quebec's Steve Lamoureux drove a Tony out of the SH Karting shops into 32<sup>nd</sup>, just ahead of JM Racing's Ryan Howe, also on a Tonykart.

Thirteen other North Americans made qualifying attempts and their results can be found on The Scoring Tower (pg.38).



## HEATS

The six heat races provided some great action, although not a true preview of the race that eventually unfolded. Gandolfi was the star of the show, winning all three of his motos in dominant fashion. The Italian was flexing his muscles and at that point in the weekend, he was definitely considered a serious favorite for Saturday's Final.

PCR's Biasuzzi took two wins and a third to net himself the off-pole position in the Prefinal alongside Gandolfi, while Liuzzi took the opening moto as the only other heat race winner. Beggio was consistent throughout his races, accumulating a 3-2-2 record, enough to keep him near the front of the grid. He was slowly advancing to the front following his ninth in Qualifying and would start the Prefinal in the advantageous third position, directly behind the polesitter, Gandolfi.

A fifth by Valiante in the second heat was our best result, although a number of top tens were enjoyed. The Canadian contingent teamed up in the fifth heat to give us our best overall effort, putting four drivers into the top ten. While Valiante lead the charge in sixth, North Americans also grabbed the spots from eight through ten with Poisson, Macri and Anthony Simone (Birel) completing the finishing order.

The top American finish in the heats came from Rudolph, the St. Louis, MO veteran taking an eighth in the second heat to pair with a solid eleventh and a disappointing 20<sup>th</sup>.

Valiante's solid effort would put him directly into the World Championships and he would not be alone. Seven additional drivers transferred directly into the Prefinal and Final through their heat race point totals, a truly impressive number. Macri's successful 14-7-9 trio of finishes put him on the eighth row in 16<sup>th</sup>, four ahead of Simone in 20<sup>th</sup>. Elliott and Rudolph were together once again, this time with the former leading the way into 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Quebec drivers Poisson and Lamoureux also made the program on their first attempt, taking 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>, just ahead of Howe in 27<sup>th</sup>.

## REPECHAGE

The remaining drivers in the field were forced to come through Repechage, a last chance dash that takes the top six drivers only into the Championships finals. Both the U.S. and Canada added two additional drivers through this spectacular event as Rozolowsky pulled away strongly to win the sprint and take the 29<sup>th</sup> spot on the Prefinal grid.

Motorcycle Tire Center teammates Jimmy Didier (Birel) and Curtis Cooksey continued their progression by finishing second and fourth, each driver safely through to the next round. Race polesitter Camirand was able to hold onto the final transfer spot in sixth, although a charge was being made from the rear of the field by Guindon.

After trouble in the heat races, the young driver was forced into the Repechage and was involved in an incident in the early going. After battling his way back to the middle of the field, Guindon ran out of laps and although he sat in eighth behind KGB's Curtis Ruth at the checker, his attack on the gap between himself and the final transfer position was impressive. Within another handful of laps, his times indicated that he could have caught Camirand and would have then made the Final. Despite not completing the task, it was a convincing charge that went unseen by many observers.

## PREFINAL

As a set-up to the Championship Final, the shorter Prefinal allows drivers to make con-

trolled charges through the field. Beggio used this event to do just that, asserting his power by winning strongly over Biasuzzi. Alessandro Manetti took third in his CRG with Dandolfi and Ronnie Quinterelli rounding out the top five. Both Manetti and Quinterelli had positioned themselves well through the heat races, Manetti starting sixth in the Prefinal thanks to an 8-2-4 record. Quinterelli had posted an even better 9-2-2 trio to start on the second row, but faded slightly as Manetti made his way by.

Valiante was the top North American once again, finishing sixth, a result that would put him on the third row for the all-important Final.

Poisson and Rudolph were next up, moving into the top 15 with impressive runs to 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> respectively. A four-kart group occupied the spots from 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>, as Rozolowsky advanced impressively after winning the Repechage, improving a solid 12 positions. Macri, Howe, and Cooksey completed the quartet and would begin the Final from the tenth and eleventh rows on the grid.

## FINAL

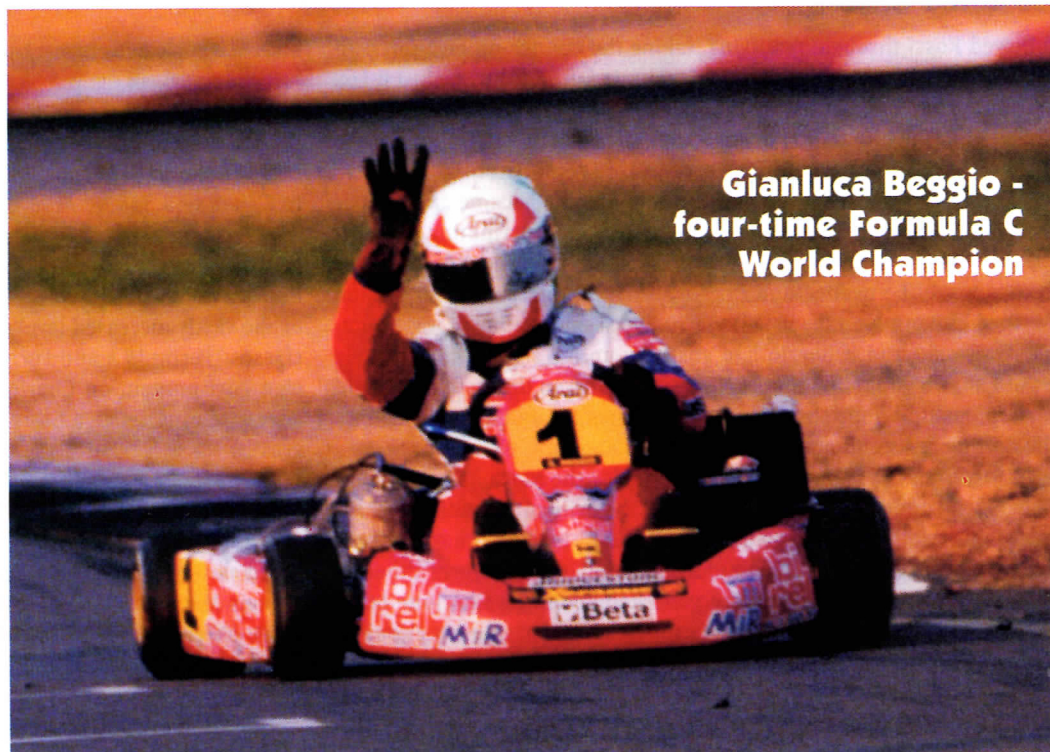
The events that transpired once the green light went on for the Final finally uncovered Beggio's overall weekend strategy.

The Italian did not use an out-of-control, on-the-edge qualifying approach, he drove intelligently and kept his cards hidden. There were no walk-away wins in the heat races, just consistent advances up to the leader. What occurred throughout these events was an approach that can be taken when you are already a three-time champion. This is something that comes with experience and true confidence in your equipment and your team. Beggio knew what he had and he knew when it was time to show it.

It didn't take long for the reigning champion to develop a comfortable cushion once the field had left the grid on the green light. One second or three seconds, the size of the lead was up to the reigning World Champion and he controlled it at will. To say that he was "playing" with his competition would be a little aggressive, but it did seem to insiders that Beggio had a firm grasp on his position as the leader.

When his competition closed the gap slightly, Beggio would take a look back to assess the situation and then extend the margin by turning up the wick a notch. The Birel pilot was in the driver's seat and he was steering his entry to his unprecedented fourth consecutive Formula C World Championship.

Biasuzzi was the wolf for a time, pressuring Beggio to hold his position until Manetti disposed him of the duty to take the runner-up himself. With the former second-place pilot moved to third, the star of the heat races, Gandolfi, crossed



**Gianluca Beggio -  
four-time Formula C  
World Champion**





Michael Valiante (left) had the best outing of any North American pilot, qualifying in amidst the European factory pilots before continuing an impressive charge to sixth in the Final. It was an amazing performance. Veteran pilot Alan Rudolph furthered developed his almost legendary status in U.S. karting by becoming the highest finish American driver, taking an stellar 17th in the final tally

the line in fourth with Francesco Laudato (Birel) in fifth.

Valiante's remarkable weekend ended with a stellar sixth place effort, although just one shy of a podium finish. The personable young man carried the flag for our racing community throughout the week and came up with an incredible performance in the most prestigious international shifter race of the year. After a winning season on this continent, Valiante's outstanding effort is a testament to what is possible and is proof that racing in North America has the characteristics that are needed to properly train drivers for this level of competition. His fellow compatriots fared well, as a number of them cracked the top

twenty. Poisson was the next North American to take the flag once again, taking twelfth in the final tally. The Canadian was followed by Rudolph, who kept his position as the top finishing U.S. shoe, carding 17th in the Final, just one position ahead of Macri.

After a summer of anticipation, this event's scheduling on U.S. turf did a great deal for the sport in this country. Many drivers fulfilled dreams of running in the World Championships while many others went to school on the level of preparation that is needed to be competitive at this rung on the ladder. Yet if one thing is for sure, it is that each and every North American driver will be just that much better when they attack their next on track assignment. **SKI**

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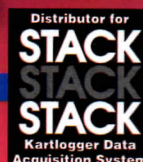
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
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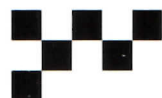
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



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# SCORING TOWER

## QUALIFYING

Pos.	Driver	Engine/Chassis/Tires	Time
1.	Danilo Rossi (I)	CRG/TM/Dunlop	39.425
2.	Ennio Gandolfi (I)	BRM/TM/Bridgestone	39.539
3.	Vitantonio Liuzzi (I)	CRG/SGM/Bridgestone	39.708
4.	Nico Biasuzzi (I)	PCR/TM/Bridgestone	39.734
5.	Andrea Belicchi (I)	PCR/TM/Bridgestone	39.743
6.	Natale Maggio (I)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone	39.764
7.	Michael Valiante (CAN)	Ital/TM/Vega	39.769
8.	Giorgio Pantano (I)	Kosmic/Vortex/Bridgestone	39.774
9.	Gianluca Beggio (I)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone	39.796
10.	Marino Spinazzi (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone	39.810
11.	Sauro Cesetti (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone	39.882
12.	Ronnie Quintarelli (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone	39.929
13.	Andras Bakos (H)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone	39.941
14.	Christophe Vassort (F)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone	39.944
15.	Alessandro Manetti (I)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone	39.947
16.	Valerio Sapere (I)	Birel/TM/Vega	40.130
17.	Alessandro Piccini (I)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone	40.155
18.	Milton Rytarbris (S)	CRG/TM/Vega	40.161
19.	Francesco Laudato (I)	Birel/TM/Dunlop	40.244
20.	Jean-Paul Guindon (CAN)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone	40.282
21.	David Fore' (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone	40.342
22.	Alan Rudolph (USA)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone	40.417
23.	Darren Elliot (USA)	CRG/CRS/Bridgestone	40.515
24.	Marc Poisson (CAN)	BRM/TM/Bridgestone	40.529
25.	Luigi Ferrara (I)	Top/TM/Bridgestone	40.534
26.	Oliver Vander Heyden (B)	Birel/Paves/Bridgestone	40.571
27.	Marc Camirand (CAN)	CRG/CRS/Bridgestone	40.605
28.	Francis Macri (CAN)	First/Paves/Bridgestone	40.685
29.	Paul Rozalowsky (CAN)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone	40.824
30.	Fernando DiPaolo (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone	40.838
31.	Stefano Griggio (I)	Red Baron/TM/Vega	40.856
32.	Steve Lamoureux (CAN)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone	40.939
33.	Ryan Howe (USA)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone	40.945
34.	Claude Monteiro (F)	Birel/TM/Dunlop	41.034
35.	Anthony Simone (CAN)	Birel/TM/Vega	41.037
36.	Jesse Rooke (USA)	Margay/TM/Bridgestone	41.065
37.	James Didier (USA)	Birel/TM/Vega	41.142
38.	Justin Price (ZA)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone	41.377
39.	Curtis Ruth (USA)	KGB/TM/Bridgestone	41.597
40.	Alessandro Ottaviani (I)	BRM/CRS/Bridgestone	41.607
41.	Adam Thompson (USA)	Biesse/TM/Bridgestone	41.640
42.	Dario Aggio (I)	Biesse/TM/Vega	41.686
43.	Camilo Zurcher (CO)	PCR/TM/Bridgestone	41.773
44.	Marc De Vellis (CAN)	Red Baron/TM/Bridgestone	41.863
45.	Andrew Boyd (ZA)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone	41.885
46.	Curtis Cooksey (USA)	Birel/TM/Vega	41.924
47.	David Odenthal (USA)	Swiss/TM/Bridgestone	42.004
48.	David Bradfield (USA)	Tony/TM/Bridgestone	42.050
49.	Chris Watson (USA)	Tony/TM/Bridgestone	42.399
50.	Kimball Williams (USA)	CRG/CRS/Bridgestone	42.540
51.	Benoit Galland (CAN)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone	42.719





# FMK/FIA Formula C World Championships

## HEATS

HEAT A-C		HEAT B-C		HEAT A-D		Heat B-D:		Heat C-D:		Heat A-B:	
Pos.	Driver	Pos.	Driver	Pos.	Driver	Pos.	Driver	Pos.	Driver	Pos.	Driver
1.	Vitantonio Liuzzi (I)	1.	Ennio Gandolfi (I)	1.	Nico Biasuzzi (I)	1.	Ennio Gandolfi (I)	1.	Nico Biasuzzi (I)	1.	Ennio Gandolfi (I)
2.	Danilo Rossi (I)	2.	Alessandro Manetti (I)	2.	Gianluca Beggio (I)	2.	Ronnie Quintarelli (I)	2.	Ronnie Quintarelli (I)	2.	Gianluca Beggio (I)
3.	Gianluca Beggio (I)	3.	Natale Maggio (I)	3.	Giorgio Pantano (I)	3.	Nico Biasuzzi (I)	3.	Francesco Laudato (I)	3.	Andrea Belicchi (I)
4.	Alessandro Piccini (I)	4.	Vitantonio Liuzzi (I)	4.	Andrea Belicchi (I)	4.	Giorgio Pantano (I)	4.	Alessandro Manetti (I)	4.	Alessandro Piccini (I)
5.	Sauro Cesetti (I)	5.	Michael Valiante (CAN)	5.	Danilo Rossi (I)	5.	Valerio Saperlerio (I)	5.	Sauro Cesetti (I)	5.	Natale Maggio (I)
6.	David Fore (I)	6.	Francesco Laudato (I)	6.	Alessandro Piccini (I)	6.	Natale Maggio (I)	6.	Michael Valiante (CAN)	6.	Andras Bakos (H)
7.	Francesco Laudato (I)	7.	Marino Spinozzi (I)	7.	Valerio Sapere (I)	7.	Francis Macri (CAN)	7.	Valerio Sapere (I)	7.	Luigi Ferrara (I)
8.	Alessandro Manetti (I)	8.	Alan Rudolph (USA)	8.	David Fore (I)	8.	Milton Ryttaarbris (S)	8.	Marc Poisson (CAN)	8.	David Fore (I)
9.	Michael Valiante (CAN)	9.	Anthony Simone (CAN)	9.	Ronnie Quintarelli (I)	9.	Fernando DiPaolo (I)	9.	Francis Macri (CAN)	9.	Marino Spinozzi (I)
10.	Andrea Belicchi (I)	10.	Milton Ryttaarbris (S)	10.	Andras Bakos (H)	10.	Steve Lamoureux (CAN)	10.	Anthony Simone (CAN)	10.	Danilo Rossi (I)
11.	Darren Elliott (USA)	13.	Marc Camirand (CAN)	11.	Marc Poisson (CAN)	12.	Kimball Williams (USA)	11.	Darren Elliot (USA)	11.	Alan Rudolph (USA)
12.	Ryan Howe (USA)	14.	Darren Elliott (USA)	12.	Steve Lamoureux (CAN)	13.	Jesse Rooke (USA)	12.	Marc Camirand (CAN)	14.	Ryan Howe (USA)
14.	James Didier (USA)	15.	Kimball Williams (USA)	14.	Francis Macri (CAN)	14.	David Bradfield (USA)	14.	David Bradfield (USA)	18.	James Didier (USA)
15.	Anthony Simone (CAN)	17.	Curtis Cooksey (USA)	15.	Ryan Howe (USA)	15.	Curtis Cooksey (USA)	15.	Curtis Ruth (USA)	20.	Curtis Cooksey (USA)
16.	Paul Rozalowsky (CAN)	18.	David Odenthal (USA)	16.	Marc De Vellis (CAN)	18.	Marc De Vellis (CAN)	16.	Benoit Galland (CAN)	21.	Chris Watson (USA)
17.	Curtis Ruth (USA)	21.	Benoit Galland (CAN)	17.	James Didier (USA)	19.	Jean-Paul Guindon (CAN)	18.	Jesse Rooke (USA)	24.	Paul Rozalowsky (CAN)
18.	Marc Camirand (CAN)	25.	Curtis Ruth (USA)	18.	Paul Rozalowsky (CAN)	20.	Alan Rudolph (USA)	19.	Steve Lamoureux (CAN)	25.	Adam Thompson (USA)
19.	Chris Watson (USA)			19.	Jean-Paul Guindon (CAN)	22.	Marc Poisson (CAN)	20.	Marc De Vellis (CAN)	26.	Justin Price (ZA)
20.	David Odenthal (USA)			20.	Adam Thompson (USA)			22.	Jean-Paul Guindon (CAN)		
21.	Adam Thompson (USA)			22.	Chris Watson (USA)			25.	David Odenthal (USA)		
22.	Benoit Galland (CAN)			24.	Jesse Rooke (USA)						
				25.	David Bradfield (USA)						

## REPECHAGE

Pos.	Driver	Engine/Chassis/Tires
1.	Paul Rozalowsky (CAN)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone
2.	James Didier (USA)	Birel/TM/Vega
3.	Claude Monteiro (F)	Birel/TM/Dunlop
4.	Curtis Cooksey (USA)	Birel/TM/Vega
5.	Dario Aggio (I)	Biesse/TM/Vega
6.	Marc Camirand (CAN)	CRG/CRS/Bridgestone
7.	Curtis Ruth (USA)	KGB/TM/Bridgestone
8.	Jean-Paul Guindon (CAN)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone
9.	Jesse Rooke (USA)	Margay/TM/Bridgestone
10.	Chris Watson (USA)	Tony/TM/Bridgestone
11.	Alessandro Ottaviani (I)	BRM/CRS/Bridgestone
12.	Kimball Williams (USA)	CRG/CRS/Bridgestone
13.	Stefano Griggio (I)	Red Baron/TM/Vega
14.	Oliver Vander Heyden (B)	Birel/Pavesi/Bridgestone
15.	Camilo Zurcher (CO)	PCR/TM/Bridgestone
16.	David Bradfield (USA)	Tony/TM/Bridgestone
17.	Christophe Vassort (F)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone
18.	Marc De Vellis (CAN)	Red Baron/TM/Bridgestone
19.	David Odenthal (USA)	Swiss/TM/Bridgestone
20.	Justin Price (ZA)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone
21.	Benoit Galland (CAN)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone
22.	Andrew Boyd (ZA)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone
23.	Adam Thompson (USA)	Biesse/TM/Bridgestone

## FINAL

Pos.	Driver	Engine/Chassis/Tires
1.	Gianluca Beggio (I)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone
2.	Alessandro Manetti (I)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone
3.	Nico Biasuzzi (I)	PCR/TM/Bridgestone
4.	Ennio Gandolfi (I)	BRM/Bridgestone
5.	Francesco Laudato (I)	Birel/TM/Dunlop
6.	Michael Valiante (CAN)	Ital/TM/Vega
7.	David Fore (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone
8.	Giorgio Pantano (I)	Kosmic/Vortex/Bridgestone
9.	Vitantonio Liuzzi (I)	CRG/SGM/Bridgestone
10.	Marino Spinozzi (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone
11.	Danilo Rossi (I)	CRG/TM/Dunlop
12.	Marc Poisson (CAN)	BRM/TM/Bridgestone
13.	Sauro Cesetti (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone
14.	Andras Bakos (H)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone
15.	Natale Maggio (I)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone
16.	Alessandro Piccini (I)	CRG/TM/Bridgestone
17.	Alan Rudolph (USA)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone
18.	Francis Macri (CAN)	First/Pavesi/Bridgestone
19.	Ronnie Quintarelli (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone
20.	Anthony Simone (CAN)	Birel/TM/Vega
21.	Fernando DiPaolo (I)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone
22.	James Didier (USA)	Birel/TM/Vega
23.	Curtis Cooksey (USA)	Birel/TM/Vega
24.	Marc Camirand (CAN)	CRG/CRS/Bridgestone
25.	Luigi Ferrara (I)	Top/TM/Bridgestone
26.	Paul Rozalowsky (CAN)	Birel/TM/Bridgestone
27.	Claude Monteiro (F)	Birel/TM/Dunlop
28.	Milton Ryttaarbris (S)	CRG/TM/Vega
29.	Dario Aggio (I)	Biesse/TM/Vega
30.	Darren Elliott (USA)	CRG/CRS/Bridgestone
31.	Valerio Sapere (I)	Birel/TM/Vega
32.	Steve Lamoureux (CAN)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone
33.	Andrea Belicchi (I)	PCR/TM/Bridgestone
34.	Ryan Howe (USA)	Tony/Vortex/Bridgestone



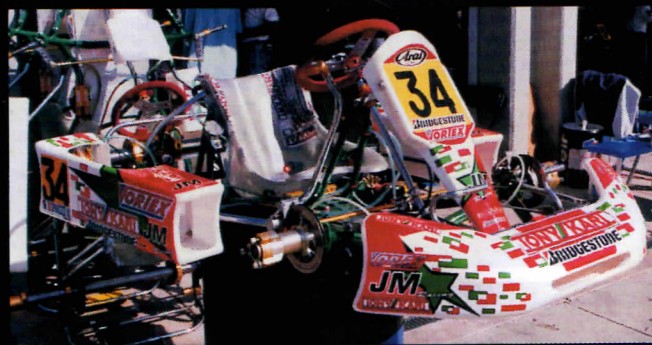


# TECHNICAL IN CHARGE

The recent FMK Formula C World Championships in Charlotte provided North Americans with a rare opportunity to observe our European counterparts at work; both in their karts and in the paddock. We thought you might like to get an inside look at their trick stuff, so we put a camera in the hands of our Senior Writer Chris Watson and told him to work his way through the paddock when he wasn't busy campaigning his own entry. Watson is as sharp as they come and the following accounts his findings as he infiltrated the Charlotte garage area...



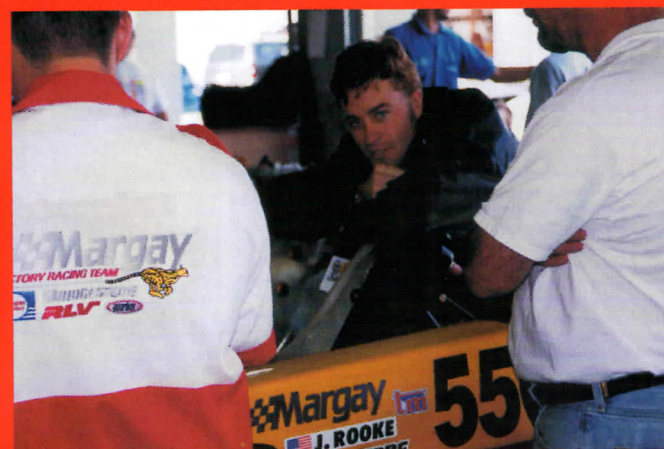
Tonykart came to Charlotte with their big gun drivers and used their latest chassis. The Extreme has now gone through at least four generations of changes in three years, demonstrating that the Tonykart guys are committed to product development. Some of the Tony drivers still preferred the 40mm axles, while most opted for the latest 50mm set-up. JM Racing, the American importer for Tonykart, had new, cool looking graphics for their entrants. At the end of the event, Texan Collin Lynn (a Tonykart regional distributor) made off with the Italian Marino Spinuzzi's Extreme chassis, complete with the new graphics, reportedly headed for Las Vegas and the Superkarts! USA Gearbox SuperNationals.



When all the containers of racing equipment were unloaded, guess what? It was all brand new. No three-month-old karts here. Chassis seem to be looked upon as no big secret deal. They assemble them quickly, using whatever washers happen to be around for stuff like seat struts or bolting on lead weights. Careful attention however, is placed on caster, camber and toe. Steering is checked and adjusted much more frequently than we are used to. The seat position is another area that receives acute attention. They have setup jigs that clamp to the frame to help locate the seat for drilling. The settings of the jigs have been perfected through trial and error over many races and much testing. By the time of the World Championship, they know pretty much where to put the seat; but some teams did have extra holes drilled, where they made their final adjustments.



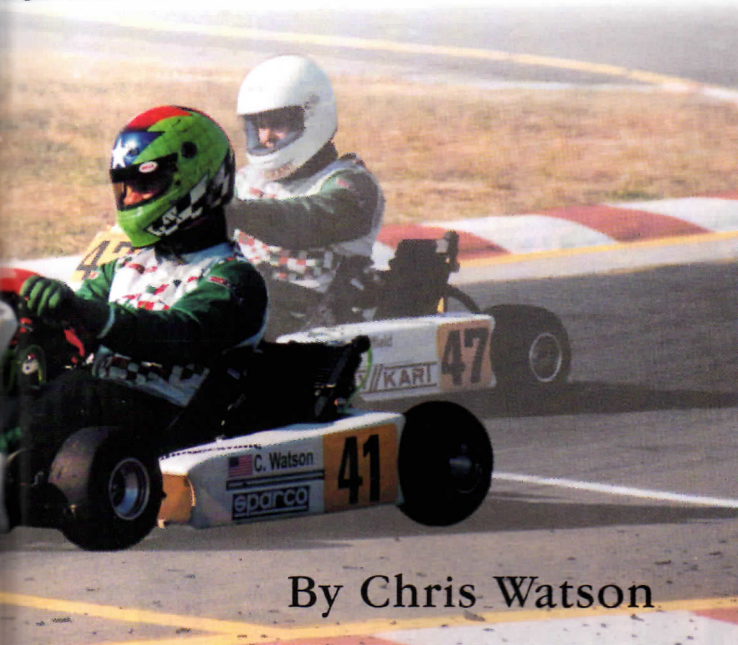
Rear axles were pulled out often, both to switch to softer or stiffer choices and to make sure there was no binding with misaligned bearings. Ride height adjustments, both front and rear, were used as a method of fine tuning the chassis, but only after seat placement had been finalized.



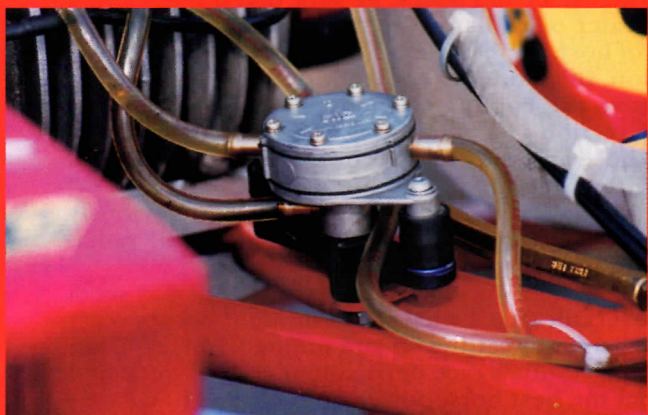
Since the combined driver/kart weight in Formula C is 363 lbs., tall (read 'heavy') guys like Adam Thompson had their new chassis shipped over without paint, to save 3-4 lbs.! Thompson carried the colors for Biesse, while Jesse Rooke drove the factory Margay entry. The new Margay had been painted, but Jesse said the chassis was shipped directly to Charlotte from Margay's paint booth, barely dry.



# L TRICKERY ARLOTTE



By Chris Watson

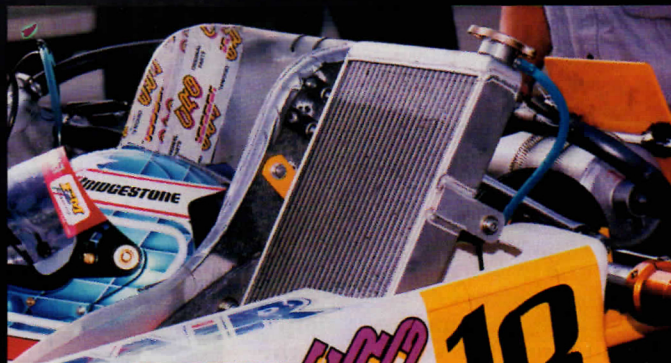


Birel karts were the most popular among privateers, with 11 Birel drivers advancing to the Final. Latest features include forged foot pedals and some cool machined parts to mount fuel pumps or to hang radiators, for example.



For short guys (which means most of the field), there was a trend of spacing the steering wheel so the top was closer to the driver's grip. At first, we thought they were bent, but upon closer inspection found washers or machined spacers were the trick.

Big radiators were all the rage as well, but we can't buy them yet. As soon as the air temp warmed up to about 70 degrees, the whole paddock pulled out their bigger radiators, to lower their engine's water temp.



The European teams have their stuff together. If a motor 'went soft', they just ripped it off the kart in about three minutes and put on another one. These photos were taken in between the Prefinal and the Final, with less than an hour separating the two. Three different teams changed chassis, looking for the winning set-up.

Gearbox ratios were a technology all to itself. For a nominal fee, a TM customer could take his motor to the TM tent and they would change the internal gearbox ratios to the "recommended" set up. This change alone was worth about three or four tenths per lap. From start to finish, it would take the mechanic less than five minutes to execute these gear changes.

The ignition of choice seemed to be the Selettra, identifiable by its bright blue coil. Although PVL's are common on the Formula A 100cc engines, the 125cc motors didn't use them very often. When we asked the BRM mechanics why they preferred the Selettra unit and if they could see the difference on a dyno; they basically said that although there was little difference on a dyno, the kart could accelerate better off the corners.





# Paddock Pass



Michael Valiante won the 1998 Skip Barber / Rio Big Scholarship Shootout in early December, just as we were taking this issue to press. A full story on Michael's amazing outing will follow in the next edition of SKI, our editor Rob Howden sitting down with the talented driver for a one-on-one interview.

## ON THE WIRE...

A new spec rubber has been designated for the new SKUSA Florida Winter Tour. MG tires will make their debut at the second round of the series, a race on Jan. 16-17 in Miami, FL and will be mandated for the Formula S2, 80 Sr. and 80 Jr. classes for the remaining five events. A contingency program for the headline Formula S1 division will also be offered, drivers finishing in the top three receiving cash and product if they are running on the MG brand.

An upgraded racing surface will greet visitors at Jacksonville's 103rd Street Sports Complex after its owners completed repaving operations in preparation for both the WKA's Kartweek and several upcoming shifter events. The track has been widened in certain sections in an effort to more adequately accommodate shifter racing, a layout that will be tested when the SKUSA Florida Winter Tour heads to the track on April 3-4 for the final round of the new schedule of events.

A new racing team will focus its efforts on the WKA Constructors' Championship and the SKUSA North American Pro Moto Tour in 1999, as it has been announced that TM engine importer George Barks will field a squad that will accompany the businessman to these events. Barks will be at each and every race to support and service his customer base, leaving the operation of the team to expert tuner Doug Sharp. The group is currently inviting drivers to inquire about tryouts for the open seats in both 125cc and 80cc classes and although a chassis has yet to be determined, the TM engines used by the team will be hand-completed at the factory by chief builder Franco Drudi. Barks will also be offering an engine rental program for the series. Interested drivers are directed to contact Sharp at 503-266-7287.



Ted Tackett's BRM package looked great in Charlotte and his on-track triumph matched this professional image

PHOTOS BY JEFF DESKINS



## TACKETT TOPS FIELD AT CHARLOTTE

Accompanying the international festivities at the North American Karting Championships (NAKC) in late October was a support program that the World Karting Association promotes as the North American Sprint Track Championships. While the race holds nothing close to this moniker in the minds of the country's drivers, it has become an annual trek for many teams looking for one last shot at competition before their equipment goes into storage for the winter. Friendships are rekindled and with the Charlotte weather much more comfortable than a majority of the country, a vacation atmosphere ensues.

This is not to say that the racing is any less fierce. A 125cc class was on the docket as usual and a duo of SKUSA Great Lakes Tour competitors were in town to vie for the win. Ted Tackett (BRM) and Adam Andretti (Topkart) were the proponents in this battle and in the end, it was Kalamazoo, MI's Tackett taking the eventual victory and the winner's spoils.

An interesting sidebar was the shifter debut of junior hotshoe Regan Smith, a veteran of many forms of karting competition. With the Formula C World Championships already completed, Smith took to the track in one of the factory Birel chassis, complete with a new TM moto engine in place of the FC unit, a powerplant tuned by TM's Franco Drudi himself. The young pilot was fast out of the box, but ran off track on a number of occasions as he became more comfortable with the vastly increased power. If not for a race-ending spin, Smith may have been able to catch the leader, as Tackett was forced to slow rapidly when his exhaust system came loose. Although he looked good in the shifter, it is a good bet that the North Carolinian Smith will be headed for stock cars instead.

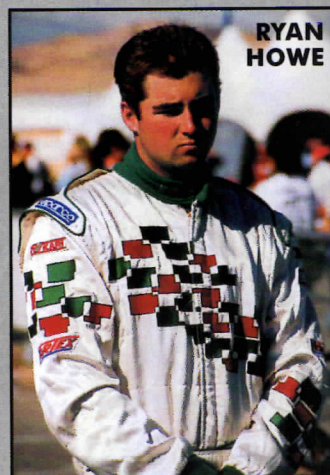
## SHIFTER PILOTS HIGHLIGHT BARBER SCHOLARSHIP SELECTIONS

The selections for the 1999 Skip Barber Driver Development Program made their way throughout the karting community in late October and a number of top shifter kart pilots were invited into the 15-driver opening level of the program. Ryan Howe, Jason LaPoint, Patrick Long, Joey Hand, and Kyle Martin all received their call to the track and each should be looking forward to the opportunity to follow in the footsteps of a fellow gearbox competitor, Michael Valiante. The Canadian was among the four drivers that won last year's DDP and he took full advantage of the award, winning the Formula

Dodge Midwestern Region. The prize for this accomplishment: a seat in the Rio Big Scholarship Shootout in Sebring, FL, a run-off that was completed just as we went to press. To his credit, Valiante won this prestigious competition and will be awarded a full year of Barber Pro Dodge competition. With this ultimate prize now proven possible, the program's potential worth has grown substantially.



PAT LONG



RYAN HOWE