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Brambilla wins Monza dodgem race

Italian driver and F3 Brabham take the honours
in the fifteenth 'Monza Autodrome Cup'

By DICK SUTER

LOCAL hero Ernesto Brambilla beat some tough opposition on 18th September when he crossed the finishing line first after a 30-lap final of some of the hairiest F3 motor racing yet seen at Monza. In winning this race he became Italian F3 Champion for 1966, although the De Sanctis team has the national constructors' championship under its belt. In the final Jonathan Williams was forced to retire when another competitor spun in front of him at the entrance to the Parabolica, and this put paid to his chances of a seventh consecutive victory in F3 races in Italy.

Official practice was on the Sunday morning of the event, but many competitors practised on the Saturday afternoon. Saturday was a day of heavy showers, and the Sunday morning was no better. For the race, though, the track dried out and the heavens stayed shut. Jonathan Williams in the De Sanctis made fastest time on the Sunday morning in 1 min 53.6 secs, followed by Carlo Facetti in the interesting Tecno, who recorded 1 min 53.9 secs. The Bologna built Tecno first appeared this summer at the Circuit of Mugello, and in the hands of Facetti performed well until damper troubles slowed its progress. For Monza the Tecno outfit produced two cars: one for Facetti, the other for Baghetti. The driver sits further forward than is normal in current rear-engine design, with the fuel tank behind him, to give the machine a slimmer line. Although the cars are very much in the experimental stage they should be worth noting in the future: as it was, on Sunday they proved that they could stay with the best.

Only 12 foreign drivers were invited, but Charlie Crichton-Stuart and Derek Bell managed to get acceptance, as Sverrir Thoroddsen's car could not be repaired after its Enna encounter with Jonathan Williams, and Martin Davies blew up his hard-worked Brabham in the practice session early on the Sunday morning.

The first heat started at 3.45 pm, after the Monza 850 and 875 formula midgets had done their stuff. Facetti with the Tecno had pole position, sharing the front row of the grid with Luigi Petri (Brabham), who had recorded 1 min 54.8 secs, and Giorgio Pianta, who was driving a yellow Lola (named Butterfly after the cosmetic company of Eugenio Dragoni), who had got around in 1 min 55.3 secs. On the second row were "Tiger" (De Sanctis) and local favourite Brambilla, whilst Chris Williams was sharing the third row with Patrick Dal Bo (Pygmée) and second Tecno driver, Giancarlo Baghetti.

Brambilla shot into the lead from Facetti, with Petri making a poor start from the front row and tailing the 17-car field. At the end of lap 1 the order was Brambilla, Facetti, Pianta, Baghetti, "Tiger", Dal Bo, Manfredini (Brabham), Braga (Lotus), Bellasi (Bellasi with Novor-motor version of the Ford), Peterson (Brabham), and Chris Williams. At the end of the second lap Facetti, Brambilla and Pianta had pulled out a couple of lengths over the rest of the dicers, some of them trying like mad to get to the front and others going fast enough for a place in the 30-lap final. This was just the 12-lap sprint to get their engines warmed up, but by the third lap Dal Bo had done such a good heating job that the pits claimed their first victim.

Every lap the lead was changing hands at least four times, but past the start/finish line it was always either Facetti or Brambilla, and sometimes both together. At the beginning of lap 11 De Sanctis man "Tiger", who had been disputing fourth spot, ceased functioning on four pots and went on to what sounded like a little more than two. He made the finish, but didn't reappear for the final. As the dodgem exponents came out of the Parabolica Brambilla had the lead, but the thoughtful Facetti did some fine slip-streaming on the run-in and five yards from the waiting flag moved up into first place, to give the Tecno its first win.

For the second of the 12-lap heats Jonathan Williams had Enzo Corti (BWA Cosworth) and

Charlie Stu for company on the front row. Corti had done 1 min 54.7 secs in practice against Crichton-Stuart's 1 min 55.1 secs. On the second row were Harry Stiller (Brabham) making his first appearance at Monza for three years, and Giancarlo Gagliardi (Branca Ford). Third row contained Antonio Maglione (De Sanctis), Boley Pittard (BWA-Ford BWA) and Derek Bell (Lotus). At flag fall Charlie Stu, sporting a new engine, made a quick getaway to lead Jonathan Williams into the Curva Grande. Derek Bell, who hadn't seen the starter, thought the rolling start was the real thing, but throttled back in time to avoid penalization. Through Lesmo, down the straight, through the wicked Parabolica, it was Charlie from Corti and De Sanctis Williams. At quick intervals they were followed by Harry Stiller, Giancarlo Gagliardi, Boley Pittard and Derek Bell. Coming into Parabolica on lap 2, big drama: Corti cut off Stiller, hit him and broke the Brabham's bottom wishbone, reshaped the front offside wheel, and then cushioned himself off on to Derek Bell, whose suspension suffered; then Corti lost one of his own wheels and that was how three of the fast ones convinced the spectators at the Curva Parabolica that they were getting value for money. Bell pulled into the pits for an inspection, did but one more lap, and then retired opposite the pits without any oil.

Meanwhile, up front, Charlie Stu was having fun leading Jonathan Williams and Pittard, with Gagliardi having a good view from a few yards away. On lap 10 Crichton-Stuart put up the fastest lap of the heat with 1 min 50.9 secs, but Williams was awaiting his opportunity. Last lap and Charlie had the lead into the Parabolica, but as they came out of the two-part corner, Williams had edged in front. Up to the man with the flag, flash went Williams, flash went Crichton-Stuart, and less than a second later flash went Boley Pittard. Gagliardi meanwhile, had stopped at Lesmo and didn't figure in the final.

Based on the times put up in the two heats, Facetti had pole position for the 30-lap final. Making up the front row of the grid were Brambilla and Baghetti. On the second row were Pianta and J. Williams, with Crichton-Stuart, Pittard and Maglione on the third. Brambilla made another of his picture-book starts and led the field for the first lap, followed by Facetti, Pianta in the beautifully pre-

pared Lola, Baghetti in the second of the impressive Tecno cars, Jonathan Williams, Pittard and Salerno (Lotus). The Pianta Lola was showing its paces in no uncertain way by coming through the second part of Lesmo in fifth spot and taking the lead on the entrance to the next corner, the Parabolica. By lap five the leading five, J. Williams, Brambilla, Facetti, Crichton-Stuart and Pianta, had pulled a slight lead over the next bunch, led by Baghetti, but by the end of the next lap Baghetti had forced his way up into fourth spot and the unfortunate Boley Pittard had bent a valve, and once again was fated not to finish in a F3 final at Monza. On lap eight Jonathan Williams had the lead by a fraction of a fraction of a second, but lap nine was quite something with Facetti, J. Williams, Brambilla, Pianta, Baghetti and Charlie Stu all leading past the pits: if that wasn't close nor is a Gillette shave. . . . On lap 14 Baghetti came into the pits, having blown up the Cossy-engined Tecno in manner magnificent; this left a little more roadway for the braves, as on the next lap Brambilla, Facetti, Maglione (De Sanctis) and Charlie all led across the start-finish line!

Then leading Jonathan Williams into the Parabolica Pianta braked too hard, spun, and Williams, just behind, could not avoid the revolving "Butterfly". Williams tried to go round Pianta but they contacted and the De Sanctis climbed over the Lola's back wheel. Chris Williams (in eighth spot, but right there, such was the closeness of the racing) went off the road to the left, while Ghezzi (Brabham) went off to the right, and clouted a guard rail. These latter two got going again, but the race was finished for Jonathan Williams and Giorgio Pianta.

Chris Williams lost 10 secs on Ghezzi, but within two laps had caught up again and passed the quick Brabham of his opponent. Charlie was leading most of the laps now, and looked all set for a long-awaited victory. But this was not to be: for the last six laps he held a slender lead from the crowd's favourite, Brambilla, and from Carlo Facetti, but as the three swept through the second part of the notorious Parabolica, Michael Herbertson (Cooper) inadvertently baulked Stuart, and Brambilla made time. As the cars took the chequered flag Brambilla had a 0.3 sec lead over the Scotsman, and gained the applause of his following and the much coveted national title at the same time.

RESULTS

Heat 1 (12 laps): 1, Carlo Facetti (Tecno), 22 m 28.9 s, 114.2 mph; 2, Ernesto Brambilla (Brabham); 3, Giancarlo Baghetti (Tecno). **Fastest lap:** Giorgio Pianta (Lola), 1 m 50.1 s, 116.8 mph. **Heat 2 (12 laps):** 1, Jonathan Williams (De Sanctis), 22 m 38.5 s, 113.4 mph; 2, Charles Crichton-Stuart (Brabham); 3, Boley Pittard (BWA). **Fastest lap:** Crichton-Stuart, 1 m 50.9 s, 115.1 mph. **Final (30 laps):** 1, Ernesto Brambilla (Brabham), 55 m 49.2 s, 115.1 mph; 2, Charles Crichton-Stuart (Brabham); 3, Carlo Facetti (Tecno); 4, Francesco Ghezzi (Brabham); 5, Chris Williams (Brabham); 6, Corrado Manfredini (Brabham). **Fastest lap:** Facetti and Brambilla, 1 m 49.1 s, 117.7 mph.

A BACK MARKER is lapped by Charlie Crichton-Stuart (Brabham) and Carlo Facetti (Tecno) during one of the most exciting F3 races this season.

