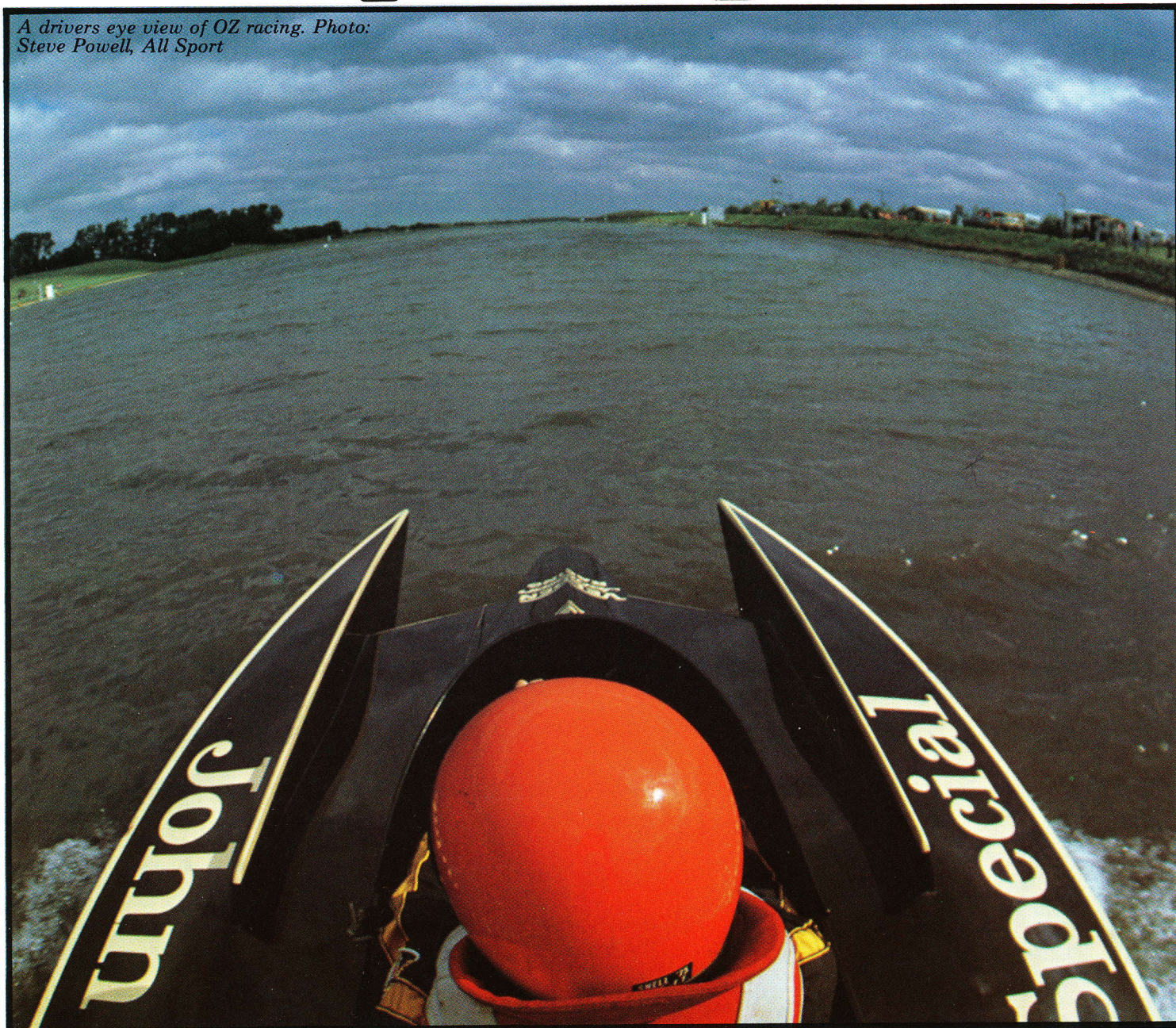


A John Player's Special

By Christopher Wright

A drivers eye view of OZ racing. Photo: Steve Powell, All Sport



Great things were expected of the John Player Special meeting at Holme Pierrepont, with the World ON Championship, and the British leg of the JPS World OZ Series and the Aspen World OE Series.

What a feast for the connoisseur, and it was only the second time in Britain this year that the rival camps of OZ and ON had competed at the same meeting. You will be glad to know that war did not break out in the pits and no blood was spilt.

In fact, the pits operation ran as 'smooth as silk' and the superb

facilities at Holme Pierrepont were marshalled with military precision by the organiser extraordinaire, Len Britnell, Commodore of the LMBRC.

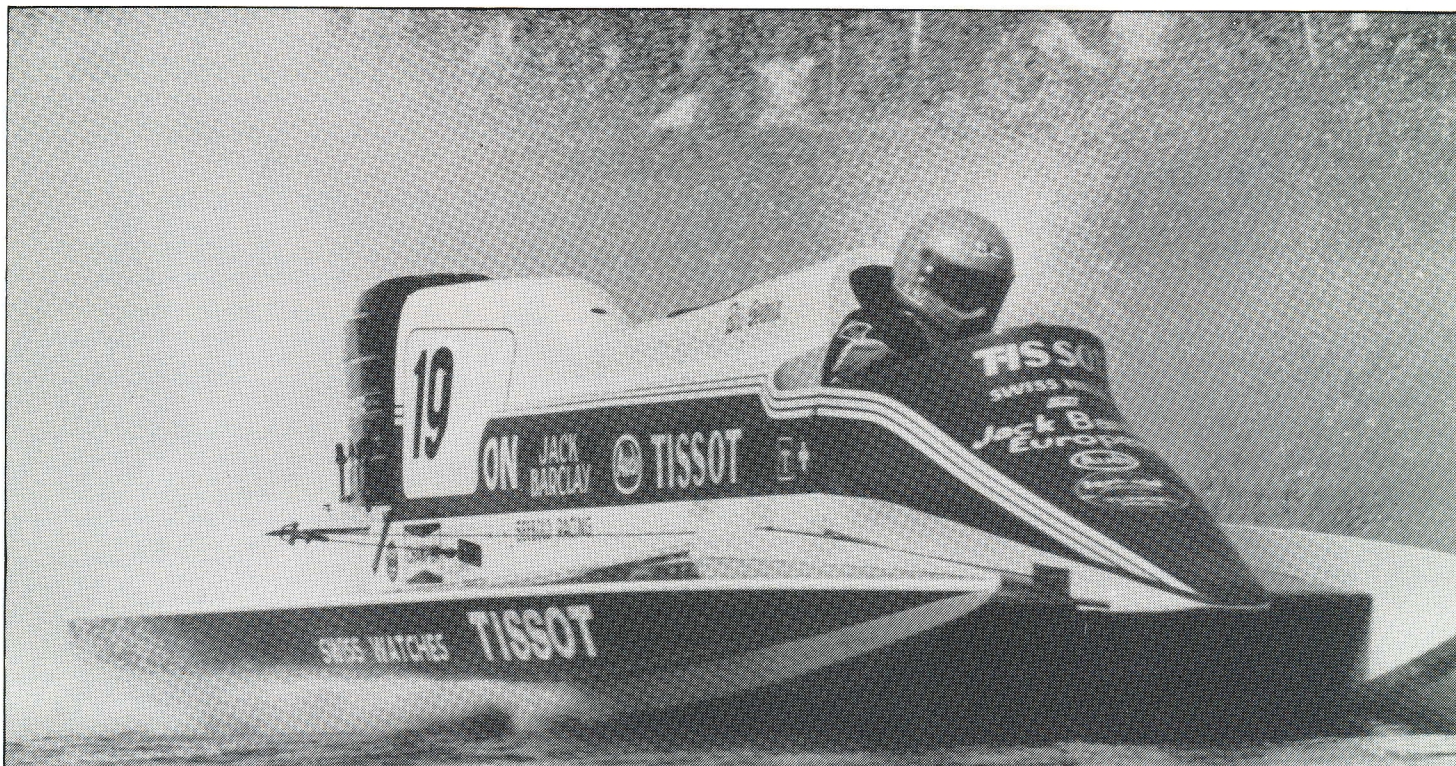
But there was only so much he could do and even Len could not arrange British winners of the three principal events, Billy Seebold, from St.Louis, walked off with the ONs, Renato Molinari (Italy) dominated the OZ's and our own John Hill was pipped by Lasse Strom (Sweden) in the OEs. Ah well, you can't have everything.

Pride of place in the review of proceedings must go to the ONs as

their event was for the outright, one-off world title.

As far as the British contingent was concerned Saturday's erstwhile practice session was crucial, for this became a form of speed trial, with the five fastest qualifying for the world heats. Those left were to be relegated to the 'also-ran' division.

The five to qualify were John Nicholson (Barrus team Mariner), Peter Inward (Tissot/Jack Barclays/Mariner), Mark Wilson (Impala/Mercury), Malcolm Burnapp (Walsall Litho) and Tony Williams (Kazed Doors/Mercury),



Above: Seebold wins championship. Below: Boats amassed in the pits



qualified at the last gasp, much to the dismay of lovely Fiona Brothers, who thought she had earlier booked a guaranteed place.

As it happened Fiona (Colt Cars) would have given better value than some; Inward stopped at the start, Burnapp didn't show and Williams went sick after three laps. Nice one, lads. The Union Jack was definitely on the droop.

But back to the real racing and at the start of the first heat off went Mr Seebold like a bullet. Subtlety is not Billy's middle name and he pursued his usual grind-their-nose-into-the-dust tactics, streaking to the front and remorselessly building a massive lead.

Not the most exciting battle of a lifetime, but it was a treat to watch a master at work: trimmed to perfection, rounding the buoys like a whiplash, always in command of his boat and never looking likely to make a mistake.

Behind there was all the fun of the fair as Michael Werner, from Germany, threw his Liqui-Moly rig round the course like a racing maniac a) to catch Seebold and b) to get his son Mike off his back. I can think of a few more horrible positions for a driver: a Seebold in front and a Seebold up your transom.

But he hung on and the final order was Seebold, Werner, Seebold Jnr, Nicholson and Wilson.

The second heat had to be restarted as some eager-beavers jumped the gun but the restart became a super-dice between Seebold and Junior. Billy took over on the 4th lap and pulled away, while Mike fended off Wilson and Inward took fourth. Williams broke on the first lap, as did Werner, and Nicholson made it to lap 4.

The wind picked up on the Monday and in the third heat Wilson went for



the all-air route and in a high, soaring flip poor Mark flew like a bird, or at least a lame parrot. On the re-entry he bounced five times along the water on his bottom, biting his tongue first bounce. Unlucky Mark was a very sore lad.

Another flip occurred shortly after and when the red flags went out the order was Billy Seebold (Tissot/Jack Barclays/Mercury), Mike Seebold and Werner.

There was some confusion as to whether there would be a re-run or not, but after the usual rushing about, claim and counter-claim it was adjudged the third heat would stand and that made Billy Seebold the new and worthy ON World Champion.

Master plan

With Mike second and Werner third in that race, the Seebold master-plan for the final heat was for Junior to lead while Billy guarded his rear, if you will forgive the expression.

But even the best laid plans of Seebold 'oft gang agly' and Mike's motor went sick after a couple of laps. Billy was forced to lead from Werner and Mike limped in third. That left the two tied for runner-up overall and the German nipped in with the fastest lap time. Nicholson was the highest placed Briton in fourth.

The OZs may not be vastly faster than the ON's on a circuit like Holme Pierrepont, but they certainly sound it. The noise of those massive engines being wound up before the start was

enough to send tingles up and down your spine.

Billy Seebold attempted to gate-crash the OZ party in his ON rig, but scrutineering adjudged otherwise, and Billy was not allowed out to play. If he had been one or two OZ drivers may well have garroted him.

On to heat one and surprise, surprise, Renato Molinari (Tecnocar/Evinrude) first had the pack by the throat and then left them yapping at his heels. Cees van der Velden (Johnson) was left at the start and struggled thereafter, but Francois Salabert (JPS), also left, fought his way through the field to finish third.

A resigned Bob Spalding (JPS), had to settle for second. 'Not a hope', he said, 'Molinari has got tons on hand. I didn't have a hope of catching him.' Tom Percival, who had moved everything in the boat seven inches forward, took fourth and seemed happier with the handling than he has been of late.

Molinari produced a repeat solo run in the second heat, but this time Velden took his dirty water. Percival (JPS) and Spalding were battling for third until Bob dropped back, and before the end Roger Jenkins, struggling to regain his magic of the Worlds, managed to nip in for fourth.

The Italian clinched the British leg of the series with another effortless triumph in lap 3. Velden was again second, with Percival third as Spalding again dropped back. Arthur Mostert was fourth.

Molinari decided he had done enough



Photo: Tony Pearmain

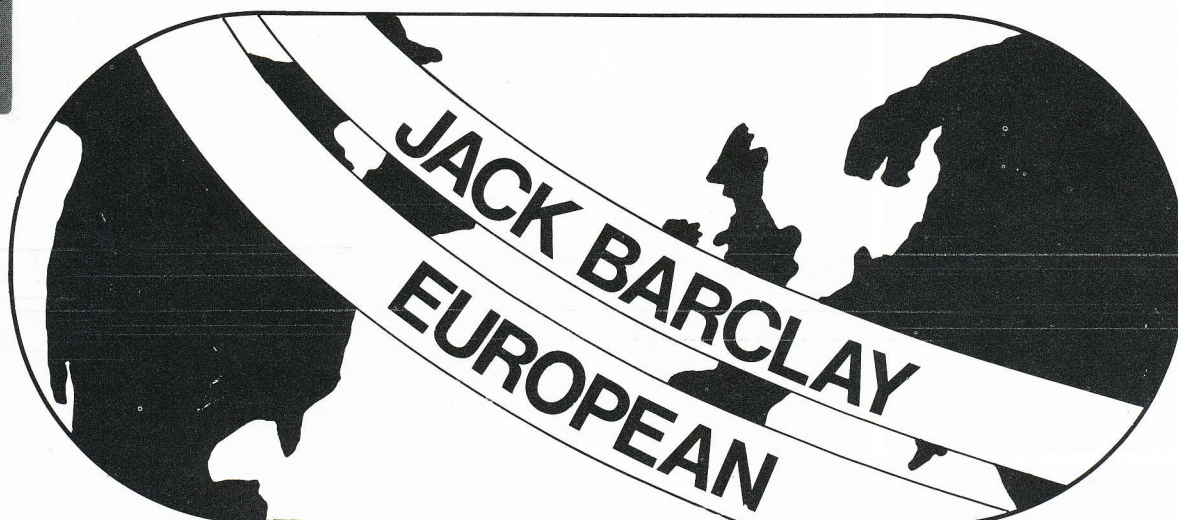
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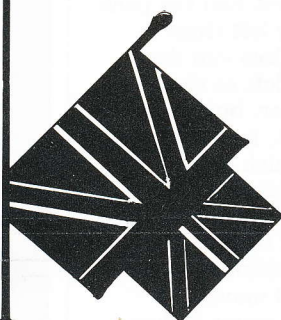
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**Congratulate Billy Seebold
on winning the
World ON Championships
at Holme Pierrepont**

PETER INWARD



BILL SEEBOLD



**Our congratulations also go
to Peter Inward for winning
the National ON class at
Holme Pierrepont**

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The fancy dress party caused a lot of hilarity. Top left: Bob Spalding!; Top right: Roger Jenkins' mechanic, Tony!; Bottom left: Jonathan Jones!; Bottom right: Colin Hayes as the 'Pubic Cube'!

and shut up shop before the final heat, leaving the way clear for Spalding to take the chequered flag. Percival and Velden dived for second and it seemed a fitting end to the JPS series when Bob crossed the line first and Tom second in their identical black and gold livery.

That would have been all sweetness and light, but this is rarely the case in circuit racing and Percival was docked a lap for hitting a buoy. In went the protest, and later apparently a counter-protest, and after much delay, confusion, mayhem and all-round griping Percival was over-ruled.

Great duel

The OE Aspen series was a great duel between John Hill (McEwans Lager/Evinrude) and Lasse Strom (Akai), a ding-dong affair right to the very end.

First blood went to Strom, who had clawed his way through the first after Hill had streaked off to a fine start. Both were running methanol, but Strom had more muscle, led on the third lap, and pulled away.

But the Swede barrel-rolled in heat two and Hill stepped in; if that was disaster for Strom, then it was Hill's turn on heat three, when he was left in the pits. This time Strom wins.

The last heat and now Strom's motor did not fire. By the time it did Hill had been and gone. The overall result after discard was a tie, and Strom scrapped home with a lap time one-tenth of a second faster than Hill.

Aspen OE standings after three races: Hill 21 pts; Strom 15; Valdano and Colombo 9.

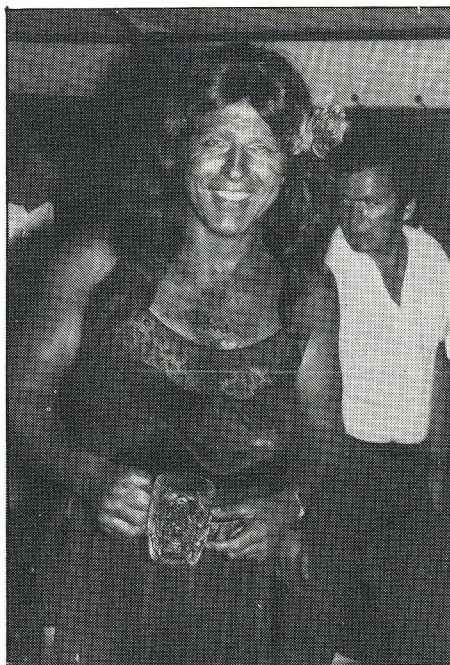
Peter Inward worked a bit of a strictly legal flanker in the also-ran ON's leg by running a second boat. Nothing wrong with that, let me hasten to add. He was giving double value to his sponsor, Tissot and Jack Barclays, and they were naturally delighted.

And the dentist took the first two heats. Fiona Brothers may have been closer in the first, but for stuffing it round a buoy.

Fiona did catch Inward in the third heat, but this race was remarkable for a father and son double flip. First Andy Bateman, on the limit, turned his boat over and a lap later his father, Graham did the same thing. Luckily both escaped serious injury.

The final heat was a cracker, Fiona, using a new prop, took time to settle but worked her way through the field and finally caught Inward. Overall, though, it was Inward from Brothers.

In SEs the weekend belonged to

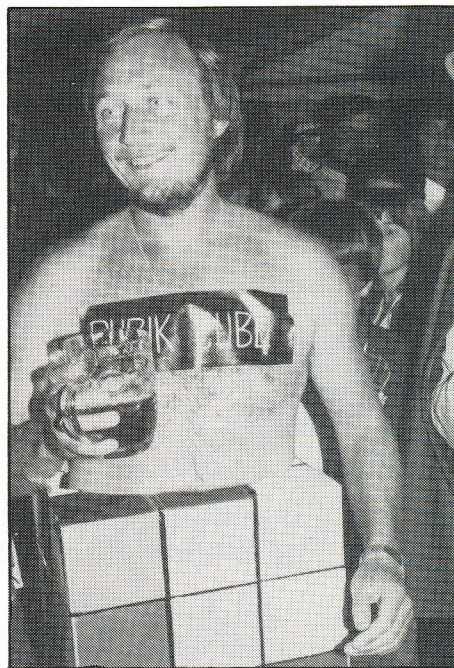


Nick Mawby, who scored three firsts and a fourth. Pedersen from Denmark showed good speed, but a smashed left sponson put paid to his overall chances. In the last heat he finally got his act together and romped home ahead of Peter Faithfull, who had been a consistent runner-up.

Willy Grey was a joy to watch in dominating the NSEs. Christeen Molgaard, the boat designer from Denmark, was competing and took three thirds and a second, a worthy effort.

As usual, those maniacs in monohulls gave full value for money. Ron Whitney (Forresters), despite spinning a couple of times, took the first heat NF laurels from Ron Baker and NE victory went to Mick Chick (Team Yamaha) from Andrew Elliott.

Same sort of order in the second heat, although Phil Duggan (Pentax) finished second to Whitney, while in



the NEs Elliott kept on smashing into buoys trying to get past Chick.

Whitney flipped in the third, a most unusual occurrence from Ron, leaving the heat honours to Duggan. Meanwhile, Elliott missed a buoy this time and was still runner-up to his friend Chick.

Whitney returned to the fray in heat four and wins after a tussle with Gary McLaughlin. Baker was third and our friendly foreigner, Alex Rodrigues (Forresters) fourth. In the NEs Elliott broke through the Chick barrier at last. His grin was as wide as the Grand Canyon.

We expected great things and we got them. A really wonderful and superbly organised race meeting. Our congratulations to the John Player for sponsorship, Len Britnell for organisation and, oh yes, the drivers for providing such marvellous entertainment.

