

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

U.S. FF2000 Championship: Round 11

Bianchi First

• **LOUDON, N.H., Aug. 18** Bruno Bianchi's first U.S. Formula Ford 2000 victory had taken its good sweet time in coming. So when he took his Key Tours/Van Diemen Ford on a low-line run past polesitter Steve Knapp on the 15th lap, he made it a I-will-not-be-denied run in the penultimate round at New Hampshire International Speedway. Starting on the outside of the front row, he gave up a little ground in the beginning, but clawed his way to the top and smoothly put a full-second gap between himself and second-place finisher Jason Bright.

"All weekend, we worked on a car that would stick at the bottom of the track," said Bianchi of Lachenaie, Quebec. "Steve was running a higher line, and I saw he was having some problem in the corners. I just drove underneath."

Bright started the weekend off with a high-dollar crash during the pre-race test session, but with his Skilled/Van Diemen Ford back to full song, climbed steadily up from seventh to fight a strenuous wheel-to-wheel duel with Knapp to secure second place.

Bright opened up a nine-point gap to Knapp in the overall championship points standings. "The car has been handling well all weekend. We've been quick enough, but we didn't qualify that well so we had to come from the back—again. By the time we got past Steve, [Knapp], Bruno Bianchi had too big a jump on us and there weren't enough laps."

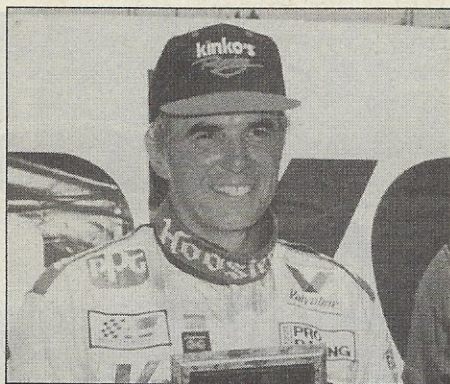
For Knapp, the flat-out oval-track setup that had worked so well at IRP and Richmond wasn't completely effective at New Hampshire, putting the three-time winner one session behind all weekend. Then, after crashing two hours before single-car qualifying, Knapp miraculously took his sixth-consecutive pole, but was stuck with a high-line, high-downforce setup that didn't work that well in an almost all-green, 50-lap race. Knapp is probably the only guy with a reasonable chance to challenge Bright for the title in the Las Vegas finale.

Driving the Victory Circle/DSTP Motorsports/Van Diemen Ford, Alex Barron finished fourth at NHIS after a loose oil hose took him out of contention at Mid-Ohio.

Allen May thought he had the setup that would take the Domicile Properties/Colmet/Van Diemen Ford to his second win of the year. Unfortunately, he blistered a tire instead. And although he pitted for a new one during the race's only full-course yellow, he finished fifth anyway. Still, May broke the tie for the lead in the USAC Oval Crown championship, putting a six-point gap between himself and Bright.

Starting 16th after losing a wheel bearing in single-car qualifying, Canadian Andrew Bordin brought his Player's Ltd./Van Diemen Ford up to a sixth-place finish. This dropped him to third in the overall championship points standings, 23 behind Bright.

Eighteen-year-old rookie Matthew Sielsky wasn't supposed to be at NHIS, but the Highcroft Racing team loaned him Michael Fitzgerald's Van Diemen Ford; and though he started way back in 15th, Sielsky took a solid seventh-place finish. Meanwhile, 17-year-old Joey Scarallo brought his ROH Alloy



Bob Schader clinched the ACRL SS title at Sears.

Wheels/O.Z. Race Wheels/Van Diemen Ford up from 24th to finish eighth ahead of Duncan Dayton in the Highcroft Racing/Tamarack Investments/Van Diemen Ford. Larry Vatri rounded out the top 10 in his Newark Parcel Service/Swift DB-6.

Just like his nemesis Allen May, Sam Schmidt thought things would go a whole lot better than they did. Although his Team Atlanta crew found the elusive electrical gremlin, they found it late in the weekend, leaving little time for high-speed running. Thus, Schmidt's Arnette Sunglasses/BG Lubricants/Van Diemen Ford ate up two right-front tires. Still, he finished 11th, ahead of Nick Holt in the Microsoft/Cape Motorsports/Van Diemen Ford.

—Laura Culley

• **QUALIFYING: Pos. Driver (chassis/all Yokohama tires), Time over 1.058-mile oval.** 1. Steve Knapp ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:30.205; 2. Bruno Bianchi ('94 Van Diemen Ford), 0:30.396; 3. Sam Schmidt ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:30.566; 4. Howard Katz ('93 Vector Ford), 0:30.759; 5. Allen May ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:30.865; 6. Larry Connor ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:30.952; 7. Jason Bright ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.133; 8. Robby McGehee ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.157; 9. Zak Morioka ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.159; 10. Duncan Dayton ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.212; 11. Joe Foster (Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.253; 12. Jeff Horne ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.319; 13. Alex Barron ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.401; 14. Larry Vatri (Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.411; 15. Matthew Sielsky ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.453; 16. Andrew Bordin ('95 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.528; 17. Peter MacLeod ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.620; 18. Nick Holt ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.681; 19. Robert Wright (Swift DB-6 Ford), 0:31.708; 20. Cory Witherill ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:31.916; 21. Scott Dick (Van Diemen Ford), 0:32.469; 22. Edwin Dasso (Citation Ford), 0:32.695; 23. Jeffrey Smith (Citation Ford), 0:32.761; 24. Joey Scarallo ('96 Van Diemen Ford), 0:33.057; 25. Jerry Petersen (Van Diemen Ford), 0:33.100; 26. John Economou (Van Diemen Ford), no time; 27. Ric Rushton ('95 Van Diemen Ford), no time.

• **RESULTS (50 laps for 52.9 miles):** 1. Bianchi, 50 laps, 28m10.885sec; 2. Bright; 3. Knapp; 4. Barron; 5. May; 6. Bordin; 7. Sielsky; 8. Scarallo; 9. Dayton; 10. Vatri; 11. Schmidt; 12. Holt, 49 laps; 13. Katz; 14. Rushton; 15. Horne; 16. Morioka, 48 laps (accident); 17. Smith; 18. MacLeod; 19. Foster; 20. Wright; 21. Connor, 47 laps (accident); 22. Petersen; 23. McGehee; 24. Dick, 46 laps; 25. Dasso, 21 laps (mechanical); 26. Witherill, 50 laps (disqualified). **DNS:** Economou. **Time of Race:** 28m10.885sec; **Length of Race:** 52.9 miles; **Margin of Victory:** 1.00sec; **Average Lap Speed:** 112.62mph; **Fastest Race Lap:** Jason Bright, 0:29.876 (127.48mph); **Lap Leaders:** Knapp, 1-14, Bianchi, 15-50.

• **POINT STANDINGS (top 5 after 11 of 12 rounds):** 1. Bright, 211; 2. Knapp, 203; 3. Bordin, 201; 4. Schmidt, 189; 5. May, 156. **USAC OVAL CROWN (top 5 after 5 of 6 rounds):** 1. May, 117; 2. Bright, 111; 3. Schmidt, 109; 4. Knapp, 93; 5. Bianchi, 92.

American City Racing League: Round 7

Schader Clinches

• **SONOMA, CALIF., July 13** Team San Diego's Bob Schader won his first ACRL Drivers Championship at the Kinko's-sponsored Sears Point race, the seventh of the ACRL's eight race series for 2-liter Ford Cosworth-powered sports racing cars. Polesitter Jeff Glenn of Team San Jose hounded Schader the entire way, closing to within a few feet at the flag. Chris Ronson of Team Las Vegas followed the battling duo to the line, scoring his first podium finish. Team Santa Barbara's Buddy Dold finished fourth, and San Diego's Margie Smith-Haas was fifth.

Schader, who had been fastest by over a second in all the practice sessions, damaged a front winglet on the first lap of qualifying, which slowed him just enough to allow Glenn to take the pole by a tenth of a second. San Diego's Marc Zurlinden, Reno's Rick Lee and Ronson also made the Daeco Top Five podium.

Glenn took off at the green flag and held the lead for three laps until Schader surged by in Turn One to take the lead for good. Zurlinden spun back to 13th place on the first lap, worked his way back up to fifth, but was eventually sidelined by a Turn Six crash. Lee ran in third behind the flying duo of Schader and Glenn, but sputtered to a halt in Turn Three, two laps from the end, victim of a fuel-consumption miscalculation. This moved Ronson to third, Dold to fourth and Smith-Haas to fifth, slipping and sliding in Dold's late-race oil spray. Her finish clinched the team win for San Diego.

Only Team Las Vegas has a mathematical chance of taking the City title away from San Diego at the Reno finale. With his win here at Sears Point, only Joe Gioski's father, Leo, has a chance to catch him for the Sports 2000 driver's championship. —Roger Diez

• **RESULTS: (18 laps, 45.36 miles) Driver/City Team** 1. Bob Schader/San Diego, 18 laps; 2. Jeff Glenn/San Jose; 3. Chris Ronson/Las Vegas; 4. Buddy Dold/Santa Barbara; 5. Margie Smith-Haas/San Diego; 6. Larry Vollum/Portland; 7. (S2) Joe Gioski/Woodland; 8. (S2) Bill Bachofner/Wilsonville; 9. (S2) Ian Wood/San Diego; 10. (S2) Dennis Reed/San Jose; 11. (S2) John Ostlund/Fresno; 12. (S2) Eric Lunn/Fresno; 13. Justin Ferguson/Anaheim; 14. (S2) John Bachofner/Wilsonville; 15. (S2) Leo Gioski/Woodland, 17 laps; 16. (S2) Jack Mucha/Montreal, 17 laps; 17. Jim Paul/Long Beach; 18. Rick Lee/Reno, 16 laps (mechanical); 19. Leo Sismani/Las Vegas, 14 laps (accident); 20. Joe Casanova/San Jose, 13 laps (mechanical); 21. Marc Zurlinden/San Diego, 10 laps (accident); 22. Neal Knox/Dallas, 7 laps (mechanical).

• **DRIVER POINT STANDINGS (top 10, best 6 of 7 finishes):** 1. Bob Schader/San Diego, 599 (Champion); 2. Rick Lee/Reno, 522; 3. (tie) Leo Sismani/San Diego and Jeff Glenn/San Jose, 502; 5. Chris Ronson/Las Vegas, 456; 6. (Rookie) Marc Zurlinden/San Diego, 426; 7. Joe Gioski/Woodland, 423; 8. Leo Gioski/Woodland, 357; 9. Ian Wood/San Diego, 329; 10. Larry Vollum/Portland, 313.

• **S2000 DRIVER POINT STANDINGS (top five, best 6 of 7 finishes):** 1. Joe Gioski/Woodland, 593; 2. Leo Gioski/Woodland, 524; 3. Ian Wood/San Diego, 455; 4. John Ostlund/Fresno, 352; 5. John Bachofner/Wilsonville, 313.

• **CITY CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS (top 10 after 7 rounds):** 1. San Diego, 1208; 2. Las Vegas, 1070; 3. Woodland, 908; 4. San Jose, 847; 5. Santa Barbara, 808; 6. Reno, 572; 7. Portland, 461; 8. Wilsonville, 421; 9. Vancouver, 402; 10. Fresno, 323.