

RIDGE RACER TYPE 4 - HISTORY OF THE GRAND PRIX RRR

“REAL RACING ROOTS” commonly called “RRR” is one of the most famous racing competitions in the world, along with the “Formula 1 Grand Prix” and the “Le Mans 24 Hour”. RRR stands for Real, Racing Roots and aims to pursue the roots of real racing as it says. The history of RRR is surprisingly old dating back to 1949 when the first competition was held in Avignon, France. The sponsor was Louis Age, who was a very wealthy man and the founder of the Age Solo car manufacturing company. At that time only a small number of manufacturers participated in RRR and the event was still only small in scale. However, it gradually gained in popularity since the rules were changed to incorporate the current 8 courses for competition, in 1975. In the middle of the 1980’s RRR became recognized as one of the greatest Grand Prix’s in the World. It is also noted for its careful selection of participating teams. Four teams have now been selected to race in the latest RRR, using these strict selection procedures.

RC MICRO MOUSE MAPPY

“RACING CLUB MICRO MOUSE MAPPY” is a unique team owned by a 24 year-old woman. The team itself has for a long time been a participant in the RRR competition. It was originally run by her grandfather who took a great interest in the racing industry. He had been taking care of the team since its first entry into RRR, but things soon changed after he was diagnosed with heart disease the year before last and became unable to direct the team. She then quickly succeeded him as the owner of the team.

She had been watching the team’s activity since she was a little girl and dreamed of becoming the owner of the team and then a winner, someday in the future. She also promised her grandfather that she would realize her dreams, and indeed she realized one of her dreams of becoming an owner. The other dream was to win. However, in reality it was not so easy. Once the races started, various problems arose.

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Part of the problem is that she was raised spoilt, so the racing business is just pleasure to her, which she does not take seriously. Her attitude toward the team staff was just like a superior treating subordinates, there should be good communication within the team. The staff made many complaints, and as a result the whole team became demoralized. Consequently the records of the team were getting progressively worse.

Her father who took over her grandfather's company was a realist and was considering withdrawing from the racing business, which required a lot of money to fund even with bad team performances. A month before the RRR '99 is held, her father finally issued her with an ultimatum.

“If you fail to win the championship for the next racing competition, you'll have to quit as the owner and get married to the fiancé I choose for you.”

She has been driven into a corner, and is eager to win the race, but her little knowledge of racing is doing her no favors.

She does at least have skillful staff in her team. But will her team be able to win the race? Will she be able to become a real owner?

PAC RACING CLUB

The RRR competition will be held this year and the big news is that a new team “PAC RACING CLUB” has entered the competition. This is the first entry from Japan. Considering her top world class economic power and technology, it may be surprising to know that Japan has never participated in the RRR competition up to now. Why is it then that a Japanese team have tried to enter the RRR at this time? The depression in Japan is the reason for such an action.

Japan has achieved high economic growth since World War II without experiencing depression for decades. The U.S. criticized Japan for her trade surplus, this was thanks to the good exchange rate of the Yen for Japan, both of which are still fresh in our memory. The peak of the so-called “bubble economy” came in early 1990. Then the bubble burst and stock as well as land prices plunged, hitting Japan with an unprecedented depression. Many companies went into bankruptcy and even the banks were no exception. Consequently a large number of people lost their jobs and the unemployed overflowed in the streets. In the past 5 to 6 years' people haven't heard any bright topics and a gloomy mood has been hanging over the whole nation.

“We have to do something positive”, thought the people in the business field. Some bright topics should be presented before the people in order to encourage them just a bit to overcome the depression. So they came up with the idea of participating in the RRR competition which is outstandingly popular in the world.

With the background above the PAC RACING CLUB had a hard task, and Shinji Yazaki was selected as its team manager. He used to belong to the RT SOLVALOU team, as an active racer when he was around 20 and was the only Japanese racer at the time, which was the reason why he was appointed manager. It will be very interesting to see how far Shinji, as a former RRR participant, will be able to go leading a new team. Shinji's team has a high level of technical knowledge, which will reflect in their cars performance, so they are by no means inferior to the other teams. If they can get a good driver, it is most likely that the team will be “the one to watch” in the forthcoming RRR competition.

DIG RACING TEAM

The “DIG RACING TEAM” is a distinguished racing team, for it has continuously participated in RRR since the first competition was held in 1949. They are also noted for having competed with the RT SOLVALOU team many times for the championship. However in the past few years the team's records have declined, so that it is now called by many people in the racing business “A team that digs its own grave”.

Why has the team deteriorated so much? It dates back to 12 years ago when, a food manufacturer, then the parent company of the DIG RACING TEAM was acquired by an oil mining company whose president is the current owner of the team. The new owner had neither the knowledge nor experience of racing, yet began to interfere in various team matters. Of course the owner funded the team and it cannot be maintained without him. Naturally his right to speak has near absolute power. He made special requests not only with the management of the team, which might be bearable, but also with the contents and tactics that the team should use in a race. This must have been hard to bear for other people, let alone the staff. A year after the parent company changed, a then great manager, Donald Lewis left the team and moved to RC MICRO MOUSE MAPPY. It was then that the DIG RACING TEAM began to go badly downhill.

The present team manager is Robert Chrisman, who was an assistant manager while Donald was the manager. He seems to be a competent man considering the fact that he was appointed an assistant manager as young as he was, and Donald trusted him. However he has a timid nature, which means he cannot

oppose his owner, even at the last minute, even though he knows that the owner is wrong. What is worse, is that recently the owner has begun to cut down the racing funds for the team. The bad performance and records of the team were given as part of the reason. Now the DIG RACING TEAM no longer shows any vestige of its former glory and, because of the lack of funds, it means they cannot even modify their cars for better performance like they want to.

Will the DIG RACING TEAM be able to fight through all eight of the RRR races in the competition, under these circumstances or not?

RT SOLVALOU

The "RACING TEAM SOLVALOU" has entered all the RRR competitions, since the 9th Grand Prix. They have had the most victories for a RRR participant over the years and always perform well, normally expecting to be victorious. The team is also known for the heroic deed of winning the championship as a new entrant for the 9th RRR in 1967 when it made its debut. It then achieved three successive season wins, in 1969 and 1971, following on from 1967, which was the first time ever in the RRR history. It reached the top position in the RRR in just a few years, pushing aside all the other veteran teams, for which Enki Gilbert, the team owner and manager, acted as the driving force. He was formerly a driver for the DIG RACING TEAM and was then called a "genius racer". He has won numerous championships in his time and was regarded by most people as a "racer with no equal". He retired from the racing world in 1965 and two years later founded RT SOLVALOU.

Gilbert enjoyed his glory as a racer during his active years and then aimed to train the new team members and young drivers. He, as the owner and the manager of the team, used his knowledge and experience to educate the team staff and drivers, he would not allow any compromise in his pursuit of speed. Because of this the team won the championship in the year of its first entry, and now they have raised their position to the point of being called "an ever-victorious team."

However they could not reach this point without any trouble. More than 10 years ago RT SOLVALOU had the misfortune to lose Juliano Gilbert, the teams top racer, he was killed in an accident. He was the son of Enki Gilbert and with his amazing driving ability he was thought of as a "second advent" of his father. The death of the team's top racer threw them into confusion and its withdrawal from the racing world was rumored. Yet Enki courageously decided to continue racing and overcame his grief. The RT SOLVALOU team still exists now, even after all that has happened.

ASSOLUTO

ASSOLUTO Co., named after the founder Assoluto, is a pure sports car manufacturer representing not only Italy, but also the world.

Assoluto himself had a career as a racer. He debuted as a professional racer at the age of 21 and competed with his good rival, Enki Gilbert for the championship in every domestic race. He was expected sooner or later to gain the reputation of a genius driver. When he had nearly reached this point Assoluto unexpectedly had an internal health disorder, which forced him to retire from racing before realizing his ambition. Yet his spirit was so strong that he believed that he could win the Grand Prix even though his physical strength for controlling the cars was lost. Yes, as the owner of a team. He organized his own racing team right after his forced retirement from active racing and also founded a company that would work on and develop new cars. His enthusiasm was so great that it created a rumor that he would make commercial cars in order to earn funds for racing activity.

As the racing business required enormous amount of money, there was once talk of selling the company to Lizard, a giant U.S. manufacturer. They, however, could not agree to the terms. A well-known quote of Assoluto's was that he proudly said, "Even if I sell my company, I can never sell my soul for racing".

Then as he got old, he withdrew from all racing activities, but he still pours a lot of his energy into his business. He leads the development staff and works everyday as hard as ever, always devoted to the development of a new machine.

Incidentally it is Enki Gilbert, that founded RT SOLVALOU, a rival in his active racing years, who Assoluto now supports. Assoluto and Enki are comrades, representing Italy in various ways. Assoluto helps Enki by providing racing funds and technical knowledge for the RT SOLVALOU team. A foe in the past is a friend today.

LIZARD

LIZARD is the leader and a major pulling power of the car manufacturer market in the world. It has a 60% share of the U.S. market and is recognized in the world, as the top class car manufacturer, in amount of car production. It is such a giant enterprise that the company has influence not only over the car industry

but over the world economy as well. This was not always the case, once there was a time when even this, now giant company, experienced hardship.

Lizard cars are clearly different from Assoluto and Age Solo cars in their nature. Lizard's cars have large bodies and great power and torque to drive these powerhouses. The design of these large Americanized cars are in sharp contrast to the smart and compact design of European sports cars, whose differences can be attributed to road conditions and national character.

Lizard had to make a big change after the oil shock. More economical and eco-friendly cars were required in the world market at the time, the time of the compact cars had arrived. The U.S., a big exporter of cars, now began to import more cars from Japan and Europe and Lizard's market share started falling.

At that time a Japanese car company called Terrazi achieved a dramatic increase in sales, which is said to have enabled them to enter the racing business.

Lizard also had a desperate fight going on in the racing business and was suffering successive bitter losses in the compact car races. Lizard's compact cars were, in comparison, as large as a European large model of car, in size as well as displacement. So they could in no way match the performance, or the experienced design of these European car manufacturers.

However it was under this threatening climate that Lizard was given a good opportunity to review their cars. The technicians and development staff at the company united as one, and pooled all their resources to develop the best cars they could. They succeeded in wiping out the stain of their former defeats in later years.

If it was not for this period of hardship that they had experienced in earlier years, Lizard could not have enjoyed the prosperity that they do today.

TERRAZI

There was once a Japanese man who was charmed by cars. He graduated from university, and helped in his family business. His name was Shouichiro Terrazi, who often heard news about car racing taking place overseas, which made his heart leap with excitement night and day. "I want to make a car on my own, and to be able to run it on the racing circuit some day" he thought.

This young man's dream moved slightly forward right after World War II. He closed his family business of ironworks and started an auto factory, this was the start of a long cherished desire of his. However people were still in poverty during the postwar period and there was a shortage of resources such as gasoline (petrol) etc. Terrazi wasn't rash to pursue his dream, he considered that the society would require cheap and easy-handling motorcycles in this period of time.

So Terrazi launched his business as a motorcycle manufacturer. Fortunately the sale of his motorcycles was good and as his company steadily grew, Terrazi's dream of four-wheel cars kept on reoccurring to him. However there were already many car manufacturers that existed in the domestic market. It was not going to be an easy job to survive such a situation.

Then Terrazi took a policy of thorough characterization of his cars. He tried to make his company recognized and renowned, rather than solely trying to increase sales. For this purpose he selected to build small sports cars using a technology that was developed in the motorcycle business. It hit the mark. Although the first model was not a big hit, it attracted a great deal of mass media and he began to be looked upon as a lucky adventurer.

Terrazi now has a wide range and lineup of cars and is no longer a pure sports car manufacturer. It is a car manufacturer that is in the middle of the rankings of the car market in Japan, but has a fanatical following of fans called "Terrazi believers" they love Terrazi cars for their reliable technology and original design characteristics.

And now Terrazi has decided to participate in the RRR for the first time, as a Japanese car manufacturer, carrying the dreams of many fans. Terrazi's new challenge has just begun.

AGE SOLO

Louis Age, the founder of the Age Car Company, was born in 1877, eight years before the car was invented. As a little boy he took a great interest in automobiles, a then great invention, and was to spend the rest of his life with cars. Age made his first car at the young age of 21.

It was a small car that he had made, and he imitated other designs, which he had seen. He made the car in a small rented part of the town workshop. He showed his car to his friends, which instantly created a lot of excitement. One

friend even expressed his interest to buy the car on that occasion, which gave Age confidence as well as a lot of money.

Then he founded a company with that money so he could start full-scale car manufacturing. Age also paid attention to car racing which was beginning to become popular around that time. A car manufacturer that enters their cars into the racing can gain a lot of valuable promotion and prestige for their company. If their cars are victorious in the championships, this beneficial effect will be greater. Above all though, if the cars his company had made were to be successful over the other competing manufacturers, then this would make Louis Age very proud and give him much personal satisfaction.

So Age actively participated in the racing world. Originally he aimed to make cars suitable for everyday life. He made a lot of effort to produce racing cars that were lighter and more durable, which helped achieve Age's successive wins. While other makers were shifting their cars to the ones with larger output, Age conducted a heroic deed of winning the general championship without increasing the displacement of their cars.

Its factory was burnt and destroyed in World War II and it has had its dark days, being nationalized after the War. But even now it has not lost lightness and controllability of its cars and the company has been growing steadily since.

In 1998 Age Solo was finally founded. It is a subsidiary division of Age. The sports car department has split off from the main company (Age) to build a full backup system for their racing cars. This shows the spirit that the Age Solo has towards the RRR of 1999.

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Developer: Namco Genre: Arcade Racing No of Players: 1-2 Peripherals: Analog Controller (DUAL SHOCK), Memory Card, neGcon, JoGcon
