

## March F1 to F2 Conversion

by Ken Stone

March racing cars had an up and down career in F1. They had been winners and also-rans. Relatively they had more success in F2 which in those days was also known as Formula Atlantic (FA). This series was popular all over the world with Formula Pacific in Australia and Asia. In the U.S, it was FA but used 1600cc carburetted engines instead of two litre injected motors. It was a wonderful series to watch as Grand Prix stars raced against the up and coming (like Giles Villeneuve) unlike today when the F1 stars only race against others in the off season.

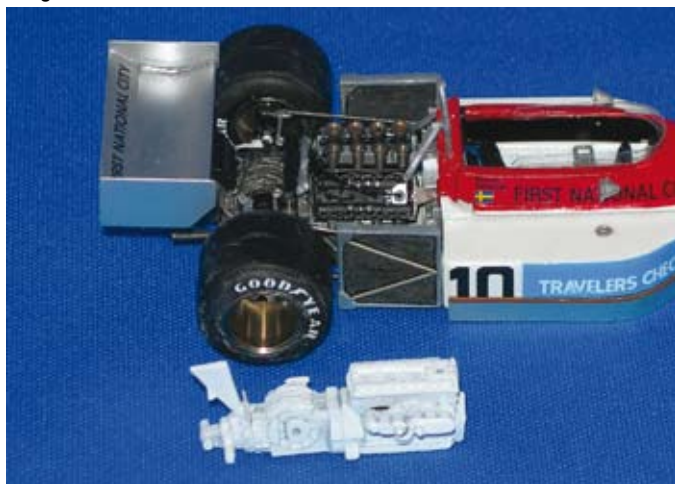
March had most of its success in the minor formula like FA. They supported the F1 effort by making forty to sixty customer race cars a year of all types. I decided to convert a March 761 to a FA because one of my friends had a real one. I have been building models for decades. Because I race a FA in the U.S. in vintage racing, I know many people with this sort of car so have made seven of these conversions for friends.

For a March race car the best kit to begin with is a Tameo 751 or 761 and for this build I have used a 761 ([TMK236](#)). They are the most detailed and have an engine made of six pieces unlike the SilverLine ones which have a one piece engine block. After all we need a four cylinder engine for a FA.



Mechanical parts from the base kit before modification.

The engine in FA's was a Cosworth BDA from 1972 till the 1990's. This engine was made after the famous DFV and shared a similar cam cover. So to make a BDA one simply has to bend the white metal parts to narrow the angle of the block on the "pan" and make it square. After that it is a matter of trimming the heads off the front cover and bellhousing, slightly modifying the bellhousing to fit, reattaching the heads and adding the transmission. In an F1 of this era the transaxle was usually an Hewland DG and in a FA it was the FT200 Hewland which fortunately for us are visually similar. A FA had the wing mount attached to the end of the transmission but since things are so delicate in this scale I have chosen to leave it where it is for strength.



The newly created 4-cylinder engine alongside the V8 original.

Now for the second big modification, it is necessary to cut up the mono-coque. This was the era when sidepods were mandated as crash structures which is why the cars became so wide thus ending with ground effects eventually. FAs had them also but in the US our races were not as



Ken Stone's March F2 conversion represents a car currently competing in historic FA races (left) with the Tameo March 761 Monza 1976 for comparison.

long so not needing the extra room for larger gas tanks the SCCA here mandated smaller sidepods. So with some sidecutters and epoxy putty the F1 sidepods were removed and the smaller ones made. The engine cover was different also and once again epoxy putty to the rescue.



Original, unmodified, body parts from Tameo's kit ([TMK236](#))

The last major modification was the rear tyres. The F1s ran with 13 inch fronts and 15x13 rears while the FAs were limited to 13x13 rears, 13 inches was the width. So how can you cut the wheel and tyre the same amount? The easiest way I have found is to use a razor saw with two blades which can be fixed at a set distance apart. The one I have is available from [www.umm-usa.com](#). It is originally from the Czech Republic so you may find it in Europe. I cut the wheels separately from the tyres and then super-glued the pieces together.



The completed body conversion parts alongside F1 original for reference.

The last two chores are to make the airbox for the carburettors from epoxy putty and to shorten the nose. The F1 has a longer "cow-catcher" than a FA. F1s ran higher downforce noses since they had bigger wings and tyres and the horsepower needed to overcome those factors. After you get that done, it is just a matter of paint and decals. If you have been making models for a long time you will probably have a supply for the car you wish to make. Tameo has always been helpful in giving us two sheets for many of their cars. An alternative would be to make your own with one of the many computer programs around and Baremetal Foil's decal papers ([BMFCLEAR](#) / [BMFWHITE](#)). If you need Weber carburettors for a US version, Marsh Models make some as part [MMA009](#) which is still available.

After several weeks of toil you end up with the desired result, a pleasing model you can be proud of and a friend who will be overjoyed to receive such a gift.