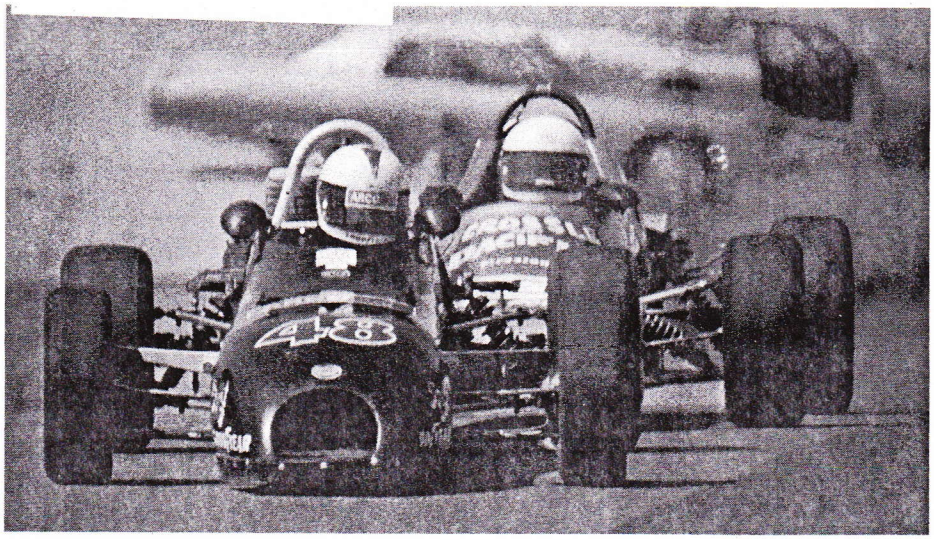
LOOKING AT USED CARS...

An Informal, Unofficial Formula Ford Bluebook

BY MIKE HULL
Technical Editor SPORTS CAR® Magazine



The 1978 National Championship winning Eagle is no longer in production. David Hahs

What follows is a used car buyer's guide for some of the more popular Formula Fords. Although a Formula Ford chassis depreciates approximately $100 per track hour ($200 per race weekend), it seems to depreciate more by model year than by actual track time. A new FF usually depreciates about $1000 in its first year whether it has been raced only once or every weekend. In fact, a front-line well-used FF will usually sell for more than an identical marque of little use.

CHASSIS	HIGH VALUE	LOW VALUE	COMMENTS
ADF MKII	$16,000	$12,500	Will hold resale value; to update older chassis to newer model is bolt-on items; condition of rod ends critical.
Crossle - 16F & 20F	$ 3,500	$ 2,500	Not many around; will re-sell because of current model reputation
25F	$ 5,000	$ 4,000	Easy to drive, similar to later cars, good for entry level.
30F	$ 6,500	$ 4,500	Can be updated to later versions with bodywork; original 30's needed additional cooling; a good choice.
32F & 35F	$12,500	$ 9,500	Refinement of 30F with bodywork, forward bracing, etc.; good owner feedback; plenty around, so shop the market for condition.
Eagle	$10,500	$ 9,000	No longer in active production, but factory stocks pieces; quick in the right hands.
Elden - Ph8-10	$ 4,500	$2,500	Very short wheelbase; seems more difficult for beginner to drive than some.
Hawke - DL2	$ 3,500	$ 2,500	Hawke no longer producing cars, parts for older cars almost non-existent.
DL15-17 DL20	$ 7,000	$ 5,000	Many sold east of Mississippi; check parts availability.
LeGrand - Mk10-13	$ 4,500	$ 3,500	Not many left; factory and parts available in U.S.—good technical advice.
Mk21	$ 7,500	$ 4,500	Few sold, resale a bit difficult, shown quickness in certain hands.
Lola - T-200-204	$ 3,500	$ 2,500	In beginner's price range; difficult for beginner because of short wheelbase. The reputation seems to sell the car.
T-340-342	$ 6,500	$ 4,500	Good handler; look for stiffened chassis and rear radiators; can still win.
T-440	$ 9,500	$ 7,500	Not as good as T-342; later cars had revised suspension and spring rates which really helped.
T-540	$12,500	$ 9,500	This year's car; excellent choice for anyone. Good as delivered, look for one with little time.
Lotus - 51	$ 2,500	$ 1,500	Will be collectors' car very soon but parts non-existent; once the "state of the art."
61	$ 3,500	$ 2,000	Easy to drive for beginner, but parts not available.
Merlyn - Mk11	$ 3,500	$ 2,000	Good starter car, if you can find one in reasonable condition; still a lot to choose from; should resell easily.
Mk17,20,24,25	$ 4,500	$ 3,500	Sound, basic FF's with parts still around.
Mk29 & 30	$ 7,500	$ 4,500	Not as good as earlier models.
Mk31	$10,000	$ 8,500	Departure from past, fast in proper hands, not many sold.
PRS - RH01	$12,500	$ 9,500	This year's car; is good and philosophy seems to be one of "update" a la Crossle; good dealer support.
Royale - RP16	$ 3,500	$ 2,500	Quite a few sold; needed "Bob Earl" modifications (suspension, body, cooling) to be reasonable. Parts for early car getting scarce.
RP24	$10,000	$ 7,500	Diversion from past, good construction technique, quick.
RP26	$12,500	$ 9,500	Diversion from RP24, good parts availability.
Tiga - 76F	$ 5,000	$ 4,000	Strong and stout.
77F	$ 6,500	$ 4,500	Strong, never given a fair chance, delivered with very good hardware.
78/79F	$12,500	$ 8,500	Good as earlier models; will stand up to abuse; can be a flier if given the chance.
Titan - MK6	$ 4,500	$ 2,500	A ton produced, any model if still rolling is good for starters; too bad it iss no longer in production.

CHASSIS	HIGH VALUE	LOW VALUE	COMMENTS
Van Diemen - RF78	$ 8,000	$ 6,500	First year of serious importation into U.S. Good car, strong, simple, easy to set up.
RF79	$12,500	$10,000	Slight revision to RF78; good for beginner or race winner.
Zink - Z10	$10,000	$ 4,500	Revised slightly through the years; all bolt-on revisions such as radiators, Bilstein shocks, fuel cell; clearly a dominator in right hands.

Categorically contained herein is a list of some of the options or items to closely examine upon intent to purchase a FF. Determine a grading system for each car. If the car, its options and condition is graded on a scale from poor to excellent, the chance for a successful purchase is elevated. Don't be intimidated by the overpowering desire to race; use a systematic and rational approach in selection.

AEROQUIP: Few English FFs are delivered without Aeroquip, so most owners Aeroquip their rubber hydraulic and engine lines out of necessity. Current market value is $250.

AIR CLEANER: If the car has an air cleaner, you know the owner is definitely concerned about the life of the engine. A standard bolt-on cleaner currently sells for $35, while a handmade plenum chamber is worth $70 to $100.

BATTERY: Most FFs are delivered with Varley Green Top Racing batteries, currently sold for $140 and worth it. The condition is essential. Auxiliary battery connectors and their wiring systems are probably worth an additional $75.

BODYWORK: Resale-wise, it is better to have a car of standard configuration or one with little modification. The buyer is comparing one to the other and will be skeptical of variations. Stockers are worth more.

ENGINE: It is either an English- or U.S.-built motor. The original engine, Cortina, is worth $1000 to $2000, whereas the uprated engine is valued from $1500 to $4000, depending upon condition, engine builder and merit at the end of the straight.

FASTENERS: Most FFs seem to be delivered with Grade Five hardware; many owners replace nuts, bolts, clamps, terminals, etc. with flight grade hardware. Today's value is $200.

FIRE EXTINGUISHER SYSTEM: Most FFs are delivered with a hand-held extinguisher, the two-and-one-half pound variety, which is worth nothing to you in a fire. An English or U.S. onboard system is valued at $150 to $250 installed and is worth more if it saves your life.

GENERAL APPEARANCE: Look to the basic care taken in cleanliness of the chassis itself, the condition of plated parts, basic repairs to the chassis. To strip it to the bare frame and rebuild to good condition can be worth as much as $1000 in time and materials.

INSTRUMENTS: Most FFs are delivered with Smith Instruments and replaced with original equipment or Stewart-Warner. There is no real difference in price, only one of preference.

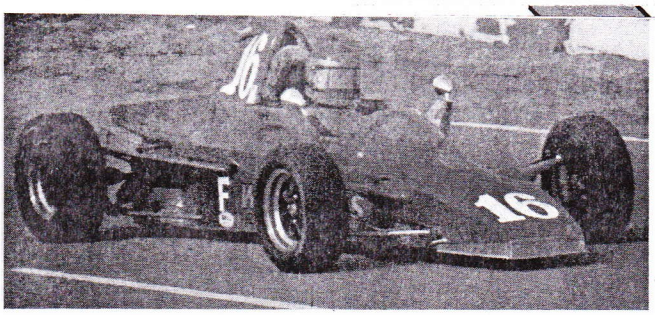
ROD ENDS: Good rod ends and spherical joints are essential to the handling characteristics of the automobile. A good Teflon-lined 4130-shank bearing lists for $25. It is worth the money. Most FFs have a minimum of 20 rod ends of various sizes. Look to their manufacture and condition.

SHOCK ABSORBERS: Most FFs are delivered with Bilstein, Armstrong or Spax shocks with a current replacement value of $175. Some FFs have Koni shocks which currently list for $295.

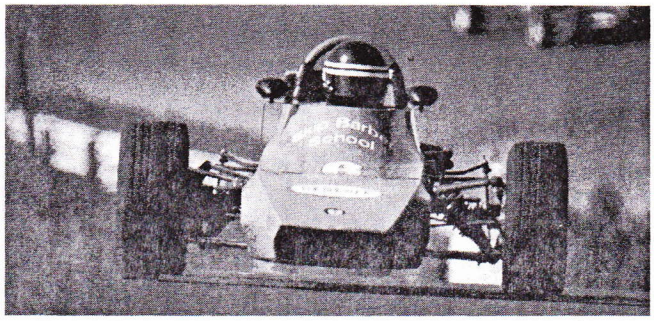
WHEELS: Beyond steel wheels (worth $30 each), most FFs have an alloy wheel which sells from $110 to $250 each in new condition.

A NOTE ON VALUABLE SPARES: With the sales price of a used FF, many times the owner will include spares and they will seem to weight the conversation and sale. Look to their condition. Most FF drivers carry spare gear sets, a starter, electrical pieces, a gasket set, an extra nose piece, and a few tune-up parts. Look carefully at their condition because it might be better to have the sale price reduced by their market value and purchase your own spares.

-Mike Hull

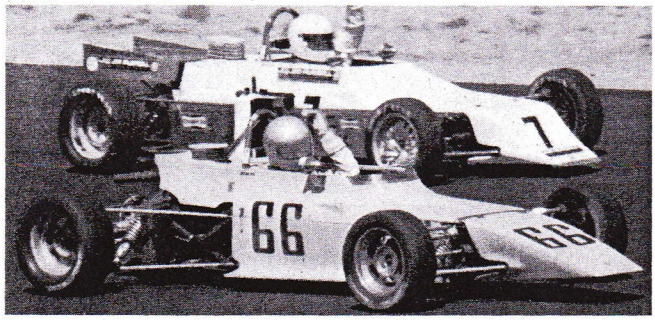


(ABOVE) 1977/78's Lola T-440. (BELOW) '75/'76 Crossle 30F.

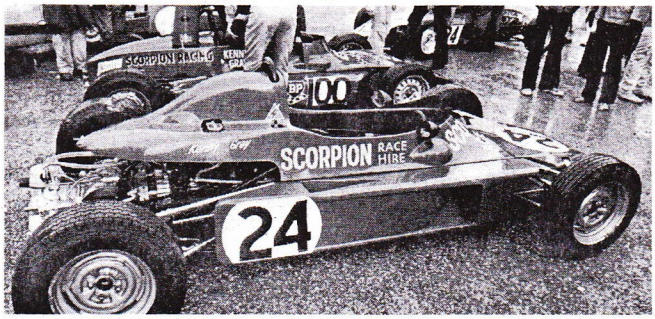
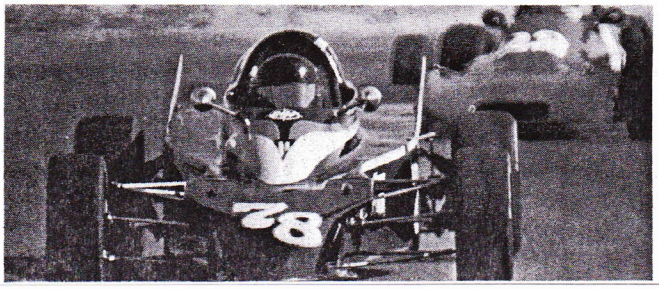


Last year's Van Diemen was a big winner. Stan Clinton

Merlyn Mk31 (high) and Mk30 (low).



Sturdy and quick—Royale RP-24.



ADF MkII—resale king. Dan Fitzgerald