

# Juniors come of age



Ian Garmey's attractive Cooper leads a group of Formula Juniors.

Photo: [www.groundsky.co.nz](http://www.groundsky.co.nz)

**Formula Junior celebrates its Golden Jubilee this year with a series of races across the globe.**

**By Nigel Russell**

From 1958 to 1963, Formula Junior replaced the motorcycle-engined 500cc F3 cars as the stepping-stone to Formula 1. It was the brainchild of Italian Count "Johnny" Lurani, and provided for 1.0 or 1.1 litre production engines and gearboxes in mini Grand Prix chassis. In its short six years, the design covered the major progression of racing car evolution from ladder-framed front-engined cars, through space-frame chassis, to rear engined space-frames such as the Coopers, and finally to the full monocoque chassis of the Lotus 27.

Formula Juniors ranging from 1958 to 1963 gathered under sunny skies to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Formula Junior at the January Tasman Grand Prix meeting held at Pukekohe, and the Tasman Revival meeting held at Taupo a week later.

Twenty-two cars from around the world and 17 cars from the New Zealand Formula Junior Register combined, for a strong international flavour. The field of 39 Formula Juniors was one of the major drawcards that saw the Historic Racing Club-promoted event burgeon from the normal 200-odd competitors to well over 400 entrants, making it the largest motor race meeting of any kind held in this country.

Over 18,000 spectators came through the gates over the three days of the Tasman Grand Prix.

Seven early front-engined cars of the type that initially dominated the International Formula in 1958 and '59 were on hand, with the remainder of the field being rear-engined models. Many were from well-known companies such as Lotus, Lola, Cooper, and Brabham with others from long forgotten manufacturers such as Ausper, Emeryson, Lynx, Nota and Gemini. The quality of the cars was impressive, with two former Team Lotus works cars racing, while other cars participating had been raced by the likes of Jim Clark and Denny Hulme.

The recently restored Lola Mk2 FJ of Roger Herrick made its debut at Taupo where it had its first race in over 40 years. This was the first Lola single-seater produced by the company.

The drivers engaged in close and exciting racing. Front runners were hitting speeds of 130mph at the Pukekohe circuit, and the fastest front-engined cars were doing over 110mph at the end of the straight.



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