

# Cooper Climax T53

**Scalextric C.2639A Cooper-Climax T53**  
**- Jack Brabham, Portuguese Grand Prix 1960.**

**Scalextric C.2729 Cooper-Climax T53**  
**- Bruce McLaren, Monaco Grand Prix 1960.**

By Holger "Slaasshh" Thor

Englishman Charles Cooper built his first racing car in 1936, but it was first after serving with the Royal Air Force during the war, he and his son, John, in 1946 decided to go serious into motor racing. They build their own car and used a JAP motorcycle engine for the new 500cc racing series.

The 500cc series became know as Formula 3 in 1951, and Cooper chassis was widely used all over Europe. In 1952, when the World Championship was run to Formula 2 regulations, Cooper moved up a step and Mike Hawthorn finished third in a Cooper in the British GP and won the non-championship Daily Mail Trophy at Boreham.

When the Formula 1 regulations changed to 2.5 litre engines in 1954 Cooper faded from the Grand Prix scene. But in 1957, however, Climax engines were fitted into Cooper chassis and Australian Jack Brabham became a regular at Formula 1 races. In 1958 Stirling Moss drove a private Rob Walker Cooper to victory in Argentina. The little 1.9 litre rear placed engine was able to make up for the horsepower difference to the 2.5 litre Ferraris with front engines. In 1959 Climax stretched the engines to 2.5 litres and the Cooper-Climax T51 was fully competitive. Jack Brabham won the Monaco and British GPs, Stirling Moss won in Portugal and Italy and Bruce McLaren won in the United States. Jack Brabham won his first world title, and Cooper took the constructors title.

In 1960 Cooper and Brabham totally cleaned up with a new Cooper-Climax T53. Bruce McLaren started the season with a fine win in the Argentine GP, but then Jack Brabham took over. Starting with the Dutch GP he took five victories in a row and claimed his second title.



Jack Brabham in his Cooper-Climax T53 #2 on the way to victory at the Portuguese GP at Oporto on August 14th 1960. Bruce McLaren came through to finish second to give Cooper another fine 1-2 result with Jim Clark finishing third in a Lotus-Climax 18. Brabham's victory meant that he clinched the World Championship with two races still remaining. Jack Brabham went on to construct his own car, and in 1966 he claimed his third title in a Brabham-Repco BT19. In 1970 he won his 14th and final GP in South Africa in a Brabham-Cosworth BT33. Australian Jack Brabham was knighted in 1979 for his achievements in motor sport.



Bruce McLaren in his Cooper-Climax T53 #10 on his way to second place in the Monaco GP on May 29th 1960. Stirling Moss won the race in a Lotus-Climax 18. New Zealand born Bruce McLaren became famous as being the youngest Formula 1 driver to win a GP, which he did in a Brabham-Climax T51 at Sebring at the United States GP on December 12th 1959. As his mentor, Jack Brabham, Bruce McLaren went on to construct his own car. During his career he won 4 GPs, several CanAm titles and was victorious at Le Mans in 1966 in a Ford GT40 Mk II together with Chris Amon. Sadly, on June 2nd 1970 while testing a McLaren CanAm car at Goodwood he was killed. But his name lives on forever in the fine victories and championships won in cars bearing his name by stars like Denny Hulme, Peter Revson, Emerson Fittipaldi, James Hunt, Niki Lauda, Alain Prost, Ayrton Senna, David Coulthard, Mika Häkkinen, Kimi Räikkönen. Lewis Hamilton, Jenson Button etc.

In 1961 regulations were changed again, favouring the Ferraris, and Cooper never again became competitive in the same manor. Jack Brabham left the team to design his own car, and at Monaco in 1962 Bruce McLaren won the last GP victory for Cooper.

In 1964 Charles Cooper died and not long afterwards John was seriously injured in a road accident. The running of the Formula 1 team was effectively handed over to Ken Tyrrell, and in 1965 John Cooper, after a total win of 16 GPs, sold his company to Chipstead Motor Group. If you talked of motor racing in the early sixties it was impossible not to mention "Black Jack" Brabham and the rear engine driven Cooper, a bit like Michael Schumacher and Ferrari a few years ago. This was noticed in the new born slot car world as well.



Box for Scalextric Set 50 from approximately 1962-63. A green formula car with rear engine is chased by a red car with front engine. Probably in Monaco.



Box for Airfix Motor Racing Model M.R.7 from mid sixties. This is without any doubt Jack Brabham in his Cooper-Climax T53 leading a red (Ferrari?) car.