

Running Record

Greg Hewson's Mini has only ever been a race car, and it is a perfect candidate for Historic Sports Sedans.

Greg describes his Mini as the ultimate "grandpa's axe". There's no doubt there is little left of the original car, and what hasn't been replaced, has been modified, improved or lightened. But then, that's what Sports Sedans are all about.

Greg's car began life as a 1973 Mini Clubman, that was apparently converted for racing by Rick 'Noddy' Mathews in Sydney, in 1975. That car only lasted a short while, as Greg explains. "He ran it in the Super Minis series at Amaroo and Oran Park, but had a bad accident, at Oran Park I think, and wrote it off. He re-shelled it with a brand new 1977 shell from Fairfield Leyland."

Like most Sports Sedans, it has changed substantially since then, but Greg has recently back-dated the specification some-

what, in anticipation for the introduction of Historic Sports Sedans.

According to Greg, Mathews ran the car in the NSW Super Minis series until about 1980, then apparently passed away after a fight with cancer. The car was sold to Howard Middleton, also from Sydney. "He embarked on a lot of modifications to the car", Greg recalls. "I think he ran it as he bought it from Rick for a couple of meetings, then basically spent three years pulling it to bits and starting again. He put a beam axle in the back of it, and acquired the Arden head, but he never raced it."

Greg bought the Mini in 1983, and had a couple of frustrating years racing it in his home town of Adelaide, as he details. "I tried to race it in 1983 and '84, without much success. I had teething problems with the engine, a lot of handling problems, braking problems, so I decided I'm not getting anywhere with this, it was becoming frustrating. So, I basically pulled it apart and started from scratch."



The major change is that the front subframe has been raised four inches into the body, by cutting into the main cross-member at the top of the firewall, and re-working all the subframe mounting points.

Greg said that this achieved the desired body drop without upsetting the original suspension design. "I reckon Issigonis and his team got the suspension pretty right", he explained.

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Words and photos by Craig Watson