NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP ELECTRIC DRAGS

the little go . . . . a fast start

STRAIGHT-LINE slot racing, drag-strip' in miniature, has been an active phase of the modeling sport for some time. Sooner or later the staging of a national championship run-off was inevitable. Car builders and owners the country over were interested in comparing their craftsmanship and performance with those other hobbyists in the fifty states who had chosen electric drags as an outlet for creativity.

The MARCA (Model Auto Racing Club of America) had pretty well begun to set the pattern for such competition. Mail-in drag racing had been going on for many months, rules were set which aligned nicely with National Hot Rod Association regulations yet differed where certain inherent variations could not be reconciled. The organization existed and all that stood between was to properly stage the event, alert possible entrants and solicit awards.

Rod & Custom magazine, the pioneer in editorial coverage of electric racing, agreed to sponsor such an event, lending its powerful influence to aid MARCA in promotion of the First Annual National Championship Electric Drags. Mid-June was selected as the time, the parking area behind R&C's offices as the spot. Limitations of scale (1/25rd to 1/32th) were imposed and MARCA's well established rules were to be in effect.

Car Craft reporters were on the spot, covering the meet from inside the pit fence, getting the entrants' viewpoints.

An excellent track had been built just for the Nationals by Auto Hobbies of Glendale, California. Scaled to duplicate a Quater-mile course, the dual-lane strip was powered for 55 feet and had 57 feet of shut-down area. A blanketed buffer and several active "pin boys" gave added insurance for some of the more rapid and free-wheeling cars at the final footage. To record the times, Ollie Riley, the old clock-watcher himself, set up a layout of his super-accurate Chronduk timers, recording right down to .0001 seconds.

Mail-in entries from 17 states numbered 37, many unfortunately damaged in shipment. MARCA members pitched in to see that every car was put back into top shape prior to the meet. Repairs ranged from minor to major, sometimes requiring complete new wiring, gearing, motors, tires, wheels or contacts and pins. Auto Hobbies shop, one of the award donors for the Nationals saw fit to donate all parts necessary to put mail-ins into running order, thereby broadening the scope of the competition and making it more truly nationwide in context.

Following set-up and sign-in the first morning, qualifying and record runs were made. Some consternation ensued as MARCA personnel discovered that their rules and scoring systems were discarded by the sponsors in favor of a modified system established on the spot for the Nationals. Entrants, too, were at a loss . . . hard pressed to understand just where they stood as rules changed with every few runs and the then current rule failed to correct previous scoring. Protests were the order of the day with the ever-changing rules, yet if one protest was granted, an equal one might be denied. What was sauce for the goose was not necessarily so for the gander.

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