

Scale Model Drag Racing

A huge turnout gave Inglewood Raceway's new strip a rousing sendoff.

By Gene Husting

THIS MEET WAS the inauguration of a brand new strip, at Inglewood Raceways, 10309 Hawthorne Blvd., Inglewood, Calif. The shop is run by Bob & Bill LaRue, and was opened about a year ago with a fine road course that Bob built by himself. He did a great job building the road course, and being an enthusiastic participant at Lions Drag Strip, his next project was to build a strip of his own in his slot shop. He built it using a light tan formica surface with three 12 volt batteries for power. Surveyor's instruments were used to level

and straighten the track. Equipment includes individual start buttons for each lane, a yellow caution light, a green light, and the dreaded red light for each lane.

After three hours of tune-up runs, the track was closed down so the meet could get started. Jim Bartosh did a fine job running the meet, and Bob LaRue handled the staging of the cars and the yellow and green light button. From the expressions on Bob's face during the meet, I don't think he could have had any better time at Lions.

We had a good turnout of cars in the Fuel Top Eliminator division with 17 fuel rails entered. Because this seems to be the most popular class, I'm going to slip lightly over the other three divisions first so you can have a full report on the fuelers. The action was hot and heavy in the Little Eliminator runoffs, with these realistic little bombs really putting on a good show. Bob Nord's 12 volt Ram powered '65 Dodge stock class winner with a 1.72 e.t., was pitted against Tweety's Revell powered Mustang sports car winner which had a 2.07 e.t. Nord is very fast on the buttons, and with a five car length jump off the line, he shut down the Mustang by quite a few lengths, turning a 1.71 e.t. This brought up Jim Rhoden's 12 volt Ram powered Corvair gas class winner, which turned a very good 1.51 e.t. on his bye run, to race against Nord. Nord was lightning fast on the buttons again, and beat Rhoden out of the chute by two car lengths, but by the half-way mark Rhoden caught up with Nord and at the finish it was Rhoden taking Little Eliminator with a 1.57 e.t.

Joe Merrill brought his 12 volt Ram powered '34 Ford coupe, which had a class winning 1.46 e.t., to the line to race Dick

Merget's modified sports class winner which had turned a 1.66 e.t. Merrill was pretty quick off the line, and his car was quick all the way down the scale quarter-mile as he won Middle Eliminator with a 1.48 e.t. This brought up what Ray Yates refers to as the "Blackie Carbon" type cars, the Gas Top Eliminator machines. Blackie Carbon or not, these 12 volt Ram speedsters really haul, with both Ray and Jim Kirkwood turning 1.15 e.t.'s at the last drag meet at "Horsepower City" (J & J's in Long Beach). Well, Jim Bartosh brought his gas competition coupe class winner, which turned a 1.22 e.t., up to race Jim Kirkwood's gas dragster class winner which had a 1.25 e.t. After a pretty even start, Kirkwood's car jumped out of the slot leaving an easy win to Bartosh with a 1.26 e.t. Bartosh then had to race Bob Nord's modified roadster class winner that had a 1.22 e.t. Nord was his usual quick self on the buttons, and with a good hole shot he won Gas Top Eliminator with a 1.20 e.t.

And now to the largest class of the meet, which is also the most exciting, aggravating, rewarding, thankless, nerve-racking, anxious, satisfying, hectic, etc., etc., all depending, of course, on whether you won or lost your race. The preparation for these races is fantastic. Besides the hours spent getting the cars tuned up, there is also much time spent on the practice buttons. I know of at least two guys who take a nap before the races to help their reaction time on the buttons. And some of the guys have to dry the sweat from their hands before they pick the buttons up, and then they're shaking so much it's hard for them to keep from red lighting. The tension is terrific!

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Ray Yates, on the right, carefully seats his tires to the track as Gary Venem, on the left, checks his start button. Gary put Ray on the trailer with a fantastic three-foot hole shot start.



The fans strain for a view as Jim Gallagher, on the left, owner of I&J Raceways, pulls a four-foot lead on Carl Carlson for the win. These fuelers are something to see during competition.