



Rod & Custom Drags

WHEN MODEL CAR DRAG RACING first started in Southern California it was a kind of "run what you brung" type affair. There were one or two portable tracks that were set up in parking lots once a week. Everybody just chose off who they wanted to race and everyone had a ball. Stock cars were racing against roadsters, altereds were racing dragsters and so on. About every type motor imaginable was run, every Pittman motor made, small aircraft type motors, windshield wiper motors, some nobody even knew where they originally came from. But the one that topped them all was the Lindsay L1010.

Permanent drag strips were built in slot racing shops that were opening up all over Southern California. With regularly scheduled weekly drag meets being held, and merchandise or gift certificates being awarded to the winners, the meets became more organized. With drag racing becoming very popular at the local shops, Rod & Custom Magazine staged the first Rod & Custom National Electric Drags in June, 1962. The rules consisted of the then popular rules used at the fastest drag strips in Southern California. For the 1963 Rod & Custom Nationals the most significant rule changes were outlawing the Lindsay motors, except for unlimited class, and allowing rewinds to any voltage in all classes. It finally got to the point where a few guys were so sharp rewinding the Pittman 85's that it was too difficult for the average enthusiast to keep up with them. This also made it too hard for the newcomers starting out in drag racing, so it was decided to change the rules.

A representative group of drag racers and shop owners were assembled to lend their varied knowledge to the difficult task of writing a completely new set of rules. Bill Neumann, the editor of Rod & Custom Magazine, presided over the series of meetings required to formulate the rules. He personally supervised the running of the two R&C National meets and so was well informed of many of the problems facing this group. Members of the group included Hal

Prendergast, owner of Western Motel Raceways, where some of the largest weekly drag meets were held; Jim Gallagher, owner of J & J Raceways, one of the most popular and fastest drag strips in Southern California; Jack Tate, manager of Modelrama Raceways, one of the first of the plush type raceways. Racers included, of course, Bob Braverman, whose accomplishments are well known to readers of R&C Magazine, but maybe some of you didn't know that Bob also campaigned a Chrysler dragster in the Chicago area; Ray Yates, who builds some of the most beautiful cars in the Southern California area, and who also held many records on the slot car drag strips; Bob Cartwright, who specialized in the Unlimited class, running some of the exotic custom built motors by Bob Lindsay; Jed Donahoe, Mr. Top Eliminator at the 1963 R&C Nationals. And finally myself, who spent over 10 years racing on El Mirage Dry Lake, Bonneville and also running a Chrysler dragster on the Southern California drag strips. So, we had a group that knew quite a bit about slot car drag racing and also about real car drag racing.

We started with the Little Eliminator Division and decided to keep the motors stock 12 volts. This was done for two reasons. One, because someone with a limited amount of tools could build a car that could be competitive, and two, it would be the ideal class for the beginners to start with. They could learn the basics of running a drag car, gearing, tires, weight distribution, etc. without having the added task of hopping up the motor. It was also required that the bodies be the injected molded plastic type, because there are many enthusiasts who want their cars to be as realistic looking as possible.

For the Middle Eliminator Division we advanced a step, allowing basic improvements to the motors, such as installing ball bearings, lightening the end plates and changing the brush springs. Vacuum formed or clear plastic bodies were allowed.

Gas Top Eliminator Division was added