

that way until just before the finish, when Bob's dragster pulled ahead to win with a 1.24. There must be some way to beat Braverman, but how?

Fuel top eliminator runoffs found Rod Owens in there pitching with his fuel competition coupe against (Aw, c'mon now!) Bob Braverman's fuel dragster first-placer which had shown a tremendous 1.10 e.t. Well, this race was all over right at the starting line, as it was 'spin city' for Rod. Bob beat him by three car lengths off the line and held it all the way to take the race with a 1.15. In all fairness to Rod Owens, we must do a little explaining here. You'll hear over and over again how important tires are. For the past couple of months, Rod has been winning more than his share of fuel top eliminator runs at the meets. His cars are so light (5½ ounces) that he only found one set of tires that would bite. After he trued up the tires the last time, they were too small to run on the cars, so the tires he ran at this meet did not show his machine's true potential. It's frustrating to know you have the cars that can get the job done but not the tires! This explanation is not meant to detract in any way from Bob's fine performance, as we doubt that anyone could have beaten him in this match. But wait, he still must race the fuel modified roadster winner. Bob won that class too, but not without a real fight from Chuck Blaney's modified roadster, which ran a dead heat with Bob's dragster at 1.15. On the rerun, however, the 'luck of the Irish' pulled through and Bob took it with 1.11 e.t. So, Bob is our fuel top eliminator for the meet and also holder of official low e.t. (1.10) in fuel dragster class.

Right here would be a good place to explain that some people might call Bob's

winning streak 'luck of the Irish', as we did in the foregoing paragraph, but actually, it's more like plain hard work! Bob Braverman didn't just show up at this meet and luck his way through these races. He really had to work for those prizes. We know he was over at the track running every afternoon and evening for more than a week, tuning up his cars. There isn't anyone we know that spends more time than Bob in running on the drag strip, and now you can all benefit by it. The first part of his article on tuning appeared in the April issue of R&C, and the second part starts on page 76 of this issue. Read this article again and again. He knows what he's talking about and can save you a lot of time and trouble if you'll follow his tips. Bob's a real racer!

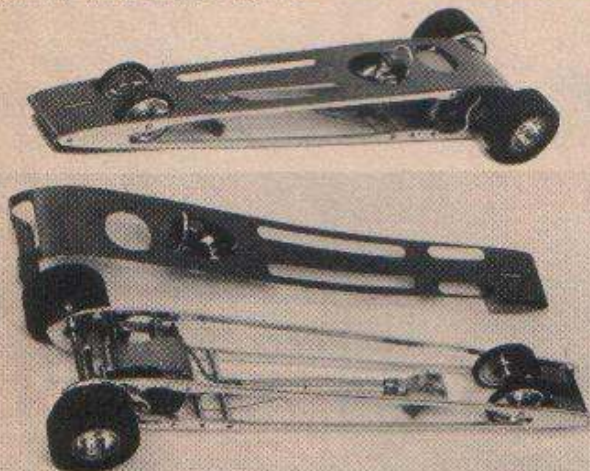
Now, we come to the class that Mr. Braverman doesn't stand a ghost of a chance of winning, Western's 1.20 e.t. bracket. This also calls for an explanation. During the past few months, fuel top eliminator division has been dominated by Rod Owens, Bob Braverman, and your reporter. We've been turning almost identical e.t.'s, with a few dead heats, and this has made for some very exciting racing. Western does not have individual lane starting buttons, so the quickest car usually wins. This is great for the few fast guys, but how about the newcomers or the fellows who just haven't got quite the right combination yet? We think you'll find this same situation at almost any drag strip in the country. Well, at Western, we solved the problem with the 1.20 e.t. bracket. The quicker cars have been turning dual-run e.t.'s in the vicinity of 1.13 seconds, while the remainder turn between 1.15 and 1.25 seconds. Now, anyone choosing to run in the fuel top eliminator division cannot run in the 1.20 bracket, even

with another car. This gives the slower guys a class all to themselves, and is the only sure way to eliminate Mr. Braverman and the other quick ones. The main stipulation in this class is that anyone turning less than 1.20 eliminates himself. Hence, the quicker cars' owners just add a little more nose weight to try to keep above 1.20. This has grown to be the most popular class, with very close racing. We'll describe the final rounds in this class to give you an idea of how it works.

Ray Yates' beautiful dragster was pitted against Wayne Cartmell's potent machine. The cars were placed carefully on the track, the start button was pushed, and Cartmell's machine took an early lead and held it all the way. Ray figured he had lost the race, but the clock read 1.17, which is a very good run. Too good, in fact! Cartmell eliminated himself by turning less than 1.20. This left Ray still in the running.

The next race paired dragsters by John Cukras and Jerry Conrad. Cukras took it with a close 1.22 e.t. Next up were Jim Kirkwood and Warren Stone. Kirkwood beat Stone to the finish line, but lost with a heartbreaking 1.19. Bud Durbin was up next, facing Jim Rhoden. Rhoden took a big lead off the line and held it all the way, but he turned a quick 1.17 to lose the race. When a guy makes a run like that, it's with mixed emotions! He's glad the car went fast, but on the other hand, it cost him the race. Jed Donahoe, 1963 R&C Nationals top eliminator, finished the round by making an odd-lot single at a safe 1.29 e.t.

Start of the next round paired Ray Yates with John Cukras. Yates had a little too much weight in the car and Cukras won it with a 1.24 e.t. This was followed by the two Nationals winners, Donahoe and Stone.



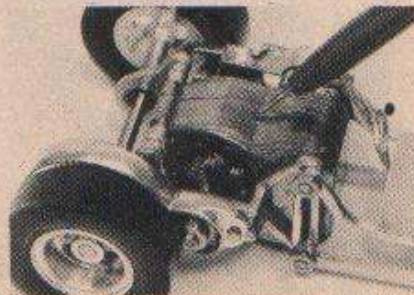
ABOVE: This beautiful Modified Roadster was built by Ray Yates and runs in Gas Top Eliminator class with times in the 1.20's.

ABOVE LEFT: Another example of Ray Yates craftsmanship is his Fuel Dragster; it was judged 'Best Constructed' car of the meet.

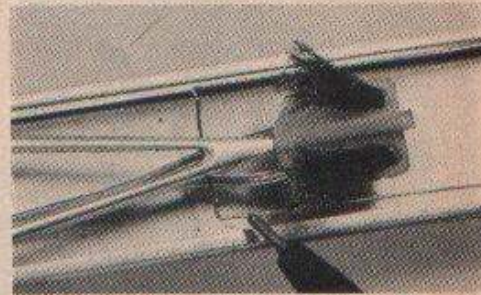
LEFT: Motor on Ray's Fueler is a modified RAM 850. Chassis is magnesium and body snaps in place over and around the rails.



Chassis details on Rod's roadster show the beautifully made rear axle hangars and gear guard. Flanged bearings are used.



Motor end plates were reduced to a mere shadow of their former weight and field laminations were thinned and contoured.



Hand shaped drop pickup is tensioned by a piano wire spring secured to forward end of the car. Copper wire pickups are used.