

WINNER



THE FFW BUCK STOPS IN THE BUCKEYE STATE

TRUE STREET REIGNS AT NORWALK RACEWAY PARK—AND THE ICE CREAM AIN'T BAD, EITHER.

BY FRANK H. CICERALE
PHOTOS BY EVAN J. SMITH

LOCATED IN the quaint hamlet of Norwalk, Ohio, Norwalk Raceway Park is one of the cleanest dragstrips you'll ever visit. This July it played host to the 16th Annual Buckeye State FFW Nationals, and there was plenty of smoking action in all the classes—especially **MUSCLE MUSTANG AND FAST FORDS/Tremec True Street**, with three cars in the eights! When the smoke cleared, we saw some old hats in the winner's circle and a few surprises, too.

The event kicked off with Friday and Saturday qualifying, which featured extra chances for the heads-up racers to dial in their performances, along with the opportunity for the hundreds of bracket competitors to get in their practice runs. Saturday, the popular **MMA&FF/Tremec True Street** contestants made their presence known. Nearly 70 wild machines made the 30-mile trek around the rural roads of Ohio before making the required three passes down the famed quarter-mile. True Street featured some of the nicest and quickest cars we've seen, and the **MMA&FF** cameras were all over the action.

Elapsed times ranged from the low-16-second range to a set of blistering 8-second e.t.'s

by Bill Klein, who averaged a killer 8.804 to take home the True Street championship. Greg LaPoint clocked an amazing 8.974 average for Second Place, while Marty Merillet rounded out the top three with a 9.16 average. Of note was the disqualification of John Slade, who was right on Klein's heels running high-8.s but was tossed after the second run for failing to wear fire gloves.



TOP & ABOVE: Nearly 70 True Street competitors made the required three runs down the famed Norwalk strip, but when it was all said and done, Bill Klein (above), who averaged a killer 8.804 elapsed time, was crowned the winner. The North Olmstead, Ohio, resident took an SVO block, punched it out to 376 ct, and dropped it between the fenders of his red '85 GT. Topping the romping small-block Ford are a set of Twisted Wedge R heads and a 300 shot of Nitrous Express laughing gas. The engine is backed by a C4. Klein was the only True Streeter to make all three runs in the 8-second zone.



Sunday dawned sunny and warm, and in the heads-up classes there were some old standards and some new hats in the winner's circle. Procar Industries Pro saw David Schorr behind the wheel of his 815ci Escort run the table as he qualified number one with a 6.68, and then gunned down Erica Ortiz in the final. Schorr left first and



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JIM D'AMORE (near lane) piloted this fast-Saleen prepped V-6 Stang of SD Wheeler for the win in Ford Race Ultra Stang. The suspense of the final was eliminated, as was Wheeler, when SD left the starting line too soon, fouling away his chance.



WINNER

REIGNING JDM Engineering Tough Truck champion Don Justus wreaked havoc in Norwalk as he scored yet another win. Justus combined good reaction times and consistency out of his 10-second Lightning to take the trophy back to Hendersonville, North Carolina.



VINCE LEMMON wheeled his Mineral Grey Cobra to a 12.08 average in True Street, earning him the accolades for the top 12-second time. Lemmon ran an 11.59 best.



JEFF EDWARDS broke into the Top 15 on the True Street list with an 11.45 average out of his super-clean Fox-body. Running an 11.32 best, surely many a Camaro driver has felt the kick from this Pony.



THE OHIO State Patrol serves, protects, and spent Saturday escorting the True Street competitors around rural Ohio on the required 30-mile cruise. Special thanks to troopers Griffith (left), Gockstetter (center), and Lettmann (right). By the way, sorry for the noise!



ANDY BROWN broke into the 12-second zone when he averaged a 12.98 in True Street. The Fox-body convertible, featuring Weld Draglite wheels and the always-cool big-and-little tire combination, ran a best time of 12.84 seconds.



ANYTIME YOU go to Norwalk, you would be remiss if you didn't try the famous ice cream. Just ask MRT's Scott Hoag (right). At \$1 a pound—yes, \$1 per pound—you could blow your diet way out of whack. Just ask MM&F Editor Evan Smith. Wait, was I supposed to say that? Beat's me, I'm just the new guy.



WINNER

THE MONEY round of ProCharger Street Outlaw saw the '02 Cobra of Tim Lynch (near lane) square off against the '01 Mustang of Dan Milten. Lynch was out of the gate first, but Milten came around the yellow snake for the win.

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was the top qualifier with a 9.60, and he used a slight holeshot and a 9.63 pass to best Martorella's 9.66-second run. In Sean Hyland Motorsports Mod Comp, Paul Svinicki wheeled his '06 Mustang past Jimmy Rondello's Mustang to the win. Svinicki was slightly better on the starting line, and he used a 10.03 to take out Rondello's off-pace 11.49. Mark Anderson was the victor in Superchips Street Stang as he put John Heid on the trailer in the trophy round. Anderson was better on the Tree, and his 12.68 was more than enough to handle the 12.80 effort put forth by Heid.

JDM Engineering Tough Truck saw the Lightning of Don Justus once again take home the cash. Justus overcame final-round opponent Rogbert Chuhran's 0.026 light with a 10.77 pass to get to the stripe first without breaking out. The Ford Racing Ultra Stang win went to Jim D'Amore of JDM Engineering who was driving a 10-second Stang. D'Amore had a relatively easy win when SD Wheeler pulled the trigger too soon and red-lighted by a mere six thousandths of a second. The win put D'Amore in striking distance to Wheeler who leads the points by a slim margin. The Accufab Four-Six Frenzy trophy made its way into the hands of Josh Wells, who, like D'Amore in Ultra Stang, had an uncontested pass into the winner's circle when final-round opponent Scott Baumgartner fouled out.

With the season now at the halfway mark, the points chases are getting interesting as new winners emerge and those at the top try to stay there. This second half should be interesting!



JIMMY RONDELLO (near lane) and his NHRA-legal Super Stock car made an appearance, competing in Sean Hyland Motorsports Mod Comp. Rondello wheeled his Mustang Cobra all the way to the final round, when he ran into some engine issues, giving the win to Paul Svinicki.



WINNER

RONNIE WILSON'S Mustang remained unbeatable in Precision Turbo Street Renegade competition, though this time it was Gina Munden doing the driving and the winning. Munden (far lane) got past a troubled Dan Schoneck in the final when Schoneck couldn't get the car down the track.



WINNER

JOHN SCARO (far lane), used consistent 9.60-second elapsed times to take home the Boria Street Warrior cash. Jeff Chambers (near lane) got some help from UPR for the weekend, and drove his '90 Mustang GT to the semifinals, where he lost to runner-up Jeremy Martorella.



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motored away from Ortiz, eventually stopping the timers in 6.77 seconds at a flying 209 mph.

ProCharger Street Outlaw racer Dan Millen pushed his Mustang past the Stang of Tim Lynch in the money round. Millen, who was the number-one qualifier at 6.99 seconds, was just one speed mark behind the terminal velocity of David Schorr and his Pro entry as he clicked off a 209-mph pass in qualifying. In the final, Lynch, behind the wheel of a bright yellow '02 Cobra, left first, 0.044 to 0.126. At the finish line, however, Millen was able to run down Lynch and score the win with a 6.98.

Chris Little was the only one in BFGoodrich Drag Radial, but despite this he put on a show, hiking the wheels dangerously high during Friday qualifying and then ripping to a 7.96/183-mph run on Sunday. The 7.96 marked Little's first foray into the 7-second zone. In Precision Turbo Street Renegade, the car that won was the same, but the driver had longer hair and a feminine touch. Ronnie Wilson, who is on his way to locking up the Street Renegade title, stepped out of the ride for the weekend, letting Gina Munden strap into his '00 Mustang. The car, which has been unbeaten with Wilson driving, remained unbeaten as Munden took out Dan Schoneck in the final. Schoneck was the number-one qualifier with a 7.78-second pass, but he ran into engine problems on his first round single. He was able to stage the car for the final, but he had the same problems, as he couldn't get the car to the 330 mark under power. Munden took the easy win with an 8.71.

ABOVE: Greg LaPoint also busted into the 8s. In most cases, an 8.974 average is good for the win, but this time, that wasn't the case. LaPoint, who hails from Holland, Ohio, bolted up twin hairdryers to a 347 stroker that powers his '99 Cobra. With a best e.t. of 8.73, his 8.88 was still enough to pull the rocker molding off of the passenger side of the car.



MARTY MERILLET of Wauseon, Ohio, was the one and only True Street constant to record an average in the 9-second zone, when he averaged a 9.16 in his '88 Stang. Power behind the punch comes from a 420ci small-block that gets extra happy when the Nitrous Express 300hp shot is kicked in. Before the weekend started, Merillet had run a best of 9.02. That was, until his third run of competition, when he broke the 8-second barrier with an 8.99-second pass.

Even though the opening round of competition in CFE Street Bandit saw a pair of competition singles for Matt Jones and Daniel Bott, the final round was by far the best race of the event. Jones was the top dog in qualifying as his 8.72 was just a bit quicker than Bott's 8.79. At

NORWALK FFW TRUE STREET TOP 25

DRIVER	AVERAGE
Bill Klein	8.804 Winner/ Top 8 Sec
Greg LaPoint	8.974 Runner-Up
Marty Merillet	9.160 Top 9 Sec
Matt Parker	10.031 Top 10 Sec
Dan Richards	10.712
Gary Basinger	10.816
Neal Alder	10.826
Ben Beard	10.965
Mike Biggs	11.157 Top 11 Sec.
Kurt Brenner	11.163
George Chaboudy	11.171
Kathy Powell	11.192
Brian Marton	11.221
Jeff Edwards	11.459
Paul Dappenbrook	11.566
Billy Foreman	11.568
Derek Bellotti	11.608
Mike Collins	11.701
Kevin Box	11.731
Rick Mettler	11.789
Robert Dappenbrook	11.948
Vince Lemmon	12.082 Top 12 Sec.
Tom Reicha	12.117
Tony Nguyen	12.122

the end of the day, Jones was the winner in the squeaker of a race. Both drivers had nearly identical reaction times, with the minuscule 0.001 advantage going to Jones. At the stripe, Jones' 8.823 earned him the win over Bott's 8.838 pass by a scant sixteen-thousandths of a second.

In another close final round, John Scaro and his '03 Cobra nipped Jeremy Martorella's Mustang for the Boria Street Warrior title. Scaro



THE CLOSEST final round of the weekend came in CFE Street Bandit when Matt Jones (*far lane*) scored the win over the '98 Mustang of Daniel Bott. With both drivers recording nearly identical reaction times, it was nip and tuck with Jones eking out the win, 8.82 to 8.83.



WHEELIES ARE cool, and so is winning and breaking into the 7-second zone. Just ask BFGoodrich Drag Radial winner Chris Little. Little took a single for the win, running in the 7s for the first time in his career with a 7.96 blast.

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ERICA ORTIZ made FFW history as she ran a 6.88 in the Probe Industries Pro final round to become the first female in the sanctioning body's history to break the 6-second and 200-mph barriers.



JASON MOULTON jammed the Liberty five-speed in his Glidden small-block-equipped Fairlane. Moulton ran in the nines and tasted a few rounds in the Nostalgia Ford class.



PAUL SVINICKI was all smiles after he took home the victory in Sean Hyland Motorsports Mod Comp. Svinicki wheeled his '06 Mustang that packs the heart of the Ford GT to a 10.30 run on his 9.94 dial-in.



DAN MILLEN was the Outlaw top qualifier with a 6.99-second blast, and he improved on it in his final-round victory over Tim Lynch when he blew through the traps in 6.98 seconds.



CANDICE LANGDON and her husband, Jeff, drove from Ontario, Canada, in their nitrous-injected '92 LX. They weren't alone, however. The Langdons are a part of the GTMAC.com car club, hailing from, yep, you guessed it, Ontario. More than 30 of the club's members made the trek to Norwalk to hang out, shoot the breeze, and show off their Stangs.



YOUR AUTHOR, Frank Cicerale, the new associate editor for **MUSCLE MUSTANGS AND FAST FORDS**, gets a Norwalk greeting. ■■■