

Twister

by DAN WILBANKS

OFF-ROAD CHALLENGE



Participants had an excellent view of the track from the drivers' stand. The announcer and the computer operator also worked from a raised platform, and this made their jobs much easier.

Twister hits the Bay area

THE FIRST ANNUAL Twister Off-Road Challenge was held in Livermore, CA, at the 15,000-square-foot Hobby Haven Indoor Raceway. Over 232 competitors from as far away as Nevada and Southern California competed with locals from the San Francisco Bay, Sacramento and Livermore Valley areas. Participants in the two-day event competed in four off-road classes: 2WD Stock, 2WD Modified, 4WD Stock and 4WD Modified.

Course Design

The course was designed by Lenard Smith of Hobby Haven Raceway, whose goal was to design what he considered to be a pure "driver's course": one that not only requires a fast car, but also requires the drivers to make quick maneuvers around successive high-speed turns and over multiple jumps. While the triple jumps seemed to be the most intimidating, turn one proved to be the spoiler, especially on opening buzzer dashes. At times, four or five cars piled up in spectacular crashes as they tried to enter the corner together.

The Challenge

During the first day's 29 qualifying heats, competition was close. Under the watchful eye of their founder, Mike Walker, the Twister racing team was there to test new designs and match their skills against those of the local drivers. During the Challenge, Walker was pleased to announce his sponsorship of a local racer, Jon Anderson of Sacramento, who's now on the Twister racing team.

Also taking the Challenge was Eustice Moore Jr., owner/designer of MIP Racing Products. As a manufacturer of drive-trains and related accessories, Eustice has been involved in the industry for over 12 years. His ability as a driver is reflected by his membership on the Reedy Modified Racing Team.

At the end of the first day, the local racers were leading as everyone prepared for the Mains. Before the final qualifying race, the tentative TQs were:

- 4WD Modified: Rob Russell
- 4WD Stock: Bobby Drummond
- 2WD Modified: Jon Anderson

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- 2WD Stock: J.D. Beckwith

Sunday opened with a strong showing in all categories as the final qualifying heats were run in the morning. By noon, the TQ in each A-Main had been established:

- 4WD Modified: Eustice Moore Jr.

- 4WD Stock: Bobby Drummond

- 2WD Modified: J.D. Beckwith

- 2WD Stock: Jon Anderson

The A-Mains kicked off with the 2WD

notable because of Jon's controlled smoothness through each turn and nearly perfect timing off each jump, especially the triples.

The opening seconds of the 4WD Stock A-Main found Bobby Drummond leading the pack with Neil Rabara a close 2nd. Drummond was involved in a crash in turn one, and this disaster allowed Rabara to take the lead. With aggressive driving, Drummond was able to sprint past Rabara as they exited from turn seven and entered the straightaway. He hung on to drive his Schuma-



with a winning total of 14 laps in 4:06.20.

Most expected the 2WD Modified A-Main to be the highlight of the Challenge, because many of the best drivers entered. J.D. Beckwith, Jon Anderson, Jay Kanemoto, Eustice Moore Jr. and Bobby Drummond had already shown their abilities in previous heats, and they went on to provide the spectators with the best race of the meet.

Following the starting buzzer, Eustice Moore Jr. quickly took the lead, and he held it for two laps until Jon Anderson wrested it away on turn one and built a comfortable margin of almost 4 seconds. Driving hard and very

consistently, Anderson maintained a strong lead until he crashed on turn seven and gave Moore the chance to catch up and run almost alongside.

As they approached turn three, Moore took the inside line away from Anderson,

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cher XLS Cat to victory.

Jay Kanemoto took the lead early in the 4WD Modified A-Main. Displaying great determination, he held off challenges by Rob Russell and J.D. Beckwith and brought his Schumacher XLS Cat with a Twister Modified across the finish line



Jon Anderson, the newest member of the Twister racing team, won the 2WD Stock A-Main with his Associated RC10.

Stock race, in which Jon Anderson drove an Associated RC10 with a Twister stock motor and turned in a winning performance of 14 laps in 4:08.40. This race was

Mike Walker Keeps On Racing

IF EDUCATIONAL DEGREES were awarded for racing experience, Mike Walker, founder of Twister Motors, would have a Ph.D. with honors. With over 25 years experience in full-size motor racing (top fuel, drag and stock) in every capacity (driver, designer, engineer and mechanic), he's a relative newcomer to the R/C industry.

Three and a half years ago, in an attempt to provide a creative and competitive outlet, he formed Twister Motors Inc. Mike was looking for an alternative to the heavy demands of the professional racing circuit, but he still

wanted to do something that would utilize his racing experience and expertise. In earlier days, he had raced gas-powered cars as a hobby, but with the advent of R/C technology, he saw an opportunity to continue racing, but with a slightly different slant.

The rapid growth of Twister Motors has created a "Catch 22" situation for Mike. He's now busy touring nationally with his Twister Racing Team, sponsoring races and promoting the sport in general. With this demanding schedule, he still spends more time away from home and family than he'd like. But it's a sacrifice that Mike is willing to make, because he's doing something that's still in his blood after 25 years—racing. ■



Mike Walker, founder of Twister Motors Inc., and the sponsor of the Twister Off-Road Challenge.