

Below is a Snapshot of our 2015 Columbus Y-Block Nationals & Shootouts

Opening Preview:

Similar to last year with Harry Hutten's secret 5-year build of a 450 HP Y-Block that shaved nearly 2-seconds of his ET and added about 19 mph to his top end charge, we had another Friday surprise. Also similar to last year where Adam Root up-graded his Purple F-100 272 with a 4-Bbl carb and headers and cut a second and a half off his ET, he stepped it up again and blew us all away Sunday.

Thursday:

We had 7 Y-Blockers roll in "Early Thursday", and I waved off three more coming from Mississippi that were cutting it too close to the 5:00 PM gate closing. They included the Church Brothers and 1st-Timer Don Powers who drove up with them in his 1933 5-window Ford, modified 292, 5-Spd, with his son Cooper riding shotgun. I also made mention of the lone Port-A-John in the pits, poking fun that we beat the Port-A-John delivery. They do have real restrooms under the pit bleachers (pretty far away from us).

Friday: Still only one Port-A-John in the pits.....

I was still getting my Merc ready for Time Trials when Bob Bell drove his '57 Ranchero back from his first one. He showed me a time slip with an un-familiar car number – that showed an 11.97 @ 109 mph pass. He was giddy and saying something to the effect that he could quit now and be happy the rest of his life – or something to that effect. Bob was running 13.80's at Norwalk – less than 3-months ago. Since he was pitted next to me, I looked at his car number – which matched the time slip – and accused him of writing someone else's number on his windshield. Ted was on his way to us, smiling, and I had this funny feeling again – especially when he said "not bad for a tune-up, pointing to the valve covers that sported a 272 decal. At Norwalk, Bob had blown his factory radiator, and all I looked at, and saw, was the brand new aluminum radiator under his hood. Turns out that he took delivery of an Eaton 292-369" with Mummert heads & intake, and an Eaton electric water pump - that dyno'd over 547 HP. Now it runs like it sounds – awesome!!!

I had some fun Friday lining up with those nearest my ET/MPH (15.19 / 89) – Robin Church at 15.10/89 & Jim Cochran (15.40/91+). Lost to both, but had great fun with them along side in the mid-range. I'm sure others were doing it also – really helps to form your race strategy, and have a lot of fun doing it. They did open the gates early – about noon, but as the afternoon unfolded, there were fewer cars than last year. Sad – but the way the schedule was formatted, with only Quick-16, True Street, Y-Blocks and the "Extra \$50 Gamblers Race" running on Saturday, everything hinged on the Sunday turnout, where all the Brackets run for a good purse. At the end of the day, we had 16 Y-Blocks, with 2 1957Ford.com cars on the way after work. Hmm, no bye runs. I still had one more on my list, and mentally, if he showed up, we would have 4-Bye runs. Hmhmhmhm.

The weather forecast was a 30% chance of rain after 4:00 PM. Almost right on schedule, about 4:30 PM, a cold front "BLEW IN", and caused some damage to some of the pop-up tents in our area. We didn't get any rain as the front went around us, but we watched it rain south of us – with a funnel cloud trying to form too. The Time Trials were to continue until 10:PM, but we left around 5:30, having had all the time runs we wanted or needed. We had our "Traditional" Red Lobster dinner down by the malls in Heath, where Doug & Charlie Dover joined us (they came up from NC without Doug's '56 Ranch Wagon to join in on our fun. Also, Dave Zimmerman from Texas dined with us (he was a surprise to Ted, who knows him), as did Dana & Barb Pittman, from Arkansas, who have been coming up to watch us the past 12 years. About 23 of us met at the Longhorn Steak House for dinner that evening for more bench racing fun and good food. Fords, Fun & Food. Our motto.

Saturday: Still only one Port-A-John in the pits.....

Forecast was a 20% chance of rain. Not a drop, and the sun seemed even hotter after the racing wore down.

A local racer friend of mine, Jim Browder, member of a long-time family of Ford racers and a Staging Lane Official under the Crites Regime at Columbus and the first years under the NMRA banner. He stopped by with his son Ben, former Junior Dragster driver a couple of years ago who now drives their big block Dragster in Bracket 1, and their BIG BLOCK '55 Ford T-Bird in Bracket 4 Nostalgia, now a Heavy Hitter (I told our Y-Blockers running in Nostalgia to avoid him if at all possible). Jim asked me "What happened to this place", referring to the lack of cars. "You guys have the biggest group in here". I told him it has been on the serious decline the last three years – he just shook his head. Eliminations were to start at 3:00 PM, and I overheard that they were going to start them early about 11:30, so I beat it to the tower to confirm the hearsay. They were about to start the final round of Quick 16 qualifying, and they told me they were going to call the Y-Blocks up right after the qualifying finished – and they didn't have that many cars vying for the 16-car field (Ted Eaton being one of them of course). I rounded up the troops and told them to get ready – and we would start lunch later. We were called up at 12:07. Whew, lucky I went up to the tower (but I should have seen that one coming with so few cars on the grounds).

Our Saturday Y-Block Shootout turned out to be (another one of the) "Dave Fuszner and Harry Hutten Jr. show, not unlike past years, except that Bob Bell is now the "New Wally", with him and Harry jabbing each other all weekend. It started with Bob costing Harry a Nostalgia Bye Run, and hasn't stopped since. Dave started round 1 with a reaction advantage over Robin Church, and Harry got a red-light gift from Don Powers. Don, with little Bracket Racing experience, had rolled in too deep. He had done so during time trials and the starter let him back up and re-stage. Not so during eliminations. Don backed up when the tree was coming down and Harry left without him. Hard lesson to learn, but Don took it all in stride.

In Round 2, I violated Bracket Racing's Rule No. 1 – don't watch your opponent – just run your own race. I drew Jim Cochran and was hoping for some Friday payback. But when he accidentally deep staged after I was already staged, I looked over at his dilemma – only to be caught with the tree coming down and triggered a red light start in the panic. Lesson learned – I wish. Right. Dave cut his 2nd best reaction (.037) against Adam Root's F-100 for the win, and Harry got a shot at Bob Bell. With a .64 handicap head start, Harry drilled him on the tree, and never saw Bob challenge him for the finish line. But Bob's "right-on" 12.12 run gave him the Best Finishing Truck honors of the four in the Shootout, with his share being \$100. Adam Root's break-out 16.79 earned him the \$50 Second-Best Finishing Truck award. But his best was yet to come (on Sunday).

In Round 3, the semi-finals, Dave uncorked a .014 Best Reaction against Ted Eaton taking a double break-out win, and Harry, with a starting line disadvantage against the '55 Ford Mainline of Jim Cochran, pushed him out at the finish line, both men never lifting. The final saw Dave with a 12.76 Dial to Harry's 12.72, but the race ended on the line with Harry's -.045 red light.

At our Awards Dinner at nearby Sunset Inn, we enjoyed more good food and bench racing. I thanked our Sponsors and welcomed Don and Cooper Powers for coming up to join us in our fun. He received Doug Thrasher's \$50 for the "Quickest Driven-In Competitor" (mid-to low 16's) and Dave Fuszner received the Lion's share for the Shootout win. I had worked up \$200 from our General Fund monies Friday night, but when Lonnie Putnam and David Church gave me an extra \$100 each, I put them both on the top of Saturday and Sunday's Awards, giving Dave \$300 and \$25 for his Best Reaction. Then, I presented him with Karol Miller's \$56 Award that he sent up with Ted Eaton (one \$56 Prize for each Saturday and Sunday Shootout Winner. Karol also sent up laminated copies of his 155.844 Bonneville Record Run he made On February 14, 1958, signed by Bill France. Hmmm, 57 years ago and we're just catching up with it. Salute. I took a picture of it and found three Y-Blockers who also had an interest in Bonneville, and they now have Karol's copies. Doug Thrasher, Frank Rice, and Gordon Payne. Karol also sent up a shirt for me. I wore it to the dinner, and I'll get a picture of it for my report in Y-Block Magazine. Near the end of my presentations, I mentioned if anyone else saw that there was only one Port-A-John in the pits, and Bob Bell piped up "And there were no lines". That

ended our awards on a “somewhat” funny note. On the way out, Don Powers gave me back one of the \$50 bills to be put up for 1st-Timers next year.

Sunday: Still only one Port-A-John in the pits.....and very few more cars and people on site. With the low car count, and our participation in the EXPO Brackets, we had the opportunity for more than the one scheduled time trial. They cycled thru the Brackets, and called the Y-Blocks after B-3, Street. John Feistritzer, in his “Hoosier Hurricane” ’57 Ford started our Round 1 with a perfect .000 reaction, unfortunately for Steve Fleming in his yellow F-100. That win earned John Craig Seyfried’s \$50 prize for the first perfect reaction during Shootout Eliminations – which lasted two years.

We had two issues occur in Round 1. I was pre-staged and waited for Harry to pre-stage. After he did, I staged, and immediately, the tree started coming down and Harry got the red light. I left, wondering what I saw, and noticed that Harry was coming, but very slowly. My time slip had my win with no numbers under Harry’s column (he wasn’t staged), and “Autostart Override” on the bottom instead of “Autostart On”. Harry drove directly back to the tower and I thought he was on his way to kill someone there. Also, Adam Root in his Purple F-100 ran Dave Fuszner, and while the tree worked OK, they received no timeslips. Adam went back to the tower. I got the page to come to the tower, and they explained that they had to replace the computer umbilical cord and had to re-run me & Harry, and Adam and Dave. We were to come up in the fence lane and they would re-run us as soon as possible.

Harry and I went first, and wouldn’t you know it – I got a better reaction – with both of us running off our Dial, but good enough for me to beat Harry to the finish. Then came Adam and Dave. But they read Dave’s 12.78 Dial as 12.18, and he didn’t catch it at the starting line display boxes (or the top end scoreboards which are hard to read in the sunlight). That marked the start of the run of the “Purple People Eater”. In Round 2, Adam took out Ted Eaton with a better reaction, and in Round 3, the semi-finals, while John Feistritzer Tree’d Bob Bell, Adam did likewise to Gary Burnette who broke out of his 13.50 Dial by 2-tenths trying to catch the “Purple People Eater”.

The Final saw Adam take a 3.66 second head start on John Feistritzer AND a .007 reaction, 2nd Best of the weekend! John brought his rpm’s up to launch, but the “Hurricane” inched forward while the tree was coming down, and he triggered a -.082 red light in the chase, and we saw our 4th Street-Driven Y-Blocker Shootout Champion – our first one in a Truck. Note also, that since last year, Adam up-graded his truck from a 272 to a 312, and ran about 1.25 seconds quicker with that combination. His winnings started with \$150, with another \$100 mentioned above at Saturday’s Awards dinner, plus the \$56 envelope from Karol Miller. Add to that John Feistritzer’s \$50 for the most rounds in the Sunday EXPO Brackets (5-rounds in Street), Saturday’s \$50 for 2nd Best Truck, and when all of the other prizes are tallied, Dave Fuszner and Adam Root had a good weekend.

Also, thanks to all those that helped me load my stuff and car on the trailer – after the 4:15 announcement that the gates were being closed at 4:30. We were the last to leave the facility. Hmmmm, in the past, we were close to last to leave, but it was also after sunset – after 7:00 PM.

Having said that, knowing the car count was low – and a lot of those with last year’s rain checks – and that they paid full purses, I can’t help but feel that our 20th Annual was the last Labor Day Weekend at Columbus. I have one rumor to chase down (mentioned at the Awards dinner), It MIGHT happen at Columbus - BUT in June. But like someone on the Y-Blocks Forever Website Racing Forum stated last year – it most probably will be “Goodbye Columbus” over Labor Day Weekend. I’ll let everyone know what I find out as soon as possible.

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