



# Ground Pounding in "Thunder Valley"

By Ryan Chisholm

The seventh stop of Fun Ford Weekend's season was in Bristol, Tennessee; where Bristol Dragway (a.k.a. "Thunder Valley") was carved out of the beautiful mountainside.

The central location and

impeccable facilities drew one of the best turn-outs of the season for the fastest Ford's in the nation to battle it out and bring the "thunder" to the valley. The 15th Annual O'Reilly Thunder Valley Fun Ford Weekend Nationals put on a show that anyone present won't soon forget.

The Probe Pro class consisted of a five-car field with a range of combinations from twin turbos, to nitrous, to all-out naturally-motivated size. Mr. John Gullett showed up with a new paint job, and made sure the car's good looks were backed up, setting the standard with a 6.552 at 218.02. That was

good enough to get him Low E.T. and top speed for qualifying. On his heels was Chuck Samuel's nitrous-injected '04 Escort with a 6.625 at 216.83. Third was David Schorr's mountain motor motivated '04 Escort with a 6.772 at 207.98. Dan Saltz was next with a 6.864 at 186.38. The fastest woman in Fun Ford Weekend, Erica Ortiz, had some early issues in qualifying and only managed an 8.656 at 118.95.

Round one saw Saltz give the race away to Schorr on the line with a .032 red light, making his better 6.640 at 217.53 to Schorr's 6.787 at 208.52 run meaningless. Next up were Samuel and Ortiz. Erica and her crew did well to sort out the issues she was having during qualifying, because she ran her

fastest time ever with a



Lynch and crew putting a few tweaks on the new 600 cubic inch big block before letting it loose down the 1320.



Chris Little brought his new turbo setup to Bristol for some Drag Radial fun after putting the car into the 7's in Norwalk.



Seems Conrad Scarry couldn't buy an uneventful weekend if he wanted. After a blowout on the trailer on the way to the track, the crew found themselves up all night replacing the motor after a failure on Saturday

6.852 at 207.30, but it wasn't enough to stay out ahead of Chuck's 6.578 at 217.67. Gullett got the honor of a bye run but didn't back off one bit, running the weekend's fastest pass of 6.533 at 218.76.

Round two matched Schorr and Gullett together, but Gullett couldn't keep it together for the full pass and Schorr went on to take the win with a 6.794 at 207.62 to Gullett's 9.022 at 110.31. Samuel got the bye pass this time around, and put down a 6.692 at 212.63.

That made for an all-Escort final of Schorr versus Samuel. Unfortunately, Samuel had an uncharacteristic error and tripped the red light while trying to bump the car in to fully staged. That gave the win and money to Schorr who took an easy 8.586 at 124.13 pass.

ProCharger Street Outlaw saw one of the largest fields of the season show up, and the return of last year's Champion Billy Glidden. Glidden stood as the only nitrous car in sea of turbo-driven small and big blocks, along

with one blown small block. Tim Lynch showed up with a new 600 cubic inch big block behind the twin turbos and captured the top qualifying spot with a 6.970 at 213.91. Glidden showed the Champ still "had it" and sprayed his way to a 7.183 at 194.07 to grab the number two spot. Conrad Scarry fought through issues with not only his car, but also their rig in getting the car to the race, to qualify third with a 7.205 at 202.21. Lance Styck made a return to Fun Ford Weekend after rolling his car over last year in Orlando after a parachute malfunction. He qualified his small block twin-turbo Mustang fourth with a 7.274 at 193.05. Jared Brunner joined the party once again with the smallest motor in the field, at 351 cubic inches and only one turbo pushing air into it, but managed to grab the fifth spot with a 7.326 at 192.41. James Keen piloted the only blower car to a

7.382 at 198.55 and grabbed the sixth spot. Brad Brand was battling tuning issues for his 707 cubic inch twin-turbo big block during qualifying, settling in seventh with an 11.076 at 81.41.

Round one should have started with Styck (who ran a 7.09 at 200 in a morning test run) meeting Brunner. However, a dropped valve kept Styck from even entering the water box. So Brunner went on with a 7.282 at 194.94. Next was Keen versus Scarry, who spent most of the night swapping out motors. Scarry got the best light with an .085, but couldn't get all the power down to stay ahead of Keen's

7.314 at  
198.90  
with his



Gina Gorman showed up with a Fox Mini-Me version of Ronnie Wilson's Renegade setup. Ronnie was all business on the track, though, and put her out in Round 2.



Brad Brand jumped on the twin turbo big block bandwagon as well, and used Bristol as an opportunity to start getting used to the new combo.



Jeremy Martorella showed up with a new engine combo built by Bill Glidden. The new combo proved deadly, too, as Martorella went home with the win.



John Gullett's new paint job turned heads. And his E.T.s drew cheers from the crowd!