

MAKING A



The Spring Fling Moves To A New Venue

MOVE



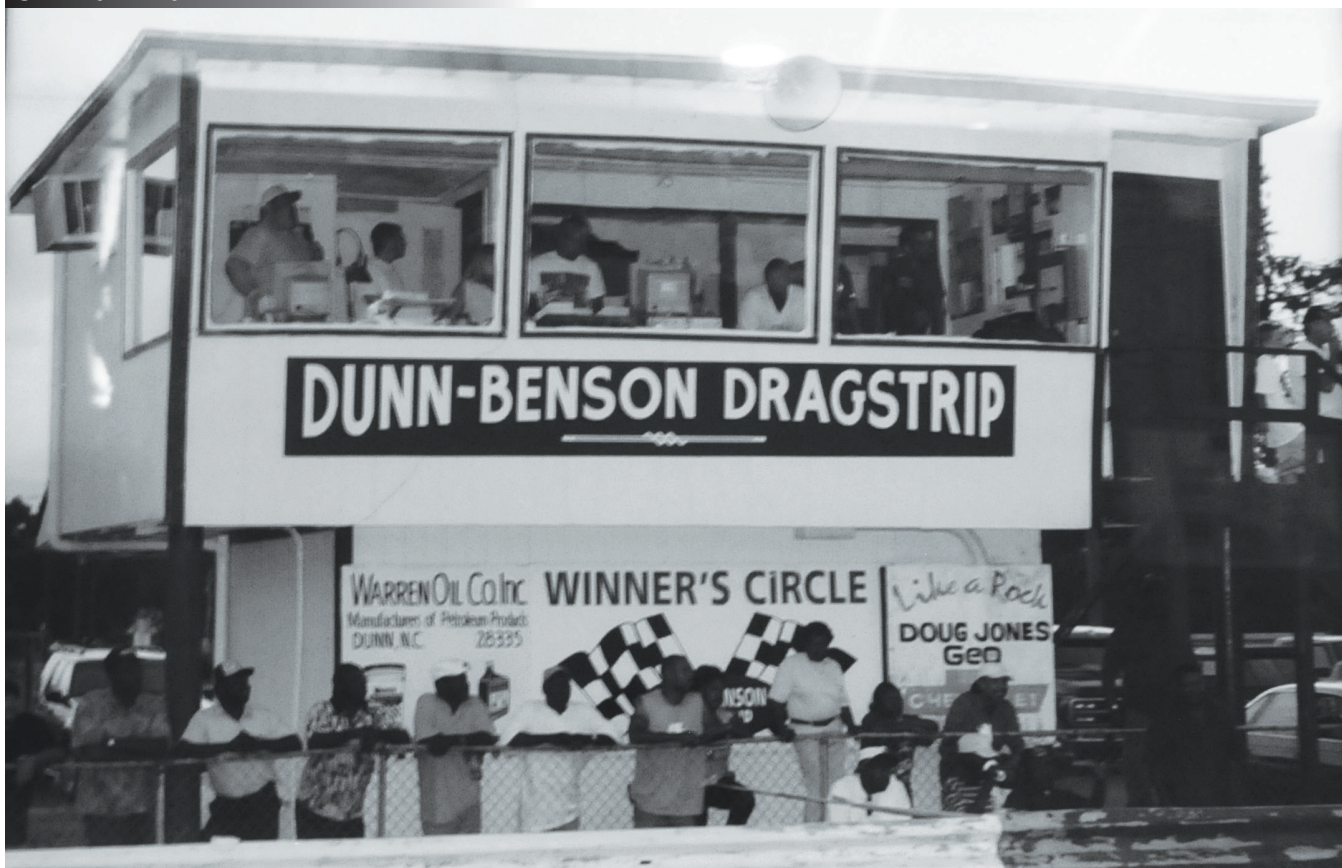
WORDS/ PHOTOS John DiBartolomeo

When Spring Fling co-promoters Pete Biondo and Kyle Seipel were looking to add a third event to their successful line-up of big dollar bracket races, there was one choice that stood out to them.

“When our racers come into a Spring Fling event, they are expecting a one-of-a-kind experience at a premier facility,” Biondo explained earlier this year. “So, Kyle and I have searched high and low for the right facility and time of year and have put a ‘Fling schedule and payout structure in place for 2017 that I think racers are going to love.”

In early April that meant a trip for the fourth straight year to Las Vegas for the Spring Fling Million (*Little Things Make The Difference, DRE July 2017*). For the past seven years, the month of May meant the Spring Fling 5-Day contested at Bristol Dragway in Tennessee. Not this year though.

“We love Bristol and want to stay there, yet we felt it was important to find a time of year that Bristol had better weather so that our racers can fully enjoy the experience we have to offer,” explained Seipel. “Long term, fall in Bristol provides more favorable weather for the Fling’s race structure.”



Hanging on the wall inside the new Galot Motorsports Park tower is this photo of the old Dunn-Benson Dragstrip tower. The track has surely come a long way since it first opened in 1957.

As such, the Bristol 'Fling will now be named the Fall Fling and will take place Sept 26-30, 2017, which left an opening in the schedule, easily filled by an old track with a new twist.

Dunn-Benson Dragstrip first opened to the public in 1957, attracting many of the south's best racers. In 2013, the property was purchased by successful businessman Earl Wells, promising to rebuild the facility into one of the nicest in the country. He didn't disappoint.

From the concrete track to the mostly paved pits complete with 85 spots having electric current to the gorgeous tower, Earl Wells did not spare a dime on the newly named Galot Motorsports Park. It's even little things such as the track concrete surface not extending all the way to the guardwall. Instead there is a roughly two-inch wide gap to be used as drainage. Besides not sparing the money, he did his homework also.

The scoreboards are LCD screen models on which any number of videos can be played. The Spring Fling at Galot event was held on the same weekend as the Lucas Oil NHRA Southern Nationals. During a brief rain delay at Galot on Saturday, race officials up-



Hundreds of racers flocked to the new facility, most in part who have never been here before but heard just how nice the facility is, and they were not disappointed.



In addition to a small drainage ditch at the edge of the track for easier track drying, plumbing lines underground allow for track surface cooling during those hot days of summer.

loaded the NHRA All Access broadcast to the scoreboards. Impressive is all we can say.

As for the race itself, there isn't much more to be said other than the typical 'Fling brand of events. Four separate races with each paying big money in addition to the American Race Cars/Racetech Dragster Shootout, the Hoosier Tire Door Car Shootout, the Spring Fling Reaction Time Challenge, the Brodix Best Package Award, all coupled



New owner Earl Wells certainly did his homework when it came time to rebuilding the track. Eighty-five pit spaces have electricity and water hook-ups available which eliminates having to hear generators running 24/7.



The concept of running door cars separate from dragsters until the ladder round of 16-cars or less has made a big difference with the door car contingent. More and more of them are showing up to take part in the festivities.



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SPRING FLING



Former NHRA Comp world champion and multi-time winner Frank Aragona Jr. also saw the benefit of racing at the 'Fling.



When it comes to door cars, there were none better at the 'Fling than Tommy Plott's Mustang. Plott was voted the Todd's Extreme Paint MVP based on the many rounds he won and a last day runner-up finish.



Tim Thomas scored a cool \$1,000 after hitting a perfect reaction time in the one-shot Spring Fling Reaction Time Challenge.



The Spring Fling races are truly a fun event for the whole family.



With the 'Fling held on the same weekend as the NHRA Southern Nationals held in nearby in Atlanta, it meant a tough decision for PEAK-sponsored racer Dan Fletcher who is chasing his 100th win in NHRA national event competition. For the professional racer, nothing beats the money of four separate big money races.



The Best Door Car Package (Jimmy Melillo) and Best Dragster Package (Lee Dixon) of the first three days battled it out for a set of Brodix SR20 cylinder heads with Dixon taking home the prize.

with over \$50,000 in hardcore products randomly handed out throughout the weekend.

With the increased purse for 2017, the week began and ended with only slight moments of exasperation in between for event officials. A couple of slight weather delays held up the action from time to time but every race was completed and all the money paid.

During the Spring Fling Reaction Time Challenge, 20 randomly selected racers were given one shot at the 'tree with any .00X reaction time earning the driver a crisp \$100 bill. A perfect .000 gets \$1,000 and the chance to hit the 'tree one more time. Another .000 gets a cool \$10,000. After 19 racers took their chance, Matt Schapiro, Bug McCarty, Vince Shrawder, Matt Brehm, Antoine Jett and Jerry Brewer each left with \$100, leaving only one racer left to hit the mother-lode, so to speak. What were the odds? When the scoreboard lit up with that elusive .000 for Tim Thomas, race officials might have gotten a little nervous. When Thomas came back for his second shot, co-promoter Kyle Seipel tried to talk Thomas into resetting his delay box but he wasn't listening. With the thoughts of \$10Gs on his mind, Thomas wound up his dragster and missed another perfect run by kissing away the money by only .002 on the red side.

New for 2017 was the Todd's Extreme Paint MVP Award chosen by the Spring Fling staff, with said racer receiving a gorgeous custom-painted Simpson Devil Ray helmet in addition to \$1,000. In the running on the last day were Shane Carr, Jeff Dobbins II, Tommy Cable and Tommy Plott. By virtue of him winning numerous rounds of racing all week in addition to a last day runner-up, Plott was the obvious winner.

Afterwards, Seipel said, "This was a great foundation for us to build from. I'd say that probably 75-percent of the racers who came here are new to our 'Fling races so that opens us up to new customers. In addition, they've done nothing if not rave about how nice Galot Motorsports Park is and I'm sure that will bring in more racers in the coming years. So, the news is that we'll be back here once again next year."

And we'll all be looking forward to it. ¶

BOXSCORE

K&N Spring Fling

presented by Optima Batteries

Galot Motorsports Park - Benson, NC



American Race Cars/Racetech Dragster Shootout

W-Paul Warwick, Lumberton, NC

R/U-Jason Lynch, Pleasant View, TN

Hoosier Tire Door Car Shootout

W-Randall Blinson, Clayton, NC

R/U-Don Hansen, Palm Beach Gardens, FL

Yukon Gear & Axle Wednesday

W-Shane Carr, Palm City, FL

R/U-Tommy Cable, Nugaesville, MD

Wiseco Thursday

W-Jeff Dobbins, Willmington, NC

R/U-Brandon Collins, Shannon, NC

Strange Engineering Friday

W- Terry Brannon, Boiling Springs, SC

R/U-Tommy Cable, Nugaesville, MD

JEGS Saturday

W-Bug McCarty, Hazlehurst, GA

R/U-Tommy Plott, Winston-Salem, NC

Reaction Time Challenge Winners

Tim Thomas - \$1,000.

Matt Schapiro - \$100.

Bug McCarty - \$100

Vince Shrawder - \$100.

Matt Brehm - \$100

Antoine Jett - \$100

Jerry Brewer - \$100



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