

SMOTHERS BROTHERS' RACING VENTURES

DRAG RACING HAS BEEN GIVEN A BIG BOOST, BOTH PUBLICITY-WISE AND STATURE-WISE, BY THE EVER-INCREASING PARTICIPATION OF THE BROTHERS SMOTHERS.



Admittedly, a number of drag race enthusiasts have posed the question of why would a television team as successful as the Brothers Smothers even consider entry into the drag race field... especially as earnestly as they have now jumped in?

"This is no kid's sport, and it certainly is a far better and more organized activity than the general public would lead you to believe. We wanted to organize a strong team of drag cars. One that would be a sharp, crisp grouping of some of the better car builders and drivers who could help advance the status of drag racing even more than it presently is."

In a very special way, Dick Smothers is becoming more deeply involved in the '69 drag race season than he was during the "tasting" he had in '68. Specifically, he has engaged in a "partnership" with Carl Schiefer (of Schiefer Mfg.), and in conjunction with various Oldsmobile dealers sprinkled throughout the country, a string of stock-type Olds equipment will

carry the Smothers team banner during the coming year.

Careful selection of class categories preceded entry of some half-dozen stockers, and all of this came on the heels of a season's tail-end participation of a pair of "S" Coupe Olds, seen at the '68 NHRA Nationals in Indianapolis, the Tulsa World Points Finals at the close of the '68 season and at an assortment of other major strip activities concluding the just-past year.

Curiously enough, Dick's first ride at the helm of a Super Stocker came at the Indy Nationals meet, at which time he climbed into the car and commenced to drop each succeeding elapsed time with each pass in the car. A concluding 12.93 (in a four-speed drag car and for the first time), and Dick was hooked to the extent that the '69 program began to solidify.

"Man, I was completely stoked on the car. It was really nothing like herding a Formula rig, even though it required a lot of attention to driver requirement. But it's fun, and I figured

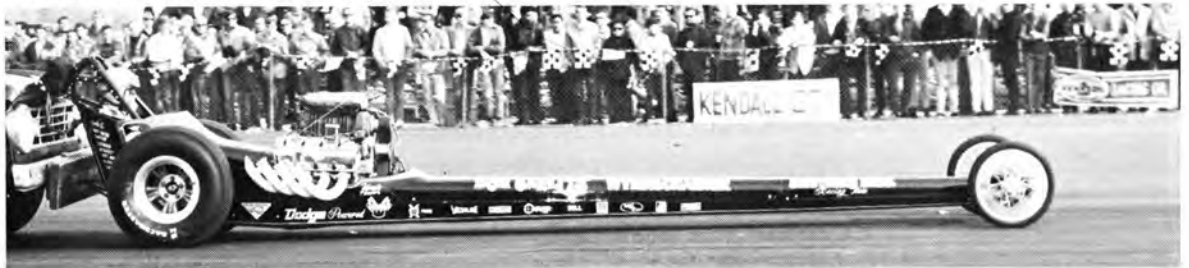
it was time to see in what small way I could help a lot of people realize where drag racing's really at."

So he is. Joining the Smothers team at the outset of this season were a couple of fuel drag cars: some guy named Don Garlits (who bites a hole in the record book just about every time he pulls his car from the trailer) and an up-and-coming (and very personable) group dubbed the "Beach Boys" with Jim Busby leading the charge. Both of these cars will be campaigning under the Smothers team label, and it would probably be safe to assume that further additions may be made to the roster before the '69 season comes to a close. Of course, Dick maintains that the initial feelings toward getting involved in the sport were generated because of his almost total love for automobile racing of any sort. The decision-clincher was his belief that he could actually benefit the sport.

"I dig it all. I don't care if it's Formula racing, Championship racing,



Ron Garey, '68 NHRA Springnationals Stock Eliminator, is one of the Jr. Stock team members in this year's expanded string of small stockers. Car was right on the F/S record at the NHRA Winternationals ('69).



One of the pair of AA/FD cars on the team is the "Wynnscharger" of multiple Eliminator champion Don Garlits. Car now sports a full body skin, for the first time in the list of many "Swamp Rat" Garlits-built cars.

This was the Indy Nationals car. Fitted with a 350-inch Olds, car posted elapsed times which were startlingly close to corresponding National Record for its class. Dick's first runs down the quarter-mile were made in this particular car, and he quickly put car into the 12's.

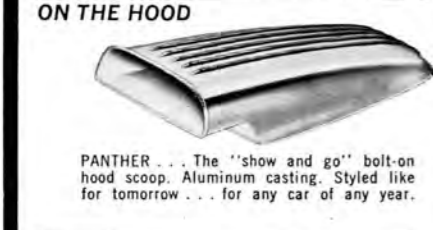


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Ex-Chevy Jr. Stock runner, Jim Waibel, herds the G/S Olds "rag top" Cutlass team car. Car was one of three Smothers team entries at the '69 Winterinternals that survived all but the last runs for class wins.

Grand National racing, or drag racing, or even a little foolin' around on the mini-bike. I've been intrigued with engines, their sounds and the feel of a piece of race machinery for as long as I can recall (his brother Tom's three-wheeled wagon notwithstanding), and this is just another way that I can outlet my feelings. In fact, racing is the only thing I can think of that I do which requires 100 per cent of me. In everything else I've tried (skiing, golfing, tennis, etc.), I've found that proficiency was not nearly as difficult to achieve as it is in auto racing. So it's my bag, and I'll dig it for as long as I can."

If early "returns" on the projected success of the Smothers drag team cars are any indication of this season's outcome, it ought to be worth watching. As each step is taken, additional ones are planned. A couple of Super Stockers might be next. There has been some talk of backing a Modified Production or Gasser somewhere down the line, to the possible exclusion of perhaps one or more of the stockers. At this stage of the game, it's still just talk, but to develop and maintain balance of the overall team effort, a couple of other car types might be in the mill. It's still all rather fresh and continues to grow.

Two years ago, who would have thought that such a team would ever have gelled? Even Oldsmobile Division of GM might not have given it a thought had it not been for the concerted efforts of Carl and Olds' "General at the drag track" Dale Smith. Spectators simply buried the car at both Indy and Tulsa, and if the stockers and fuelers can generate only a portion of this much excitement at future meets, they collectively or individually will be worth a trip to the

track to see. The chances are better than fair that you might catch Dick at the end of one of those four-speed "wiggle sticks." Help us a little. Maybe we can pry him completely out of those little funny-shaped Formula cars.

The other fuel car member is the rig of Jim Busby (formerly known only as the "Beach Boys") of Southern California. Car is consistently quick and reliable and will perform at numerous strips during the '69 season.

Pete Kost got the nod for the F/SA car. Another of the country's stronger Jr. Stock builder/drivers, Pete was beaten only in the final for F/SA class laurels.



Willard Wright, another Jr. Stock National Record holder (in an automatic, 265-inch Chevy 2-door) joined the Smothers team and now campaigns this GS/A Cutlass convert. Most impressive feature of the new cars was the fact that less than two weeks of preparation time was available before the first of the major meets. Despite this, all of the team cars were running at or near respective National Records. Should be a real "killer car" by the middle of the '69 season.



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