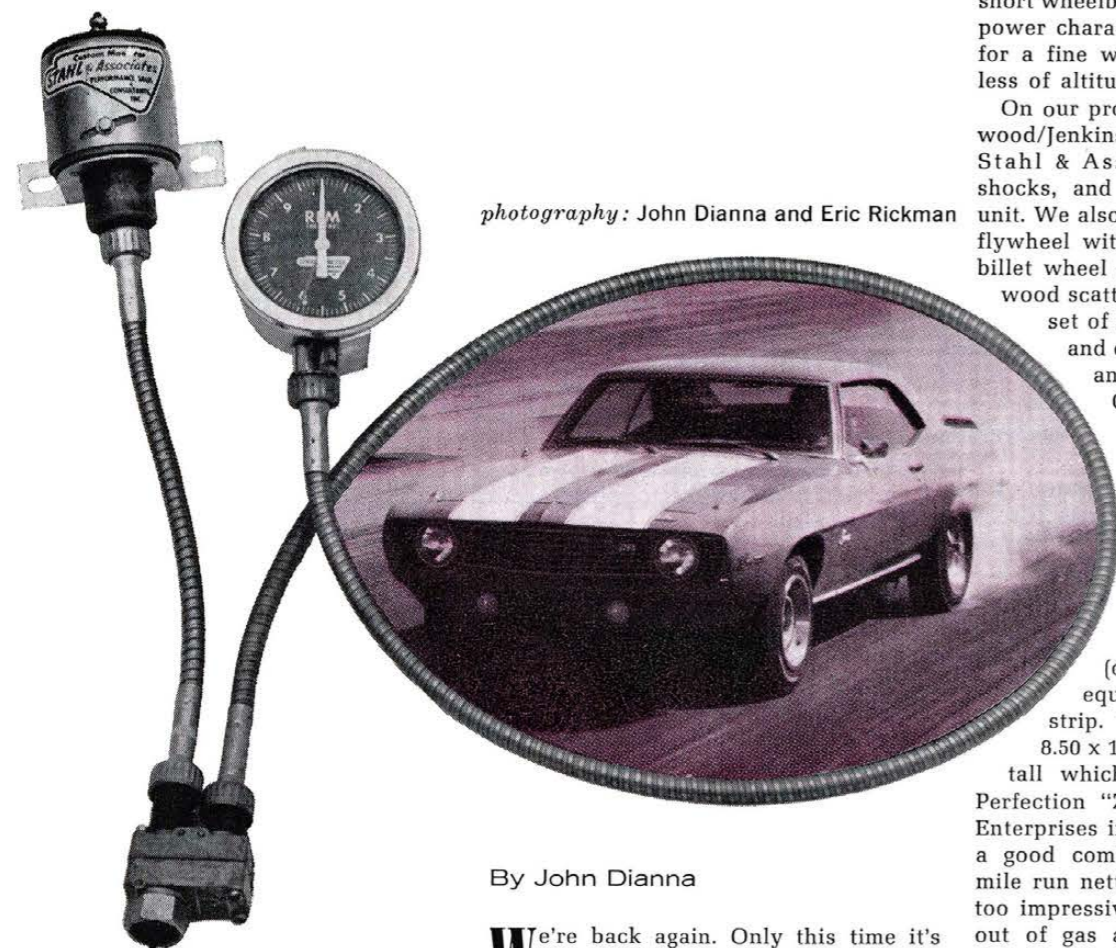


A little bit here and a little bit there, and the records will fall like dominoes

strip preppin' the Z/28



photography: John Dianna and Eric Rickman

By John Dianna

We're back again. Only this time it's in answer to the large number of letters asking just how competitive the Z/28 actually is in Stocker competition. We'll go on record as having said very. This package falls within the NHRA F/Stock classification, and with the National Record currently standing at 12.69 e.t. and 110.50 mph, the Z/28 is more than competitive.

Let's examine a few specifications which make this little "bomb" a prospective Eliminator winner. To begin with, the 3218-pound shipping weight makes this "lightweight" easy to launch down the quarter. Another important aspect is the fact that the car requires very little

weight trimming to reach the minimum specification. For example, the car we ran weighed in at 3215 pounds, and that's minus the smog equipment, without a spare, and with about two gallons of gas. Surprisingly, the car still retained the AM/FM radio and the floor console, which are not considered necessities in an all-out race car.

Now let's take a quick look at the heads on this 302. Well-designed intake runners, along with light swirl-polished 2.02-inch intake valves, do quite a job of delivering the air/fuel requirements into very efficient combustion chambers of 11.0:1 compression. All this, coupled with the 108-inch wheelbase, provides a good combination for adapting the car to varying strip conditions and that's where it's happenin'. To run strong only on your home strip is no longer a winning formula. The short wheelbase of the car and high horsepower characteristics of the engine make for a fine working combination, regardless of altitude.

On our project Camaro, we used Lakewood/Jenkins adjustable traction bars, Stahl & Associates adjustable front shocks, and a Schiefer Rev-Loc clutch unit. We also replaced the stock cast iron flywheel with a 32-pound Schiefer steel billet wheel and covered it with a Lakewood scattershield. Next, we installed a set of Stahl's new Camaro headers and one of their mechanical tachs and engine shutoffs. The stock OEM Hurst shifter may be fine for the street, but we didn't want to depend on that type of unit for competition purposes, so we installed a Hurst "Competition-Plus" shifter. This completed our preliminary setup, and with no further refinements to the engine (other than removing the smog equipment), we headed for the strip. We installed a set of 8.00-8.50 x 14 Goodyear tires 27 1/2 inches tall which, in conjunction with the Perfection "Zoom" 5.38 gears that Scat Enterprises installed for us, proved to be a good combination. Our first quarter-mile run netted us a 13.36 at 105.36. Not too impressive, but the car was running out of gas as soon as the clutch was dumped, and at the top of each gear it was complete starvation. No more runs were made that day, in order for us to replace the stock fuel pump with an AC No. 4799 pump from a '61 348-cubic-inch high-performance engine. We also rejiggered the carb with #70 and #72 primary jets and left the secondary jets stock (#76). Fuel bowl levels were raised to the inspection holes and timing in the reworked Corvette distributor was set to 12 degrees @ 2200 and 38 degrees total.

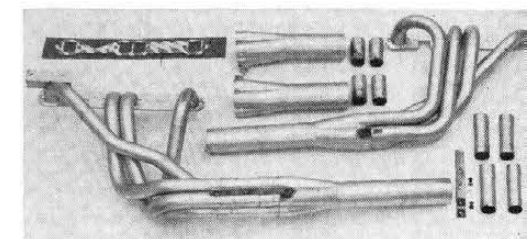
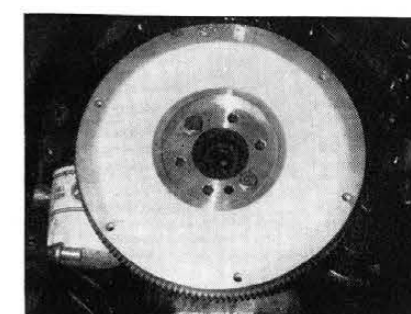
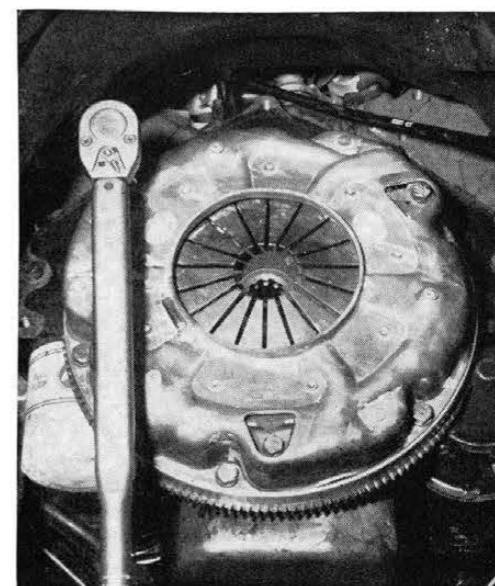
We were ready to run but were forced to take a two-week vacation due to rain. (In fact, it was the worst deluge Southern California has ever seen.) This cut our

development time considerably, but we waited it out and managed to make a few runs at Orange County Raceway for our second test. The Goodyears were aired to 17 psi, and our first run bagged a 13.09 at 107.27. A round-robin second run netted a 13.05 and 107.78. Timing was bumped to 40 degrees, but the 13.14 at 106.93 was off the normal running standards. The lead was dropped back to 38 degrees, and the tires were let down to 14 psi. This combination came up with a 12.93 and 107.93 mph. But due to low air pressure, and our neglect in securing the tire to the rim, we spun a tube, which brought an end to our day of racing.

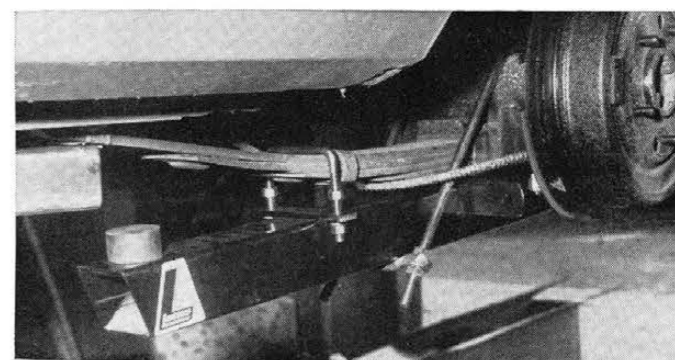
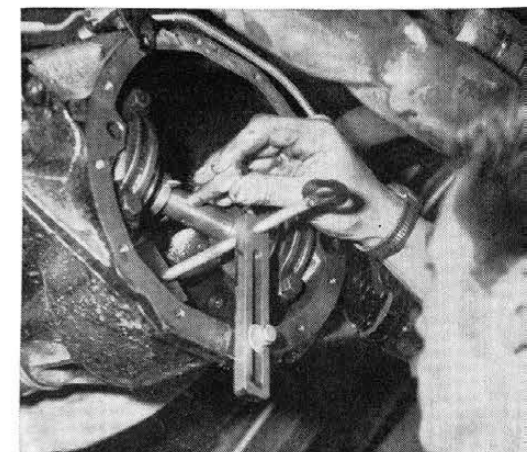
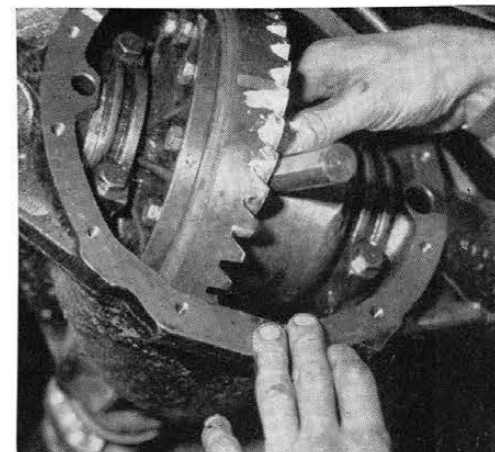
During preliminary runs, the car seemed to lay down around 6000 rpm. After removing the heads and checking the springs, we saw the problem. Factory spring setting was very spastic, with a low spring seat tension of 54 pounds and a high of 76 pounds. This, compared to the specified spring tension of 84 pounds on the seat, was quite low. At any rate, a valve job followed, and the cc's were checked and found to be over the minimum spec of 61.2 by as much as 7cc, to be exact. The heads were cut and minimum cc's held to 62.0 for all chambers. At this point, the springs were set up to 84 pounds (closed position) at 1.70 inches and 206 pounds (open position) at 1.25 inches. Although we didn't disassemble the short-block, we checked a few of the decks for our own information. NHRA buys a minimum of .002-inch deck with an .018-inch gasket; our decks were around .012-inch, with .027-inch gaskets. With the engine assembled, we headed for our final testing.

Our next run (all combinations same as preceding run) was surprising, as the car tripped the clocks with a 12.77 and 108.92 mph. As might be expected, we came right back and made a pass at 12.73 and 109.91. We knew we were in the ball game, and that the car would better the existing National Record that day with no further engine preparation. However, after an engine cooldown, we attempted to cut our imaginary 12.5's, but unfortunately the spider gears let go on a pre-stage burnout. And because of magazine deadline and numerous other commitments, we were unable to complete the tests. Still, with the limited preparation that our Z/28 received, we've proven one thing: This car is competitive.

If you ask our opinion (you'd better, 'cause you're getting it anyway), this car has the potential to run 12.2's with a completely blueprinted engine and further chassis development. And that's not stretching it a bit. Remember, don't ever say can't. Why only a few years back an injected '57 Chevy was "flat-out flying" when turning 13.5's, and now they're going mid-twelves. And with Camaro's sales figures exceeding the production estimates, we just may see new Chevy "blood" in Stock Eliminator. Wanna buy a winner? ■ ■



ABOVE LEFT We used the new Schiefer Rev-Loc clutch in our Z/28 and were much surprised at the ability of this unit to hook up without shocking the drive train. TOP RIGHT Flywheel shown is one of the new units with the exclusive Schiefer coating. ABOVE RIGHT Stahl's new adjustable headers; they're outasight!



ABOVE LEFT When using 5 38 gears, it's necessary to grind a flat spot on the pinion shaft in order to slip it past the ring gear. ABOVE Brian Honsberger of Scat Enterprises is shown checking pinion depth with a barrel indicator. This procedure is necessary when installing "Zoom" gears. LEFT

—Traction bar selection for our project Camaro was the Lakewood/Jenkins design. These bars offer many advantages, one of which is the total adjustable positioning. Chassis loading is easily accomplished by merely readjusting the bars. In some cases it becomes necessary to replace the bar's shock bumper with a longer pinion snubber. Not shown in photos but also utilized is Lakewood "shield."

MINIMUM/MAXIMUM Z/28 SPECIFICATIONS PER NHRA

Shipping weight	3218 lbs.
Minimum cc specification	61.2cc
Minimum deck height	.002-in.
Maximum overbore	.030-in.
Piston pop-up height (maximum)	.289-in.
Piston pop-up volume (maximum)	10.84cc
Minimum head gasket thickness	.018-in.
Valve spring specifications:	
Maximum seat tension	84 lbs. @ 1.70 in.
Maximum open tension	206 lbs. @ 1.25 in.