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Shoot-Out in 'Dega ! Twin States Shoot-Out Series Opens in 'Bama



Plus a whole lot more!!!



Online and the Box Stock

This month we are going to change gears a bit in the "Grassroots Tech Barn" and discuss the online forums and the Box Stock, or as it's commonly referred to as the "clone" engine.

The hottest, most volatile topic as of late has been the announcement that one of karting's highest profile organizations is going to adopt the billet flywheel. This comes on the heels of a stock flywheel explosion on the dyno of a major engine builder. This series has taken the stance of being proactive and trying to eliminate the potential for future safety issues. Some of the online posters have proclaimed this as the end of the Box Stock class, it will raise the cost of the engine to the point it will no longer be affordable. Is it safe to assume that these same racers would wear a bucket on their head if helmet rules were relaxed, just to lower the cost of participating? These are the same racers that will have a three hundred dollar paint job on their helmet and five or six sets of tires, but will bark like a wild animal at the mere notion of any increased cost, regardless of the reason. The increased operating range of this engine has lead to the need to visit this option.

Healthy debate is often constructive. The operative word is healthy. Many of the persons posting the most critical and threatening comments are by their own admission, just offering their "opinion", but don't have a clone, or even have any short term plans to purchase one. Many are "locals" that will never grace the gates at one of the events of any major series, and are completely unaffected by the announced changes. Worse than that, many of these so called "ambassadors of the sport" post under an alias, never revealing their identity to go with their disparaging thoughts.

Like I said, debating thoughts and ideas in the proper manner is the basis upon which positive progress is made. However, bullish, threatening statements lead to more of the same, creating defensive responses that in the end, just lead to more never ending, unproductive banter.

Having as large a group of racers as the online forums possess, we all know the ideas of a particular organization will tend to ruffle the feathers of some, especially in the short term. The only hope I have is that we can

carry out our discussions and debates without questioning the ancestry of those who do not share our particular view. While speaking of disagreeing and expressing it, be man, or woman enough to sign your name to your statements, and don't post anything you aren't willing to say to the person's face. Show the same respect you would expect from someone that has a problem with your ideas.

Evolution of an engine is part of racing. Look at the flathead engine today compared to twenty, or even ten years ago. Many lessons have been learned from past experiences, not all in the manner we would have chosen. That's not to say, we want engine prices to skyrocket along with growth, but some rise in cost is going to have to happen. It is up to the sanctioning bodies and organizations, with our constructive input, to maintain a rules package that offers performance along with safety for all involved. Just look at the costs of a Box Stock engine today compared to just eighteen months ago. Some racers are already jumping up and down, blaming the kart shops and the engine builders for the rise in cost. Crooks, cutthroats, you name it, they are to blame, according to many. But, hold on a minute, let's take a deeper look at where the roots of engine development lie.

Over the past year or two, the majority of the big payout money races have highlighted the Box Stock classes, paying big bucks to win. Just how long do you honestly believe serious racers are going to leave carrots like that dangling without getting creative and looking for every possible bit of horsepower? If you think otherwise, you are laps behind already.

The initial concept of the Box Stock was to allow the budget racer the ability to race and compete at a reduced cost. The big purses have attracted the hottest racers in the country, and the entry level racer still doesn't have a chance.

Those that are offended by the advancement of this engine need look no further than the promoters that pay the big money.

Increased purses and exposure ups the ante for all involved. If you want to remain at a budget level, the purses and exposure will be less. However, the upper levels of the

sport will advance at a higher rate. Therefore it may be a point where the rules packages vary amongst the levels. In most any form of motorsport, the purse structure dictates the level of technology. Racers wanting to compete at an entry level should expect entry level purses and awards.

Some, however, obviously disagree with that notion. They think that they should be able to take their entry level engine and compete with karting's elite, a perfect example of having your cake and eating it too, and folks that's not how it goes in the real world.

High purses and entry level rules will not co-exist. As much we as racers want to keep the cost of racing as low as possible, growth and development is inevitable. We should not ever stand in the way of progress that makes the sport we all dearly love safer for all involved.




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