



Gasser Wars: Drag Racing's Street Classes: 1955-1968

By Larry Davis



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In the late 1950s, thousands of street legal hot rods participated in organized drag races across the country -- they ran in three major classes: Gas, Modified Production, and Modified Sports. As the racers got more serious, these cars were street legal in appearance only. They had headlights, taillights, and interiors, but they were full-on race cars, with huge blown Hemi engines, wide racing slicks, and raised front suspensions. Racers soon discovered that small, lightweight cars were the fastest, and the classic Gasser was born -- cars like the Stone Woods & Cook '40 Willys. Because these cars resembled street vehicles, they had a huge fan base, and their short wheelbases and wildly overpowered engines made them exciting to watch. And, as car manufacturers began sponsoring cars and touting their accomplishments in ads, the "Gasser Wars" were born. Thousands of spectators flocked to events where the top Gassers in the country would face off in grudge matches.



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Gasser Wars: Drag Racing's Street Classes: 1955-1968 By Larry Davis Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #823405 in Books
- Published on: 2007-08-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .44" w x 9.00" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 192 pages

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Review

"For the true drag-racing devotee, it's a cornerstone of a good collection, for those interested in grassroots racing the way it was at its height, it's a centerpiece." -Street Rodder, reviewed by Chris Shelton, February 2008 --Street Rodder, February 2008

About the Author

Larry Davis was a hobby drag racer between 1960 and 1970, competing in various Stock Modified Production and Super Stock classes. His efforts included participation in the 1967 and 1969 NHRA National Championships to Indianapolis, MN. When he wasn't racing, he was an avid fan of the Super Stock class and took many photos of the cars and crews. He currently resides in Canton, Ohio.

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