December 15, 2008

TO: All Dragway 91 Car Builders of the Rolling Plains Longhouse

SUBJECT: Car Design for Optimum Timer Performance

To All Guides,

In an effort to insure that everyone has an equal opportunity for success on race day, I would like to make everyone aware of certain limitations of our track's timing mechanism so that you can avoid some common "pitfalls" that we have seen in past years.

Your car's time is registered based on when it blocks the light beam at the end of the track. If the car does not completely block the beam, no time will be registered. We have seen issues with certain car designs that will not adequately trigger the timers to register the time. In talking with the manufacturer of the timer, these are inherent limitations that can only be avoided by paying close attention to certain aspects of the car's design.

There are two design attributes that typically cause this problem. The first is the paint. Light, shiny, or metallic paints tend to cause indirect light to be reflected back to the sensors resulting in the timer not being tripped. The second is the width of the vehicle. Thinner cars (like canoe shapes, for example), do not block the light beam adequately enough to consistently trip the timer.

Here's what you can do to overcome these limitations:

1.) If you plan to have a light, shiny, or metallic paint job, paint just the bottom of your car with a flat black paint.

2.) In shaping the front end of the vehicle, try to maintain as much width as possible. I don't have an actual dimension to maintain, but I know that a pointed front end is not good. At least an inch and a half wide at the front is probably a safe play. If you're going for the canoe, you may need to get a little creative in how you shape it.

3.) If in doubt, bring your car to the time trials on February 8th at Adell Durbin to verify that it will register times.

Thanks and Good Luck to All,
Gary Long
Longhouse Chief
Race Matrix Operator
garlon100@sbcglobal.net