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DRAG RACING EDITOR BRUCE BIEGLER'S STRAIGHT TALK

'IGOR' INNOVATION VINDICATED



the journey by his racing partner Al Lougheed. Together, they managed to slay all of the favourites to win the weather-deferred Monday conclusion to the Kragen O'Reilly Winter-nationals.

Harrison and Lougheed claimed the event's Competition eliminator title, racing a car that can only best be described as "unique." It was Rob's first ever win at the NHRA National event level.

Driving his one-of-a-kind J/Altered-classed and Ford Escort-bodied car (the motor for which is affectionately dubbed 'Igor'), Harrison combined a superior final round reaction time of .017 secs. with a run of 7.610 secs. at 177.56 mph to take the event championship over opponent David Rampy.

Harrison's winning car features an almost exclusively home designed, milled and built in-line 6-cylinder engine. That 351 CID engine – which traces its earliest roots back to Australia more than 10 years ago – has been an ongoing project of love and much toil to this point. These factors made the sense of accomplishment that Harrison and Lougheed felt, in victory lane at Pomona, all the more rewarding.

"This all started a decade ago as a rather innocent project," Rob reflected. "We had an idea and we had a Duggan block cast in Australia. We welded up some cylinder heads, bolted those on, and then tried it out.

"Some 550 dyno pulls and many years and innovations later we have arrived here. 'Igor' is now an all-billet block with billet everything. Ba-

sically, we make every part on it except for the rocker arms, camshaft and the crankshaft."

Harrison continued, "Looking back I doubt I would choose again to go through what we did to get here. While it was a lot of fun at times, it was expensive and the breakage was regular. It would probably have made more sense to choose a more conventional route for the class."

Harrison was quick to cite valued support of a number of influential drag racers for his project's progression and its ultimate success. Sonny Leonard, Les Davenport, Ron Parr and Brad Claridge all played unsolicited key roles within the development process.

While Harrison and Lougheed were obviously pleased with the Pomona event result – they also provided a small glimpse of their future.

"To this point all of our work has been about making this engine reliable," Rob added. "We wanted to be able to go to races and travel with the car. We do have a next generation 'Igor' in the works and 'he' will be built for horsepower. That's something we've never done before – we will be more performance based."

Rob Harrison and Al Lougheed hope their very positive start will springboard their 2011 racing season which will see the B.C. duo race most of NHRA's Division Six Lucas Oil Series schedule as well as additional select NHRA national event races. •

In future drag racing annals, Rob Harrison's victory – in February at the 2011 season-opening NHRA Winternationals – may be regarded as one of the most significant wins in Canadian drag racing history.

The stunning development

capped a truly epic journey for the North Vancouver, BC-based racer. The victory came in Harrison's first trip back to California's NHRA Winternationals after an 11 season hiatus.

Harrison – a highly talented and innovative racer – was joined in

(Above left) Rob Harrison (l) and Al Lougheed (r) with 'Igor.'
(Below) The BC-based Ford Escort-bodied car en route to victory at the recent NHRA Winternationals. Rob Harrison at the wheel.

PHOTOS BY BRUCE BIEGLER

