



BY EVAN J. SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE MM&FF MAFIA

HEADS-UP MUSTANG racing used to be simple. Fox Stangs barreled down tracks everywhere with nothing more than a power adder (or two), 10-wides cut back, and a rollbar for safety. They were street-appearing, some still streetable, yet they outran many prepared race cars of the day.

Today, heads-up Mustang racing is worlds away from those early times. There's a smattering of classes with intricate rules and definitions. To be competitive, racers need a dedicated combination and deep enough pockets to travel to the required events. They regularly haul from coast-to-coast in search of titles, for the thrill of the chase, and to be named king of

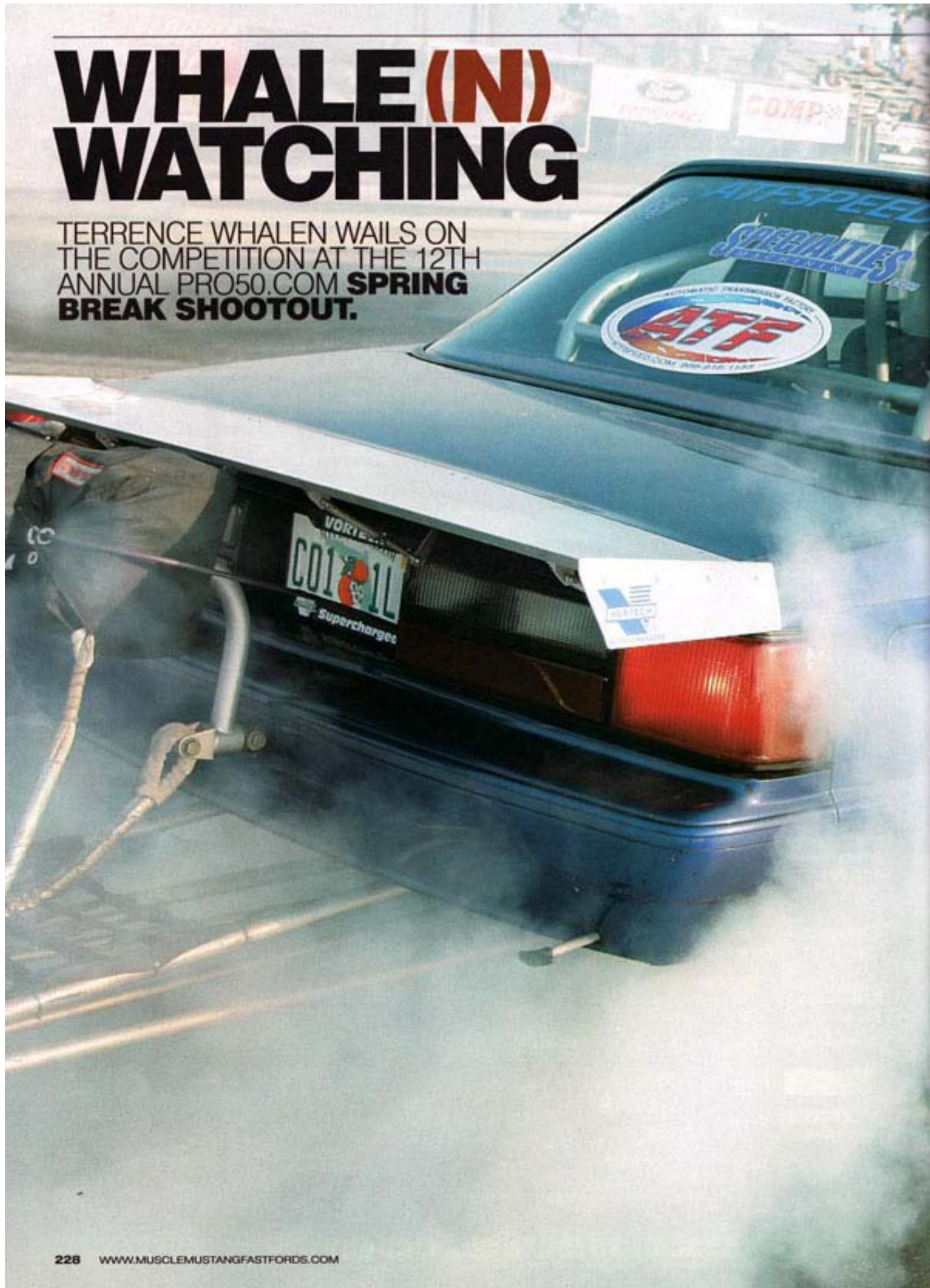
the hill at season's end. But where does that leave the guy, or gal, with a basic late-model that doesn't have the "right" cubic inch displacement, cylinder heads, or power adder?

Sure, you could run Open Comp, but that's still bracket racing with breakouts. Thankfully, the staff at MM&FF has a solution. We believe in simplicity, and that's why we've presented the Pro50.com Spring Break Shootout (SBSO) class for the last dozen seasons. Many believe the SBSO, held in conjunction with the Fun Ford Weekend season opener in Orlando, is the ultimate "run-whatcha-brung," stock-suspension street Mustang event to be found anywhere.

The rules allow any Ford engine combination to be stuffed in a Fox Ford or S197 vehicle, and weight breaks are assigned based on the type of

WHALE (N) WATCHING

TERRENCE WHALEN WAILES ON
THE COMPETITION AT THE 12TH
ANNUAL PRO50.COM **SPRING
BREAK SHOOTOUT.**





WHALE(N) WATCHING

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FLORIDA
NATIONALS



TERRENCE WHALEN was on his game in the Spring Break Shootout class, scoring the win and the \$1,500 check from Pro50.com. He received help from Ronnie Wilson and his crew chief Steve Entwistle.

engine, the power adder, and/or the cylinder heads. Rear suspensions must be stock, with the exception of direct replacement aftermarket parts. It's really that simple. As for the spoils—our pals at Pro50.com put up the \$2,500 cash purse, of which \$1,500 goes to the winner.

While the rules mandate the important street equipment (lights, wipers, seats, and so on) be in place, we're not sure how many of the eight- or nine-second machines are driven to the mall or the supermarket—but who cares? The field is always full and the action mind-boggling.

Though the stated rules are somewhat simple, we've had a few discrepancies. This year, there was a problem with cylinder heads on one entry. For 2007, the MM&FF staff will help oversee tech, so get your ducks in a row. We'll be checking for all the necessary equipment, and those without it will not race. The question is whether to pull back the reins on the rules to allow more realistic street cars to be competitive, or should we leave it alone? You be the judge by e-mailing your suggestions to us at mmff@primedia.com.

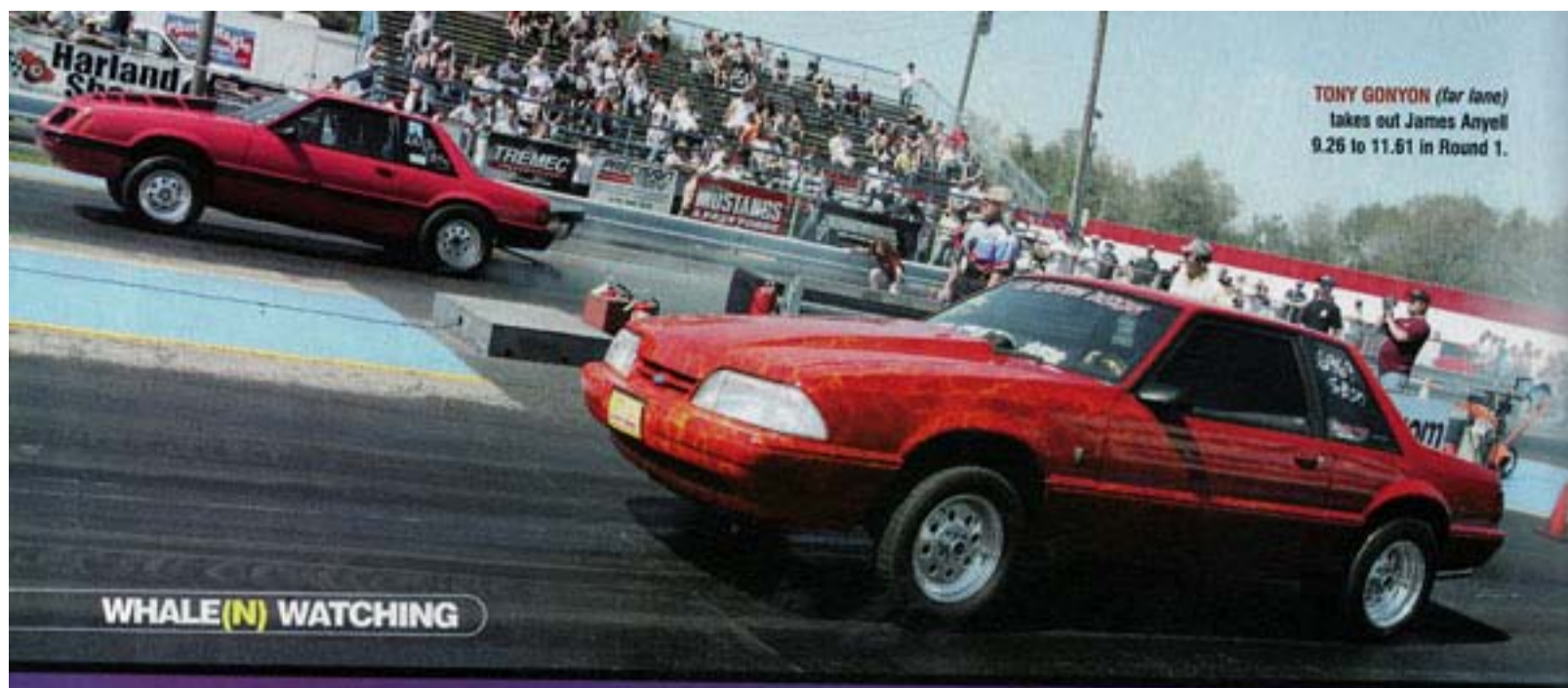
To get in the Spring Break spirit, our staff fired



FAN FAVORITE Bill Kieler wheeled his mad '89 Lincoln to an amazing 9.09 at 151 mph in qualifying. Kieler got past the first round, but his ship lost steam and was knocked out in the second frame.



LONGTIME SBSO contestant Tony Gonyon of Orange Park, Florida, qualified his 514-inch, nitrous-swallowing big-block in the ninth position with a 9.14 at 148 mph. Gonyon was knocked out in the third round by runner-up Spurgeon Adkins.



TONY GONYON (far lane) takes out James Anyell 9.26 to 11.61 in Round 1.

WHALE(N) WATCHING



WAYNE MARTIN (near lane) put up a good fight against Ardron, running 8.85 to Ardron's 8.22.



WHALEN PUT on quite a show at the Pro50.com S850. He took the top spot, running a record 8.18, and then marched through eliminations, never running slower than 8.40.



ANDREW JUHL made a nice showing with his 10.02-second '98 Cobra.



THE RED LX of Jason Gerona qualified 14th with a 10.61.



S850 '06 brought plenty of wild, wheels-up action. Justin Elkes joined the bash with this '93 coupe sporting a 472-inch beast that ran 8.90s. Elkes qualified seventh and lost to Adkins in the second round.

11.09) and his big, bad 388-inch Lincoln Mark VII. Kieler ran in the 9s during qualifying, but fell off the pace and got sent home.

On the other side of the ladder, Adkins, who has attended every S850, was putting on a show with his rough, little, nitrous-fed LX. Adkins, of Cordele, Georgia, ran 8.63 at 160 in the second frame, and in the process trailered Justin Elkes when Elkes broke off the line.

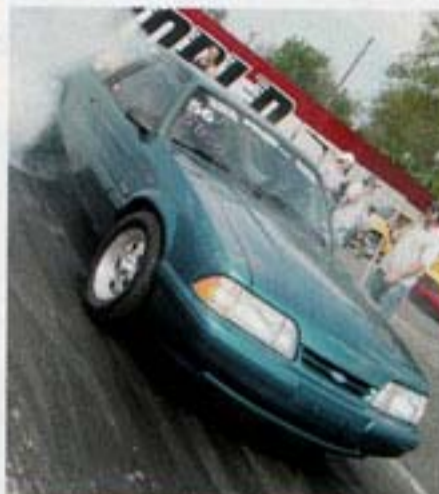
Jason Ardron proudly displayed his new 374-inch turbo combination. With the help of Job Spetter Jr. and 24 psi of boost, he ripped deep in the 8s, and in the second round faced the brightly painted green machine of Jeff Horn. Both racers completed the burnout, then Ardron prestaged, but the green LX sat still. After ample time was given, the starter waived Ardron forward to Stage. Ardron got a single, but he didn't take it easy, ripping to an 8.18 at just 153 mph.

In the last pair, Tony Gonyon, who runs a 514-inch big-block with two stages, also cruised to a single when Gerona failed to show. It's worth noting that Gonyon was running on new Goodyear 325/50/15-inch drag radial tires. The tires appeared to work well, but a faulty trans-brake nearly caused him to shut down on his single. He took the Tree and limped back to his

BELOW: Bill Kieler (left) got the jump on Clinton Roberts in the first round and he never looked back. Kieler ran 10.04 to Roberts' 11.40.



WHALE(N) WATCHING



CAR 56 belonged to Chris Lazzaro who landed the 16th spot on the ladder with an 11.28.

pit, but his performance for the next round was in question.

The third round opened with excitement as Adkins and Gonyon squared off, but the nitrous-gulping small-block of Adkins proved too much for the injured big-block Mustang. Adkins, whose switch from Cleveland/Yates-style heads to inline cylinder heads allowed him to run at 3,000 pounds instead of 3,300, as he had in years past, blitzed to an 8.37 at 164, while Gonyon ran only 9.71.

Next up was the low qualifier Terrence Whalen who faced number-four qualifier Dave Fadel. Fadel was unable to make the call, but Whalen pleased the crowd with an 8.29 at 168 mph. Ardron followed, taking the competition single, and what was thought to be the first SBSO car in the 7s, when the board flashed 7.84 at 189 mph. Unfortunately, a question rose about his cylinder



THIS SVO was mod-powered and ran 9.38. Chris Escobar of Pensacola, Florida, was the pilot.

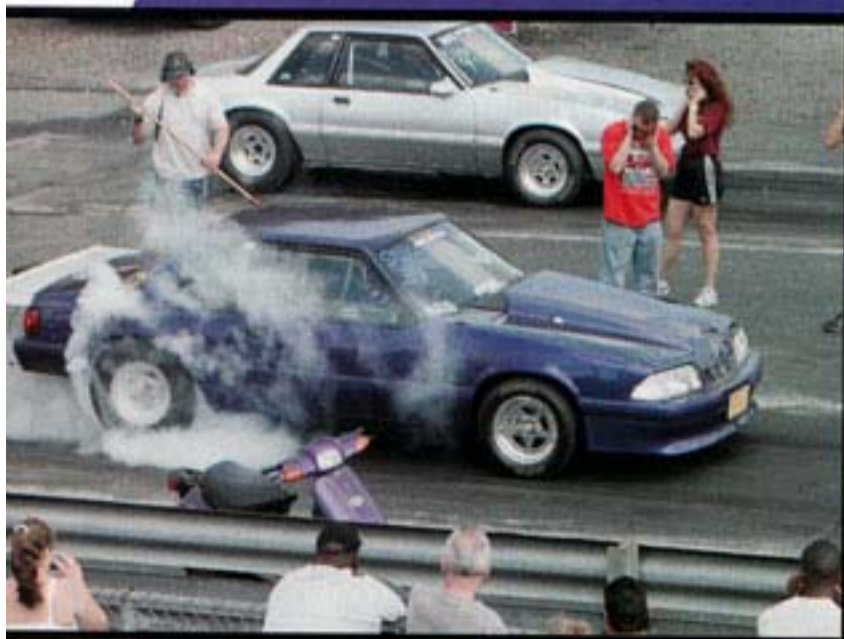


JASON ARDRON (near lane) took out Jeff Horn in Round 2 when Horn was unable to stage on time.

heads and the weight classification of the combination.

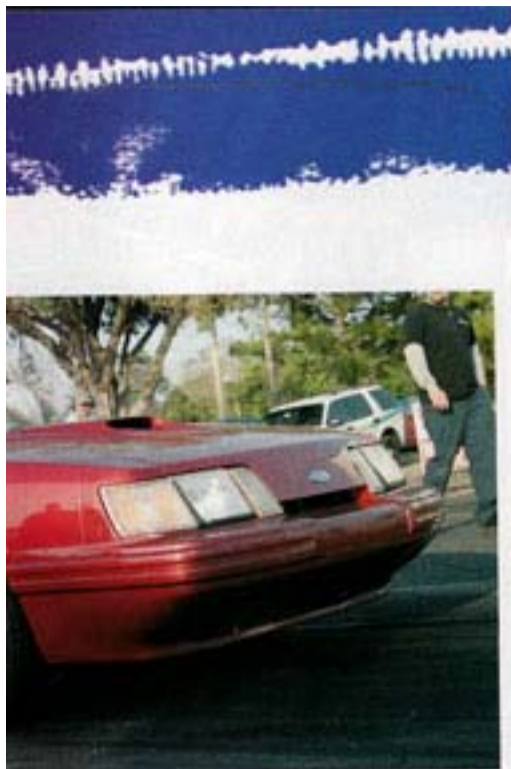
Ardron returned to the lanes to face Whalen for the semifinals in which Whalen got the 8.20-to-8.31 win. As it turned out, Ardron's engine was wearing Yates-style heads with a turbo, which required that his machine be at 3,300 pounds, however, he never claimed the heads during inspection where he was classified at 3,000 pounds. So, according to Fun Ford's George Klass, "He would have been disqualified anyway after the round." Adkins, the only other racer in competition, took a leisurely competition single to set up the final.

Darkness had set on Orlando Speed World when the pair of purple Mustangs rumbled into the water box for the final. Adkins began to heat his tires, and Whalen followed with an angry burnout. The Double-X huffer under



'06 MM&FF/PRO50.COM SPRING BREAK QUALIFYING

PSN.	NAME	HOMETOWN	ET/MPH
1.	Terrence Whalen	Deerfield Beach, FL	8.184/170.45
2.	Jason Ardron	Tamarac, FL	8.235/156.38
3.	Spurgeon Adkins	Cordele, GA	8.548/161.43
4.	Dave Fadel	Tamarac, FL	8.563/158.95
5.	Doug Laurent	Plantation, FL	8.670/153.58
6.	Jeff Horn	Pompano Beach, FL	8.678/157.12
7.	Justin Elkes	Cooper City, FL	8.914/153.63
8.	Bill Kieler	Margate, FL	9.091/151.87
9.	Tony Gonyon	Orange Park, FL	9.149/149.22
10.	Chris Escobar	Pensacola, FL	9.385/143.63
11.	Wayne Martin	New Port, IL	9.840/153.50
12.	Andrew Juhl	Deltona, FL	10.020/138.78
13.	Brent Nelson	Cape Coral, FL	10.480/130.94
14.	Jason Gerona	Callahan, FL	10.614/126.56
15.	Robert Watson	Jacksonville, FL	11.076/127.80
16.	Chris Lazzaro	Raleigh, NC	11.282/125.24
17.	Clinton Roberts	Seabrook, SC	11.357/121.96
18.	James Anyell	Pompano Beach, FL	11.480/122.39



Whalen's hood was howling as it idled—on the other side, "Purgin" Spurgeon gave his nitrous a long, cold purge.

In the next moment, the pair inched forward until each prestaged bulb flickered "on." Adkins blipped his throttle once—on the other side, Whalen, with his engine idling, moved right in. Adkins was right behind him, then the pair of small-blocks went on the chip, and at the flash of yellow both cars moved hard. In a rage of thunder, they left the line as camera strobes blasted the cars. Adkins' coupe took a slight holeshot (0.078 to 0.115 second), but the pair seemed to move in unison as they shot past the 60-foot clocks in a purple blur. Both engines screamed in the cool March air, and by half-track Whalen had inched ahead. As they neared the stripe, the winged coupe of Whalen was in the lead, and he crossed first by the slim margin of 0.130 second.

Adkins put on a fight, but he juiced his 347 a little too hard and apparently it gave up the ghost just short of the line. He later reported he thought it had burned a piston when it nosed over, and that killed his speed and his chance to be the first two-time Spring Break Shootout winner. Whalen, meanwhile, busted off an 8.25 (to Adkins 8.41) to take the Pro50.com SBSO crown, a title he will cherish.

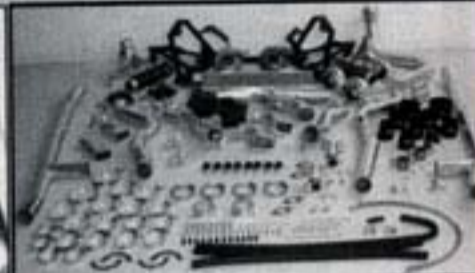
"This is my second time driving in the Spring Break Shootout," Whalen says. "I raced in 1996 and went 9.30s, but it's a lot faster now. I'm stoked. We usually run eighth-mile, so it was a guess when it came to picking what gear to run—we were just shooting from the hip. The track was tricky, too. We got down on the first few runs, so my crew chief, Steve Entwistle, and I kept the car nearly the same every round. In the final, we put more hook in it by loosening the front end. We didn't want to spin. Spurgeon is a veteran—he is the man at the Spring Break Shootout. We just tried to get a light and do the best we could."

And they did, taking the '06 SBSO championship. ■■■

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