

Pro Challenge cars will shift to auto drivetrain

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Pro Challenge Performance Racing has emerged as a leader in the driver development racing platforms in recent years and now a new generation motor will continue the rapid rise of its regional and national series as well as the drivers that compete in them.

After successful test sessions at Kingsport Speedway in Tennessee and Hickory Motor Speedway in North Carolina, Pro Challenge will begin offering a four-cylinder car engine beginning in 2007 that will be implemented into the regional and national series during the 2007 and 2008 calendar years.

The four-cylinder engine will be implemented with a five-speed transmission with a reverse gear, which will replace the six-forward gear transmission currently in all Pro Challenge cars.

"Motorcycle engines are great powerplants and they have served Pro Challenge very well," said John Litzinger, owner of Pro Challenge. "They have, however, changed through the years in terms of performance and availability and that has been causing us a lot of grief of late. I felt like we will have a lot more stable engine platform by moving to a car engine. One thing that this accomplishes for our spec series program is it that we will benefit from an engine platform that will last a long time. Car engine platforms typically last about 10 to 12 years, far more than motorcycle engines."

The Pro Challenge cars will have a new engine package in the future.

"We have also had a lot of requests for a reverse gear," Litzinger said. "We've been looking to try to develop a reverse gear option for our motorcycle-powered cars and this solves that problem. Also, we believe that moving to this particular engine platform will be beneficial in their use as a developmental tool for the young drivers. It will make Pro Challenge the premier scale product available today."

While the new four-cylinder car en-



gine will be implemented into Pro Challenge racing, officials insist the current motorcycle powerplants, the Kawasaki ZX1100 and ZZR12, will continue to be equally competitive. The motorcycle engines now in existence will be allowed in Pro Challenge competition through 2008.

"The entire reason we are taking two years to develop and implement the new engine package is because we want to develop the new product, but not obsolete the current motors," Litzinger said. "Our plan will be to allow the current motorcycle engines to compete in the series in an equally competitive environment for two years. We feel that this is a reasonable timeframe for the new motors to make their way into the series."

Pro Challenge racing has emerged as a leader in the scale car racing community, and with the move to the new generation of engines, Pro Challenge continues its rapid progression towards being the elite developmental racing series. The implementation of new technology, such as the new four-cylinder motor, and the influx of new, young tal-

ent racing in Pro Challenge in the United States and Canada, show that Pro Challenge is the home of some of racing's future superstars.

"All of the major NASCAR teams are trying to develop a minor league system in order to do well," Litzinger said. "We feel as though we have a product that is uniquely positioned to be part of that process. Our cars are a natural step in the progression of a developing driver. They are basically smaller Late Model-type cars in the way that the two are set up. Adding a transmission and a car engine is a bigger step towards making an even better developmental series. We are spending a lot of time and effort in development and technology and I think it will serve us well for Pro Challenge to be one of the best series to be in for a developing driver."

Competition has been tremendous this year in the Pro Challenge Series. Multiple-time Pro Challenge champion Terry Mathis edged 13-year-old Zach Stroupe by 34 points in a heated battle for the Aaron's Pro Challenge Series title.