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Detailed History Of Slot Cars

In today's world, it seems that almost any topic is open for debate. While I was gathering facts for this article, I was quite surprised to find some of the issues I thought were settled are actually still being openly discussed.

Does your kid love racing? To make him experience the joy and excitement of being on a race track without actually driving a real race car, you should think of buying him a slot car set. Slot cars are replicas of actual automobiles with bodies made purposely for miniature racing. While there are commercially available slot cars of different sizes and styles, some racers still prefer to make their own models from basic parts and materials. But how and where did slot cars originate?

The first slot cars to hit the market were built by Lionel Corporation. This model, which appeared on Lionel's catalog in 1912, draws its power from a toy train rail that was set in the wide slot between the rails. Racers can adjust the speed of their vehicle by regulating the switch positioned on the track's power supply. This very first model has much resemblance to modern slot cars, but independent speed control was offered only as an option way back then. Production of this toy set was stopped after 1915.

1930s

In late 1930s, hobbyist use relatively large model cars with 1:16 to 1:18 scales. These cars derived their power from miniature internal combustion engines that were initially equipped with spark-ignition that was later on replaced with glow plug engines. Since there was no way for the player to control the car's speed and steering, this kind of car was mainly a mechanic's hobby.

1940s

In 1940s, British hobbyists start experimenting controllable electric cars that feature hand-built motors.

You may not consider everything you just read to be crucial information about Slot Cars. But don't be surprised if you find yourself recalling and using this very information in the next few days.

1950s

In 1954, the Southport model Engineering Society in the United Kingdom was dared by a patent-holder to use rail-guided gas-car exhibition on raising funds. So its staff made an electric racecourse with six-lane layout and measuring 60 feet long. This course is designed for 1:32 rail-guided cars which are considered as the ancestors of slot racing cars.

Inspired by the said layout from Southport, some US and UK clubs start racing electric cars assisted by center rails in 1955 to 1956. These rails were soon after replaced by slots on the track surface and cars raced on these tracks are name slot cars. In 1957, Minimodels has produced a famous line of slot-guided vehicles called Scalextric. Victory Industries also launched the VIP line. The Scalextric became an instant hit, causing engineers and some companies like Aurora Plastics Corporation to develop HO vibrator sets. These small cars amazed the public because their price and size best suit the needs of average consumers.

1960s

It was in the 1960s when slot cars became very much popular. In 1963, after manufacturing a million and a half units, Aurora made flat-commutator motor to replace the vibrator cars. From this, the best-selling slot car in history, called Aurora Thunderjet-500, was produced. The Thunderjets, along with their upgraded versions, dominated the market for around a decade.

1970s

It was in the late 1970s when the slot car craze sputtered out.

By using computer-aided designing, more detailed and authentic models have been made in 1990s. And in 2004, the digital control systems which have modernized model railroading, start appearing in 1:32 slot cars. Such systems provide racers with the ability to race multiple cars in every lane, and to enjoy more realistic racing experience.

Don't limit yourself by refusing to learn the details about Slot Cars. The more you know, the easier it will be to

focus on what's important.

About the Author

Helena Zwarts is a small business entrepreneur and write passionately about various [home based business opportunities](#) to earn money from home.

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