



IT WAS BARELY controlled chaos. The Coors RaceTruck Challenge saw fields of compact trucks, helmed by some of the country's top racing talent, banging fenders and tailgates. The stakes were low, the horsepower lower, but the racing was bare-knuckle. Pickups three-wide into a corner, a fourth punted into the infield. Pairs of Ford Rangers and Jeep Comanches bump drafting through the pack, intent on taking the podium. It was full of under-the-table factory support, clandestine race parts, and real competition.

For years, *Road & Track* held an annual competition for showroom cars.

The Manufacturer's Challenge Cup began as an earnest invitational: any company could bring any production vehicle for a chance at claiming the best time around Lime Rock Park. But where there's racing, there's cheating.

By the mid-Eighties the rules had changed. Then editor-in-chief John Dinkel hand-picked the competitors, and the finer points of the scoring system were left up to his whim. That's how we wound up with a couple of Ford Rangers going fender to fender with brand-new Corvettes and Mustang GTs. That's how we helped

launch what would become the SCCA RaceTruck Challenge.

"It would rank as the most surreal race series in the era of colorized television," says *Road & Track* contributor Marshall Pruett, a spectator when the series started. "There was nothing like it beforehand. This was years ahead of anyone contemplating trucks being raced. NASCAR launched its truck series in 1995, but the trucks were actually built as road racers first. Contextually, it came out of not only left field, it came out of fricking outer space. But the bizarre thing is the enthusiasm within this small