

EXCLUSIVE TO MODEL CARS ILLUSTRATED

GILBERT RECREATES

STOCK CAR THRILLS



The brightly colored Ford stock car slides around the curve, straightens out, and picks up speed on the straightaway. Throttle down to the floor, tires a whirling blur on the black track, it races up the ramp, starts to change lanes—and then vaults off into space!

With a solid thunking sound, it slams down on a lower ramp more than a car-length away, now in

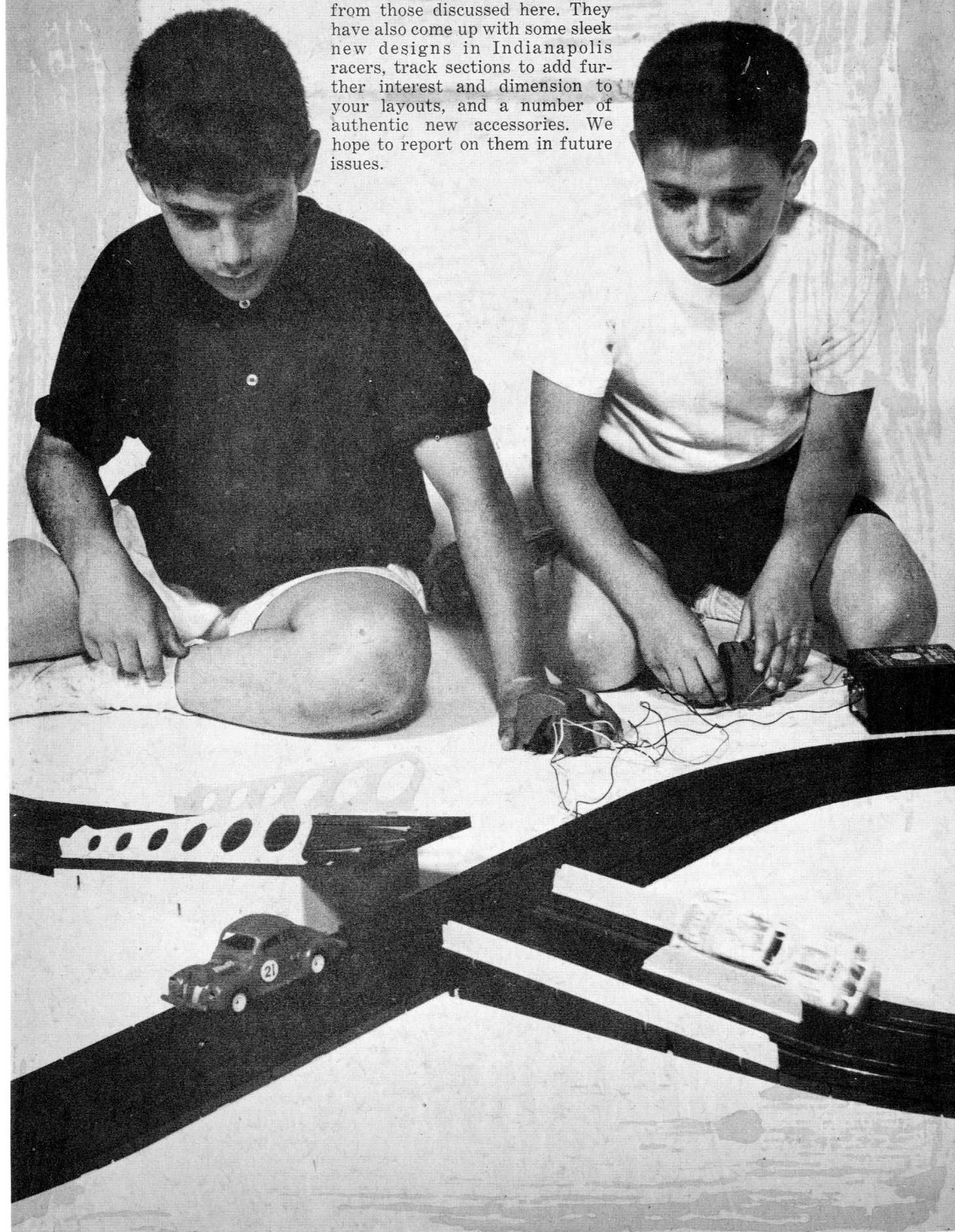
the other lane, and again begins to pick up speed for the far turn and another lap.

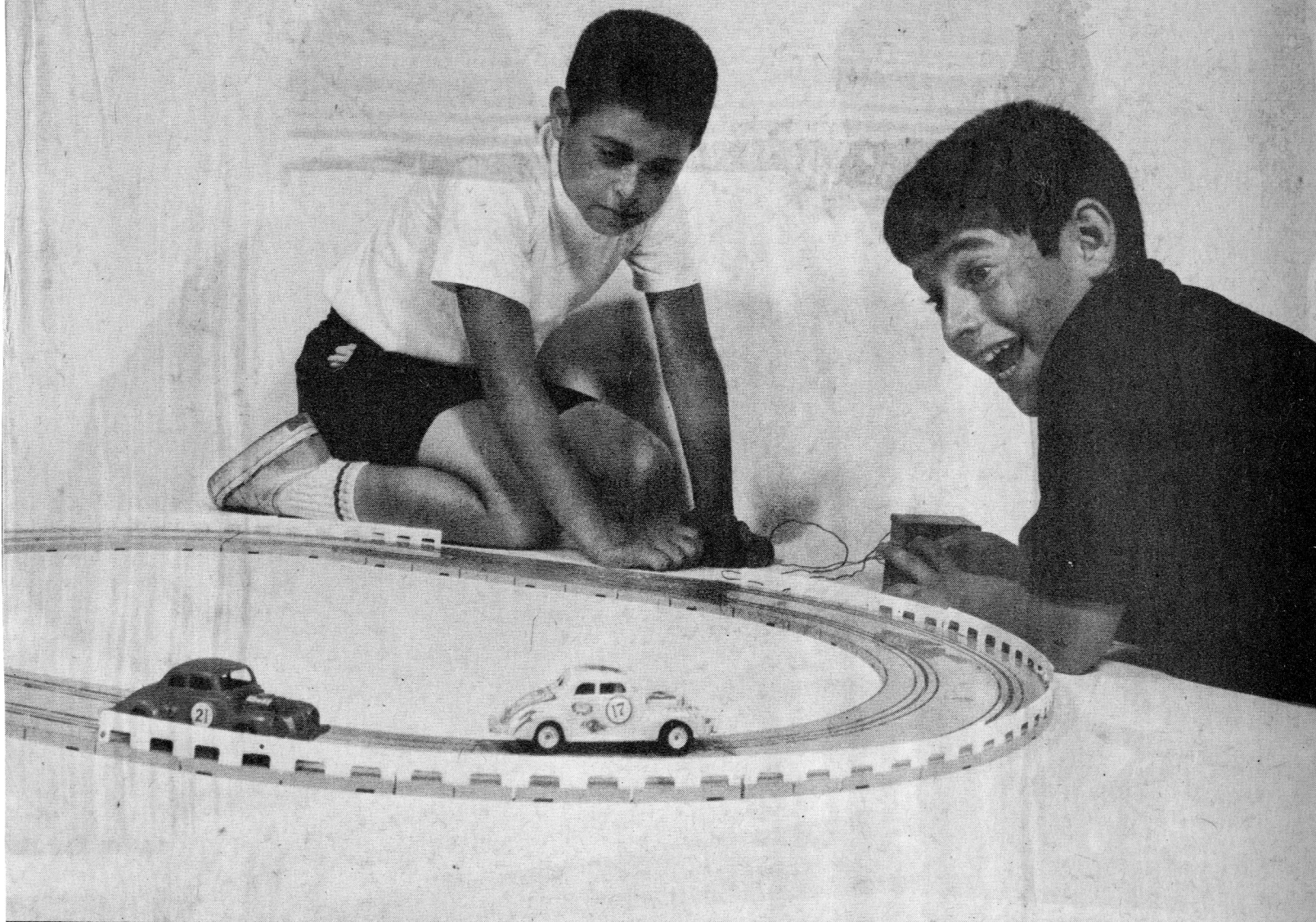
Sound exciting, just like the daredevil show you have seen at your local stock car race track? It is; and it's on your own track, with you on the throttle! Of course the whole thing is in miniature, one of the many new Autorama slot racing sets for 1963 by A. C. Gilbert.

Gilbert, a respected name in the toy industry for 54 years, and whose American Flyer trains have chugged around millions of Christmas trees, has some ideas on slot racing that put its Autorama racing sets in a different light than most other slot racing manufacturers.

Basically, Gilbert's thought is this. The vast majority of Americans like stock car races and

As many of you might guess, Gilbert makes several other new Autorama car racing sets aside from those discussed here. They have also come up with some sleek new designs in Indianapolis racers, track sections to add further interest and dimension to your layouts, and a number of authentic new accessories. We hope to report on them in future issues.





Let's examine Gilbert's current Autorama sets to see if the theory holds water.

Taking the Fly-Over Speedway set first, we see that it contains two exciting ingredients; a Fly-Over Chicane and a crossroad. It also boasts an 80 piece accessory pack to make a grandstand, observation tower, score board, walls for service pits, and a host of other realistic racing standbys.

In addition, there's a manually operated starter who drops either a checkered flag or a green one at the press of a button, to get your race off to an authentic start. Two Ford stock cars plus customizing decals, two accelerator-type speed

controls, a metal and plastic fence set, and a 1-amp D.C. output power unit are included too. And of course, enough black roadway to make a track 48" by 84".

The Fly-Over Chicane, described at the start of this article, is certainly the most unusual and exciting dimension added to slot racing thus far by any manufacturer. It comes in two sections; an approach ramp and a descent ramp. A car shooting off the edge of the approach ramp must travel twice its own length through the air to land safely on the descent ramp. And if you think that doesn't take a degree of skill, you have another think coming.

Inevitably though, some modelers who buy this set will try to stretch the distance between ramps for even more excitement. That's possible too, because the distance recommended between the ramps has been calculated for two things:

1. A moderately fast approach speed, and
2. Just enough room to set up a section of roadway at right angles to the gap underneath it, so that while one car is making the leap, a second may be right underneath it.

Naturally, a faster approach speed means that the increased momentum will carry the car

car. The motors are protected from dust and dirt on the bottom or roadway side by tough plastic pan. Modifications on the motors, for those who like to add some extra oomph, are accomplished by removing two screws, one at each end of the chassis.

And speaking of modifications, the body may also be changed to suit your style by the usual methods of cutting, filing, sanding and painting. Overall body length of the Ford coupe is $5\frac{1}{4}$ ".

The cars steer automatically by virtue of a swiveling axle to which are attached two plastic pins that track in the slot in the center of the roadway. Metal contact strips on the cars pick up current from the metal strips imbedded in the roadway on both sides of the slot in the middle.

Another interesting and unusual Gilbert Autorama exclusive is contained in the Stock Car Speed Bowl set. This is the "Which Lane?" Chicane. In this particular section of roadway, two lanes narrow down to become one—the slots actually merge. In chicane sections made by other manufacturers, the two slots come close together, but never merge into one.

In the "Which Lane?" Chicane, the result is wild to say the least, for you never know what lane you are going to be driving when you come out of the chicane. The result is pure chance, and it makes for suspenseful and challenging racing. The unpredictable that real racing continually produces is certainly in this set.

Also included in this set, which features the popular Ford coupe stock too, is enough track to take up a 36" by 54" area. Naturally, there are individual throttle controls, a plastic fence set, and a 1 amp D. C. power unit.

The roadway sections in this set are designed in such a way that if you buy two complete sets, a four lane raceway could be assembled. This is possible because Gilbert makes two different types of curved track. They are City curves, shorter in length, and Outer Race curves, that are longer in length and have a wider radius.

Both blend together to make a perfect section of four lane raceway; increasing the competition, and the fun!

