

## TASCA'S NEW FC BODY HAS POWERBOAT CONNECTIONS

By appearance, the body on Bob Tasca III's Motorcraft/Quick Lane Ford Mustang Funny Car looks like any other Ford body being tested this week at Palm Beach International Raceway.

Appearances, however, can be deceiving.

Tasca is utilizing a brand-new body developed by the world-renowned company **Outerlimits Offshore Powerboats**, which is based in Bristol, R.I. Outerlimits is about 30 minutes away from the Tasca Ford dealership in Cranston, R.I.

"The cost has been spiraling for these Funny Car bodies and they are approaching well over \$30,000," Tasca III said Monday in an interview with CompetitionPlus.com between test runs at Palm Beach. "So, we looked at more efficient ways of building the body while maintaining quality and performance. Shape-wise, it is absolutely identical to the body we ran last year. Outerlimits builds offshore speed boats from scratch and they hold many of the offshore records around the world. Mike Fiore, the president of the company, and I are friends and he was interested in building a (Funny Car) body. I give him all the credit because he funded the development of building this body to show that his company was capable of basically throwing their hat in the ring for future body programs, and not just for Ford. He picked Ford as the first body because of our relationship."

Fiore is the founder and president of Outerlimits Offshore Powerboats and his company has been in business for 18 years.

"This body is not too dissimilar to what Ford has been running before," Fiore said. "This (body) is basically a carbon fiber Kevlar hybrid prepreg Honeycomb construction. We got involved with this (building a Funny Car body) because we have the facility and the technology to do it, and it is just pretty cool. We wanted to throw our hat in the ring and we felt we could certainly come in doing at least on par to what everybody else is doing and we know that in a very short period of time we should be able to eclipse what most of the other body manufacturers are doing right now. This is the first (Funny Car) body we have ever done and it was a little more in-depth than I thought it would be, and we have invested a fair amount of money into this. There's a lot of detail work and a lot intricate parts that go into making one of these bodies."

According to Tasca, his race team and Outerlimits started this project in the spring of 2010 and the first body was completed in December.

"If all goes well, and we're hopeful that it does, we will be able to build a better body at a more affordable price," Tasca said. "This body is an identical copy of the Ford design and my race company has worked exclusively with them (Outerlimits Offshore Powerboats) to develop this body for our race team. (This body) is absolutely more cost efficient. I do not want to release the exact price point, but it is a substantial cost saving over our current body. Now, it (the body) has to last. If it doesn't last long, it's not cheaper. We have to get the same life expectancy (out of the body) at the price points we paid. That's why we have only built one (body). At the end of the day, it is a huge investment to build one body, so I tip my hat to Mike (Fiore) and his company

because he took on all the risks. At the end of the day, he believes in his company and his company's capability. Sitting on the ground, this body looks terrific. It looks as good as anything we have ever run. Obviously, we need to prove it on the race track."

Fiore is in Palm Beach to see firsthand how the body he built for Tasca responds.

"We are down here to gather some data with Bob and just verify all our engineering," Fiore said. "We're going to watch him put as many runs on it as we can and then we will go back to the factory and start building more bodies. We have material in stock in our freezer and we're ready to turn the wick up and go full tilt and keep building bodies. Honestly, I never thought I would get involved in building Funny Car bodies, but my father-in-law is Art Whipple (of Whipple Superchargers), so it is really because of him I got involved with this."

Tasca says his team will make several laps at Palm Beach through Feb. 5 and then he is taking his Funny Car with the Outerlimits-built body to The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway for testing Feb. 16-20.

"After we make all the runs in Palm Beach and Las Vegas we will be able to determine whether or not the body will live, and we're hopeful it will," Tasca said. "Blowing blowers up isn't the fault of the body or hitting cones isn't the fault of the body, and all things considered, you should be able to get about 150 runs plus on a body. If you get 150 runs in every body, you can say to yourself that is pretty good. The problem is when you only get 10 runs on a body and you have to throw it away because it blew up or caught fire or whatever the situation is. Now, those checks (for bodies) become real big checks. That's why we have gone down this road to try and develop a more cost-effective body, and also try to build a better body. We didn't try to build a body that wasn't as good. We tried to build a better body from the standpoint of durability and shape. We also want the performance to be the same. If the body is stronger and it can withstand a blower coming off it better or you can hit a cone and it doesn't take the nose off the car, that's what we want. We engineered a lot of time into building a stronger body to withstand some of the abuses these bodies take and if it can withstand it, that lowers your cost as well. We're in a tough economy and at the end of the day, we're just trying to build a more efficient body."

Fiore's long-term objective is to expand in the Funny Car body market.

"Our goal is to go through this year supporting Ford," Fiore said. "Then, hopefully we can get another team or two and start developing for them their current bodies or next generation bodies. This is just the beginning. We have a lot more technology we want to bring to body building."

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