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CHAMPIONSHIP CHALLENGER

WITH BACK-TO-BACK WINS TO START THE SEASON,
KEVIN HELMS HAS HIS EYES ON FOURTH TITLE

RACE COVERAGE

- AMALIE MOTOR OIL NHRA GATORNATIONALS
- JEGS NHRA CAJUN SPORTSNATIONALS

HEAD GASKET TECH

A LOOK AT CYLINDER-HEAD SEALING SOLUTIONS
FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE ENGINES

NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

by Jim Luikens

It was great to finally get the 2015 NHRA J&A Service Pro Mod Drag Racing Series underway. As usual, it was historic Auto-Plus Raceway at Gainesville that hosted the first Pro Mod event of the year. Many things are new this year, including the title sponsor, cars, body styles, teammates, and sponsors.



Jim Whiteley

Both Bob Rahaim and Troy Coughlin brought '15 Corvettes to Gainesville, the first C7 'Vettes that have been seen in NHRA Pro Mod competition. Also making their twin debuts were the new '69 Chevrolet Chevelles of Steven Whitley and Doug Winters. Chip King's '70 Dodge Charger, which replaced his winged '69 Dodge Daytona, and Jim Whiteley's '14 Cadillac CTS also are new body styles.

Rahaim debuted his new car on Friday, won his first round ever of Pro Mod racing on Saturday, and won his first Pro Mod Wally on Sunday in only his seventh career start.

In the partially new-car department was Don Walsh's '14 Camaro front dog house on his race car. It replaced the 2013 front clip that the car carried last year. Walsh was the No. 1 qualifier of the event at 5.832 seconds, the seventh pole of his NHRA career. In the first round of eliminations, he lowered his best event elapsed time to 5.829 seconds before losing to eventual winner Rahaim in the second round.

In the new-but-you-would-never-know-it department was Clint Satterfield's Jerry

Bickel-built '68 Firebird, which replaces his venerable R2B2 Firebird. The new car carries the same color scheme as last year's entry but features some absolutely amazing airbrush detail. The airbrushed bumpers even have airbrushed bumper jack slots. Joining the Satterfield team and ace crew chief Bob Gardner is crewmember Brian Hinkley.

Last year, Danny Rowe Racing and J&A Service were the only two-car teams competing in the series. In the never-ending quest for more data, they are joined this year by the two-car teams of Precision Turbo, Jim Bell, and Coughlin. During the off-season, Bell added Kevin Fiscus to his team, Coughlin added son T.J. to the powerhouse JEGS team, and Khalid alBalooshi joined Harry Hruska's PTE team.

Young T.J. had by far the most successful outing of the new teammates. He qualified second in his dad's former race car, a '12 Corvette, and went all the way to the semifinals in his debut. When father Troy also advanced to the semifinals

in his new '15 Corvette, the makings of a storybook finish were at hand. Unfortunately for them, both Coughlins experienced serious parts failures in their quarterfinal victories and were unable to advance past the semifinal round.

Fiscus drove the late-model Mustang that he and Josh Klugger campaigned last season. He will switch to the Mustang that Bell crashed early last year when repairs are completed.

alBalooshi drove the PTE '68 Camaro that Walsh wheeled to top speed of the meet at last year's event.

Delaware's Gerry Capano didn't have a new car, paint scheme, or crew in Gainesville, but what he did have was a new sponsor, HE&M Saws. A steady stream of the sport's top engine builders and chassis builders could be seen rotating through the Capano pit all weekend as they checked out the new saw.

Eighty-seven-year-old Willard Kinzer became the oldest competitor to ever try to qualify for an NHRA Pro Mod event. Willard, who has been successful at various Pro Street Series events, drove the former El General '69 Camaro and fell short of making the field, but he will again be seen at another NHRA event this season. **ND**



Willard Kinzer

PRO MOD

1. Don Walsh, Wixom, Mich. ('14 Camaro) **5.832, 248.02**
2. T.J. Coughlin, Delaware, Ohio ('12 Corvette) **5.876, 251.49**
3. Steve Matussek, Olathe, Kan. ('68 Camaro) **5.879, 248.29**
4. Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills, Calif. ('68 Camaro) **5.882, 249.95**
5. Troy Coughlin, Delaware, Ohio ('15 Corvette) **5.893, 252.43**
6. Pete Farber, Baldwinville, Mass. ('69 Daytona) **5.897, 247.02**
7. Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('69 Camaro) **5.909, 246.30**
8. Mike Castellana, Muttontown, N.Y. ('69 Camaro) **5.926, 242.80**
9. Bob Rahaim, Grosse Pointe, Mich. ('15 Corvette) **5.929, 243.55**
10. Bill Glidden, Whiteland, Ind. ('10 Mustang) **5.941, 243.24**
11. Mike Knowles, Grand Junction, Colo. ('67 Mustang) **5.966, 236.30**
12. Kevin Fiscus, Jacksonville, Fla. ('12 Mustang) **5.973, 248.57**
13. Mike Janis, Lancaster, N.Y. ('13 Camaro) **5.973, 245.40**
14. Eric Latino, Port Perry, Ont. ('69 Camaro) **5.984, 245.63**
15. Kenny Lang, Grande Pointe, Man. ('69 Camaro) **5.989, 240.64**
16. Chip King, Semora, N.C. ('70 Charger) **6.005, 243.19**

ALTERNATES: Khalid alBalooshi - 6.007, 250.00; Steven Whiteley - 6.007, 244.92; Jim Whiteley - 6.025, 242.19; Jeff Naiser - 6.030, 239.87; Gerry Capano - 6.059, 237.67; Jim Bell - 6.062, 232.15; Doug Winters - 6.174, 223.54; Clint Satterfield - 6.180, 240.38; Dan Stevenson - 6.195, 242.15; Willard Kinzer - 6.293, 240.59; Chris Juliano - 6.381, 232.39.

PRO MOD CHAMPION BOB RAHAIM

