

NATIONAL

ISSUE 15 ★ VOLUME 54 ★ JULY 26, 2013



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DRAGSTER

RISING STAR

With two wins already this season, Michael Ray's future is shining bright

TODD LESENKO

Canada's newest nitro hero took a winding path to the seat of a Funny Car

MIKE FERDERER

Super-class veteran has struck a successful balance in racing and life

SUMMER SIZZLE

Mello Yello Series heats up the Midwest with stops in Chicago and Norwalk

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DELIVER BY JULY 26, 2013



PERIODICALS

Notes From Pro Mod Reporter's Notebook

by Jim Luikens

In my last report I talked about the diversity and the parity of the three types of engine combinations that are accepted in the NHRA Pro Mod class, and my thoughts turn now to car bodies and the popularity of certain styles.

At the recent Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals, no less than eight different body styles were represented in the 16-car qualified field. From nostalgia to current to futuristic, there was a body style to please everyone.

First-generation '68 and '69 Camaros were the single most popular style with five competitors using that body. In second place was the current-generation Camaro with three competitors running it. In other words, exactly half of the 16-car field was made up of early and late Camaros. With that type of penetration, it was not surprising that both the winner and runner-up in Norwalk were driving Camaros.

What is a surprise is that the only other body style to record multiple entries was the '69 Dodge Daytona with two of those in action. Six different body styles made up the rest of the field with single entries of each: One '68 Pontiac Firebird was joined by two Ford Mustangs ('67 and '12) and three Chevrolet Corvettes ('63, '13, and Harold Martin's futuristic version).

At one time it was not surprising to find half of a typical Pro Mod field comprised of split-window '63 Corvettes, one of the all-time iconic body styles, but that has certainly changed. NHRA stars like Rickie Smith, Mike Knowles, and the late Steve Engel, among others, were all '63 Corvette proponents at one time in their careers. However, Canadian Kenny Lang was the only competitor running that body style in Norwalk. Lang's car is owned and tuned by fellow Canadian Al Billes.



Eric Latino

Another place where you will find great diversity is in the crew chiefs. From the animated Jimmy Rector to the studious Billes, Pro Mod crew chiefs run the gamut from one extreme to the other.

The most active is Rector, who serves as crew chief for the entries of Danny Rowe and Tim Tindle. When either of Rector's cars are running, he owns the starting line, quickly moving from one vantage point to another in an effort to observe everything that is happening. One thing you can't argue with is his success. Team owner and lead driver Rowe recorded three No. 1 qualifying positions in this season's first six events and also has three low e.t.s of the meet and one top speed of the meet so far this year.

At the other extreme you have the stoic Billes, who has driven and tuned these cars with great success. He quietly observes everything that goes on with Lang's team from the rear of the starting-line area while the rest of the crew is assembled closer to the car. Lang is currently third in points with 369 markers while Rowe is only 28 points further back despite having missed one race.

A couple of teams that deserve special mention are those of Smith and Clint Satterfield. Each team makes do with only one crewmember, notable exceptions to the rest of the Pro Mod field. Smith has right-hand man Chad, and Bob Gardner makes up a one-man crew for Satterfield's team. Despite apparently being understaffed, Smith has won the last two races and leads the points, and Satterfield won Houston and recorded top speed of the meet in Norwalk.

With the completion of the Norwalk race, Pro Mod teams will enjoy a two-month summer break. They return to action at the Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals and run two more races in September and one in October to finish out the season.



Bill Lutz