

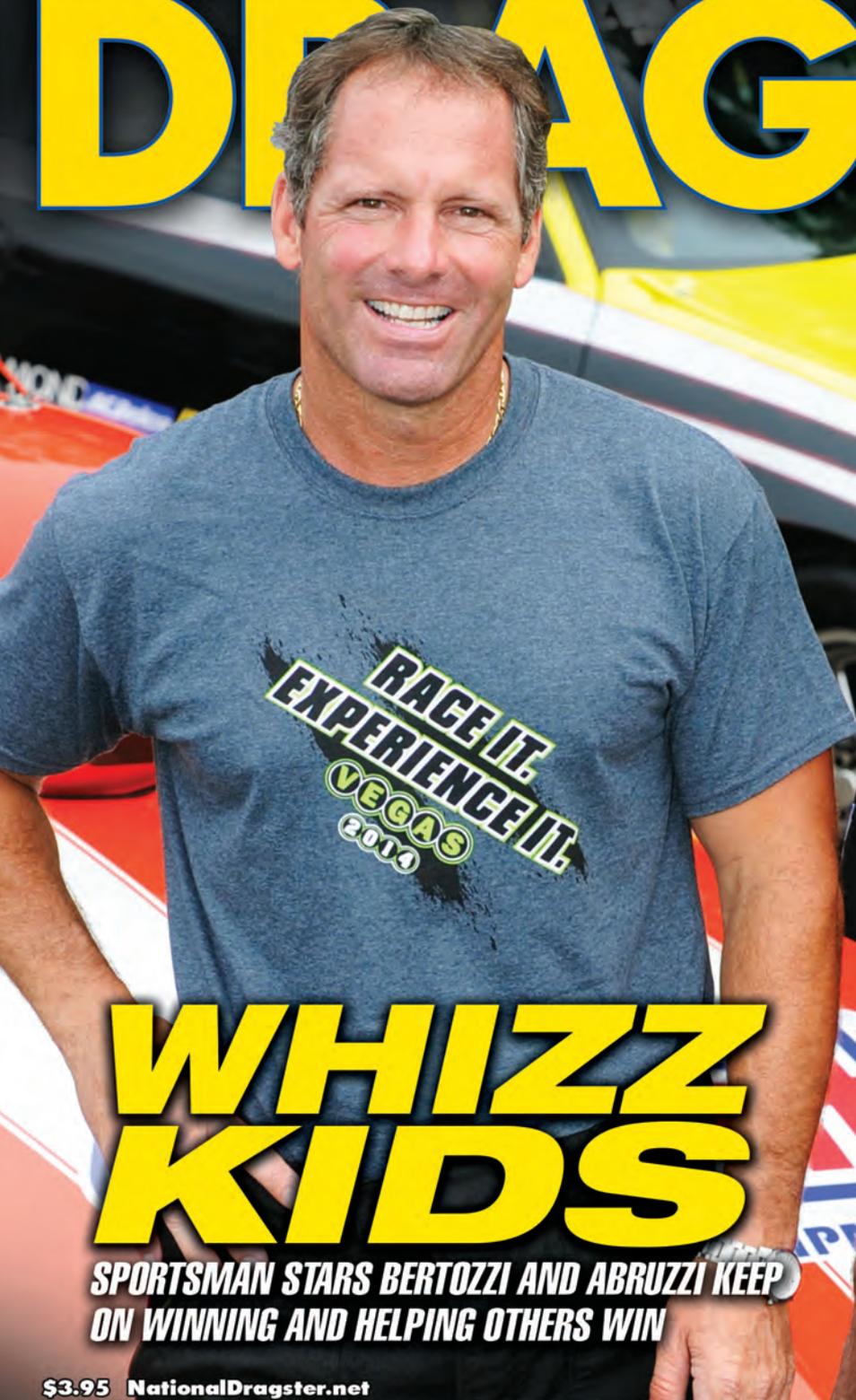
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# DRAGSTER



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# Notes from the Pro Mod Reporter's Notebook

by Jim Luikens

**W**ith the completion of the Ford NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals presented by Tri-Cities Area Ford Dealers, the NHRA Pro Mod Drag Racing Series reached the halfway point of the season. Appropriately enough, it was the Ford Mustang of Jacksonville, Fla.'s Kevin Fiscus that claimed the No. 1 qualifying position. Fiscus actually tied Mike Castellana for the pole at 5.958 seconds, but Fiscus' higher top speed served as the tiebreaker and earned him his second consecutive pole position.

Wixom, Mich.'s Donnie Walsh continued his speed rampage, recording the top speed of the meet at 248.43 mph. Only five NHRA Pro Mod events have been contested this season, and Walsh has claimed top speed at three of them in his Precision Turbo & Engine '68 Camaro. Rumor has it that his new PTE entry will debut in Norwalk, the next event on the tour.

On race day, the only Dodge in the field proved strong enough to take the win. Pete Farber, who has been flying lately and running under the radar, qualified 13th. However, on race day, he was victorious over a red-lighting Danny Rowe, Dan Stevenson, Jim Laurita, and fellow first-time finalist Steve Matusek. Along the way he recorded the best



Jim Bell

reaction time of race day, .004-second, and tied Fiscus for the second-best reaction time of the day, .024-second.

Speaking of Farber, almost unnoticed he qualified second at the previous race in Englishtown and recorded two 250-plus-mph runs in the process; he qualified at 250.69 mph and recorded a 250.41-mph run while defeating fellow Canadian Kenny Lang on race day. No doubt some of the credit has to go to Al Billes, his long-distance engine tuner. Farber and Billes confer after every run, and the situation appears to be working well.

On the negative side of .000 were the red-

lights of Von Smith (-.005) and Rowe (-.016). Smith came into Bristol on a high note because of his two previous events: He was the winner in Englishtown and runner-up in Atlanta. Rowe hasn't been to a final yet this season, but he has been a consistent late-rounds finisher.

Rowe's new teammate, Matusek, reached his first final round ever at this event. Matusek, too, had been a consistent late-rounds finisher in the events that led up to Bristol. Here he defeated incoming points leader Rickie Smith in the first round and No. 3 points man Castellana in the second round. In the third round, Matusek stopped incoming No. 2 man in points Mike Janis in the closest race of the day, 6.062 to 6.073, before falling to Farber in the final.

Jim Bell, of Edmonton, Alta., continues to run well as he sorts out his "new" '69 Camaro. He started the season with a Mustang, but a crash at a non-NHRA event left him without a race car. Moving quickly, he purchased this Camaro and has qualified for the last two events. At this race, he lost in the first round to polesitter Fiscus after going a couple of rounds in Englishtown.

Batesville, Ind.'s Jimmy Widener brought a little diversity to Bristol in the form of his Mercury Cougar. He and partner Tony Bischoff did not qualify for this event, but I expect to see them again this season and am glad they are part of the series.

Janis left the event as the points leader, taking the lead from Rickie Smith. Matusek was the other big mover, with his final-round appearance vaulting him from seventh all the way up to fourth place. **ND**

Jimmy Widener

