

NATIONAL

ISSUE 19 ★ VOLUME 55 ★ SEPTEMBER 26, 2014



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DRAGSTER



MAKING THEIR MARKS

Crampton, DeJoria, Gray, Krawiec add their names to Indy history book with first wins at the Big Go

Notes from the Pro Mod Reporter's Notebook

by Jim Luikens

The 60th annual Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals was a race where you really couldn't tell the Pro Mod players without a scorecard. There were racers there with new, old cars and new, new cars as well as old racers in new places, new racers, and at least one new sponsorship.

The most successful of all these had to be Rickie Smith. He qualified sixth in a field of 33 cars, the largest Pro Mod field of the year, and then drove his new '69 Camaro RS straight into victory lane on race day. Harold Martin had parked his own '14 Corvette for this event and was driving Smith's freshly retired '13 Camaro in a testing mode.

Almost as successful was Don Walsh. After driving a '68 Camaro RS earlier this season, Walsh debuted Harry Hruska's new '14 Camaro. In its competition debut, the new Camaro recorded a stout 5.863 elapsed time at 252.61 mph on its first full pass. Those numbers would hold up for the low e.t. and top speed of the meet as well as the No. 1 qualifying position. Walsh's top speed of the meet was the fourth one he has recorded this year with the others coming in his venerable '68 Camaro RS. Walsh's new Camaro was also selected as the



Don Walsh

Best Engineered Vehicle of the event.

It was hard to walk very far in the Pro Mod pits without bumping into a luminary from drag racing's past. Among those spotted assisting a current racer were Joe Lepone (assisting Eric Latino), Tony Christian (Dan Stevenson), Floyd Cheek (Gerry Capano), Al Billes (Pete Farber and others), Shannon Jenkins (Mike Castellana), and Bob Glidden (Bill Glidden, of course).

Much like his illustrious father in years gone by, Bill Glidden had an unforgettable weekend at the

U.S. Nationals. Bill, who had never recorded a five-second elapsed time in NHRA competition before with his '10 Mustang, recorded a 5.995 in the early going of qualifying. That number would eventually hold up for the 16th and final spot in the 16-car field, barely edging out Latino's 5.998 time slip.

In the first round of eliminations, Bill improved his time again, all the way up to 5.902 and a surprise defeat of the No. 1 qualifier. After suffering major engine damage, he survived a mad thrash that looked very

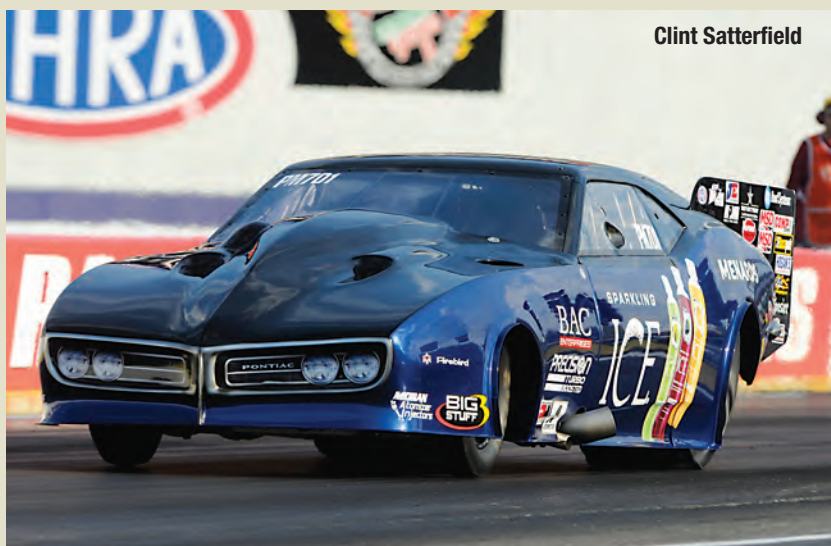
familiar to those surrounding his pit. He won his second-round race with another 5.90-second run, this time a 5.970, when Stevenson red-lighted. Bill's glass slipper finally broke in the final four when he red-lighted to eventual event runner-up Farber.

After seeing nary a split-window Corvette — that staple of the early days of Pro Mod — in the first half of this season, a total of three showed up at

Indy. Besides Capano, Mark Martino made his Pro Mod debut in Billes' '63 Corvette, and Jimmy Keen made his NHRA Pro Mod Drag Racing Series debut in his own '63 Corvette.

The biggest surprise at Indy had to be Texan Jeff Naiser. A legend in other forms of nitrous racing, Naiser showed up and promptly roared all the way up to the No. 3 qualifying position in a star-studded field that saw many NHRA Pro Mod regulars get an early start home. After a strong opening lap, Naiser fell to the eventual event winner, Smith, in the second round.

A nice surprise at Indy was the '68 Firebird of Clint Satterfield showing up with sponsorship from Sparkling Ice beverages. More than anything else, sponsorship is the key to longevity in racing, and it's always nice when a new sponsor joins the sport. After a very successful product sampling at a local Menards, things didn't go as well for Satterfield and his ace crew chief, Bob Gardner, once they reached the track. Among other things, they broke a roller lifter and eventually ended up not qualifying for the field after recoding a strong 10th qualifying position in Norwalk, the Pro Mod event prior to Indy. **ND**



Clint Satterfield