

NATIONAL

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DRAGSTER



In The

DRIVER'S SEAT

WITH A THIRD PLAYOFF WIN, SCHUMACHER
CLOSES ON EIGHTH TOP FUEL CHAMPIONSHIP

**SPEED KNOWS
NO BOUNDARIES**

KHALID ALBALOOSHI IS
A RACER AT HEART

**ONWARD AND
UPWARD**

MIA TEDESCO IS ON THE
FAST TRACK TO STARDOM

NHRA PRO MOD TITLE FIGHT GOES DOWN TO THE LAST RACE

The 2014 NHRA Pro Mod Drag Racing Series season will wrap up at the NHRA Toyota Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Going into the final race of the year, of which Aeromotive is the presenting sponsor, defending world champ Rickie Smith is leading the points, as he has all season. Smith has a 76-point lead over Troy Coughlin and a 77-point advantage over Mike Janis. Von Smith is a round behind in fourth place.

Smith's lead places him nearly four rounds ahead of his two closest competitors and five rounds ahead of Von. Basically, each of Smith's closest competitors would have to go four rounds further than him in eliminations to secure the championship.

Assuming that Smith qualifies for the race, he would have to go out in the first round while Coughlin or Janis would have to win the race for either of them to have a mathematical chance at the title. Von would have to have the same scenario happen

as above and set the national elapsed time record to earn enough points to move into contention for the title.

The top four drivers have had excellent years. Smith won in Atlanta and Indy after opening his season with a win in Gainesville. He also recorded two low elapsed times and one top speed of the meet and qualified No. 1 in Atlanta.

Coughlin recorded wins at his home race in Norwalk and in Charlotte. Janis won in Houston and was the runner-up in Charlotte.

Steve Matusek and Don Walsh also deserve special recognition. Matusek improved his points position from No. 12 last year to No. 5 this year, and Walsh recorded top speed of the meet five times at the eight races where he has competed.

— Jim Luikens



Demke, Harker Clinch Lucas Oil Titles in Alcohol Classes

Entering the 2014 season, new champions were assured in the alcohol categories because two-time Top Alcohol Dragster champ Jim Whiteley and 17-time Top Alcohol Funny Car champion Frank Manzo both retired from active competition. A definitive answer to who would succeed them was given in dramatic fashion during the NHRA Nationals in Reading when Chris Demke in Top Alcohol Dragster and Steve Harker in Top Alcohol Funny Car clinched the NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series world titles.

Demke locked up the championship with a semifinal win over five-time Top Alcohol Dragster champion Bill Reichert in the rescheduled Pep Boys NHRA Carolina Nationals eliminations held during qualifying for the

NHRA Nationals. Harker made his Top Alcohol Funny Car championship run Sunday during Reading eliminations, when he outran incoming points leader Dale Brand. The Australian became the first non-North American to win an NHRA world championship.

Demke went on to win the Pep Boys NHRA Carolina Nationals and the NHRA Nationals to distance himself from Joey Severance and Randy Meyer, who also were chasing the Top Alcohol Dragster title. Demke has five national event victories this year, beginning with a win at the season-opening Circle K NHRA Winternationals. He lost in early rounds in his next five outings before winning again in June at the regional event in Acton, Mont. He scored his other two national event

wins in Chicago and in Indianapolis, where he grabbed his first Big Go victory.

Harker came on strong for the Top Alcohol Funny Car title in the second half of the season, winning his last three events and six of his last seven after a slow start to the season. His last seven events have resulted in four national event wins and a pair of regional triumphs. The streak started at the Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals in Norwalk, where he beat Chris Foster and recorded low e.t. and top speed of the event. Like Demke, Harker won both the delayed Pep Boys NHRA Carolina Nationals and the NHRA Nationals. He defeated Brand in the Reading semifinals and John Lombardo Jr. in the final to close his championship weekend. He also added a national event win in Dallas.

