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## CAN ANYONE HOLD THE LINE?

SUMMIT DRIVER WINS FOURTH RACE IN SEVENTH STRAIGHT PRO STOCK FINAL; KALITTA, HAGAN GRAB ATLANTA NITRO WINS

**BRIAN STEWART**

FUNNY CAR PRIVATEER PROVES THAT WHERE THERE'S A WILK, THERE'S A WAY



# NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

The mayhem that has identified the 2016 NHRA J&A Service Pro Mod Drag Racing Series continued at the tour's third stop in Atlanta. This year's Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Southern Nationals was the 35th renewal of the historic event, and Pro Mod racers joined the festivities by creating some fireworks of their own.

The action began Friday night during the eliminator's second round of qualifying. **Steven Whiteley** had recorded a subpar 7.682 elapsed time in the first session and was highly interested in moving up on the qualifying sheet during the second session. There, he recorded a fine 5.961 at only 206.64 mph. That relatively slow speed, in relation to his elapsed time, indicates that all was not well at the finish line — and it wasn't.

Just past the finish line, Whiteley's Cadillac CTS-V made a sharp turn and crossed both lanes before hitting the opposite guardwall in front of **Shane Molinari**, who, trying to respond quickly, got on his Firebird's brakes hard and crossed both lanes, hitting his opposite wall as well. Thus, both cars ended up in the opposite lane from the one in which it started.

Initial inspection showed that Whiteley's car should be repairable, but Molinari is done with his Firebird. This was



Chuck Little

Whiteley's second wall-banger of the year (after Gainesville), and he doesn't like the karma that his race car, brand-new at start of this season, is carrying. Construction has already begun on another '68 Firebird for Molinari with the Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals targeted as its debut event.

One trackside wag was overheard commenting, "Those boys have got to learn that the accelerator pedal goes up as well as down," and another added, "It's a good thing there are 40 Pro Mod teams or they wouldn't have enough cars to finish the season."

Rickie Smith, who created the fireworks at the previous race, had his '15 Camaro repaired and back in action in Atlanta. His now red-and-white Camaro showed the quick work that had to be done in order to compete at this race, but it certainly didn't slow his performance. Smith qualified on the pole and won the race, his second straight victory of

the season. Those two wins, combined with a runner-up at the third race contested so far this year, have given him a very large lead in the points race.

Once again, the nonqualifiers could have put on a heck of a show of their own. Included in the 11 DNQers were past winners **Mike Knowles**, **Bob Rahaim**, **Mike Janis**, **Mike Castellana**, and **Jim Whiteley**, the tour's most recent winner in Houston.

One driver who did qualify was **Gerry Capano**, of Greenville, Del. Capano, who did not qualify

at the first two races of the year, slipped into the final qualifying spot with an elapsed time of 5.998 seconds. Well-respected Howard Moon is spinning the wrenches for the team now, and more good things are expected in the races ahead.

**Chuck Little**, of Atkinson, N.H., also showed progress; he finished No. 24, up from the 28th position he notched in Gainesville. Little races a '63 Corvette, a body style that once defined Pro Mod but is seldom seen anymore. New Englander Dan Page is doing the tuning for the team, so it shouldn't be long before they join the ranks of qualifiers.

Surprisingly, **Chip King's** struggles continued in Atlanta. After a strong ninth qualifying position to open the season in Gainesville, he has recorded back-to-back qualifying positions of 28th and 27th. Highly regarded Jason Hamstra is tuning for King's team, so don't be surprised by a quick return to their normal ways. **NHRA**



Gerry Capano

## PRO MOD

- Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('15 Camaro) . . . . . **5.781, 250.51**
- Troy Coughlin Sr., Delaware, Ohio ('15 Corvette) . . . . . **5.806, 253.14**
- Khalid alBalooshi, Duxbury, Mass. ('69 Camaro) . . . . . **5.816, 247.20**
- Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) . . . . . **5.845, 252.14**
- Steve Matusek, Olathe, Kan. ('68 Camaro) . . . . . **5.853, 248.80**
- Eric Latino, Whitby, Ont. ('69 Camaro) . . . . . **5.857, 247.57**
- Von Smith, Oak Ridge, Tenn. ('16 Corvette) . . . . . **5.885, 246.12**
- Doug Winters, Pleasant Garden, N.C. ('69 Chevelle) . . . . . **5.893, 241.93**
- Bill Glidden, Whiteland, Ind. ('10 Mustang) . . . . . **5.915, 242.36**
- Kenny Lang, Grande Pointe, Man. ('69 Camaro) . . . . . **5.931, 242.28**
- Pete Farber, Baldwinville, Mass. ('69 Daytona) . . . . . **5.932, 246.62**
- Clint Satterfield, Albuquerque, N.M. ('68 Firebird) . . . . . **5.954, 246.71**
- Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills, Calif. ('15 Corvette) . . . . . **5.960, 246.71**
- Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('14 CTS-V) . . . . . **5.961, 206.64**
- Kevin Fiscus, Jacksonville, Fla. ('12 Mustang) . . . . . **5.995, 244.03**
- Gerry Capano, Greenville, Del. ('63 Corvette) . . . . . **5.998, 239.91**

ALTERNATES: Mike Knowles - 6.046, 233.64; Jim Bell - 6.080, 214.89; Bob Rahaim - 6.238, 238.64; Ruben Tetsoshtvili - 6.239, 239.19; Mike Janis - 6.274, 205.07; Shane Molinari - 6.766, 200.56; Dan Stevenson - 8.271, 125.26; Chuck Little - 9.732, 96.26; Mike Castellana - 9.950, 90.25; Jim Whiteley - 10.245, 95.78; Chip King - 13.905, 67.50.

