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MONKEY BUSINESS

LAUGHLIN PARKS GAS MONKEY GARAGE CHEVY IN WINNER'S CIRCLE



COMPLETE COUNTDOWN COVERAGE

Battles heat up in St. Louis and Reading

RARE IRON

Judi Bureski's '70 Olds 442 Stocker

NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

Years from now when **Jay Payne** reviews the scrapbook of his career, the page for September 2016 will probably be blank. That is because in three weeks, both of his race cars were in serious crashes. First, Payne went off the end of the track and into the safety net at Indy with his Top Alcohol Funny Car Camaro. Then, after rolling out his Pro Mod Camaro for the AAA Insurance NHRA Midwest Nationals in St. Louis, he endured his second serious crash of the month when he hit the wall hard during the first round of NHRA J&A Service Pro Mod Drag Racing Series qualifying. Although Payne escaped serious injury in both accidents, he has to be glad that there are no more NHRA races in September this year.

For the past four seasons, the Pro Mod championship has been won by either **Troy Coughlin** or **Rickie Smith**, and it will be again this year because they are the last two racers standing as the Pro Mods head to the final 2016 NHRA race in Las Vegas. Smith jumped out to a dominating points lead early when he reached the final round of the first three Pro Mod races this season.

However, Coughlin has been impressive as he clawed his way back into title contention. Last season, Coughlin won the series title despite not winning a 2015



Jay Payne

Pro Mod race. This season, he already has two wins, with his second victory happening at the most opportune time possible. Facing elimination from the title chase, Coughlin won the St. Louis event to force the championship to the final race. Despite only having the slimmest of chances of capturing the 2016 title, he has overcome a similar situation in the past to claim the season championship.

On the other end of the spectrum is New York's **Mike Janis**. Janis, a perennial top runner who finished No. 2 in the points last year, has had a very un-Janis-like 2016 season. Janis' only bright spot this year was his final-four appearance in Norwalk, his "home track." Other than that, he has six first-round losses and one DNQ to show for this season. I'm sure Janis and his team can't wait for the calendar to turn over to 2017.

Bill Glidden bounced back from a disappointing Charlotte

race to qualify in St. Louis. A first-round loss cut his race day short, but at least he made the field in only his second attempt after returning to his venerable '10 Mustang.

Someone who has been quick and fast all season is **Michael Biehle**. He has recorded top speed at three of the nine Pro Mod races conducted this season and is the leader in the category. He has also qualified for every Pro Mod race with a best qualifying position of fourth,

which he has done three times. In eliminations, he has two final-four appearances to go with his four second-round and three first-round finishes.

Dan Stevenson's woes continued in St. Louis. Stevenson ended up 29th of the 29 Pro Mod competitors who attempted to qualify for the St. Louis race. His best run of 9.466 seconds at 96.67 mph placed him dead last on the qualifying sheets. He was also a DNQ in Charlotte in his only other race in the Harry Hruska Camaro.

As the 2016 Pro Mod season winds down, it's hard not to be impressed with how far Pro Mod has come in NHRA. By all measurements, it is a popular eliminator with huge car counts, incredible competition, one of the best TV ratings increase in the NHRA family, great diversity in power adders and brands represented, and an ever-increasing fan base. It will be interesting to see where the series goes from here.



Mike Janis

PRO MOD

1. Von Smith, Kingston, Tenn. ('16 Corvette) **5.814, 247.70**
2. Bob Rahaim, Grosse Pointe, Mich. ('15 Corvette) **5.840, 248.02**
3. Sidnei Frigo, Sao Paulo, Brazil ('16 Corvette) **5.843, 252.33**
4. Mike Janis, Lancaster, N.Y. ('13 Camaro) **5.845, 245.63**
5. Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) **5.852, 254.76**
6. Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills, Calif. ('16 Corvette) **5.858, 248.75**
7. Todd Tutterow, Yadkinville, N.C. ('69 Camaro) **5.875, 244.52**
8. Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('15 Camaro) **5.876, 249.21**
9. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('14 CTS-V) **5.879, 247.66**
10. Steve Matusek, Olathe, Kan. ('68 Camaro) **5.885, 247.43**
11. Khalid alBalooshi, Los Angeles, Calif. ('68 Camaro) **5.904, 246.93**
12. Doug Winters, Pleasant Garden, N.C. ('69 Chevelle) **5.910, 242.80**
13. Pete Farber, Baldwinville, Mass. ('69 Daytona) **5.927, 246.71**
14. Jim Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('69 Chevelle) **5.933, 243.99**
15. Troy Coughlin, Delaware, Ohio ('15 Corvette) **5.935, 251.25**
16. Bill Glidden, Whiteland, Ind. ('10 Mustang) **5.941, 243.99**

ALTERNATES: Chip King - 5.955, 242.89; Shane Molinari - 5.970, 251.86; Harold Martin - 5.971, 242.41; Kenny Lang - 5.972, 244.74; Jay Payne - 5.976, 244.47; Chuck Little - 6.009, 242.41; Gerry Capano - 6.015, 240.85; Jim Bell - 6.015, 229.12; Clint Satterfield - 6.091, 241.93; Mike Castellana - 6.209, 226.81; Mike Knowles - 6.402, 234.09; Eric Latino - 8.180, 114.79; Dan Stevenson - 9.466, 96.67.

