

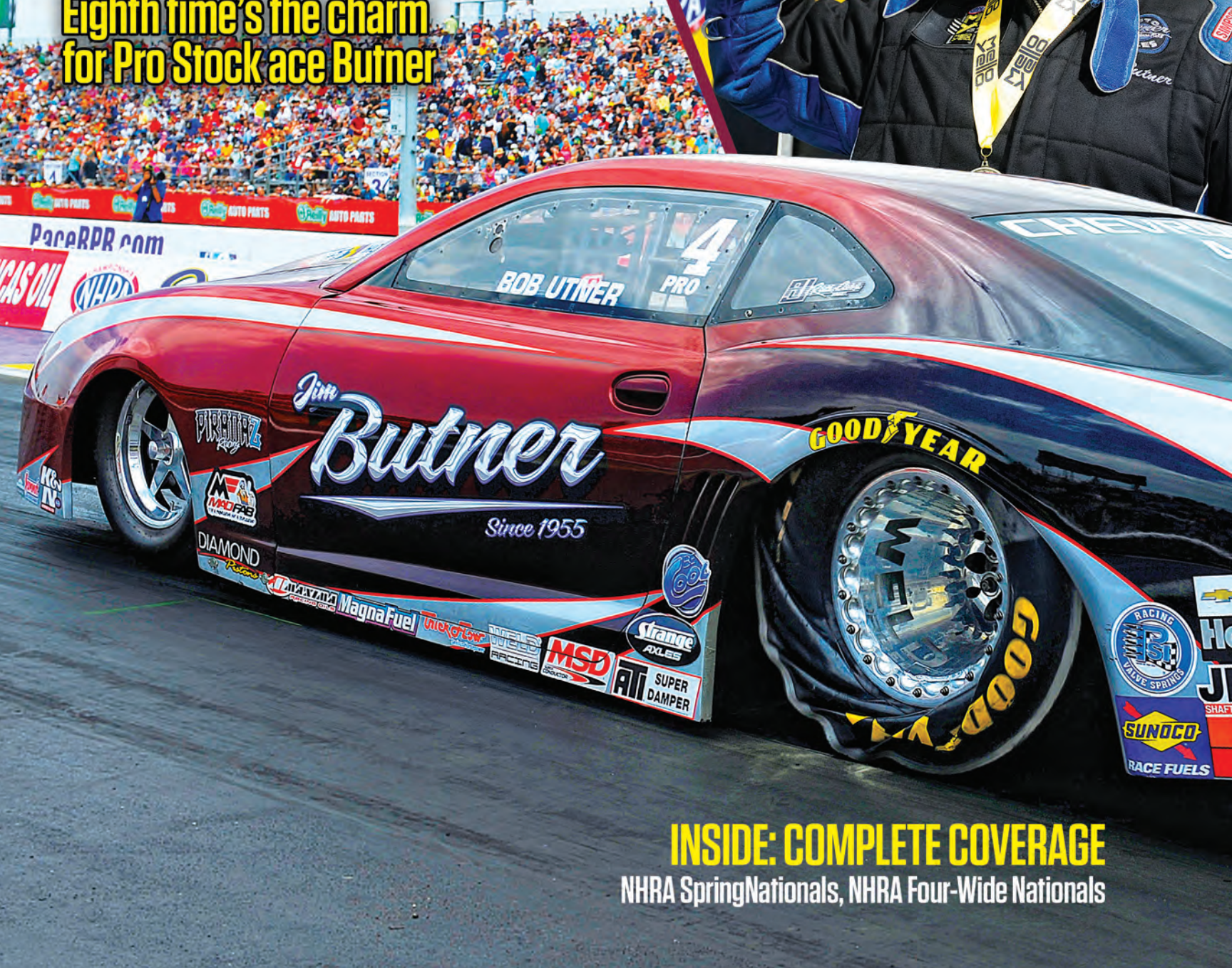


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BO KNOWS VICTORY

Eighth time's the charm for Pro Stock ace Butner



INSIDE: COMPLETE COVERAGE

NHRA SpringNationals, NHRA Four-Wide Nationals

NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

For the very first time, the NHRA J&A Service Pro Mod Drag Racing Series ran four wide at zMAX Dragway in Charlotte. A familiarization session was conducted on the starting line Thursday night prior to the event to give all of the Pro Mod drivers an up-close-and-personal look at the staging process. To their credit, the group did very well throughout the rest of the racing weekend.

The Pro Mod competitors were given four qualifying sessions for the first time ever at a three-day race. In the past, Pro Mod racers were only given four qualifying sessions at the Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals in Indy, which is a six-day race. The four qualifying sessions at zMAX Dragway produced some unusual highlights, including a session that featured three racers being bumped out on one pass.

The race was run in a series of quads with four quads of four constituting the first round. The top-two finishers in each of those quads advanced to the second round, which was made up of two quads of four. The top-two racers in each of those quads then advanced to the final-round quad. The first driver to cross the finish line legally in the final quad was declared the event winner with the second driver being the runner-up.

Shane Molinari continued his hot hand when he qualified



third for the second straight race. On race day, his competitive 5.904-second first-round run surprisingly left him last in his quad. In fact, his quad of four was the only quad in the first round in which all four racers reached the finish line under power.

Pete Farber has had a very frustrating 2017 season thus far. After DNQ finishes of 26th and 25th in Gainesville and Houston, respectively, Farber and his team rebounded in Charlotte with a fine fourth-place qualifying position. A broken run in the first round of eliminations made it an early day for Farber, but it was good to see a representative performance from his team after all of their hard work.

Qualifying just behind Farber in fifth place was **Michael Bowman**, of Oak Hills, Calif. Bowman, who had never ventured this far east for an NHRA event, got the crowd's attention early when he recorded a pass of 5.821 seconds at 258.67 mph on his very first qualifying run. Bowman also had

a short race day when his best run of the weekend, a 5.810, was not good enough to advance him out of his first-round quad. However, his 258.67-mph speed would hold up as top speed of the meet for the Pro Mod contingent. Expect to see Bowman at more NHRA races this year as he prepares for even bigger things in 2018.

Michael Biehle and his team won top honors for thrash of the weekend in Houston. That thrash continued throughout the week leading up to the Charlotte race with extensive work being performed every day. For their

efforts, the team was rewarded with a fine sixth-place qualifying position, up 10 spots from the Houston event. Further rewards awaited on race day when Biehle advanced all the way to the final-round quad.

After years of competing in flat-black cars, **Chip King** has one of the most beautiful cars on the track. His '70 Dodge Charger is covered in what can best be described as an electric-blue wrap. After close DNQs of 17th and 18th at the season's first two races, King put it all together in Charlotte. He qualified 11th with a 5.853-second elapsed time and reached the second round of eliminations.

Von Smith joined the aforementioned Bowman as the only newcomer to the big show at the four-wide event. After sitting out the first two races of 2017, Smith arrived in Charlotte as the new driver for Jim Bell. First-time blues held Smith to a 27th-best elapsed time of 5.985 seconds. No doubt there are better times ahead for that team.



PRO MOD

1. Troy Coughlin Sr., Delaware, Ohio ('15 Corvette) **5.770, 254.95**
2. Mike Castellana, Oyster Bay, N.Y. ('17 Camaro) **5.787, 249.44**
3. Shane Molinari, Battle Ground, Wash. ('68 Firebird) **5.818, 255.15**
4. Pete Farber, Baldwinville, Mass. ('69 Daytona) **5.820, 249.81**
5. Michael Bowman, Oak Hills, Calif. ('69 Chevelle) **5.821, 258.67**
6. Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) **5.831, 255.92**
7. Jim Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('69 Camaro) **5.836, 247.34**
8. Steve Matussek, Olathe, Kan. ('68 Camaro) **5.840, 250.60**
9. Sidnei Frigo, Sao Paulo, Brazil ('16 Corvette) **5.851, 250.88**
10. Larry Morgan, Newark, Ohio ('17 Camaro) **5.853, 249.72**
11. Chip King, Roxboro, N.C. ('69 Daytona) **5.853, 243.15**
12. Jonathan Gray, Artesia, N.M. ('15 Camaro) **5.855, 247.11**
13. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('14 CTS-V) **5.856, 249.35**
14. Steve Jackson, Evans, Ga. ('17 Camaro) **5.856, 244.96**
15. Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills, Calif. ('15 Corvette) **5.868, 247.57**
16. Khalid alBalooshi, Ajman, United Arab Emirates ('17 Camaro) **5.874, 249.12**

ALTERNATES: Doug Winters - 5.881, 247.84; Shannon Jenkins - 5.888, 245.90; Harry Hruska - 5.893, 252.43; Chuck Little - 5.902, 246.26; Mike Knowles - 5.904, 244.12; Kevin Fiscus - 5.906, 250.04; Eric Latino - 5.917, 248.07; Todd Tutterow - 5.926, 241.02; Mike Janis - 5.941, 239.31; Kevin Rivenbark - 5.948, 238.34; Von Smith - 5.985, 245.27; Clint Satterfield - 6.152, 244.96; Ruben Tetsosvili - 6.882, 141.24.

1 5.848-252.99
COUGHLIN (.018)

2 5.863-249.26
ALBALOOSHI (.066)

4 5.852-249.63
MATUSEK (.079)

2 5.830-250.46
FRIGO (.069)

1ST ROUND

4 14.186-57.86
FARBER (.092)

1 5.792-251.63
S. WHITELEY (.054)

3 5.810-255.92
BOWMAN (.095)

2 5.858-248.89
GRAY (.041)

PRO MOD CHAMPION MIKE CASTELLANA

1 5.800-254.57
COUGHLIN (.059)

2 6.099-245.27
FRIGO (.056)

4 7.503-144.86
S. WHITELEY (.059)

2 5.841-249.39
GRAY (.022)

2ND ROUND

2 5.849-238.55
COUGHLIN (.064)

2 5.826-250.27
GRAY (.098)

1 5.807-249.35
CASTELLANA (.049)

4 5.895-254.23 (FOUL)
BIEHLE (-.003)

FINAL

LOW E.T.: 5.770 - COUGHLIN
TOP SPEED: 258.67 - BOWMAN

■ = ORDER OF FINISH

1 5.786-249.63
CASTELLANA (.064)

2 6.432-164.57
ROWE (.056)

2 5.836-248.34
J. WHITELEY (.041)

4 8.931-95.05
MORGAN (.068)

1ST ROUND

4 5.904-257.09
MOLINARI (.194)

3 5.949-244.96
JACKSON (.038)

1 5.829-256.36
BIEHLE (.105)

2 5.929-239.78
KING (.055)