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# FOUR SCORE

Capps just keeps on winning; Brown, Gray also take Topeka titles

## FINAL-ROUND CLOSERS

Getting to the final is one thing, winning it is another

## REACTION TIME TIPS

How to cut better lights through practice

# NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

After five events in the 12-race NHRA J&A Service Pro Mod Drag Racing Series, some trends are starting to emerge. Chief among them is the success of **Mike Castellana** and his Frank Manzo-tuned '17 Chevrolet Camaro. Nearing the Pro Mod Series' halfway point of the 2017 season, Castellana has four final-round appearances with two wins and two runner-up finishes, two No. 1 qualifying positions, and has had low e.t. at four of the five races. He has also recorded the two quickest elapsed times in NHRA Pro Mod history.

Right behind Castellana would have to be Washington's **Shane Molinari**. While his results have not been as glittering as the Castellana/Manzo duo, Molinari does have three top speed of the event honors to his credit, the only statistical category that Castellana does not lead in. Molinari actually recorded the top speed of the entire season to date in Topeka when he went 258.32 mph in his '68 Pontiac Firebird. Molinari's race day was a short one, though, when he lost an engine in his first-round win against Michael Biehle and was unable to return for round two.

Someone else that did not have much to show for his efforts in Topeka was Michigan's



Bob Rahaim

**Bob Rahaim.** Despite having a '17 Camaro that is nearing completion, Rahaim purchased Jim Laurita's '14 Camaro to race with until his new car is finished. A combination of new-car blues and tough weather conditions kept Rahaim out of the field in Atlanta, but in Topeka, he soared all the way to the pole position. An untimely red-light in the first round of eliminations ended Rahaim's weekend early.

On the other hand, things couldn't be sunnier for **Stevie "Fast" Jackson**. Jackson scored his very first NHRA Pro Mod victory in Topeka when he outran Castellana in the final round. Coupled with his runner-up finish at the previous race, Jackson has now been to two final rounds in the last four races.

Two other drivers who had good results to show for were **Mike Janis** and **Shannon Jenkins**. Each racer made the field in Topeka — Janis qualified No. 10, and Jenkins was No. 11 — before going out in the first

round. With three Pro Mod Series events back to back to back on the upcoming East Coast swing through Englishtown, Bristol, and Norwalk, this was a good time for them to get their programs back on track.

The only newcomer to the Pro Mod Series in Topeka was **Brandon Pesz**. He brought a '58 Chevrolet Corvette from Texas but failed to qualify, finishing 18th on the final qualifying sheet. His unique Corvette brought the number of different body styles that have been seen so far in the Pro Mod Series during the 2017 season to 15. Although his future plans are uncertain, Pesz hopes to run some more NHRA events this year.

**Harry Hruska** continues to impress this season.

His '14 Camaro recorded a 5.722 e.t. in the first round of eliminations after recording a 255.58-mph run in qualifying. His second-round finish was the second one in a row for him after DNQs at his first two events as a driver.

Gainesville winner **Steven Whiteley** scored a holeshot win in the first round when his 5.819 e.t. prevailed over **Khalid alBalooshi's** quicker 5.811 e.t. Whiteley's race day ended in the second round when he slowed to a 10.370, falling to Steve Matussek.

Following the Topeka race, the Pro Mod contingent begins a hectic time of the season with three races on three consecutive weekends, marking the second time this year that Pro Mod drivers have had to face such a busy schedule. After the event in Norwalk, the Pro Mod Series will enjoy a two-month summer break before returning to action at the prestigious Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis over Labor Day weekend.



Brandon Pesz

## PRO MOD

1. Bob Rahaim, Grosse Pointe, Mich. ('15 Corvette) . . . . . **5.746, 251.49**
2. Khalid alBalooshi, Ajman, United Arab Emirates ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.755, 250.27**
3. Shane Molinari, Battle Ground, Wash. ('68 Firebird) . . . . . **5.759, 258.32**
4. Sidnei Frigo, Sao Paulo, Brazil ('16 Corvette) . . . . . **5.759, 256.31**
5. Harry Hruska, Hebron, Ind. ('14 Camaro) . . . . . **5.768, 255.58**
6. Mike Castellana, Oyster Bay, N.Y. ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.781, 251.49**
7. Steve Matussek, Olathe, Kan. ('68 Camaro) . . . . . **5.808, 250.55**
8. Steve Jackson, Evans, Ga. ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.818, 247.43**
9. Jonathan Gray, Artesia, N.M. ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.829, 248.75**
10. Mike Janis, Lancaster, N.Y. ('16 Camaro) . . . . . **5.829, 242.71**
11. Shannon Jenkins, Tuscaloosa, Ala. ('16 Mustang) . . . . . **5.834, 244.69**
12. Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills, Calif. ('15 Corvette) . . . . . **5.835, 248.61**
13. Troy Coughlin Sr., Delaware, Ohio ('15 Corvette) . . . . . **5.836, 255.92**
14. Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) . . . . . **5.843, 254.18**
15. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('14 CTS-V) . . . . . **5.855, 247.34**
16. Larry Morgan, Newark, Ohio ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.918, 250.27**

ALTERNATES: Kevin Rivenbark - 5.973, 237.71; Brandon Pesz - 6.051, 232.59; Clint Satterfield - 6.493, 239.06; Todd Tutterow - 7.723, 128.49; Mike Knowles - 8.871, 102.21; Jim Whiteley - 11.512, 101.17; Chip King - 13.252, 69.64.

### PRO MOD CHAMPION

## STEVE JACKSON

|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| DISQ.<br><b>RAHAIM (-.035)</b>         | 10.774-80.16<br><b>MORGAN (.029)</b>  | 10.370-83.18<br><b>S. WHITELEY (.065)</b> | 5.811-249.67<br><b>ALBALOOSHI (.057)</b>  |
| 5.868-250.55<br><b>MORGAN (.042)</b>   | 5.831-248.02<br><b>JACKSON (.057)</b> | 5.805-251.44<br><b>MATUSEK (.078)</b>     | 5.819-244.83<br><b>S. WHITELEY (.028)</b> |
| 5.819-247.70<br><b>JACKSON (.039)</b>  | 5.783-241.93<br><b>JACKSON (.026)</b> | 5.795-250.00<br><b>MATUSEK (.071)</b>     | 5.831-249.53<br><b>MATUSEK (.055)</b>     |
| 5.859-247.93<br><b>GRAY (.014)</b>     | 5.794-248.48<br><b>JACKSON (.039)</b> | 5.857-250.64<br><b>CASTELLANA (.102)</b>  | 5.839-245.36<br><b>JANIS (.081)</b>       |
| 5.773-254.71<br><b>FRIGO (.018)</b>    | 5.790-254.42<br><b>FRIGO (.062)</b>   | NO-SHOW<br><b>MOLINARI</b>                | 5.795-244.03<br><b>MOLINARI (.052)</b>    |
| 5.764-257.58<br><b>COUGHLIN (.052)</b> | 6.826-150.60<br><b>FRIGO (.053)</b>   | 5.773-250.51<br><b>CASTELLANA (.025)</b>  | 9.082-99.52<br><b>BIEHLE (.032)</b>       |
| 5.722-254.14<br><b>HRUSKA (.051)</b>   | 9.522-94.20<br><b>HRUSKA (.026)</b>   | 5.722-252.57<br><b>CASTELLANA (.110)</b>  | 5.698-252.85<br><b>CASTELLANA (.039)</b>  |
| 5.807-250.13<br><b>ROWE (.034)</b>     |                                       |   | 6.221-180.79<br><b>JENKINS (.044)</b>     |

**LOW E.T.: 5.698 - CASTELLANA**  
**TOP SPEED: 258.32 - MOLINARI**