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Finally, it's CLAY'S DAY

Millican scores long-awaited first NHRA win; Capps, Laughlin also top Bristol victors list

FAMILIAR FACES WIN IN NORWALK

Torrence, Beckman, Butner, Tonglet add to win totals at "Eastern Swing" wrap-up



**BEATING THE
SUMMER HEAT**
How to help your engine
keep its cool and boost
power at the same time

Clay Millican D+

NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

All season long, **Shane Molinari** has been knocking on the door of his first victory. With two final-round appearances and five top speeds in 2017, it was only a matter of time before he broke through for his first win in the NHRA J&A Service Pro Mod Drag Racing Series. When Molinari took out Rickie Smith in the final four of eliminations at the Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals in Norwalk, you had to think that this might be the long-awaited day — and it was. Molinari's 5.779-second run defeated Troy Coughlin Sr. to send the Wally home to Battle Ground, Wash.

On the weekend of Molinari's momentous first victory, the one thing that he did not capture was top speed of the meet; that honor went to his final-round opponent, **Coughlin**. Coughlin's 259.31-mph run wasn't just top speed of the meet, but it was also the top speed of the last half-decade as it erased Melanie Troxel's long-standing 258.71-mph record. It has been Molinari and Coughlin in the two most recent final rounds with each garnering a win.

One of the big disappointments of the weekend was **Steve Matusek's** first-round crash. Matusek, who already has one win this season, got loose just off the starting line and struck the outer wall of his lane



Shannon Jenkins

as he approached half-track. Fortunately, Matusek walked away unhurt, and the damage to his car was mostly cosmetic. With a two-month break until the next NHRA Pro Mod event, Matusek should have no problem repairing his car in time for the Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals in Indy.

With two-thirds of the 2017 season completed, Matusek is one of just four Pro Mod racers who have qualified for all eight events conducted thus far. The other three are Khalid alBalooshi, Mike Castellana, and Steven Whiteley. Here are a couple more interesting stats: There have been 36 different racers who have competed in NHRA Pro Mod so far this year, driving 15 unique types of cars. Another eight racers have officially joined the series with the expectation of racing this year, some as soon as Indy.

The hard-luck team of the year has to be the duo of driver **Clint Satterfield** and crew chief

Bob Gardner. They are the only team that has competed at all eight 2017 races and have never qualified at a single event. Pre-race testing prior to Norwalk had produced their most encouraging results so far, but a 6.145-second run was all they could muster in qualifying. More testing is promised by the cheerful pair before Indy as they seek to shed their dubious distinction.

It was good to see **Shannon Jenkins** run well again. After a DNQ at his most recent outing, Jenkins bounced back to qualify a very strong fifth in Norwalk (his best qualifying position of the season) and go two rounds. His second-round defeat was a close one when his 5.857-second run nearly matched his qualifying

elapsed time and fell just short of Castellana's 5.804-second winning run.

Jonathan Gray continued his strong season. He has qualified at all seven races that he has attended this year with a seventh-best qualifying time in Norwalk. Gray lost in the second round when he slowed and fell to Smith. His .019-second reaction time on that run was the best reaction time in eliminations by any Pro Mod racer.

Summit Racing Equipment Motorsports Park is famous for a lot of things, including their fireworks show and their \$1-a-pound ice cream. At this year's event, they debuted their new Golden Ice Cream Scoop trophy, which they presented to all winners. Machined from billet aluminum, their new scoop trophy is truly something to behold.

The weather in Norwalk was some of the trickiest we have seen this year with uniquely different weather conditions on each of the three days of competition.



Steve Matusek

PRO MOD

1. Troy Coughlin Sr., Delaware, Ohio ('15 Corvette) **5.756, 259.31**
2. Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('17 Camaro) **5.821, 248.80**
3. Shane Molinari, Battle Ground, Wash. ('68 Firebird) **5.831, 257.28**
4. Mike Castellana, Oyster Bay, N.Y. ('17 Camaro) **5.841, 249.44**
5. Shannon Jenkins, Tuscaloosa, Ala. ('16 Mustang) **5.843, 246.93**
6. Steve Jackson, Evans, Ga. ('17 Camaro) **5.846, 244.03**
7. Jonathan Gray, Artesia, N.M. ('17 Camaro) **5.848, 246.93**
8. Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) **5.857, 254.71**
9. Sidnei Frigo, Sao Paulo, Brazil ('16 Corvette) **5.873, 252.61**
10. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('14 CTS-V) **5.874, 248.02**
11. Pete Farber, Baldwinville, Mass. ('69 Daytona) **5.895, 247.61**
12. Khalid alBalooshi, Dubai, United Arab Emirates ('17 Camaro) **5.895, 247.16**
13. Doug Winters, Pleasant Garden, N.C. ('69 Chevelle) **5.899, 239.31**
14. Eric Latino, Port Perry, Ont. ('69 Camaro) **5.900, 248.61**
15. Steve Matusek, Olathe, Kan. ('68 Camaro) **5.903, 249.58**
16. Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills, Calif. ('15 Corvette) **5.906, 247.88**

ALTERNATES: Mike Janis - 5.920, 243.55; Harry Hruska - 5.921, 248.43; Chip King - 5.937, 244.21; Mike Knowles - 6.041, 240.12; Chuck Little - 6.058, 241.50; Bob Rahaim - 6.103, 241.58; Clint Satterfield - 6.145, 245.32; Jim Whiteley - 6.162, 193.29; Dan Stevenson - 6.818, 159.95; Ruben Tetsosvili - 8.125, 109.81.

