



# NATIONAL DRAGSTER

ISSUE 21 ★ VOLUME 58 ★ OCTOBER 20, 2017  
WWW.NHRA.COM

## IS EIGHT ENOUGH?



READING/ST. LOUIS DOUBLE LIFTS  
CAPPS TO EIGHT WINS, POINTS LEAD

Torrence, Capps, Anderson, Krawiec lead  
points race at Countdown midpoint

# NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

The big news coming out of St. Louis was that the NHRA J&A Service Pro Mod Drag Racing Series has a new points leader for the first time since early this season. **Troy Coughlin Sr.** has taken a 26-point lead with only one race remaining on the 2017 NHRA Pro Mod schedule. Those points convert to a little more than one round of competition with only four rounds remaining this year.

Coughlin took the points lead by winning at the AAA Insurance NHRA Midwest Nationals, and previous points leader **Mike Castellana** lost early in eliminations for the third straight race. It has really been a tale of two seasons for both drivers. Castellana jumped out to a commanding points lead by reaching four of the first five final rounds. Coughlin then took the baton and has now reached five of the six most recent final rounds.

It's always nice to see new faces in NHRA Pro Mod competition. **Melanie Salemi**, **Billy Harper**, and **Jeffery Baker** all made their first starts of the 2017 season in St. Louis. Salemi scored the highest of those three by recording a very respectable best elapsed time of 5.885 seconds. Unfortunately for her, the St. Louis field featured the quickest bump spot ever recorded in NHRA Pro Mod racing. Salemi's time was



Billy Harper

only good enough for the 24th position on the final qualifying sheet. Harper finished right behind her in 25th, and Baker landed in the 27th position.

However, the arrival of Harper, in a '00 Dodge Viper, and Baker, in a '12 Pontiac GXP, increased the already record number of different body styles that have competed in NHRA Pro Mod this year.

The St. Louis race also was the return of **Carl Stevens Jr.** and **Brandon Pesz**, both of whom had competed in only one previous NHRA race in 2017. Stevens fared the better of the two drivers, qualifying seventh in Jim Bell's Camaro, and 28th was the best that Pesz could muster.



Melanie Salemi

**Chuck Little** continued to be a very pleasant, late-season surprise. He qualified eighth at Gateway Motorsports Park, his highest qualifying position so far this year. However, it was a first-round exit for Little after his good driving and good luck had taken him to a final-four berth at the last event.

**Jonathan Gray** was the winner of the previous race in Charlotte. In St. Louis, he had the dubious distinction of being the first alternate for the

quickest field in NHRA Pro Mod history. Gray's best elapsed time of 5.807 fell just short of Pete Farber's bubble-sitting 5.804-second pass.

Speaking of **Farber**, he made the most of his opportunity by going to the semifinals. A first-round win over the points leader at that time, Castellana, and a second-round victory over Indy winner Sidnei Frigo set up a semifinal showdown with Coughlin. Coughlin very narrowly beat Farber in that race, 5.809 to 5.817.

Canada's **Eric Latino** had his best outing of the year when he qualified third with a 5.736-second elapsed time. In the first round of eliminations, he defeated recent hotshoe Shane Molinari with a 5.809-second run before losing to Steve Matussek in round two. Latino's only other second-round finish this year was in Gainesville, where he recorded that memorable 5.727-second elapsed time.

There has been a lot of back and forth this season about which power adder, if any, offers an advantage over the other two in Pro Mod. In St. Louis, it was a turbo-nitrous final round with the turbo car prevailing; it had been a nitrous-blower final at the previous event with the nitrous car prevailing. The power-adder war looks pretty even right now.

Both **Steven Whiteley** and **Baker** are new fathers since the last Pro Mod event.

## PRO MOD

1. Mike Castellana, Oyster Bay, N.Y. ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.713, 253.85**
2. Steve Jackson, Evans, Ga. ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.719, 251.81**
3. Eric Latino, Port Perry, Ont. ('69 Camaro) . . . . . **5.736, 254.95**
4. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('14 CTS-V) . . . . . **5.757, 250.32**
5. Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.766, 251.39**
6. Dan Stevenson, Bolingbrook, Ill. ('16 Camaro) . . . . . **5.769, 235.72**
7. Carl Stevens, North Haledon, N.J. ('69 Camaro) . . . . . **5.772, 257.28**
8. Chuck Little, Atkinson, N.H. ('63 Corvette) . . . . . **5.775, 248.66**
9. Sidnei Frigo, Sao Paulo, Brazil ('16 Corvette) . . . . . **5.781, 255.68**
10. Khalid alBalooshi, Dubai, United Arab Emirates ('17 Camaro) . . . . . **5.781, 251.53**
11. Steve Matussek, Olathe, Kan. ('68 Camaro) . . . . . **5.781, 250.18**
12. Troy Coughlin Sr., Delaware, Ohio ('15 Corvette) . . . . . **5.788, 254.81**
13. Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills, Calif. ('16 Corvette) . . . . . **5.791, 251.44**
14. Shane Molinari, Battle Ground, Wash. ('68 Firebird) . . . . . **5.800, 256.41**
15. Jim Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('69 Camaro) . . . . . **5.803, 251.34**
16. Pete Farber, Baldwinville, Mass. ('69 Daytona) . . . . . **5.804, 250.60**

ALTERNATES: Jonathan Gray - 5.807, 250.88; Bob Rahaim - 5.810, 250.09; Michael Biehle - 5.811, 254.47; Doug Winters - 5.815, 247.25; Chip King - 5.823, 246.80; Shannon Jenkins - 5.850, 237.42; Mike Janis - 5.884, 234.13; Melanie Salemi - 5.885, 241.24; Billy Harper - 5.980, 240.38; Clint Satterfield - 6.236, 240.21; Jeffery Baker - 6.301, 234.25; Brandon Pesz - 6.407, 167.68; Harry Hruska - 7.853, 175.68.

### PRO MOD CHAMPION

## TROY COUGHLIN SR.

7.370-132.41 <b>CASTELLANA (.051)</b>	5.821-250.74 <b>FARBER (.194)</b>	6.442-170.43 <b>J. WHITELEY (.039)</b>	5.743-250.60 (FOUL) <b>JACKSON (-.080)</b>
5.823-249.39 <b>FARBER (.066)</b>	5.817-250.32 <b>FARBER (.083)</b>	5.791-250.64 <b>alBALOOSHI (.113)</b>	11.283-103.95 <b>J. WHITELEY (.053)</b>
5.767-248.71 <b>LITTLE (.080)</b>	5.928-245.18 <b>FRIGO (.112)</b>	5.778-250.00 <b>alBALOOSHI (.079)</b>	6.102-201.34 <b>STEVENS (.100)</b>
5.774-255.10 <b>FRIGO (.065)</b>	5.792-257.24 <b>COUGHLIN (.024)</b>	5.850-250.09 <b>alBALOOSHI (.078)</b>	5.850-247.84 <b>alBALOOSHI (.122)</b>
5.744-252.71 <b>S. WHITELEY (.081)</b>	5.777-252.05 <b>S. WHITELEY (.061)</b>	6.760-157.65 <b>LATINO (.079)</b>	5.809-250.97 <b>LATINO (1.885)</b>
5.812-249.90 (FOUL) <b>ROWE (-.239)</b>	5.809-255.68 <b>COUGHLIN (.038)</b>	10.638-90.64 (FOUL) <b>MATUSEK (-.089)</b>	DISQ. <b>MOLINARI</b>
5.807-249.95 <b>SMITH (.033)</b>	5.783-255.29 <b>COUGHLIN (.029)</b>	5.831-250.74 <b>MATUSEK (.051)</b>	9.359-98.59 <b>STEVENS (.053)</b>
5.752-257.33 <b>COUGHLIN (.043)</b>			5.835-239.82 <b>MATUSEK (.056)</b>

**LOW E.T.: 5.713 - CASTELLANA**  
**TOP SPEED: 257.33 - COUGHLIN**