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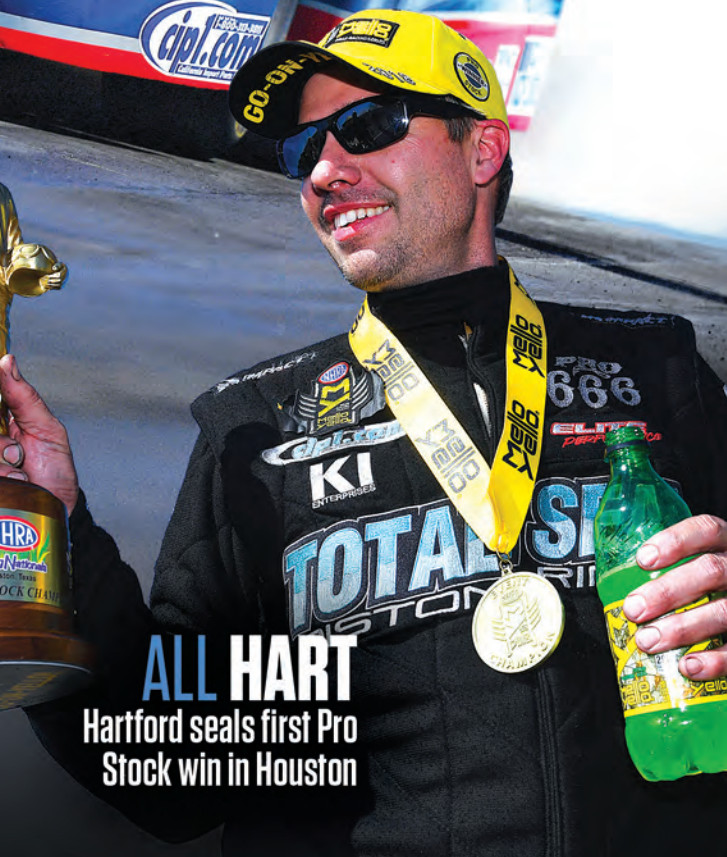
SPRING FORWARD

COMPLETE COVERAGE OF HOUSTON, CHARLOTTE
EVENTS AS SEASON HITS HIGH GEAR



ALL HART

Hartford seals first Pro Stock win in Houston



NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

Twenty-eight cars attempted to qualify in Houston at the NHRA SpringNationals for race two of the 2018 E3 Spark Plugs NHRA Pro Mod Drag Racing Series presented by J&A Service. That's not the largest Pro Mod car count we've ever seen, but it was one of the very best fields ever. Combined with density altitudes that never rose above 1,700 feet, it made for a very strong field.

After four rounds of qualifying, Puerto Rico's **Jose Gonzalez** sat atop the field with a 5.696, and **Danny Rowe** capped the field at 5.831 seconds. Ten more cars made five-second qualifying runs that were not good enough to make the field. In the end, RPM Publicist Sadie Glenn perhaps summed it up best when she said, "Qualifying was insane."

Among the 28 cars that attempted to qualify were two "newbies" to the world of NHRA Pro Mod racing: well-known Houston native **Erica Enders** and Alabama's **Brandon Snider**. Enders started off Friday with a very respectable 5.866-second run, which was good enough to put her in the field after her very first pass. Unfortunately for Enders, she was never able to better that run and ended up a disappointing 19th on the final qualifying list. Snider had a throw-away weekend and ended up last on the qualifying sheet. Both are very good racers in



Jose Gonzalez

other eliminators or sanctioning bodies, and both are looking to do much better.

Gonzalez had a mini breakout weekend; he captured the pole with a great 5.696-second e.t. and then beat Rowe in the first round of eliminations when Rowe's car pulled through the starting beams. Gonzalez lost in the second round when he got loose while racing the nitrous car of Michigan's Bob Rahaim. The Gonzalez team, led by Steve Petty, is the championship team that carried Troy Coughlin Sr. to the Pro Mod season title last year.

Chad Green had a very nice bounce-back weekend after the fiery crash that spelled the end of his Corvette in Gainesville. Driving a Camaro that he had obtained from Rickie Smith, Green qualified a strong fifth at 5.746 seconds. He lost to Rick Hord in round one when he slowed to a 6.057-second pass, but there is no doubt we will hear from him and his Bond Coat-sponsored car again this year.

Speaking of **Hord**, he went all the way to the final round, where he lost on a holeshot to Jim Whiteley. Hord's 5.818-second pass was not enough to catch a

fleeing Whiteley's 5.834 winning run. Along the way, Hord did set top speed of the event at 258.02 mph during his second-round win over Mike Janis.

As mentioned above, **Whiteley** won the Houston event. For Whiteley, it was the second win of his NHRA Pro Mod career and his second win in Houston. Unlike the 2016 Houston event, where he came from outside the starting field to win, 2018's Houston event was a pretty normal day at the races. Whiteley had a couple of easier runs to reach the final four and then beat Stevie "Fast" Jackson and Hord on holeshots in the semi's and final, respectively.

Houston marked the second of 12 races for the 2018 NHRA Pro Mod season. Every race counts because there is no playoff series for Pro Mod. After two races, it's tight at the top of the points standings. Smith is first with 168 points, Whiteley is second with 163 points, and Janis is third with 149 points. Jackson, Mike Castellana, Rahaim, Green, Hord, Khalid alBalooshi, and Todd Tutterow round out the top 10 in points.

Special thanks to event sponsor Tige Boats. The next event is the third of three races in a row for Pro Mod drivers as they move to beautiful zMAX Dragway in Charlotte for the NGK Spark Plugs NHRA Four-Wide Nationals. Four-wide racing always produces some unusual results, so it should be exciting.



Erica Enders

PRO MOD

1. Jose Gonzalez, Ball Ground, Ga. ('17 Camaro) **5.696, 257.78**
2. Steve Jackson, Evans, Ga. ('18 Camaro) **5.707, 249.53**
3. Mike Castellana, Oyster Bay, N.Y. ('17 Camaro) **5.720, 252.71**
4. Mike Janis, Lancaster, N.Y. ('69 Camaro) **5.733, 248.61**
5. Chad Green, Midland, Texas ('17 Corvette) **5.746, 250.23**
6. Khalid alBalooshi, Ajman, United Arab Emirates ('18 Camaro) **5.746, 251.02**
7. Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('18 Camaro) **5.756, 251.58**
8. Jeremy Ray, Lugoff, S.C. ('63 Corvette) **5.761, 248.66**
9. Bob Rahaim, Grosse Pointe, Mich. ('17 Camaro) **5.773, 250.41**
10. Todd Tutterow, Yadkinville, N.C. ('68 Camaro) **5.774, 248.16**
11. Shane Molinari, Battle Ground, Wash. ('68 Firebird) **5.784, 255.97**
12. Rick Hord, Belle Isle, Fla. ('16 Corvette) **5.785, 252.66**
13. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('14 CTS-V) **5.787, 250.78**
14. Jim Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('69 Camaro) **5.788, 247.97**
15. Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) **5.815, 253.09**
16. Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills, Calif. ('18 Corvette) **5.831, 250.74**

ALTERNATES: Sidnei Frigo - 5.837, 252.38; Chip King - 5.847, 245.36; Erica Enders - 5.866, 246.03; Steve Matusek - 5.869, 246.66; Richie Stevens - 5.892, 247.16; Pete Farber - 5.894, 242.54; Dan Stevenson - 5.912, 211.49; Chuck Little - 5.918, 243.63; Doug Winters - 5.919, 242.98; Clint Satterfield - 5.972, 243.02; Harry Hruska - 6.481, 237.96; Brandon Snider - 9.147, 108.79.

