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HECTOR'S HEROICS

LAS VEGAS WIN
KEEPS ARANA JR. IN
PRO STOCK MOTORCYCLE
CHAMPIONSHIP
BATTLE

CHAMPS CROWNED

TORRENCE AND JANIS
LEAD FIRST-TIME SEASON
TITLISTS IN VEGAS

READY FOR 2019

LUCAS OIL AND PRO MOD SCHEDULES ANNOUNCED



NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

Mike Janis is the 2018 E3 Spark Plugs NHRA Pro Mod Drag Racing Series champion, and he clinched his title in the most dramatic way possible. Janis was leading Rickie Smith, the only other Pro Mod racer that had a mathematical title chance, by a slim 24 points going into the final event of the season.

It looked like it was game over when Janis lost his first-round pairing and Smith won his. A victory by Smith in the second round of competition would swing the title his way. However, Smith was barely nipped in the lights by **Rick Hord** after leading most of the way in their second-round matchup. The final points tally shows Janis with 770 points and Smith with 763.

Janis becomes only the third NHRA Pro Mod champion ever. Since becoming a full-fledged NHRA Eliminator (as opposed to an exhibition class) only Troy Coughlin and Smith have been the season champions, often trading the title back and forth between them from year to year.

As is tradition, the Pro Mod racers had their series banquet Sunday evening following the race. The highlight of the evening was the introduction of the top-10 finishers. Each received a magnificent trophy that had been handmade in the spirit of the series sponsor, E3 Spark Plugs.



Mike Janis

Three awards were also presented that had been voted on by the racers. **Michael Biehle** was named Most Improved, and **Jeremy Ray** was voted Rookie of the Year. Finally, a surprised Mike Janis Jr. took home the Crew Chief of the Year trophy. In his remarks, Janis Jr. thanked his team and sponsors. He then somewhat sheepishly admitted, "I voted for Manzo myself."

One recurring theme throughout the night was the thanks that were continuously expressed to John Waldie and Danny Rowe for keeping the Real Pro Mod Association together and moving forward.

Because the NHRA Toyota Nationals are often contested on a weekend that borders Halloween, it has become the norm for some teams to dress up their starting-line crew in Halloween costumes that center around a common theme. The Pro Stock Motorcycle racers started this popular tradition

that is now spreading to other eliminators.

This year, that tradition reached Pro Mod as several teams had a unique cast of characters attending to their car on the starting line. **Jim Whiteley** was assisted by a group of pirates, and Hord had the Flintstones helping him. Doug Winters' crew included a cowgirl.

However, it was the entire cast of *Grease* that carried the day for me. They were attending to the **Marc Caruso** car and each featured a handmade costume in that theme. On the racetrack,

Caruso had another fine outing, as he qualified 12th in a very fast field that saw several of the tour regulars go home.

During the first round, it was Caruso who almost put a stop to Janis' title hopes. Caruso defeated Janis in a close race, 5.762 seconds to Janis' 5.789. However, in the second round, it was Caruso on the losing end of another close race because his 5.829-second run was not enough to hold off Jose Gonzalez's 5.755-second run.

Clint Satterfield very narrowly qualified for this field when his 5.851-second elapsed time at 248.39 mph outdid Khalid alBalooshi's identical 5.851-second pass at a slower 246.35 mph. Satterfield reports that he and sidekick Bob Gardner are learning the ropes about tuning their car now after relying on outside input up to this time. Dallas was the first race that Satterfield and Gardner twisted the knobs themselves, and each race since then has shown an improvement.

The 2019 E3 Sparks Plugs schedule was also announced. It features primarily the same stops with some dates slightly rearranged. Atlanta replaces Dallas as the only real change for next year.



Clint Satterfield

PRO MOD

1. Mike Castellana, Oyster Bay, N.Y. ('17 Camaro) **5.710, 252.80**
2. Todd Tutterow, Yadkinville, N.C. ('68 Camaro) **5.721, 243.85**
3. Jeremy Ray, Lugoff, S.C. ('63 Corvette) **5.732, 247.93**
4. Jose Gonzalez, Ball Ground, Ga. ('17 Camaro) **5.742, 258.07**
5. Mike Janis, Lancaster, N.Y. ('69 Camaro) **5.747, 249.53**
6. Rick Hord, Belle Isle, Fla. ('16 Corvette) **5.749, 253.33**
7. Sidnei Frigo, Itatiba, Brazil ('69 Camaro) **5.753, 256.50**
8. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('18 Camaro) **5.776, 251.25**
9. Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) **5.788, 255.87**
10. Steve Jackson, Evans, Ga. ('17 Camaro) **5.788, 246.21**
11. Chad Green, Midland, Texas ('17 Corvette) **5.789, 246.98**
12. Marc Caruso, Fairport, N.Y. ('69 Camaro) **5.801, 246.26**
13. Shane Molinari, Battle Ground, Wash. ('68 Firebird) **5.809, 255.63**
14. Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('18 Camaro) **5.814, 247.43**
15. Jim Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('69 Camaro) **5.850, 246.30**
16. Clint Satterfield, Albuquerque, N.M. ('69 Camaro) **5.851, 248.39**

ALTERNATES: Khalid alBalooshi - 5.851, 246.35; Bob Rahaim - 5.861, 243.50; Steve Matusek - 5.862, 247.66; Danny Rowe - 5.869, 249.63; Brandon Snider - 5.888, 241.89; Doug Winters - 5.894, 242.80; Scott Oksas - 5.910, 238.60; Harry Hruska - 5.981, 248.84; Rick Distefano - 6.092, 239.70; Chip King - 6.998, 109.52.

