



NATIONAL DRAGSTER

ISSUE 6 ★ VOLUME 60
APRIL 12, 2019 ★ NHRA.com



ROCKET MEN

60 POLES
44 WINS
2 CHAMPIONSHIPS

CAN ANYONE GROUND
FUNNY CAR'S MOST
DOMINANT DUO?



50TH GATORNATIONALS:
THE GREATEST GATORS EVER?

HOW TO RACE, PART 2
TAKING IT TO THE TREE

NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

Great weather conditions greeted the E3 Spark Plugs Pro Mod Drag Racing Series racers as they kicked off their 2019 NHRA season at the fabled Gainesville Raceway. This year was the 50th anniversary of the Gatornationals, and it was a memorable event for all that were involved.

In the end, every Pro Mod elapsed time record was shattered, and virtually, every racer recorded his or her career-best time as well.

No racer did better than **Stevie Jackson**. He qualified No. 1 at the very first E3 race that he attended, Gainesville 2017, and he followed that up with a strong number two qualifying position last year before going right back to number one this year. In fact, his number one this year was accompanied by a new national record elapsed time of 5.665 seconds.

On race day, Jackson had a somewhat easy path to the finals when his first three competitors, in succession, left before the Tree was activated, was a no-show, and broke before staging. Despite his lack of early-round competition, Jackson showed up ready to race in the final.

He lowered his personal record to 5.643 seconds in the final, but his 0.036-second reaction time was not enough to catch a fleeing Todd Tutterow whose 0.008-second reaction time and 5.662-second elapsed time was good enough for the win.



Eric Latino

The final round was the quickest side-by-side drag race in NHRA Pro Mod history. Incidentally, the stats for the record run were 1,168 feet of air, 76 degrees air temp, 66 degrees track temp, 29.85 pressure, and 64 percent humidity.

Last year, **Jose Gonzalez** was the high speed man of the year as his five top speeds of the event were more than were recorded by any other Pro Mod racer. Evidently, the offseason had no ill effects on Gonzales; his 259.31 mph was good for top speed of the meet. It seems inevitable that the 260-mph barrier in Pro Mod will be surpassed this season.

It was great to see **Eric Latino** back in action. After sitting out much of last season, Latino appeared with a new '67 Camaro that was built by Tim McAmis. Although it seemed strange to see Team Green racing a blue car, Latino acquitted himself well by qualifying for the quickest field

in NHRA Pro Mod history with a 5.753-second elapsed time. Latino's race day was a short one when he left before the Tree was activated in round one.

In addition to the record 5.753-second bump time, 10 other Pro Mods ran in the five-second zone with six of them recording 5.7-second runs.

It was sad to see that no Pontiac Firebirds were in attendance after being such an iconic Pro Mod body style for a long time. The final scorecard

showed that 20 crowd-pleasing traditional Pro Mods and nine Pro Stock-style Camaros were on the grounds. The 20 traditional Pro Mods were made up of 10 different brands/years that represented all three domestic auto manufacturers.

Marc Caruso continues to make a fine name for himself; he qualified 11th, which tied his highest qualifying spot ever in NHRA Pro Mod competition, and went to the final four. After defeating Rickie Smith in the first round, Caruso took out Brandon Snyder, 5.724 to 5.728. In the semi's, a timing malfunction slowed Caruso, which sent Tutterow to the final.

Doug Winters would have won the best appearing award in Pro Mod, if there was one, for his great graphic package for his new sponsor, Bandit Big Rig Truck Series.

After just one race, Tutterow finds himself in first place in the points with 117 versus 98 for Jackson and 75 for third-place man Jeremy Ray.



Doug Winters

PRO MOD

1. Steve Jackson, Evans, Ga. ('18 Camaro) **5.665, 253.99**
2. Todd Tutterow, Lewisville, N.C. ('68 Camaro) **5.671, 250.64**
3. Jose Gonzalez, Ball Ground, Ga. ('17 Camaro) **5.672, 259.31**
4. Jeremy Ray, Lugoff, S.C. ('63 Corvette) **5.674, 249.72**
5. Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) **5.690, 257.58**
6. Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('67 Mustang) **5.696, 257.14**
7. Khalid alBalooshi, Duxbury, Mass. ('18 Camaro) **5.710, 252.19**
8. Bob Rahaim, Grosse Pointe, Mich. ('18 Camaro) **5.713, 250.78**
9. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('18 Camaro) **5.717, 252.28**
10. Chad Green, Midland, Texas ('19 Camaro) **5.718, 250.23**
11. Marc Caruso, Fairport, N.Y. ('69 Camaro) **5.725, 249.39**
12. Jason Scruggs, Tupelo, Miss. ('69 Camaro) **5.728, 249.16**
13. Jader Krolow, Ball Ground, Ga. ('16 Corvette) **5.742, 256.21**
14. Brandon Snider, Atmore, Ala. ('16 Corvette) **5.743, 247.79**
15. Mike Janis, Lancaster, N.Y. ('69 Camaro) **5.748, 247.97**
16. Eric Latino, Port Perry, Ont. ('67 Camaro) **5.753, 250.27**

ALTERNATES: Steve Matussek - 5.761, 258.81; Sidnei Frigo - 5.761, 255.39; Pete Farber - 5.765, 249.16; Doug Winters - 5.770, 254.71; Alex Laughlin - 5.773, 258.86; Erica Enders - 5.779, 257.58; Harry Hruska - 5.832, 251.91; Rick Hord - 5.834, 250.88; Adam Flamholz - 5.869, 246.08; Jim Whiteley - 5.929, 210.73; Clint Satterfield - 6.142, 242.23; Chip King - 7.796, 120.69; Mike Castellana - 9.620, 89.88.

PRO MOD CHAMPION
TODD TUTTEROW

5.683-252.90 JACKSON (.796)	6.591-136.58 JACKSON (.058)	5.684-251.06 TUTTEROW (.078)	5.671-251.06 TUTTEROW (.045)
LEFT BEFORE TREE LATINO	5.653-254.14 JACKSON (.057)	5.665-251.77 TUTTEROW (.023)	5.758-247.84 JANIS (.020)
12.435-89.66 RAHAIM (.076)	NO-SHOW S. WHITELEY	5.747-250.69 (FOUL) GREEN (-.003)	9.670-93.12 alBALOOSHI (.126)
6.177-157.63 S. WHITELEY (.035)	5.643-253.95 JACKSON (.036)	5.662-251.86 TUTTEROW (.008)	5.731-250.09 GREEN (.028)
5.696-249.21 RAY (.039)	5.693-249.35 RAY (.059)	5.728-248.43 SNIDER (.018)	5.767-258.62 GONZALEZ (.024)
5.755-256.55 KROLOW (.069)	BROKE RAY	21.928-32.46 CARUSO (.037)	5.717-248.25 SNIDER (.017)
5.805-256.60 BIEHLE (.015)	5.701-256.65 (FOUL) BIEHLE (-.003)	5.724-246.35 CARUSO (.007)	13.014-59.07 SMITH (.088)
5.773-247.97 SCRUGGS (.059)			5.707-250.23 CARUSO (.013)

LOW E.T.: 5.643 - JACKSON
TOP SPEED: 259.31 - GONZALEZ