



NATIONAL DRAGSTER®

ISSUE 8 ★ VOLUME 60
MAY 10, 2019 ★ NHRA.com



JUST DRIVE

INJECTED, TURBO, OR BLOWN
ALEX LAUGHLIN WILL PILOT
ANYTHING ON FOUR WHEELS

HOUSTON HEROICS

TEAMMATES BRITTANY FORCE, ROBERT
HIGHT DOUBLE DOWN IN H-TOWN

MUSTANG MANIA

THE SKILLMAN FAMILY'S PONY CARS
ARE GALLOPING TO GLORY

NOTES FROM THE PRO MOD REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

BY JIM LUIKENS

Houston was really a story of three different races for the E3 Spark Plugs Pro Mod Drag Racing Series competitors. Hot and steamy conditions greeted racers on Friday for their first two qualifying sessions, and Saturday saw intermittent rain showers delay the proceedings several times. On Sunday, the bad weather had blown through, and the racers had spectacular conditions at a track that is only 10 feet above sea level.

Erica Enders took advantage of Sunday's remarkable conditions to record a spectacular top speed of 260.11 mph, the first recognized NHRA Pro Mod run more than 260 mph. There was no controversy this year after a bit of miscommunication last year negated the first-ever 260-plus mph NHRA Pro Mod run.

Unfortunately for Enders, that 260-mph run came in a losing effort to **Mike Janis**, the defending E3 Series champion. Enders missed the cut in Gainesville when her best qualifying run of 5.779 seconds left her 22nd on the final qualifying sheet. Interestingly, Erica qualified here with a 5.786-second run, which was actually slower than her Gainesville run, but the poor weather conditions held everyone back just a little in qualifying.

Fellow Houston-area native and Elite teammate, **Alex**



Erica Enders

Laughlin also made the show in Houston after missing the cut in Gainesville. On race day, he lost to the nitrous-equipped entry of Michigan's Bob Rahaim in the first round. Shane Tecklenburg and Justin Elkes have joined the tuning brain trust at Elite Motorsports, and there is no doubt that Elite's Pro Mod program is headed upward.

Canada's Eric Latino didn't make the final round, but his right-side window did. **Todd Tutterow's** right-side window had set sail in his semifinal victory over a red-lighting **Jose Gonzalez**. In dire need of a right-side window for the final, Tutterow called upon Latino for a little favor. Actually, Latino was an easy choice because he was the only other Pro Mod racer on the grounds who was using the '67-'68 Camaro body style. An interesting twist to all of this is the fact that it was Tutterow who had put Latino out of competition in an earlier round.

Gonzalez qualified No. 1 with Chad Green and Stevie Jackson

right behind him in second and third place, respectively. That meant it was a turbocharged, a nitrous, and a blower car in the top three spots. Power-adder parity is always a hot topic when multiple types of power adders compete in a single eliminator. But, as proven here, things are pretty even right now in Pro Mod. It's important to view the performance results over an entire year because each power adder normally benefits from a particular season or weather condition.

Mike Castellana suffered another DNQ in Houston after also

not making the race in Gainesville. Even the return of Frank Manzo, who was missing in Gainesville, did not improve Castellana's results. Castellana's best qualifying run of 5.871 seconds left him nearly a tenth of a second behind the bump spot.

Surprisingly, **Rickie Smith**, with his new turbocharged '67 Mustang, occupied the bump spot. Smith's race day didn't get any better when his 16th qualifying position matched him with No. 1 qualifier Gonzalez. In one of the better runs of the first round, Gonzalez's 5.711 defeated Smith's 5.754-second pass.

After just two races, Jackson and Tutterow have opened up a sizable points gap on the rest of the field. Jackson has 214 points, Tutterow is close behind at 211, and Gonzalez is a distant third with just 114 markers. Jackson's plan is to try and hold his own during the summer months and then put on a full-court press for the championship in the fall when the weather conditions should once again favor supercharged cars like his.



Alex Laughlin

PRO MOD

1. Jose Gonzalez, Ball Ground, Ga. ('17 Camaro) **5.731, 257.43**
2. Chad Green, Midland, Texas ('19 Camaro) **5.751, 249.07**
3. Steve Jackson, Evans, Ga. ('18 Camaro) **5.753, 251.02**
4. Rick Hord, Belle Isle, Fla. ('16 Corvette) **5.754, 257.33**
5. Todd Tutterow, Lewisville, N.C. ('68 Camaro) **5.754, 248.25**
6. Sidnei Frigo, Sao Paulo, Brazil ('69 Camaro) **5.760, 256.75**
7. Jeremy Ray, Lugoff, S.C. ('63 Corvette) **5.767, 244.60**
8. Bob Rahaim, Grosse Pointe, Mich. ('18 Camaro) **5.773, 250.37**
9. Alex Laughlin, Bluff Dale, Texas ('18 Camaro) **5.779, 256.36**
10. Mike Janis, Lancaster, N.Y. ('69 Camaro) **5.779, 248.98**
11. Michael Biehle, North Vernon, Ind. ('67 Mustang) **5.781, 254.62**
12. Eric Latino, Port Perry, Ont. ('67 Camaro) **5.782, 248.89**
13. Steven Whiteley, Grand Junction, Colo. ('18 Camaro) **5.783, 249.35**
14. Khalid alBalooshi, Duxbury, Mass. ('18 Camaro) **5.785, 248.98**
15. Erica Enders, Houston, Texas ('18 Camaro) **5.786, 258.42**
16. Rickie Smith, King, N.C. ('67 Mustang) **5.790, 256.80**

ALTERNATES: Jason Scruggs - 5.792, 248.61; Doug Winters - 5.797, 246.84; Chip King - 5.819, 247.79; Jim Whiteley - 5.837, 245.58; Steve Matusek - 5.870, 254.33; Mike Castellana - 5.871, 248.57; Brandon Snider - 5.988, 243.15; Clint Satterfield - 6.023, 246.30; Harry Hruska - 6.050, 247.34; Adam Flamholz - 6.052, 237.84.

PRO MOD CHAMPION STEVE JACKSON			
5.711-258.57 GONZALEZ (.042)	5.771-255.58 GONZALEZ (.029)	5.809-260.11 ENDERS (.068)	5.963-236.96 GREEN (.053)
5.754-257.78 SMITH (.050)	5.782-248.02 (FOUL) GONZALEZ (-.059)	5.725-249.81 JANIS (.034)	5.758-258.86 ENDERS (.034)
5.834-233.72 RAHAIM (.065)	5.877-213.13 RAHAIM (.074)	5.675-255.00 JACKSON (.040)	9.453-87.27 RAY (.029)
7.715-131.47 LAUGHLIN (.100)	7.715-131.47 LAUGHLIN (.100)	13.471-76.06 TUTTEROW (.266)	5.762-248.80 JANIS (.018)
12.015-59.11 HORD (.062)	5.825-250.41 S. WHITELEY (.053)	5.675-255.00 JACKSON (.040)	5.782-225.60 JANIS (.018)
6.935-148.84 S. WHITELEY (.037)	5.717-251.30 TUTTEROW (.048)	5.706-254.14 JACKSON (.036)	5.679-253.80 JACKSON (.058)
5.681-251.44 TUTTEROW (.045)	5.760-251.06 TUTTEROW (.054)	5.699-253.37 JACKSON (.028)	5.740-250.69 alBALOOSHI (.092)
10.478-74.48 LATINO (.040)		5.999-218.97 FRIGO (.046)	5.740-250.69 alBALOOSHI (.092)
		11.419-84.65 FRIGO (.019)	5.999-218.97 FRIGO (.046)
			8.608-106.86 BIEHLE (.044)

LOW E.T.: 5.675 - JACKSON
TOP SPEED: 260.11 - ENDERS