

Volume XI, Number 9 - September 2009

DRAG RACING

MAGAZINE

PMRA
penultimate
event of '09

Guest Editorial:
Jon Paulette's
vision for the
future

News & Analysis:
What did you
expect to happen?

We've Got Mail:
What you think
about John Force
at Indy

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PRUDHOMME SAYS SO LONG

No, that isn't smokeless tobacco, but The Snake's ever-present chewing gum. (Chris Haverly photo)



Don Prudhomme walked into the press room at O'Reilly Raceway Park during the U.S. Nationals and announced that his entire operation was for sale but that he, of course, would finish out his obligations for the rest of the 2009 season.

The reason for his departure was simply lack of primary sponsor. Evidently the U.S. government isn't going to allow any tobacco advertising on race cars in 2010. And reportedly the deal announced this year with the International Plumbers Union didn't come to terms.

One thing is sure, in the past when Prudhomme said he was parking his operation for lack of sponsors he didn't waiver. If he says he is selling the operation he is serious and this isn't good for NHRA drag racing in any way.

THE OTHER 'ACE' TO DRIVE T AFC FOR AL-ANABI RACING



Two of the most successful drivers of Funny Cars in NHRA have the same nickname. Frank Manzo and Ed McCulloch. McCulloch has long retired as a driver and now is a premier tuner. Manzo, on the other hand, shows no signs of slowing down as a driver. He has been pretty much unbeatable but now with Manzo getting "a deal he couldn't refuse" to join Sheikh Khalid Bin Hamad Al Thani's Al Anabi team he will be very hard to beat.

Could a nitro car be in Frank "Ace" Manzo's future? The Agent thinks it is a possibility. Todd Dziadosz photo

[9/9/2009]

BEST TWO OUT OF THREE FALLS...ER, ROUNDS, OR IS IT A LOSER LEAVES TOWN MATCH?

Determined to give drag racing fans the race they want to see in the wake of the U.S. Nationals, Speedway Motorsports President Marcus Smith offered to host a winner-take-all \$20,000 grudge race between John Force and Tony Pedregon during Pro Qualifying on Friday night, Sept. 18, of the NHRA Carolinas Nationals at zMAX Dragway.

"I'm a race fan at heart and after watching the U.S. Nationals at Indy, and the heated confrontation between John and Tony, I can say without a doubt that's the matchup I want to see at the Carolinas Nationals," said Smith. "Those guys nearly came to blows. What better way to kickoff an exciting weekend than ending the first Pro day with a \$20,000-to-win 'Grudge Match at zMAX' between those two champions?"

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Strange

"This is high drama on drag racing's biggest stage," Smith added. "You have the two most successful drivers in Funny Car history pointing fingers at each other, both of them want one thing and that's to settle it on the quarter mile. Well, we're going to give them a high-stakes way to do just that right in front of the fans."

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John Force and former teammate Tony Pedregon were happy in this photo from 2007. Or were they just practicing wrestling holds? (James Drew photo)

And we thought that Feld Entertainment would turn the IHRA into a circus act. Guess the WWE is a better business model for the Smith family.

Unfortunately for the circus, Agent 1320's Charlotte and NHRA sources tell us that both drivers have refused the offer. The reason most believe is that \$20,000 just isn't enough. Those guys get \$25,000 per for match racing, according to the Agent's sources. Mr. Smith will have to dig a little deeper to make this happen. [\[9/9/2009\]](#)

PMRA, QUICK 32 HEAD FOR SEASON FINALE

The Pro Modified Racing Association and the Quick 32 Sportsman Series presented by NAPA Auto Parts concludes its six-race season September 19 -20, on the Cayuga Dragway at Toronto Motorsports Park in Cayuga, Ontario.

Bruce Boland (above) leads the PMRA Championship Point Award Series standings with 1340, while Mark Nielsen is next with 1236 followed by Jeff Roth with 1215, Dave Earhart with 1210 and Jason Kalso fifth with 1203 points.

Jamie Bridge now has the Quick 32 Sportsman Series Championship Point Award Series lead with 783. Following are Darrin Grubb with 762, Mitch Elliott with 757, Kevin Wicke with 756, and Michael Kalin with 748 points.

The results from the Labor Day weekend race at Grand Bend are in our Lead Story. [Brad Turk photo](#) [\[9/9/2009\]](#)



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Jim Cunningham's two 2010 Ford Mustangs, his and one driven by Erica Enders, were given Best Engineered awards at the U.S. Nationals. Neither car made the Pro Stock field with Cunningham having a best of 6.856 in qualifying and Enders a 6.942. It's a nice "welcome" present to Ford as the Official Car of the NHRA. Too bad neither car was even close to qualifying for the Pro Stock field [Chris Haverly photo \[9/9/2009\]](#)

BRUTON LOOKING FOR 4-WIDE VOLUNTEERS

One of the agent's Top Fuel snoopers reports that so far Bruton Smith's Four-wide Top Fuel exhibition carries with it no compensation and the track is looking for volunteers. The agent's guess is that if this rumor is true the money will show up to entice four cars to make the exhibition lap. The question is will any Top Fuel team or crewchief in the "Playoff" want put their cars at risk for this exhibition? The agent thinks not. [\[9/9/2009\]](#)

AN ARMY OF TWO

Tony Schumacher got some support from his NASCAR counterpart at the U.S. Nationals when the Army-sponsored Tony Stewart celebrated the Sarge's win. [Ron Lewis photo \[9/9/2009\]](#)



NASCAR IS WATCHING NHRA FOR A CHANGE

From DRO editor Jeff Burk: Evidently the fallout over the accusations by Tony Pedregon that John Force cheats as seen on live TV and constantly replayed on the internet since Monday has gotten the attention of both NASCAR's officials and their fans.

According to my friends in NASCAR, NASCAR's Series Director John Darby has stated something to the effect that at this week's final race of NASCAR's regular season at Richmond, where 10 teams have a mathematical chance of getting the coveted 12th and final spot, will be watched closely.

NASCAR will be looking at any crash or incident involving cars from those 10 teams that take one of the contenders out to make sure that good, clean racing will determine the 12 teams that make the chase. Tony and Force's dustup has got more airtime on the NASCAR radio shows than the fact that Dale Earnhardt Jr. won't be in the chase.

I'll bet that NHRA's Charlotte race will attract more and get more press than any other race in NHRA history, and that the Force and Pedregon camps will have more requests for interviews than any time in their careers. [\[9/9/2009\]](#)



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Michael Knight's
ALL BUSINESS

The Most Painful Wounds

Roger Penske, on a sunny May Day in Gasoline Alley at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway more than a quarter-century ago, taught me an invaluable lesson of life and business.

"The most painful wounds," racing's most successful corporate executive and team owner said, "are self-inflicted."

Why?

"Because they can easily be avoided."

Penske's words -- and wisdom -- sped back into my consciousness when NHRA released its 2010 Full Throttle schedule.

That announcement capped an August when only congressional representatives at town hall meetings took more heat than the Lords of Drag Racing.

I won't consume space here by recounting NHRA's long hot summer of discontent. Truthfully, Jeff Burk and Jon Asher and Susan Wade and Bobby Bennett have done that more knowingly than which I am capable. Their reporting and commentaries likely have already been consumed and digested by the DRO readership and certainly are readily available to those who have not. (God Bless Google!)

As it pertains to the '10 calendar, however, I can inform you from personal experience.

I'm based in beautiful Scottsdale, Arizona, which among its many pleasures, is one of America's three top golf destinations. From my home, it takes less time than required to complete the opening round of pro eliminations to reach the Tournament Players Club, site of February's FBR Open.

Even if you're not a golfer, you've heard of the FBR (which stands for Friedman, Billings, Ramsey Group, a financial/capital markets corporation). It's the biggest party on the PGA Tour -- setting records for attendance, charitable contributions and after-hours socializing at the nearby "Bird's Nest" -- and infamous for the short par-3 16th hole. That's the one surrounded, amphitheatre-style, by fans who loudly cheer shots that are close to the pin and lustily boo those which are not. In 1997, Tiger Woods aced it, and the roar would even have surpassed four-wide Funny Cars at Charlotte. The ovation rings in my memory (maybe, even in my ears) to this day!

The annual total turnstile count exceeds 500,000. A PGA Tour single-day record was set in 2008 when 170,000 spectators showed up. That event raised some \$8.6 million for charity, distributed by the Thunderbirds, the local and respected organizing group.

The Greatest Spectacle in Golf -- and a trip to Arizona in winter -- makes the FBR an annual "must" for media and fans alike.



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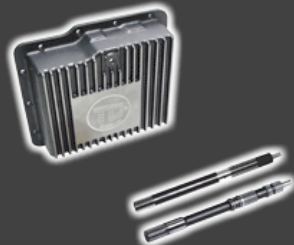
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The savvy Thunderbirds – not wanting to compete for headlines and dollars against Vancouver’s Winter Olympics – decided to push back next year’s tourney a few weeks. It will end Sunday, Feb. 28. They made that known more than a year in advance.

That, of course, pits the FBR directly against the unsponsored Arizona Nationals over at Firebird International Raceway, in Chandler.

I explained all of this to NHRA last February. As a former CART and IROC official, I understand scheduling is a tough task. But I urged them to make a one-time date change to avoid the Open. I said the lack of publicity would be uglier than a rod through the side of a block.

I thought they understood.

Silly me.

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There it is – the '10 Full Throttle schedule. And there is Firebird, exactly the same week as the FBR.

Let me explain the dimensions of this decision this way: I wrote a TOTAL of seven NHRA-at-Firebird stories this year for the *Arizona Republic*, the state’s largest newspaper. It’s no exaggeration to say there will be seven stories A DAY on golf. Traditionally, many TV anchors and radio hosts do their shows directly from the TPC course, such is the magnitude of the happening.

Anyone who comprehends anything about the local press scene will tell you this: The Thunderbirds are masterful at building and maintaining positive relationships with the media. They WORK at it on a year-round basis. If Firebird’s management -- which has precisely zero relationships with any Valley of the Sun journalists (including me) – summoned-up the energy to educate themselves as to the extent of the Thunderbirds’ PR efforts, well, they’d probably have be hospitalized for exhaustion.

As best I can determine, NHRA’s and Firebird’s reasoning is racing and golf are two different audiences. Well, gentlemen, it’s the SAME media outlets. In the race for news coverage, you’ve already lost.

As someone who made a career in the Business of Racing, events of the past year have rendered me a dispirited tracker of the NHRA sport. I consider it a crisis of confidence.

I am late to that realization. But this I know: No enterprise can stand in the face of such poor decision-making, lack of attention-to-detail, and neglected one-on-one communications. Especially, in this case, when given the gift of six months advance warning.

I feel sorry for the car sponsors who will leave the major Phoenix market publicity poor.

For NHRA and Firebird Raceway, though, I have no sympathy for the pain they will suffer from a needless, self-inflicted wound. **DRO**

Michael Knight

Long a speed secret among top professional racing teams has been the Rock Racing Battery. The 12 volt 1236 and 1257 batteries were first utilized in drag racing and within the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series. At this point Rock Racing Batteries boast an impressive 99% usage rate in NASCAR Sprint Cup Series vehicles. In the Pro Modified Drag racing ranks folks like Quain Stott, Tommy D'Aprile, Chip King, Rick Diste-fano and many other successful drivers have all been quietly using the Rock Battery.

NHRA 6-time Pro Stock World Champion Warren Johnson chooses the 16 volt Rock Racing Battery in his Pro Stock NHRA Cars.

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GUEST COLUMN

Change'll Do 'Em Good

By Jon Paulette

The economy, though improving, still sucks. NASCAR is at its lowest ebb in a long time. Indycar, after years of worthless infighting, is only now staggering back to life. Road racing is.....well, about as popular as it ever was. If NHRA drag racing is ever going to break out, now's the time to start making some changes. I'm sure NHRA has a lot of good ideas. You probably have your some of own. Here are just a few of mine....

Make Indy Matter

Calling the U.S. Nationals the biggest race of the year is nice; but to casual TV viewers, Indy looks just like every other drag race. Every driver talks about how much it means to win Indy and drag racing aficionados know exactly what they mean. But what about everyone else--the significant others, the kids and the guy who stopped on ESPN2 because there was nothing else on? Those people need convincing.

In NHRA's rush to do everything just like NASCAR, they failed to remember that few sports fans outside of the South really cared about stock car racing until drivers started winning boatloads of money--think Bill Elliot's "Winston Million" in 1985. Triple the purse, double the points and you'll have a "Big Go" worthy of the name--plus a hell of a lead-in for the Countdown. Indy is everything--we know that. Add big money and big points and *everyone* will know.

Make the Countdown Go Away

When NASCAR decided that awarding a season championship to the racer who *actually had the best season* was entirely too boring, they came up with The Chase. The idea was to replicate the do-or-die playoff mentality of stick-and-ball sports. It hasn't worked. NHRA followed along and it hasn't worked for them, either.

Faux playoffs suck, and I say this as a longtime Red Sox fan who scared the hell out of two innocent dogs by going bananas when the Sawx *finally* won it all in 2004. It was a memory to cherish (maybe not for the dogs), but I also remember that my guys got in as the "Wild Card." I'm still happy about that championship (and 2007, Yankees fans....), but I hate the Wild Card. And I hate the Chase--er, Countdown. Whatever. Both, actually.

Sometimes a championship comes down to the last run of the last race. Other times it doesn't. So what? The driver and team who have the best overall season deserve to be season champions. That said, we all know that the Countdown isn't going anywhere. But, since it was designed to increase fan interest, ticket sales and TV ratings, I'll also say this: If it ever does what it's supposed to do, each class champ deserves a *lot* more money.

Make Pro Stock Relevant

Seen any new rear-wheel drive coupes powered by 500 c.i. carbureted engines lately? Me neither. Been awed by a Pro Stock pass lately? Me neither. No offense to the hard-working teams involved, but today's 500-inch formula has to go.

Race fans are smart enough to know that the Cobalt, GXP or Stratus (Charger? Seriously, what the hell is that thing?) they see on Sunday is nothing like the one they probably won't buy on Monday. New Ford Mustangs will liven things up, but only for so long. Pro Stock hasn't sold many cars--or go-fast parts--for a while now. It's time to make the class relevant again. To do that, we need a new formula.

I'm no tech guy, but I'm thinking small-blocks, fuel injection, power-adders, gas or alternative fuels, stock-appearing bodies, rear-wheel drive, honest 10.5 tires, all major manufacturers allowed and (I'm stealing this from Bret Kepner with his full permission) NO WHEELIE BARS. Hijinks will ensue and you *will* watch. Parts will be developed and you will buy them. Pro Stock will be relevant again and that's a wonderful thing.

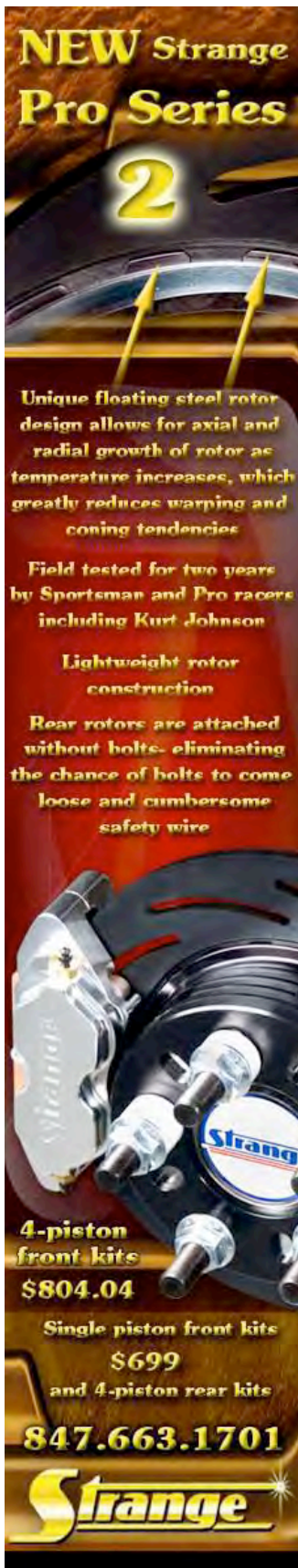
Make Pro Mod a Pro Class

You've heard of Pro Modified, right? Nutjob doorslammers running numbers that make old-time Funny Car crewchiefs shake their heads? From what I've read and seen for the last two decades or so, people seem to like them. NHRA, however, still isn't convinced. That's why Pro Mod teams jump through hoops and write checks in hopes of having a chance to win a Wally in near-total obscurity. It's a joke.

It's usually blamed on Pro Stock manufacturer pressure, but since most of those companies are too busy recovering from bankruptcy to care, why not make Pro Mod a legitimate Pro class? With a reinvigorated, high-tech Pro Stock division doing its own thing, a bunch of whackjob, old-style blown cars won't mess with anyone's marketing plan. Now's the time to take a look at the schedule, select appropriate markets for Pro Mod and Pro Stock Bike and give each class 15-17 races (including Indy) to determine a champion.

NHRA needs to get over their whole "not invented here" thing and become the sanctioning body of record for quarter-mile Pro Mod racing. The position appears to be open. [DRO](#)

Jon Paulette is a former Editor of the late and occasionally lamented Inside Motorsports, a former Managing Editor of IHRA Drag Review and a longtime freelance motorsports journalist. No wonder he's slowly becoming a Washington Nationals fan.



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(Ron Lewis photo)

Compiled from team press releases by Kay Burk
Photos by Chris Haverly and Ron Lewis

Tony Schumacher continued his domination of the Mac Tools U.S. Nationals presented by Lucas Oil Monday, racing to his eighth victory at historic O'Reilly Raceway Park and tying legendary "Big Daddy" Don Garlits for the most Top Fuel wins at the world's most prestigious drag race. Ashley Force Hood, Jeg Coughlin, and Hector Arana also were winners of the final regular season event in the NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing Series. The Countdown to 1, NHRA's six-race championship playoffs, begins Sept. 18 with the NHRA Carolinas Nationals at zMAX Dragway near Charlotte, N.C.

TOP FUEL



Schumacher's 3.861 at 314.17 mph defeated Dixon's 4.208/228.58. (Chris Haverly photo)

After beating Larry Dixon in the finals, Schumacher matched Don Garlits' Top Fuel record of eight wins in the NHRA's most prestigious race.

"I'm a little speechless right now," said Schumacher afterwards amidst a noisy winner's circle. "It's a little tough to comprehend just what we've accomplished here today."

On the way to his fourth consecutive victory at ORP, Schumacher wiped out the likes of T.J. Zizzo, Rod Fuller and Brandon Bernstein before leveling Dixon in front of an enthusiastic Labor Day crowd.

"We had a great car all day long," added the six-time world champion. "Mike Green (his crew chief) and the team were just unbelievable. They functioned just like our Army Strong Soldiers do – with plenty of precision and perfection."

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Schumacher, who collected his fourth win of the year and the 60th of his career, will advance into the Countdown to 1 playoffs in two weeks holding third-place in the standings, 40 points behind leader Antron Brown.

"With the playoffs coming up at zMAX Dragway in Charlotte, we needed to get the ball rolling right here in Indy," said Schumacher. "I'd say we did just fine. It's going to be a real tough road to the title, but I truly believe we're going to be a serious player throughout. I can't wait for the bell to ring in two weeks."

Clay Millican won the war Sunday when he clinched his first NHRA playoff position, but lost the battle Monday in the opening round of the U.S. Nationals at O'Reilly Raceway Park.

Millican's Hope4Sudan/Motorvation Top Fuel dragster registered its quickest elapsed time of the weekend, 3.916 seconds at 311.27 mph, while Larry Dixon turned on the win light in 3.855 seconds at 313.66 mph

"Well, we ran better, but it just wasn't quick enough," said Millican. "Obviously, it was one of those happy-sad things. We're sad because we didn't win some round in the U.S. Nationals, but we were extremely happy to make the Countdown to the Championship

"We made wholesale tune-up changes Sunday night and it showed lots of promise. We're going to continue working on the car. We'll definitely be ready when we get to Charlotte for the first Countdown race."

Millican secured 10th place overall in the regular season when Joe Hartley, who was only three points behind, didn't qualify Sunday.

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FUNNY CAR



(Ron Lewis photo)

Castrol GTX Ford Mustang driver Ashley Force Hood let a plethora of distractions pass her by as she cruised to her second Mac Tools U.S. Nationals, first as a professional, becoming the first female to win in the funny car category at the oldest and most prestigious drag race in the country. Force Hood defeated her brother-in-law Robert Hight in the final 4.170 to 4.217.



Ashley Force Hood receives a congratulatory hug from father and team owner, John force. (Ron Lewis photo)

"I am really excited this has been a great weekend for Team Force. Winning the race couldn't get any better for me. We have struggled in the summer and haven't done as well as we'd hoped we would. Two weeks ago in Reading (PA) we really had a tough one. We came into this racing looking to get back into our groove. Let's do what we know we can do. Let's go rounds. Let's get this car down the track. I can't give (co-crew chiefs) Ron (Douglas) and Guido (Dean Antonelli) enough credit. They have had a lot on their shoulders this weekend. They were trying to figure out the track and working really hard. My team is the best bunch of guys out here. I couldn't ask

for any more from them. I am just so proud to have won the Mac Tools US Nationals again I just can't believe it happened," said Force Hood.

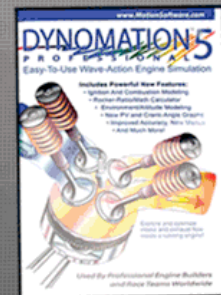
Force Hood joined Shirley Muldowney (Top Fuel) and Angelle Sampey (Pro Stock Motorcycle) as the only female Mac Tools U. S. Nationals professional winners.

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John Force's controversial loss to son in law, Robert Hight, moved Hight into the 10th spot in the Countdown. (Chris Haverly photo)

Hight's day was also special, as even though he did not win his third Mac Tools U.S. Nationals in four years, he extended his streak to four consecutive U.S. Nationals final rounds and, most importantly, he earned enough points to grab the coveted 10th spot in the Countdown to 1, outracing Cruz Pedregon and rookie Matt Hagan for the last spot.

"It is unbelievable. At the beginning of every season your biggest fear is to not make this Countdown. When you look at the class and the field of these Funny Cars and how good the cars are that are out there it is not that easy to make this top ten. Cruz Pedregon is a great racer, reigning world champ. He is an awesome driver. They have a great team over there. It just shows you how tough this is. We just pulled this out. What is best though is we are getting to go to the finals against our teammate Ashley Force Hood so a John Force Mustang will win this race. It doesn't get any better than that," said Hight, the last funny car driver to clinch a Countdown position.

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"Jimmy Prock picked the right weekend to fix this Auto Club Ford Mustang. It is on a string every run. That is awesome so good job Jimmy Prock."

John Force dispatched Cruz Pedregon in a classic Force versus Pedregon battle and that win paved the way for Hight to secure his Countdown spot. In the semi-final round Force's Castrol GTX High Mileage Mustang lost traction at about 200 feet and Hight won a decisive round win. Mike Neff was already clinched in the Countdown to 1 and almost made it an all Force semi-final but he dropped a close race to Tony Pedregon in the second round.

PRO STOCK



(Ron Lewis photo)

Back-to-back Pro Stock champion Jeg Coughlin Jr. finished the NHRA's regular season in style, winning drag racing's biggest event -- the Mac Tools U.S. Nationals presented by Lucas Oil -- for his NHRA-leading seventh victory.

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After a lackluster qualifying effort left him 12th on the 16-car grid, Coughlin came alive in eliminations, upsetting three-time world champion Greg Anderson in Round 1 with a 6.652 to Anderson's 6.688 to set the tone for his memorable day. His crushing start spooked both Rodger Brogdon and top qualifier Mike Edwards into foul starts in Coughlin's next two races, sending him to his 77th final round in Pro Stock.



The final round of Pro Stock. (Chris Haverly photo)

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With the prestigious Indy trophy on the line against Greg Stanfield, Coughlin wouldn't be denied, zooming down the quarter-mile in 6.689 at 206.48 mph to barely outpace Stanfield's 6.691 at 206.37 mph.

"We had Lady Luck on our side today, no doubt about it," Coughlin said. "We started with a huge match-up against Greg Anderson and it seemed like the weight of the world was on us there. He beat me off the line but we had the power to track him down and take the win. That sort of set the day in motion.

"Against Rodger in the second round we went into severe tire shake and couldn't make it down the track but when I looked up I saw the win light on in our lane and I realized he had fouled out at the starting line. That was another huge break.

"Me and Mike have had some battles this year and we all know how good that car can be. I got up on the wheel to race him and felt like I hit the tree real well but I still sensed that he had left first. Once again, I looked up and saw that he had fouled out, so we got another round win right there.

"Greg (Stanfield) and me were welded together all the way down the track. He beat me by a thousandth of a second off the line and I beat him by two-thousandths at the other end so we won by the slenderest of margins. I'll tell you right now, I've got nothing left in my emotional tank. I'm completely drained."

In Round 1, Coughlin and his Mooresville, N.C.-based Victor Cagnazzi Racing team secured the No. 1 ranking heading into the Countdown, the six-race playoff that begins Sept. 18-20 with the Carolina Nationals at zMax Dragway in Concord, N.C. The feat is worth 20 bonus points after the standings are reset for the Countdown to 1.

GOODGUYS

Rod & Custom Association

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"Winning Indy is a dream for drag racers," Coughlin said. "Keeping that No. 1 ranking was a big goal and it's great to get it done because we worked darn hard for it. Now we start over, for all intents, and we need to reset and get set for the playoffs. It's going to be a thrill."

PRO STOCK MOTORCYCLE



Hector Arana (far lane) took the PSM win. (Chris Haverly photo)

In Pro Stock Motorcycle, Arana earned his third victory of the season and first ever at Indy by powering his Lucas Oil Buell to a 7.026 at 189.10 to defeat Michael Phillips in the final, who posted a 7.086 at 185.84 on his Phillips Racing Suzuki. Karen Stoffer secured the final playoff position when she won her first round match and Steve Johnson lost.

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"This is the sweetest moment for me," Arana said. "All the years I struggled people always told me, 'There is something better for you,' but I always wondered when my time was going to come. Now, I've won three races this year including the U.S. Nationals and I can't ask for anything more."

Matt Smith was the only Matt Smith Racing team Pro Stock Motorcycle rider Monday to move into the quarterfinal round of the U.S. Nationals at O'Reilly Motorsports Park.

Smith, riding the Don Schumacher Racing Nitro Fish Suzuki, ran 6.984 seconds at 188.86 mph to defeat Junior

Pippin's 7.165 at 179.23. Douglas Horne upset him with a run of 7.164 at 182.55 mph to 7.106 at 184.42.

Angie McBride, riding the Nitro Fish Buell, couldn't outrun Hector Arana and L.E. Tonglet had a mechanical problem with his Frameworksmg.com Buell and lost to Karen Stoffer in the first round.

McBride covered the quarter-mile in 7.003 seconds at 185.97 mph, but it wasn't enough to get the win light as Arana turned in a time of 6.973 at 189.60.

"We improved our time on that run . . . and we ran well all weekend," said McBride. "We just had a bad draw in the first round. We'll work on our bike and get ready for our next race in Charlotte (Sept. 20)."

Tonglet, competing in his first NHRA national event, said his good weekend turned bad when the motor sputtered and "caused the bike to slow down. We just had a little bad luck. Other than that, we had a fast Buell.

"It was a great weekend. I want to thank Matt and the people at Frameworksmg.com for giving me the opportunity to do it."

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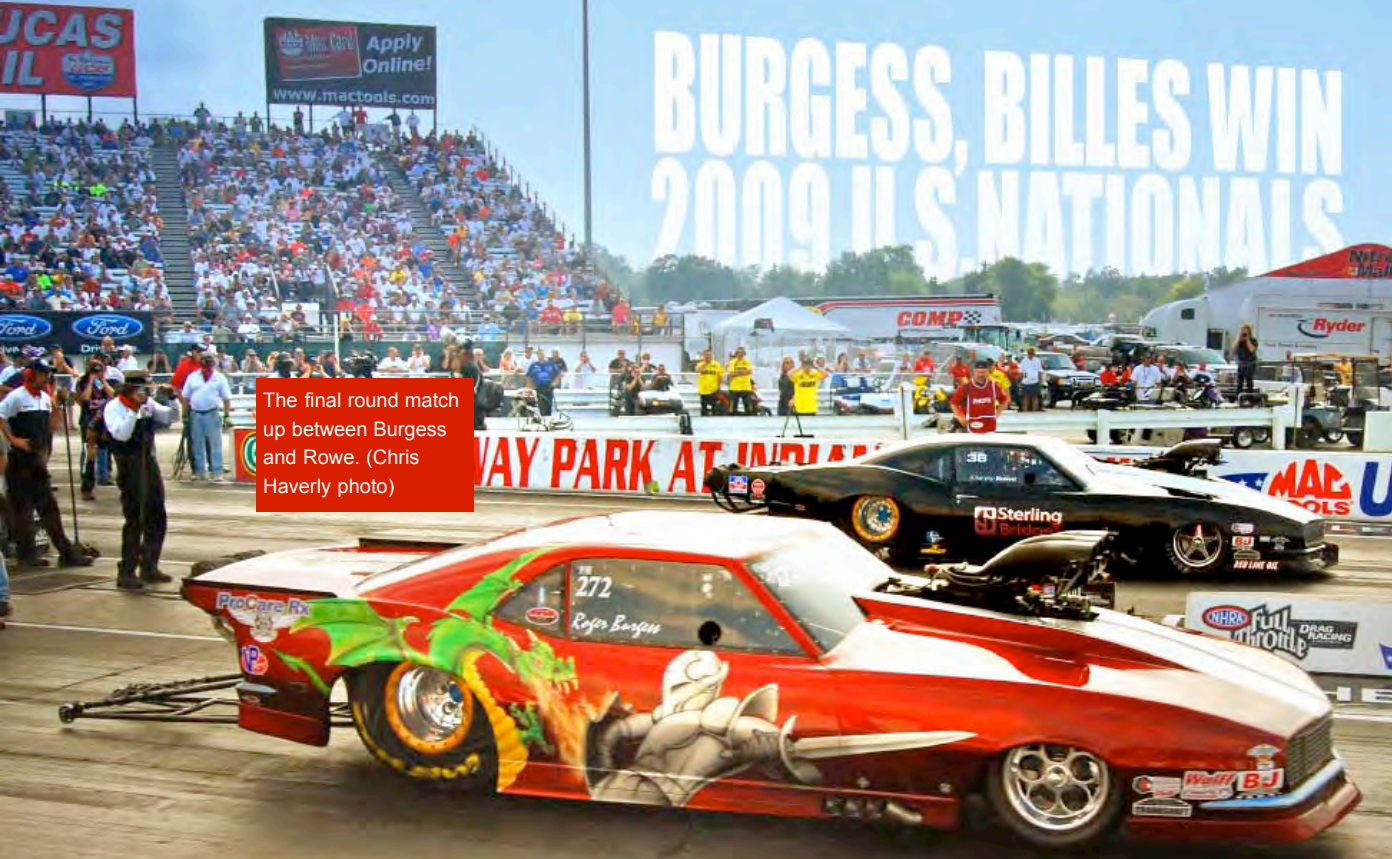


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The final round match up between Burgess and Rowe. (Chris Haverly photo)

Words by Jeff Burk - Photos by Chris Haverly and Ron Lewis

Roger Burgess's investment of time and money in Canadian engine-builder and tuner Al Billes paid off large as the Duluth, Georgia-based racer and his Canadian tuner won at the most important race in drag racing, the NHRA U.S. Nationals at O'Reilly Raceway Park in Indianapolis.

Burgess, whose company, ProCare Rx, backs the Get Screened America, exhibition series-within-a-series that is contested at ten of the NHRA's 24 national events, defeated Californian Danny Rowe and his tuner Jimmy Rector in an anti-climatic final round.

In just his second year as a professional Pro Mod driver, Burgess had an excellent .027 reaction time to Rowe's .045 and then motored away from the favored Rowe when engine woes ended Rowe's day early.

Rowe was favored on race day based on his domination of qualifying and the first three rounds of eliminations. His tuner, Jimmy Rector, who tuned Mitch Stott to the first-ever North American Pro Mod five-second pass, had Rowe's '67 Hemi-powered Camaro performing at its peak all week.

Rowe and Rector put their car on the pole with a 5.943/245.54 lap on the second and final qualifying session and then steamrolled over Kirk Wilmes, Rickie Smith and Ike Maier with ET's of 5.949, a 5.986 and a 5.973.



Danny Rowe debuted a brand new race car at Indy. He took low qualifier honors with a 5.943 and went low E.T. in every round but the finals. (Ron Lewis photo)

The pair of Burgess and Billes caught a few breaks to get to the championship round. This Pro Mod series uses NHRA's 1-vs-16 pro ladder that favors the quicker qualifiers and in the first round he dumped Massachusetts' own John Russo and his 2000 Chevy S-10 pickup with a 5.979 at 241.45 blast the easily covered Russo's troubled 6.723 at 164.79.

In the second round Burgess's opponent again had traction issues and his 6.062 at 241.07 easily defeated Mike Knowles' tire-smoking 8.408 at 110.60 mph.



Mike Castellana's Al-Anabi 1970 Camaro was the highest qualifying nitrous car at the U.S. Nationals with a Reher-Morrison nitrous motor. (Ron Lewis photo)

Then in semi-finals against nitrous racer Burton Auxier, Burgess had his best reaction time of the race to that point with a .036 to Auxier's stellar .003. His 5.996 ET got him to the winning stripe just .039 seconds before Auxier.

For the final Rowe had lane choice and a performance advantage but it wasn't to be as Roger Burgess made a career drive. He left first and thanks to his Billes tune-up ran his best lap of the week, a 5.956 at 241.80 mph.

As he climbed out from his car, the first words out his mouth were, "This one is for Bobby."

"We came to this race with a very heavy heart, mourning the loss of our friend and teammate Bobby Monacelli," Burgess explained. "We didn't talk about it, but every member of this team was resolved to win this event in the honor and memory of Bobby."

The race was spectacular in that, with just two laps of qualifying, the bump spot dropped to a 6.120 by Kirk Wilmes, which is more than a tenth quicker than last year's 6.132 bump. This year there was a good mix of supercharged, nitrous oxide-injected and turbocharged powerplants in the qualified field. Racers representing the U.S., Canada and Scandinavia were racing at the U.S. Nationals event.

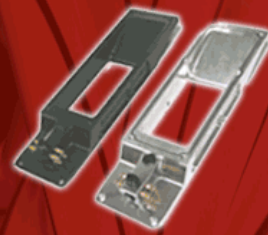
With their finishes, supercharger racers Roger Burgess and Danny Rowe joined nitrous racers Burton Auxier and Mike Castellana in solidifying their positions in the Matco Tools Pro Mod Clash, which pairs the top eight drivers in a race-within-a-race at the series finals in Las Vegas with a grand prize of \$25,000 going to the winner.

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Brad Persons turbocharged the fastest Pro with a 248.84 qualified 13th on a qualifying round. Rickie Smith. Haverly photo

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Oregon's own Dennis Radford qualified his nitrous-injected '70 Duster safely in the field and went two rounds before bowing out to fellow nitrous racer Burton Auxier. (Chris Haverly photo)

Also currently in the top eight with just two races remaining to set the field are Joe Baker, Raymond Comisso, Jay Payne and Tim Tindle.

Rowe also claimed the B&J Transmissions \$500 Bonus by defeating Kirk Wilmes in the first round. B&J's co-owner, Top Fuel racer Mike Strasberg, selected the number 16 from a hat during the drivers meeting before the event, signifying that whoever was paired with the No. 16 driver would compete for

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meeting before the event, signifying that whoever that whoever was paired with the NO. 10 driver would compete for the B&J Bonus.

Next on the schedule is the NHRA Nationals Sept 18-20 in Charlotte, North Carolina.



Joe Baker left the U.S. Nationals fifth in points and solidly in the field for the season ending shootout at Las Vegas. (Ron Lewis photo)

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CURRENT POINTS STANDINGS (AFTER 7 OF 10 EVENTS)

- 1 Burton Auxier 506
- 2 Roger Burgess 470
- 3 Danny Rowe 466
- 4 Mike Castellana 443
- 5 Joe Baker 389
- 6 Raymond Commisso 375
- 7 Jay Payne 360
- 8 Tim Tindle 354

-
- 9 Brad Personett 289
 - 10 Mike Knowles 285
 - 11 Rick Stivers 210
 - 12 Taylor Lastor 200

QUALIFYING

1	38 Danny Rowe, Laguna Hills CA, *'67 Camaro	5.943	245.54	245.54
2	7 Joe Baker, Milton FL, *'68 Camaro	5.949	240.85	241.20
3	272 Roger Burgess, Duluth GA, *'67 Camaro	5.960	242.45	242.45
4	3 Jay Payne, Ontario CA, *'68 Camaro	5.963	239.27	239.27
5	44 Mike Castellana, Westbury NY, '70 Camaro	5.963	237.75	237.75
6	501 Mike Knowles, Grand Junction CO, *'63 Corvette	5.977	240.64	240.98
7	507 Melanie Troxel, Avon IN, *'63 Corvette	6.015	241.02	241.02
8	43 Rickie Smith, King NC, '68 Camaro	6.030	234.37	234.37
9	217 Tim Tindle, Santa Rosa Bch FL, *'67 Mustang	6.051	236.46	236.55
10	1237 Burton Auxier, Dixie WV, '68 Firebird	6.056	234.29	234.29
11	3710 Jason Sfock, Lino Lakes MN, *'63 Corvette	6.079	232.95	233.12
12	173 Ike Maier, Tottenham ON, '63 Corvette	6.079	230.49	230.49
13	348 Brad Personett, Elkhart IN, *'68 Camaro	6.099	247.88	248.84
14	1986 John Russo, Middleton MA, **00 S-10	6.112	238.13	238.13
15	1970 Dennis Radford, Baker City OR, '70 Duster	6.116	229.35	229.35
16	4356 Kirk Wilmes, Altus OK, *'68 Firebird	6.120	231.95	231.95
----- Not Qualified -----				
17	872 Adam Flamholz, Malmoe SW, *'67 Camaro	6.120	228.73	228.73
18	1090 Raymond Commisso, Toronto ON, *'67 Firebird	6.131	241.97	241.97
19	6695 Rick Distefano, Calgary AB, *'53 Corvette	6.237	230.61	230.61
20	1962 Tommy D'aprile, Port Charlotte FL, *'62 Bel Air	6.301	187.47	187.47
21	67 Scott Christoffel, Oswego IL, *'68 Camaro	6.365	215.13	215.13
22	314 Rick Stivers, Lexington KY, *'06 Stratus	6.647	162.10	162.10
23	6 Scott Ray, Greenville OH, *'53 Corvette	9.166	87.79	87.79

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Texas Super Stock racer Gary Emmons gets some air time in his '96 Firebird. (Ron Lewis photo)

Results courtesy NHRA

Photos by Chris Haverly and Ron Lewis

The Mac Tools U.S. Nationals presented by Lucas Oil is arguably the most prestigious race on NHRA's calendar. For seven Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series competitors the dream of a win at Indy came true.



Top Alcohol Dragster racer Ken Perry (near lane) won just the second national event of his career when he ousted Michael Manners of Willis, Texas, in the final round. Perry earned the win on a hole-shot, running 5.404 seconds at 260.66 mph to Manners's 5.402-second, 262.49 mph pass. The Richmond Hill, Ont., resident's last national event win came at Joliet, Ill., in 2005. (Chris Haverly photo)



Bobby Martin, Beaver Falls, Pa.,(far lane) scored the win in Top Alcohol Funny Car. Martin qualified in the No. 8 spot and in the final he beat No. 2 qualifier Steve Harker of Gainesville, Ga. Martin laid down a 5.670-second, 254.18-mph run to Harker's 6.187/166.60 effort. (Chris Haverly photo)



In Comp Eliminator, David Rampy won The Big Go for the fourth time, when he knocked out Joey Tanksley of Greenwell Springs, La. (Chris Haverly photo)

	Class	Index	RT	ET	Ov/Un
W: David Rampy	A/EA	7.84	0.030	7.297	-0.543
L: Joey Tanksley	C/D	7.35	0.019	6.844	-0.506

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Larry Stewart Jr., Clinton, Miss., beat Bettendorf, Iowa's Michael Lund in the Super Stock final.

	Class	Index	RT	ET	Ov/Un
W: Larry Stewart Jr.	SS/GA	9.92	0.025	9.926	0.006
L: Michael Lund	SS/IA	10.01	0.037	10.043	0.033




The Stock Eliminator win went to Gary Waldo (shown), Hillsboro, Ore., when he jettisoned Michael Iacono of Wading River, N.Y. (Ron Lewis photo)


	Class	Index	RT	ET	Ov/Un
W: Gary Waldo	E/S	11.21	0.044	11.261	0.051
L: Michael Iacono	H/SA	11.62	0.037	11.694	0.074

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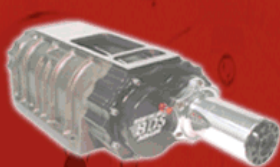
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2009 SCHEDULE

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March 27-29, 2009 - Bradenton, Florida
- 8th Annual NOS NMCA Muscle Car Nationals
May 1-3, 2009 - Bowling Green, Kentucky
- 7th Annual Kook's Custom Headers NMCA Muscle Car Nationals
June 5-7, 2009 - Reading, Pennsylvania
- 4th Annual NMRA/NMCA Super Bowl of Street Legal Drag Racing
July 16-19, 2009 - Joliet, Illinois
- Inaugural NMRA Ford Nationals / NMCA Hot Rod & Muscle Car Nationals All Star Nationals
August 6-9, 2009 - Charlotte, North Carolina

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2009 SCHEDULE

- 15th Annual Nitto Tire Spring Break Shootout
March 5-8, 2009 - Bradenton, Florida
- 9th Annual NMRA Ford Nationals
May 15-17, 2009 - Atco, New Jersey
- 6th Annual Aeromotive NMRA Ford Nationals
June 12-13, 2009 - Milan, Michigan
- 4th Annual NMRA/NMCA Super Bowl of Street Legal Drag Racing
July 16-19, 2009 - Joliet, Illinois
- Inaugural Nitto Tire NMRA / NMCA All-Star Nationals
August 6-9, 2009 - Charlotte, North Carolina

[View Full Schedule](#)



Edmond Richardson, who before the U.S. Nationals had 44 national event wins to his credit, scored just his first at Indy. The Greenbriar, Tenn., resident took out Franklin DiBartolomeo in the Super Comp final. (Chris Haverly photo)

	Class	Index	RT	ET	Ov/Un	
W:	Edmond Richardson	S/C	8.90	0.029	8.902	0.002
L:	Franklin Di Bartolomeo	S/C	8.90	0.016	8.897	-0.003



Reigning Super Gas national champion, Brian Forrester, Parrish, Fla., grabbed the win over Craig Anderson of Waxahachie, Texas, who broke out. (Chris Haverly photo) **DR**

	Class	Index	RT	ET	Ov/Un	
W:	Brian Forrester	S/G	9.90	0.018	9.929	0.029
L:	Craig Anderson	S/G	9.90	0.006	9.883	-0.017

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Three Weeks in March

By Mickey Bryant

Three weeks in March of 1959 in Bakersfield, California, were the beginning of modern "National event" drag racing. Don Garlits arrived from Florida for the March Meet and the sport ...

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Roth takes first PMRA win

Words by Bruce Mehlenbacher

Photos by Brad Turk

After one of the closest drag races in PMRA history, Jeff Roth of Baden, Ontario, defeated Bruce Boland of Hamilton, Ontario, in the final round to win his first PMRA Pro Modified event on Sept. 6.

The race was round five in the 2009 PMRA season, the Fourth Annual Thunder by the Beach PMRA Challenge at the Grand Bend Motorplex in Grand Bend, Ontario.

"This has been a long time coming," said the happy driver of the Roth Racing 1941 Willys. And I couldn't have done it without my crew. This has been a great day."

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Roth ran a 6.208-second, 226.30-mph final to just keep in front of a hard-charging Boland, who recorded a 6.212-second, 228.19-mph lap. Boland, the reigning PMRA champion and winner of the previous three events, wobbled in his lane a bit, and got it back together, but Roth was working hard to keep the Alan Johnson-powered, Atchison-prepped Willys maxed out down the track.



Jack Grainy



Eric Latino

Roth qualified number two for the event with a 6.264-second, 231.83-mph pass. In the first round, Roth did some admirable driving taking out number three qualifier Jack Grainy of North Tonawanda, New York, in the semi and eliminating Eric Latino of Scarborough, Ontario in first-round action.



Mark Nielsen

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Dave Earhart

Boland qualified number four in the eight-car field for the fifth event in the 2009 PMRA tour. He eliminated Mark Nielsen of Brantford, Ontario in first-round action, and Dave Earhart of Strathroy, Ontario, in the semi-final. Nielsen, who made the field as an alternate, shook the tires hard in the first round, while Earhart red-lit.



Gary Mater's twin turbo.

Others qualifying for the elimination rounds were Sam Andreacchi of Toronto, Ontario, who returned to PMRA racing with his 1967 Chevy Nova, and Jason Kalso of Clarkston, Michigan, who qualified his Barracuda fifth but broke and could not make the eliminations, giving Gary Mater of Petrolia, Ontario a spot on the ladder as an alternate. Both Mater and Andreacchi were first-round victims.

Number one qualifier Gary Irving of Toronto posted a 6.054-second, 223.10-mph run, but the Al Hinds-owned Corvette broke in the process, and the team could not continue.

"We wrestled and fought a bit, but we found something to help us," Roth said after the race.

The car had lots of power. Thanks to all, the crew Dave, Larry, Marc, Ashley, Steve, and of course Jim and Kim, my Dad and Mom. And thanks also to NGK Spark Plugs and Oak Grove Cheese for their support, and to Lowdown Hot Rods."

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Boland leads the Championship Point Award Series standings with 1340, while Nielsen is next with 1236. With his victory, Roth moves into third with 1215 points, and Earhart is next with 1210 points. Kalso is fifth with 1203 points.

Next in the points race are Latino, Grainy, Joe Boniferro of Niagara Falls, Ontario, Ike Maier of Schomberg, Ontario, and Tim Martin of Barrie, Ontario.

In related racing at Grand Bend over the weekend, the Top Dragsters and Top Sportsman race cars were out in force for the Quick 32 Sportsman Series presented by NAPA Auto Parts.



And for the first time in 2009, a Top Sportsman car won all the marbles, as Dan Aitken Jr. (left) of Belle River, Ontario, defeated the Top Dragster of Mitch Elliott of Woodstock, Ontario, in the final.



Buddy Forrest



Jamie Bridge

The Top Dragster final was between Elliott and Buddy Forrest of Rochester, NY, and Elliott took the victory. Elliott ran a 7.610-second, 175.23-mph pass over Forrest's 7.174, 178.64.

In the semis, Elliott defeated Jamie Bridge of Napanee, Ont., and TJ Schippling of Shakespeare, Ont. Forrest eliminated Sam Christian of Kenmore, NY, Brock Barth of Pinckney, Mich., and Tony Positano of Toronto.

The Top Sportsman final was between the Mustang of Aitken and Doug Cadman of Courtland, Ont., with his 1955 Thunderbird,

with Aitken getting the victory. Aitken, who qualified number nine in the 16-car field, bested alternate Gerry Hishon of Sebringville, Ont., Paul Martin of Breslau, Ontario and top qualifier Scott Wildgust of Wartburg, Ont. Cadman ran a single in the semi when Kevin Wicke of Stratford, Ont., could not compete, and beat Jeff Gable of Stratford, Ont., in the earlier round.

Bridge now has the Quick 32 Sportsman Series Championship Point Award Series lead with 783. Next is Darrin Grubb of Pine River, Ontario, with 762, and Elliott is third with 757 points. Fourth is Wicke with 756, and fifth is Michael Kalin of Youngstown, New York with 748 points. **DRO**

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Racing at Ford Expo 2009

Words by Jason Reiss

Photos courtesy NMRA

Every year over Labor Day weekend, the NMRA heads to storied National Trail Raceway in Hebron, Ohio, for their Ford Expo. A race weekend filled with everything from '56 Thunderbirds to 2009 Cobra Jets is a great weekend to witness, and this one was no exception.



One of the larger stories of the weekend was the drastic change 2008 Pure Street Champion Brandon Alsept (shown) decided to make just before the race. Alsept won the championship in the class last season using one of Ford's Four-Valve

Modularpowerplants, massaged to Pure Street specifications, and started out this year with the same engine as last. But in the back of his mind, he had been considering a move to the Two-Valve Modular instead. While many of you reading this may think, "but four valves make for a better-breathing cylinder head, why would he want to give that up?" That's where Alsept's rigorous reading of the NMRA's rulebook came in handy.

When we talked to him, he explained, "I've been thinking about it for almost a year now, and since I'm not in any kind of points race right now, I figured I would get a head start on next year."

Curious about his motivation to take what seems (to the outside observer) like a step back, we asked what kind of advantage there could possibly be. His explanation was quite simple, as he told us, "It's attractive to me because of how the rulebook is written. Based on the weight the car has to carry according to the rulebook, I think I can be really competitive with it. Also, to hopefully avoid parts breakage – the Four-Valve is extremely complex, and we were turning 9000 rpm through the traps. The Four-Valve was a bear in this class. As far as cost, I think all the costs are fairly similar. I like being the person out there running the odd combination."

Alsept qualified second, and went on to win the race against the Four-Valve-powered 'Farmer' Steve Gifford for his first victory of this season.

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With his third win in as many races, Michigan's Dan Miller (shown) is making a statement in the Turbonetics Pro Outlaw 10.5 class that headlines the NMRA's stable of classes. Miller took the car to Keith Engling's Skinny Kid Race Cars in his home state over the offseason with the express intention of being able to make the car lighter and thus more able to move ballast around to help tame his tricky combination.

Miller bucks the current trend in the Pro Outlaw ranks of having a big-block, twin-turbo-powered hotrod, as his combination is just a single 106mm turbocharger atop a 400-cubic inch small-block. He is also one of just two competitors trying to make the manual transmission work in the class – made even more difficult due to the complexities of getting the turbocharger to make boost properly with the stick-shift transmission. With the turbocharger needing a load to help it spool properly, Miller uses the trick of dumping more fuel into the engine when the car is on the two-step, as this makes the turbo think there's more load than there really is, helping limit spool-up time and making the car easier to drive.

Miller and 2008 Champion Conrad Scarry battled for the top qualifying spot, with Miller coming out on top by .006 – a 6.801 to Scarry's 6.807. Scarry and Miller eliminated the competition to meet up in a fitting final round between the top two qualifiers. When the tree dropped, Miller was out first with a stout .017 reaction time, and it was all over except the shouting – Miller pulled a 6.72 at over 215 mph out of his pocket and showed it to Scarry, solidifying his points lead heading into the season's final race in Bowling Green, Kentucky, on the first weekend of October.



Another racer that's been making some noise this season

is DiabloSport EFI Renegade racer Larry Hourcle (shown). The Renegade class is not for the faint-of-heart, as these are cars using the upper echelon of 'street-style' centrifugal superchargers and nitrous oxide systems. The supercharged cars typically see inlet temperatures in the 300+ degree range, which makes tuning skill and driver smarts a hot commodity.

Hourcle's hot rod is motivated by an Ed Thomas Racing Engines 310-inch small-block Ford, boosted with a Vortech YSi supercharger, and won the EFI Renegade class for the first time

Sept. 6 in Columbus. What makes Hourcle's achievement even more impressive is the fact that he won the race not on slicks, but a set of Hoosier Drag Radials. Nearly everyone else in the class is using a 28x10.5 slick of one brand or another, but Hourcle runs a local series where the 275 radial is the spec tire, so he continues that trend when racing in the NMRA.

He qualified third in the class with an 8.58, then turned around on Sunday to be consistent and fast. Both traits win races, and this time around it was Hourcle's turn. He ran an 8.58, 8.57, 8.61, and 8.64 through the course of eliminations, defeating number one qualifier Alton Clements in the final round. **DRO**

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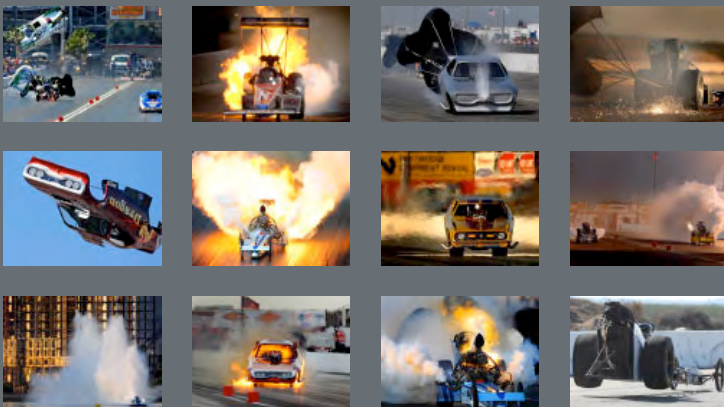
Mark J. Rebilas is a professional sports photographer based in Phoenix, AZ. Mark is the son of motorsports photographer Gil Rebilas, who first put a Nikon FM2 camera in his hands at the age of 10.

Since then it has been a wild ride including an enlistment as a US Navy photographer. While in the Navy Mark was stationed in San Diego, Seattle, and Baltimore. Mark led a team of 22 photographers as an editor/photographer on an aircraft carrier through a wartime deployment in 2004. After being honorably discharged in 2006 he moved back to his hometown in Arizona to begin a new career as a freelance sports photographer.

Mark is a regular contributor to ESPN the Magazine and US Presswire and his images regularly appear in Sports Illustrated, ESPN the Magazine, USA Today, the Los Angeles Times and many others.

To keep track of Mark's life on the road as a freelance photographer visit markjrebilas.com/blog

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Tranny Tech

by Mike Stewart

I have a '33 Willys coupe, 350 Chevy, turbo 400, 4.88 gears, and ladder bars. The engine has a Comp Cams 292h magnum with hydraulic lifters. The tranny has a reverse manual valve body.

What stall rpm would you recommend for this car as it is also street driven?

Jack Harris
West Virginia

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Jack,

On a street application, we just don't want the converter too loose because of the heat it makes. So we need something to just get the engine up where it starts to make good torque. If it was a race-only application, we could run a much looser converter. On this car setup, possibly a 3,000-3,500 stall converter would be the best choice.

Thanks, Mike

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ASK THE EXPERTS

TECH Q&A

Check Out That Chassis

By Scott Weny of S&W Racecars

Q What would be the result of going to a longer torque arm on a '95 Camaro/Firebird? I am considering changing over to your setup but want to make sure I am helping the car and not hurting it. I currently run a torque arm that is shorter than yours by about a foot with the plate that bolts up in the driveshaft tunnel. Even if you can't reply on drag racing online I would appreciate it if you could email me a reply as I want to switch over to save weight as yours are considerably lighter than my current setup but like I said I don't want to kill my 60 foot in the process. Car now runs high nines with a mid 1.30 60 foot and has a 409 ci in it if that helps, with an automatic.

Rob Petrie
Woodlawn IL

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Scott Weny
President, S & W Race Cars
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For more information about this module or any other FAST product, call them at 1-877-334-8355, or visit them online at www.fuelairspark.com.

RHS PRO ACTION SBC 23-DEGREE STYLE RAISED RUNNER CYLINDER HEADS

New cylinder head styles from RHS feature 220cc runner volumes and are available in either "as cast" or P-Port configurations. Finding a top performing cylinder head and still staying within the rules of class competition may be one of the biggest challenges engine builders face today. The RHS® Pro Action Small Block Chevrolet 23-Degree Style Raised Runner Cylinder Heads incorporating the "as cast" 220cc runner volume were originally designed for circle track competition, but these are also the "winning ticket" for Nostalgia Drags Junior Class B Fuel competition. The RHS Pro Action SBC 23-Degree Style Raised Runner Heads are cast iron heads that have been angle milled from the factory to 21-degrees, which significantly improves the performance potential of the head. This cost saving modification is acceptable by most race sanctioning bodies and allows a two-degree plus or minus valve angle change from the stock Small Block Chevy placement. In addition, these heads are available in P-Port versions, which feature added material in all the critical areas so that customers can port the heads to meet their specific requirements. The RHS Pro Action 23-Degree Style Raised Runner Heads are available in three configurations, including the standard "as cast" version with 220cc intake runner port volumes, raised runner P-Ports with seats and guide holes machined and raised runner P-Ports without machined seats or guide holes.



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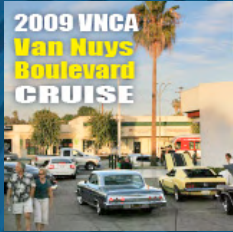
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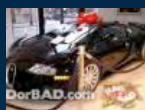
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THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN DRAG RACING

JUST WONDERING: When did a blues festival become more important than the Nationals?

Ron Ogilvie
Las Vegas, Nevada

Burk answers: After attending every U.S. Nationals since 1976, about two years ago I realized that there were other things going on over the Labor Day weekend. This year, my 84-year-old mother spent a few days in the hospital and got out the Sunday before the Nationals. I thought it best to stay closer to home than six hours away in Indianapolis. As it turned out, I didn't make it to the blues festival either. Sometimes family is more important.

A COUPLE OF IDEAS

A Just Wondering... What NHRA would be like with Bruton Smith as the promoter? Qualifying that actually means something. Eliminations Saturday and then again Sunday. Daily winner gets a crown and best points total wins the weekend. Imagine going to the track Saturday and the fifteen cars racing, not just test and tune because there are only 15 cars.

Just wondering... How to slow down the cars. Wasn't there a time when Nitro cars would run the whole weekend with the same pistons? If you win but break the motor you're out, and best losing time gets reinstated.

Roger Niemczyk
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

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SOMETIMES LOGIC SEEMS TO TAKE A BACKSEAT

Jeff, I think you should continue to be the "voice in the wilderness." These sociopaths that run Top Fuel and Funny Cars will run nuclear reactors if we let them. They are so totally absorbed that they have cornered the market on drag racing.

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Butch Nassau
Houston, Texas

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BUT SERIOUSLY, DUDE

JB, when I was a kid I was taught this.

When you have critics, that means you are to be taken seriously. When people all agree with you, is when you are not taken seriously.

Guess what pal, you're to be taken seriously. Keep voicing and writing. You're closer than you think, 'cause the critics are raising a stink.

Will Heritage
Minnetonka, Minnesota

WEEPING FOR THE LOST 320 FEET

Well Burk, you finally got your precious 1000' records. It's a sad day in the history of our sport. When is everyone going to wake up and realize that this so-called "1000' era" is going to be an abysmal stain on the history of our sport? It's a disgrace.

Mike Parsons
Orange County, California

HOW TO ATTRACT DIVISIONAL FANS?

I race in NHRA division 5 and I can't help but notice the large disparity in the number of spectators that attend the division races. Some races don't even have bleachers to accommodate more than 1000 people, and then you attend the division race at Denver and Bruce Kamada can get 15,000 fans to Bandimere. I assume that the other divisions have the same situation happening.

Is there any way to teach these other tracks what they have to do to put people in the seats, make more money for themselves and reduce some of the financial burden on the racers? Obviously it can be done. Bruce can do it and the ADRL seems to be working. It is mind boggling that there are 20,000 people that attend Heartland Park Topeka for the NHRA national and the ADRL race, but only 1000 people in the seats for a division race. Am I crazy?

Scott Cowles
Fremont, Nebraska

TRACK DESIGN BASICS

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B. Sanders
Kansas City, Missouri

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Five-second 250mph nitro-burning AA/FC's battle it out for the Series Championship. Some of the racers who have committed to this race include Series points leader Paul Romine's Man O War '79 Mustang, Doc Halladay's '77 Plymouth Arrow, and possibly from the West Coast Gary Tuner's Pedaler. Cars will Qualify on Friday and Saturday Eliminations on Sunday.

Midwest Nostalgia Super Stock Championships.

The final race of the season for the Midwest Nostalgia Super Stock Series will be ran at KCIR during the Muscle Car Reunion. See the quickest and fastest period correct Nostalgia Super Stockers in the Midwest fight it out for the Championship and bragging rights. Ford, Chevy and Mopar are all represented at this classic race of classic Super Stockers!

MuscleCarReunion.com

RACE OF THE CLONES?

Regarding the proposed new nitro series, the first rule states "Identical roadster bodies & wing design."

Sounds like they're going to be belly button cars, which isn't such a great idea even with nitro. And if it isn't a big percentage, even worse (think SCS Nitro Coupes).

Couldn't you just get existing vintage looking AA/FAs like Rat Trap, Nanook, Winged Express, Pure Heaven, Pure Hell and build a few more like them to fill out the field? After all, you'd have some true heroes to tout.

If I wanted to watch cars that all looked the same I'd still be going to big show events. That said, I'll give it a shot.

Scott Frymoyer
Wyomissing, Pennsylvania

SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT COMING

I've always been a fan of Prudhomme and Bernstein. We'll miss them, but they did it to themselves. Both members of PRO and never said anything significant about skyrocketing costs. NHRA obviously has their head in the sand when it comes to running the cars, safety, generating sponsors for racers, etc.

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Boy, is Lee Beard going to be pissed when there's fourteen cars for sixteen spots and seven of the teams are wearing jeans and tee shirts to the starting line... just like the '60s again.

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Charlie Undershirts
Dallas, Texas

HEMI CHALLENGE IN PINK?

I am really wondering why the NHRA doesn't make a big deal out of the HEMI Challenge at the Nationals. They are scheduled to run with the normal sportsman elimination in Stock and Super Stock etc. Not to belittle the other stock classes but the Challenge and how well these guys run is worthy of some publicity. It would help not only the MOPAR HEMI racers, but hopefully the entire Sportsman class. Maybe NHRA needs to consult with Rich Christensen. I'm sure he'd have a plan since he relies on input from the racers on his staff and the fans and competitors as well.

Jerry Ferris
San Angelo, Texas

TAKE A HANDFUL OF SPINACH AND CALL US IN THE MORNING

That's all I can stand... 'cause I can't stand no more. How long does NHRA expect fans to watch this multirace team BS? This weekend's show wasn't the first or last time we will see strange events take place. As long as the teams are allowed multiple entries in the same class, the problems will continue. On the other hand, if they don't let these teams bring two, three, or four cars, we won't see full fields.

I saw some of the best racing this weekend at my local dragstrip (Brainerd Optimist Dragstrip, Chatt. Tn.). Racing at its best. I don't have to make a choice between the Sat. bracket and heads up racing or the politics of the big show. NHRA has made the choice simple. The local bracket and nostalgia races win by a mile.

I feel much better now, thanks.

Doug Thompson
Murphy, North Carolina

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TRY SOMETHING NEW

NHRA's play-off system sucks. After watching the dog and pony show at the US Nationals it's clear some modifications need to be done! How 'bout a countdown to fifteen, with the bottom five being sliced away if they don't score a certain amount of points at each event if they don't perform?

Rick Johnson
California

BLACK EYE FOR FORCE

I am outraged at the latest John Force outburst and actions at the US Nationals. What a disgrace! He has destroyed the sanctity and integrity of our sport with his blatant throwing of a round, and his attempted assault on Tony Pedregon. What is worse is he then tried to play the BS card that the whole racing world is against him, and woe is me bullcrap. What a joke!

We, the fans, are not going to tolerate this kind of behavior and are not fooled one bit by it. You, John Force, are an absolute disgrace to the sport and do not deserve the Wallys and Championships that you have won... now we know how you did it! I expect the NHRA to take immediate action against John and suspend him from competition for a period of one year. Maybe then we can finally get some decent coverage on ESPN2. John Force, you are a DISGRACE!

Mike Parsons
Orange County, California

HAS SEEN IT BEFORE

I wonder how many times Tony P. was on the right side of the Force camp taking a dive for him when he won the title while driving for Force?

This has been going on for a long time in Pro Stock like in Jim Yates and WJ and Kurt so it's not a new thing.

Ed O'Brien
Stillwater, Oklahoma

FORCE LOST A FAN

I will never root for a Force car/driver again. Half the field after first round and still team orders, what a bunch of shit. John and all of his teams should hide their heads in shame, apparently John is helping NHRA run this into the ground, (probably so he can buy it and then none of his cars will ever lose). I know this started way back with Tony, but when you have half the field?

John, you worked very hard to get where you are, why are you so bent on ruining your reputation? (What's left of it anyway.)

Keith Sears
Kalamazoo, Michigan

NO WHINING!

US Nationals altercation between Tony P and John Force. Oh my God! Cruz and Tony Pedregon are the biggest whining babies in the history of drag racing. If you don't win the race to put yourself in a position for the Playoffs (Paul Page's word not mine), then shut up. Tony is an ungrateful piece of @\$\$. I'm not even a huge John Force fan. If Tony knows the operation at the Force camp and probably got his Championship this way, maybe NHRA should take it away and give it to the person who came in second that year....

It was probably Force.

Scott Smith
Tustin, California

THERE ARE ALTERNATIVES TO NHRA DRAG RACING

Wow! After watching the smack down in the shutdown at Indy, just goes to show ya what a joke NHRA is, a .209 reaction time for Force then he turns it towards the wall so he can smoke the tires, Stevie Wonder can see this was a setup!!! But the gutless puke Graham Light says no problem! I'm so glad I didn't give NHRA one dime this year!

I want to thank Jeff Burk for puttin' on a great AA/FC challenge this year, simply awesome!

Jim Kiraly
Cedar Lake, Indiana

LIVING IN GLASS HOUSES?

Boy the pot was mighty busy calling the kettle black this past Monday.

I guess Don Schumacher has forgotten all about his beloved firstborn disregarding the starter's direction to shut off a few years ago. The result of that action was a new national record and ultimately a world championship. Of course, "That's different."

And as for Tony Pedregon, I hope the taste of the hand that not only fed him but brought him to championship status tastes as good as he thought it would.

I worked the Safety Safari for almost thirty years. I remember Buster Couch telling us the next time John Force stopped on the track, to put a firehose in the window because he'd better be on fire. Poor ol' John couldn't win a race or get any respect.

I don't care what happened Monday. I really don't. If either of the Pedregon brothers were anywhere near the racer/showman/leader John Force is, one of them wouldn't be on the outside boo-hooing, "I got cheated."

Ok, I'm done.

Fred Brown
Phenix City, Alabama

THE LAW OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Beware the law of unintended consequences: the dumbass NHRA Countdown begets cheating and rule bending to bring also-rans into the top ten picture in the battle of the underperformers with manipulation of the results.

A rule NHRA cannot possible enforce has only made Graham Light more of a John Force Racing tool driven by marketing.

The bigger story is a woman winning Nitro Funny Car at Indy and T-Shoe ties the longstanding Garlits record of U.S. Nationals wins.

NHRA marketing has totally raped and pillaged drag racing with non-drag racers running the show -- and somehow we expected a different outcome?

Sorry NHRA, I am done with your act. You should be all about the racing; stop tweaking the rules to get to marketing opportunities rather than making the racing better. With Cruz Pedregon being the reigning FC Champ the NHRA Marketing department couldn't capitalize with one Hispanic marketing partner?

Turn in your MBAs, Glendora boys; they aren't worth the paper they're written on.

Rudy King
Van Nuys, California

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IS THAT MURPHY'S LAW?

Re: Your questions at the end of your Analysis.

You said it yourself: "What the NHRA brass -- most of whom never have owned or raced a drag car -- did was try to legislate morality, and history had shown over and over that can't be done. Smarter people than the suits at NHRA have tried and failed to do that.

"NHRA drag racing is a corporation dedicated to making money and keeping their major sponsors happy. The same could be said of the premier racers who compete in that series. They are for the most part corporately funded and their survival as professional racers depends on them getting and retaining those sponsors."

It's all about the Benjamins... and, why would anyone want to think about anything other than how it will affect their own bottom line?

Remember Murphy? Wasn't he an optimist?

Dale Tuley
Hartford City, Indiana

THERE'S NO CRYING IN DRAG RACING

Let the Pedregons cry. Shame on Cruz after he won the championship at the finals, first thing out of his mouth with ESPN he was already bad mouthing Force about stealing everyone's sponsors. Talk about enjoying the moment, he could not. In the end never relishing his accomplishment, just bad mouth Force. Cry on boys.

James Ammos
Burlingham, New York

NEED A BETTER ACTING JOB

John, John. If you're gonna throw a race, do it like you did when you let Ashley win. That was simply "predictable." However, this latest with Hight was just plain obvious. I don't agree with team orders. The fans and Cruz Pedregon deserve better. I've lost all respect for you, John.

Steve Graham
Raleigh, North Carolina

MONEY IS THE ROOT OF ALL EVIL

Burkster, I agree with your assessment of the John Force dive at the Nats. Racers must understand that the corporate world doesn't get hung up on right and wrong. They worry about what will make them the largest profits. When a racer accepts big money from a corporation, he must realize they now own him. If he wants to continue to receive the big money, he has to do things to promote their brand at any cost. Perhaps Tony doesn't yet understand this.

It's a sad statement on what once was the world's greatest grassroots racing activity, but the NHRA and the racers have always courted the big bucks at the expense of the sport. All of the great innovators have now been replaced by the great politicians.

I saw the handwriting on the wall when McEwen and Prudhomme got the Mattel deal in 1970. The sport I knew was over at that point. Let's hope that we can keep the big money out of the only pure form of drag racing left today - nostalgia racing.

John Martin
Nixa, Missouri

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THE SOAP OPERA THAT WAS INDY

This whole Indy Thing has got me fired up.

People need to stop pissing, moaning and whining about the so-called dive Force took. We see it happen in nearly every sporting event but because it happens at Indy people are in an uproar. Please!!! Save the so-called drama for the soap operas. No one knows just what went down except Force and Hight, so leave it at that. Force is right: they are his teams and he will do what he wants. His sponsors pay the bills to see his teams fight for a championship so Force got them all in the stupid Chase.

If people want to be pissed, then be pissed at the idiots in the suits who stole this whole countdown bullshit from NASCAR. Let them race the old way for the entire year at a quarter mile, not this 1000-foot crap we are being served. I'm sure Ron Capps and Tim Wilkerson wouldn't argue with that because they would have been champions the old way.

As far as I'm concerned Tony, when you have fourteen championships you can spout off about what you think you know is going on, but until then shut the **** up and race. That you want to be angry about the politics of drag racing and a multi-car team, so be it. If Cruz had beat Force this wouldn't even be happening.

I really think the stress of being an owner is taking its toll on Mr. Pedregon. Venables bailed after some of his questionable decisions and now it seems Quaker State may be gone too. Geez, Tony, things must have been an awful lot easier being just a driver over at Force's Team.

NHRA could not ask for a better storyline in the Countdown. A real David VS Goliath: Tony takes on the world and all of John Force Racing. Bring it T Ped, you're going to need it!

Brad Turk

A LIGHTNING BOLT

Jeff, I'm quite frankly shocked. You don't CARE if JF took a dive? Team orders are just a part of all forms of motorsports? What about integrity? Honesty? Giving the fans an honest return for their dollars? Sheesh.

Is drag racing about to become like pro wrestling? Just because team orders exist elsewhere doesn't make it right. John Force was just plain WRONG to take a dive. That's not what the fans or his sponsors pay for. You SHOULD care if John took a dive.

Steve Graham
Raleigh, North Carolina area

FORCE IS STAYING IN CHARACTER

Why is everyone in an uproar? Force has been doing things like he did in Indy for years. From Tony finishing second to John in the points and finally going on to win the championship, then there was Gary D. getting help from his teammates to finish in the top five and finally Ashley's first win. John's fingers have been all over the history books... oh, I forgot Gary D. showing up on the tour the last couple of weeks, rolling over for Team Force cars, and taking up a qualifying spot. John has turned into a very smart drag race business guy and made the rules and his popularity work for him. Sorry Tony, fight hard and kick their butts.

Kirk Peters
SoCal

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REFLECTIONS ON THE SPORT

Dear Jeff, I really enjoy reading your articles. I have been around Drag Racing nearly all my life, having gone to a race my first time at Atco Dragway in New Jersey in 1961. But yesterday was the straw that broke the camel's back for me. John Force's poor excuse for behavior and the outright insulting demeanor that he displayed to not only Tony and Cruz Pedregon, but to the TV audience and to everyone that loves and enjoys this sport.

NHRA and its special treatment of John Force is inexcusable and another insult to drag racers all over the world. I know John Force worked hard all his life to get where he is today and I respect that, but he isn't all of drag racing, he is merely part of it. There are the great ones like Garlits, "The Snake," there's so many more GREAT RACERS, the list far too long to list that have graced tracks all over the country, least John Force remember that "Flamin' Frank Pedregon" not only was a pioneer in Fuel Racing but also more than likely the first Mexican-American fuel racer period! I have met and talked to Tony and Cruz and they represent the sport to a standard that others need to look at; they are honest, truthful and gentlemen to a fault.

What John Force has done is to insult the integrity of the sport because of the almighty buck and the integrity of the fans who pay to see him and his teams. As my wife and myself watched the coverage of the U.S. Nationals on ESPN, I stopped and told her that Robert Hight may as well have had a single because as Mike Dunn said the fix is in. What a poor excuse that was. John likes movies so much, even he couldn't put a star on that act.

This sport has played a major role in my life from busting my butt to build a Super Stocker to being fortunate to spend a lot of time (between tours in Vietnam) in Southern California at OCIR, Lions, Irwindale, Carlsbad, you name it I went there, it was and is my life. Drag racing has always and my wife would tell you of my passion for drag racing and what it has meant and still means to me.

We go to the Winternationals every year (It's our vacation from the cold of New Jersey), but Jeff in all truth drag racing has become BORING and ROUTINE. Why? Because what the present day NHRA has done is taken the heart and fun and torn it right out of the average fan's wallet and heart.

I've been to the U.S Nationals maybe five or six times and when I walked into the place it was like walking onto hallowed ground, but if what they called a crowd on Monday is any indication of what the U.S. Nationals has become from what it once was then it's a sad day for drag racing indeed. We haven't attended a big show at all this year and we can afford to go unlike a lot of fans that are not as fortunate as us, and as sad as it may be, I have no intention of going.

I'm thankful that the Heritage Series is around, although a lot is out West it still gives me hope that some day the people that run NHRA will wake up and realize that drag racing is a grassroots sport and is powered by PEOPLE, not by the almighty dollar.

I'm a purist, and, I guess, old school. I want to see 1/4 mile racing again; that's drag racing, but I believe in safety and the loss of one driver is one loss too many. NHRA should have addressed this speed thing a long time ago but made the choice to sell out instead.

I would dare anyone to tell or show me the difference in a 295 MPH run and a 330 MPH run with their eye. It's merely a number on a scoreboard. Isn't it about the sound, smoke and the thrill of the race? Tony Pedregon along with a lot of other drivers some time ago stated, "We need to slow these cars down." 1000 ft racing is alright for safety, but if you watched Pro Stock on Monday you'll have seen several races pulled out in the last 320 ft and it was the only exciting Pro Eliminator that was run at the U.S. Nationals.

Isn't it time to get the money hungry ass kissers at NHRA (and I'm a member) that supposedly run this show and get back to the real issues, and that's to stop the demise of the sport and save what so many have pursued and dedicated their lives to build and cherish? Isn't that the real issue? And give the sportsman racers at least a fair shake. Warren Johnson was right about the majority and the minority.

I have arrived at the end of my soap box rant and I appreciate the chance to speak my piece but John Force, grow up. The Pedregons and the Schumachers aren't your enemy, but someone that you need! Without them you'd be racing yourself, or not racing at all and you'd be back driving a truck. Remember that you're NOT drag racing, you're just part of it.

I will close with this note to all the drag racing fans: take the time to attend a Heritage Series race or any nostalgia race. I promise you that you will NOT be disappointed, it's, and you'll excuse the phrase, A TOTAL BLAST. The funny cars are great, the Top Fuel cars are great, and the Sportsman cars are so much fun. The header flames go just as high and they may not go in the 4s and 3s but, guess what, you'll know what kind of car that funny car is!

And if you ever have the chance go to a Cacklefest, GO!!! Because these are the guys and gals that made all this happen. It's fun and these guys and gals do this for FUN, not for the money, believe me! If you like NOISE you'll like it there because after the cars shut down you're welcomed onto the track to mix with all these great people. And most of all these are great people and they appreciate you the fans and it's reasonable to say the least.

Thank you.

Howard & Linda Lloyd
Sewell, New Jersey

A LITTLE HISTORY PERHAPS? OR SOMETHING ENTERTAINING

I thought the TV coverage of the US Nationals stunk! During the rain delay, why couldn't they show some of the Pro Mod qualifying or eliminations? No, they filled the air with stupid panels talking about things like what you would see on TMZ.

I would have like to see some of the shots of the 1960s US Nationals and interview some of the stars of the past. In general, there was a lot of one car racing down the track instead of two cars. NHRA has to do something about the number of cars the owner can run in one class. Tony Pedregon noted that Force controls 25% of the class. I know it's a business, but this will drive smaller teams out of the sport. They should limit teams to no more than two cars allowed in a pro class. This might allow smaller teams to compete, and get funding.

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Keith Schultz
Apache Junction, Arizona

ISN'T HIGHT EMBARRASSED? AND OTHER POINTS

Hey Burkster, I'm with you. Run the three index classes four lanes wide. Better yet, take their boxes and throttle stops away, no electronics. That box crap ain't racin'. Bring on the nitro bikes as well, they rock.

Indy was great in some areas and a total immoral debacle in funny car. Graham Light does not have the moral fortitude to rule against Farce (sic). John left late on purpose and then drove it out of the groove on purpose, just like Mike Dunn said. When I was winning many track and series championships, I gave no quarter and I accepted no quarter. I hope Robert Hight feels real good about himself after NHRA gave him and his team an edge and then after Farce gave him the win. Personally, I would be ashamed. I used to think Robert was a good guy but no longer. For him to accept the tenth slot is disgraceful to drag racing.

Hey Burk, good to point out the Brogdon and Coughlin show. Maybe that is why Connolly is not there anymore, hmmm, I still think he was sacrificed for Jeg's sake that last year he drove. I don't think he wanted to play that game

and he should not have had to.

Now I wanna take this even deeper. Second round of Funny Car. Tasca vs Hight. Did I miss something? Tasca 4.21 at 277, chutes out before the finish line, there was a close up of it. I didn't see no fire, no tire smoke, I was screaming to the wife that Tasca just shut it off early. Team Tasca wants six Fowds (sic) in the countdown. A competitive driver always runs it to the finish, but the chutes were out early and I did not see any evidence of damage, only the telltale white smoke that is customary when shutting it off. I won't be buyin' a Fowd anytime soon and I sure as hell won't be buying it in New Yowk.

And another opinion, NO funny car team, regardless of name, should be allowed to own 25% of the qualified field. THREE CAR MAX per team.

Spencer Massey agrees with me, Don 'Snake' Prudhomme is the coolest person in drag racing. Spencer and the crew need to focus on the championship and let Snake focus on sponsorship. Win that championship for the Snake.

Am I the only one that noticed that after the NHRA let team Farce do all that extra testing that team Schumacher's flopper teams received only one interview, Capps at Indy, and ESPN was careful not to bring it up either? Another disgraceful debacle.

One thing I noticed about Mike Dunn's top five Indy moments was they made reference to Don Prudhomme's 5.63, they even showed the right car, the white and yellow Pontiac Firebird Pepsi Challenger, then they said 1981, BZZZZZZZZZZT, wrong, it was 1982. In '81 Snake was driving an all yellow Omni/Horizon.

Mark Elms
Everton, Missouri

TESTING, 1, 2, 3...

Hmmm, do you think the four wide runs at zMAX will count as a testing run?

K. Rubel Jr.
Iowa

WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

How 'bout Bruton Smith running 4-wide at Vegas with parimutual betting? AHRA's Jim Tice Sr. shared that idea with me and others, I'm sure, almost forty years ago.

Gordon Garritty
White Rock, British Columbia, Canada

HAS THE INSURANCE COMPANY SIGNED OFF ON THIS?

I feel that four abreast drag racing will bring the sport to the same circus level as monster trucks.

Has the safety aspect been fully evaluated?

Malcolm Dyer
Barcelona, Spain

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MEMORIES BUT NO PHOTOS

I read the comments of Dale Tuley about Rockford Dragway having run races with four fuelers side by side. I am lucky enough to have raced there in '65 and '66 before going to work for Uncle Sam.

I can remember the good old days when drag racing was really fun to be around as a racer or spectator. One of my fondest memories is seeing the folks at Rockford Dragway stage two local racers, the Smith brothers, who raced two identical black '64 Hemi Dodges, one a four speed, and the other an automatic, in the staging lanes directly behind the starting line and two AA fuel dragsters at the starting line. The Smith brothers were launched first and when they reached the dragsters at the starting line then the dragsters were launched.

My one regret is I lost the few pictures I ever took, but in my muddled old mind it doesn't seem that long ago!

Thanks for the great website!

Jerry Maitland
Benton, Arkansas



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Hey man! That's what drag racing is all about, has always been what it's all about. 660 feet, 1000 feet, 1,320 feet, don't matter to me as long as the tune up is right on the edge.

Keep on trucking, Burk.

Bry Schmidt
Fresno, California

HERE'S ANOTHER ANSWER TO THE FIRST LETTER

The NHRA has finally screwed the pooch. Just attended my last US Nationals event. Friday evening/night was a joke. Besides the expense to get in, paid for parking (again \$5.00 is just too darn much). The qualifying was boring, too many oil downs, too many aborted runs, too many single passes. Qualifying for TAD and TAFC was cancelled. I paid to see the scheduled qualifying.

With the current economic climate NHRA needs to reevaluate how they run their program. My business is slow so I have to cut back and guess what? NHRA events are now OUT. Just my \$.02

Steve Carter
Memphis, Indiana

A WHOLE BUNCH OF GOODGUYS

Sure appreciate the coverage of the Goodguys in Norwalk. Instead of noting the smaller funny car field and a truncated swath of geezer gassers in attendance, I'd like to point out (and I wish photographically) a few cars new to the Blue Suede Cruise and nostalgia drags. Happily, DRO captured the wheelstanding '56 "Haulin' Ass" Chevy. It had company with outstanding wheelies by David Opie's "Opie Gone Bad" Ford Econovan (?), the FOMOCO version of the hybrid van/pick up Dodge campaigned by Bill "Maverick" Golden's "Little Red Wagon", seasoned drag enthusiasts remember. A "rat racer", a '40, maybe '41 Willys coupe called "Rebel Reaper" that the driver set back on the bumper bar every launch. Good lord, you could count the bolts on the oil pan.... Very nice.

Some guys from Cleveland turned me on to a new tequila chaser; a slice of orange with cinnamon sprinkled on, and it wasn't like the tequila was bad anyhow, but, I've got to say this new finish was perfectly dangerous. So, I couldn't remember the name of the guy that had the inline six 300 CI Ford engine dragster that had 60% in the tank, but it was a first for me. I had never seen a six cylinder on nitro until this event and this guy. Yessir....

Vic Raupe's Lindamood "Color Me Gone" '64 Dodge Super Stock repro (I think it was a repro) of the car Lindamood won the U.S. Nationals with, was stunning. And quick. Great addition to the underplayed and under-appreciated Nostalgia Super Stock contingent.

Peter Gallen and the Poverty Stricken Vega crew were remarkable the entire weekend, but no matter what they did, how about those Mill Road Boys and Steve Nichols? Anytime you mark uncharted water (asphalt) you deserve big props.

Lastly, the fuel altered folks are just way too underplayed. Rich Guasco and the "Pure Hell" gang are one aspect of this living drag racing legacy, but I've got to say something for the Hough family. Dave Hough and the Nanook racing bunch are, in my opinion, living drag racing treasures. To see them operate amid personal setback and difficulties over the years and carry the torch for fuel altered racing is inspiring. Long live Nanook and Pure Hell Racing.

Thanks for what you gave us at Norwalk.

Richard Gebhart
Marine City, Michigan

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"Little did the Roadrunner know that the Coyote took delivery of his front engine dragster from ACME a day early..."

GETTING HONORABLE MENTIONS ARE:

"Please, no why did the road runner cross the track jokes!!"-- Paul Songas, Stacy, MN

"Oh man, if Wile E Coyote gets one of those, I'm screwed!" -- Mark Possinger, Little Rock, AR

"If I run across the track now, I could become "shreaded tweet!" -- Richard Burbick, Sebring, FL

"The sad road-runner, its life over prepares to commit the time honored tradition of death by Hoosier..."-- George S., Lakeland, FL

"When I went through the lights, I flipped the bird! Really, I flipped the little bird right on his ass!" -- Cody, Lakeside, CA 



Got a good photo for the Back Door?

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