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Courtesy of Glenn Boylan, Drag Racing Review

Sonoma Sportsman Pit Notes

SONOMA, Calif. -- Lane Choice? Who cares! In the 163 sportsman races I reviewed, from FMD to Stock, 82 winners were in the left lane, and 81 were in the right lane. Can't get much closer than that.

Federal-Mogul Dragster

The alcohol versus nitro count was just about equal for the 16 qualified. FMD winner Steve Faria was driving an AFD, and pretty much dispelled the "nitro cars are inconsistent" idea with runs of 5.57, 5.57, 5.56, and 5.57 in eliminations. He could have won Super Pro with runs like that.

Federal-Mogul Funny Car

Larry Miner used some consistency of his own, and some great driving, to take the win in FMFC. In four rounds of racing, Miner went 5.91, 5.83, 5.97, and 5.84. Despite the good performance from his Avenger, he still needed holeshots to win two rounds on Sunday. In Round 2, Larry's .484 light and 5.83 defeated Russ Parker's 5.81. Then in the final, Miner took a .491 to .550 advantage off the line to best Jimmy Bartoli with a 5.84 to Bartoli's quicker, but later, 5.81.

The Austins did not have a great weekend at Sonoma, as gazillion time champion Pat and recent Division 6 FMDRS winner Bucky both lost in Round 1.

Competition Eliminator

Craig Schuck came out of the #10 qualifying spot in Comp to take the win. Craig had an interesting day on Sunday, with a bye in the first round, a holeshot win in Round 2 with a great .514 light, and an unreal .505 light in the semis to win a great race over Jeff Lion, taking the win by 16 thousandths. In the final, Schuck drove his C/ED to over #13 qualifier Jeff Lane and his B/SR.

As interesting as Schuck's day was, Larry Hedlund wins the award for craziest run through eliminations. Hedlund broke in Round 1, but still advanced since Ed Urcis was a no show for the race. In Round 2, Harold Hoffman posted a 1.003 second reaction time against Hedlund, helping Hedlund advance to face #1 qualifier Scott Benham in Round 3. Benham didn't do much better than Hoffman, posting a not-much-better .607 light and running .627 under the D/A index in a losing effort (ouch). Larry's day ended in the semi's however, as he lost to Lane's great .502 light. You know what they say: He who lives by the holeshot, dies by the holeshot.

Super Stock

Dan Fletcher survived several close races to take the Super Stock title. In Round 2, Fletcher needed every bit of a .518 to .558 starting line advantage to advance past Gary Williams, as Williams ran much closer to his dial-in, but Fletcher took the win by 3 thousandths. In Round 4, Fletcher took out Joe LoCicero by 16 thousandths, and in the final he defeated Terry Sherrill by a "comfortable" 23 thousandths. *whew*

Something weird must have been going on in Round 3 of Super Stock, as David Rumpy redlighted with a .160 reaction time and Dave Raybourn WON with a .176 reaction time. Fortunately for Raybourn, his .176 came after Wes King's .483 redlight.

Stock


Brothers Jody and Toby Lang met in the final of Stock, with Jody coming out on top. Jody's holeshot (.515 to .549) pushed Toby too far at the top end where he broke out. It's probably not the first time it has happened – the Pedregon, Emmons, and Richardsons come to mind as real possibilities – but it isn't real common.

Dan Fletcher made a real run at a double win, getting all the way to the semis (Round 5) where he lost to Jody in a double breakout race. Defending national champion Don Little lost in Round 2 to Don Durham via a .471 redlight.

Super Comp

As usual, it took outstanding driving and a little bit of luck to win Super Comp, and Sheldon Gecker's run to the top was no exception. He had a .409 light in Round 3, and ran an 8.903 in Round 4 to defeat Larry Scarth's 8.899. Gecker could relax in Round 5 when Rick Beckstrom broke, and he was probably a bit lucky in the semis. Paul Farrow strapped a .405 to .439 holeshot on Gecker, but couldn't run the number and Sheldon ran him down with a 8.911 to a losing 8.947. Gecker also overcame a 1 hundredths holeshot in the final where he defeated Mike Henderson by 1 thousandth, 8.94 to a losing 8.96.

Super Gas

Running quicker than the 9.90 index in Super Gas is usually a bad thing, but don't tell that to Kevin McClland. He brokeout in Rounds 3, 4, 5, and 6. McClland had a bye in Round 3 (when he ran 9.899), was at the good side of double breakout runs in rounds 4 and 5, and was the beneficiary of Gary Cooke's redlight in the semis. Kevin kept everything on the up and up in the finals, however, where his 10.05 was more than enough to handle John Peterson's 10.45. 

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Tue, 18 Jul 2000, 11:10 AM

By Glenn Boylan

**Familiar Faces Grace the Winner's Circle at
Quaker City Federal-Mogul**

SALEM, Ohio -- It's the middle of July, and NHRA's North Central Division has only completed two races in their Federal-Mogul Drag Racing Series. What they've not had in quantity, however, they've more than made up for in quality. At the Division's first race of the year in Indianapolis, the racers in Division 3 set a new record for the most number of cars ever entered in a FMDRS event with over 700 cars. The second event, held last weekend at Quaker City Raceway, in Salem, Ohio, featured 541 cars and some great side-by-side racing.

Jeff Wilson and Gary Ward were neck and neck all in weekend in Federal-Mogul Dragster. With 14 cars trying to qualify, Wilson took the #1 position with a 5.714, 248.66 mph run on Saturday. Ward was right behind in second at 5.755, 245.94 mph. Wilson set low ET of the meet in his first round victory over Don Fiorelli, a 5.688 seconds. But Ward wasn't far behind, using a 5.762 to trailer Dana Stripe. In the second round, Ward closed the gap even further, as his 5.738 win over Shawn Bowen was just 4 thousandths behind Wilson, who ran a 5.699 to knock off Marty Thacker.

Ward stepped it up even further in the final, running a 5.703 to Wilson's 5.709. It wasn't enough however, as Jeff put a .451 to .495 holeshot on Ward to take the win. Wilson added the Quaker City race to his two national event wins and his runner-up finish at Indy divisional.

Chuck Cheeseman likes Quaker City. He's won in Federal-Mogul Funny Car four times at the track, including last year's FMDRS event. As if he needed any more reasons to like racing here, his one and only qualifying pass of the weekend netted both ends of the track record with a 5.744, 251.54, and both his semifinal and final round opponents were no-shows due to breakage. What's not to like? FMFC was shaping up to be a rematch of the Indy race, where Marc White was the top qualifier, Cheeseman was second, and the two met in the finals with Cheeseman taking the win. At Quaker City, Cheeseman qualified #1 and White was right behind him in second with at 5.775, 248 mph. The two of them had almost a 2 tenths advantage over the rest of the field.

Unfortunately for White, Ryan Sheridan didn't go along with the plot line as he ended White's day in the first round. Bobby Martin then ended Sheridan's day in the semis, but it was a costly win and Martin was not able to fire up his Avenger for the final, giving Cheeseman his second division win to go along with his win last month at the Sears Craftsman Nationals.


Speaking of repeats, Brain Browell and Peter Biondo must have been reminiscing about their wins in Atlanta earlier this year at the Advance Auto Parts Southern Nationals. And they must have liked what they remembered, because they did it again at Quaker City. Browell qualified #1 in Comp with a 7.481 second blast out of his D/D. Browell earned his victory with a final round win over Pontiac Excitement Nationals winner Steve Ambrose, 7.702 to a losing 8.283 from Ambrose's I/A.

Biondo continued his strong season in Super Stock, adding the Quaker City race to his victories in Atlanta and at the Division 1 race at US 13 Dragway. In the final, Biondo drove his GT/GA Firebird to victory over Fred Bartoli's GT/DA Firebird. It was Bartoli's second runner-up finish this year in the Division. Joe Skinner lead Super Stock qualifying, taking his '96 GT/DA Beretta to a 9.760 second run (-1.190) to lead the 84 car field.

Micci Walter of Paris, Ohio won in Stock Eliminator. Walter's '67 G/SA Camaro ran 11.473, 112 to defeat Steve Klack's, O/SA Mustang. Dave Edwards was the number 1 qualifier in Stock, as his L/SA 1978 Firebird went 11.868 second (-1.312). All of the top 10 qualifiers in Stock were more than 1 second under their indexes, with 107 racers entered.

One hundred and eight racers lined up for Round 1 of Super Comp, and seven rounds later Dave Fields of Delaware, Ohio, emerged victorious over Ron Erks of Akron. Fields' better reaction time and an 8.987 held off Erks' 8.977.

Danny Edwards also used a holeshot in Super Gas to defeat Gatornationals champion Dan Northrop. Edwards drove his Dodge Daytona to a 10.046 in the final which was enough to defeat Northrop's 10.021. The two finalists waded through 118 Super Gas entries during eliminations.

It's a long tow from Massapequia, N.Y. to Salem, Ohio, but it was certainly worth it for Ray Balian. Balian drove his '66 Chevelle to a 10.984 win over Mark Lesser's Chevy S-10 for the Super Street title. 

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Mon, 26 Jun 2000, 05:44 PM

By Glenn Boylan, Drag Racing Review

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Carlson, Austin, Lane, Stewart, Cour, Giese, Cavar, and Williams Take Division 6 Wins at Mission Raceway Park

MISSION, B.C. -- Dale Carlson made it to the winner's circle for the first time this year and Pat Austin made it for the umpteenth time in his career at this weekend's NHRA Northwest Division race. Mission Raceway Park hosted the division's third -- and their second -- Federal-Mogul Drag Racing Series event of the 2000 season.

Carlson, from Olympia, Washington, must like Mission. He qualified #1 and was runner-up at the first race there earlier this year. While he only qualified fourth this weekend, he went all the way in eliminations. Carlson had a single in the final as Paul Jones could not fix a damaged engine in time. A total of 12 cars tried to qualify for the 8 car field, with Duane Shields leading the way with a 5.499, 256.04 mph pass. The win put Carlson in second place in the divisional points standings, his 192 points just trailing Mark Hentges' 220 points.

Eleven cars tried to qualify in Federal-Mogul Funny Car, and it should not be a surprise to anyone that Pat Austin was #1 with a 5.723 at 255 mph. Austin, who is getting national notoriety for his 71 national event wins, probably has about that many divisional wins. He added his second Division 6 win of 2000 by winning for the second time at MRP.

Austin had almost a tenth of a second advantage on the field in rounds 1 and 2, but John Hyland gave him all he could handle in the final. In a great race, Austin prevailed with a 5.787 to Hyland's losing 5.789. "I saw him all the way downtrack," said Austin. "At about half track I was wishing I could put my feet on the ground and pedal [the car], like Fred Flintstone, to get past him." Austin leads the divisional points race with 230 points over Hyland and Russ Parker who are tied for second with 150.

In Competition Eliminator, Jeff Lane came from the #3 qualifying position to become the third different winner in three Division 6 races. Lane's final round opponent, John Edwards, made it easy for him as his '96 Avenger C/EA left too soon giving the win to Lane's '34 Chevy B/SR. Brian Hyerstay's G/D took its usual #1 qualifying spot with a 9.295 (-0.755) run. The top 5 qualifiers were all 6 tenths or more under their indexes.


The number 3 and 5 qualifiers met in the Super Stock final, with #5 Bill Stewart taking the win over #3 Don Thomas, who broke out. Stewart's SS/KA '74 Barracuda ran a 10.806, 116.21 to take the win over Thomas' GT/DA '89 Camaro, which ran a too fast 9.946. Steve Wann blasted to the #1 qualifying position in his GT/TD '98 Dodge with a 10.654, 1.096 seconds under the index. The top ten qualifiers were all more than 7 tenths under.

Stock Eliminator went to Kevin Cour and his D/SA '67 Camaro. The Stock final was also decided by a breakout, with Cour's 11.038, 118.26 defeating Bill Bushmaker's too quick 12.010. Like Wann in Super Stock, Randy Hutchings put a Dodge truck in the #1 qualifying spot as his ET/SA '81 Dodge, went 12.124 (-1.426).

Terry Giese and Mike Ferderer had a great Super Comp final, with Giese taking the win on the starting line. In the final, Giese ran a 8.910, 161, to Ferderer's identical 8.910 at 163.

The Super Gas final was a double breakout affair, with Mark Cavar taking the win by 2 thousandths. Cavar's '85 Oldsmobile went 9.875 at 152 to get the win light over Dan Earp and his '27-T who was justthatmuchtooquick with a 9.873.

Tom Williams showed how it's done in Super Street, driving his Nova to an almost perfect 10.902 at 125 mph. Runner up Jim Buell had to run his Camaro too hard to catch Williams and broke out with a 10.870.

Other winners at Mission included Wes Garvin III (Top Comp), Mike Fordice (Pro Sportsman Motorcycle), Jim Behnke (Pro), and Brandon Yoder and Rachel Trujillo (Junior Dragsters). 

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