

DRAG
ILLUSTRATED

WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

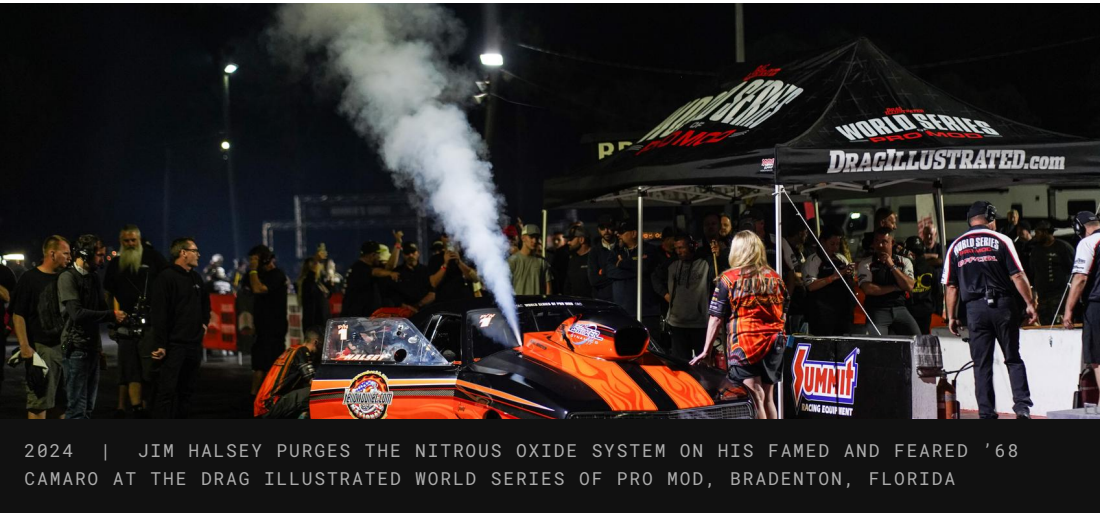
2027 MEDIA GUIDE

MARCH 5-7, 2027 TEXAS MOTORPLEX ENNIS, TEXAS

2026 | AARON STANFIELD, THE SEVENTH CHAMPION, BRADENTON MOTORSPORTS PARK

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2024 | JIM HALSEY PURGES THE NITROUS OXIDE SYSTEM ON HIS FAMED AND FEARED '68 CAMARO AT THE DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD, BRADENTON, FLORIDA

THE RACE AT A GLANCE

- Established - 2017
- 2027 Dates - March 5–7
- Venue - Texas Motorplex, Ennis, Texas
- Distance - Eighth-mile
- Field - 32 cars qualified, 64 entries maximum
- Format - No ladder. Chip draw. Sudden death.
- Runnings - Seven
- Champions - Seven. No repeats.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

A living document, revised as details are confirmed. The version stamp appears in every footer. Items still under confirmation for 2027 are marked where they appear.

A LETTER FROM WES BUCK

I was nine years old the first time I saw a Pro Mod race. It was 1993, at Eddyville Raceway Park in Oskaloosa, Iowa, a track I would end up running as general manager years later.

I did not have the words for it then. I just knew that whatever I was looking at was the thing. The variety of the cars. The drivers, who all seemed like characters out of a movie. The rivalries. The noise. It was a spiritual marker for me, and most of what I have built since traces back to it.

The World Series of Pro Mod exists because I believe Pro Modified is the future of drag racing. I believe it is the universal language of this sport.

These are race cars that look like life-size Hot Wheels, driven by cowboys and cowgirls. It is the motorsports equivalent of bull riding. They are violent, they are unpredictable, and they are not for the faint of heart. A Pro Mod covers the eighth-mile, about two city blocks, in three and a half seconds, approaching and sometimes exceeding 220 miles an hour.

Zero to 220 in 3.5 seconds. Talent matters. Skill matters. Experience matters. All of it still plays second fiddle to the courage it takes to strap into one of these things.

And here is the part I never get tired of. They still look like cars. Sixty-nine Camaros. Sixty-seven Mustangs. Vintage Corvettes, ZR1s, ZL1s, Vipers. Four thousand horsepower under a body somebody's dad used to drive to work. That matters to people in a way this sport does not talk about enough.



Pro Mod is also the only professional category in drag racing successfully contested all over the world. In 2025, close to 200 Pro Mod teams earned points in a regional or national touring series. Nothing else at this level of the sport comes close to that kind of participation, and that is exactly what makes this race possible. We hand-select the best of them and bring them to one place, at one time, to find out who is who under the brightest lights.

It stays reachable, too. Pro Mod is the entrepreneur's division: small business owners, independent operators, do-it-yourselfers. There are world-class professional teams in it now, and there is still a way in for a guy who builds his own car in his own shop. It is the highest level of grassroots drag racing on earth.

The rest of the year these racers are scattered across a dozen series and a hundred racetracks and most never cross paths. This is the one weekend that pulls them together. We have had drivers from all over North America, and from Australia, Puerto Rico, the Middle East, Russia and Sweden.

My goal was to build one drag race that could energize the entire drag racing world.

What I saw at nine years old, and what I still see, is possibility. If this sport has a best foot to put forward, it is Pro Mod. Above all else, it is what these racers, these fans and this sport deserve.

FOUNDER & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR, DRAG ILLUSTRATED
CREATOR, DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

02 MEDIA INFORMATION

Credentials, on-site protocol, Fast Facts and contacts. If you are on deadline, the page after next is the one you want.

MEDIA CREDENTIAL INFORMATION

The 2027 Drag Illustrated World Series of Pro Mod will be contested **March 5–7, 2027** at Texas Motorplex in Ennis, Texas.

Media interested in covering the event must submit an online application and must be on assignment for an approved media outlet to be considered for a credential.

Credentials are issued to members of the working media, defined as full-time paid employees or accredited representatives of recognized media organizations, including newspapers, magazines, wire services, television, radio, websites and other online outlets whose primary purpose is gathering and disseminating news.

Credentials will not be granted to marketing or commercial representatives, public relations agencies, sponsors, or to freelance journalists and photographers without prior arrangement.

Applying does not guarantee a credential. Access is a privilege, not a right, and credentials are issued at the sole discretion of Drag Illustrated.

To complete an application, media must provide a letter of assignment and samples of recent work. Applicants will be notified of their status by email in advance of the event.

TO BE CONFIRMED

Application opening date, application deadline and the live application URL. Until published, direct credential enquiries to the media contacts on page 08.

FAST FACTS

Name	Drag Illustrated World Series of Pro Mod
Established	2017
Dates	March 5–7, 2027
Venue	Texas Motorplex, Ennis, Texas
Distance	Eighth-mile
Field	32-car qualified field
Entries	Maximum 64
Format	No qualifying ladder. Chip draw. Single elimination.
Purse	Six figures. Structure to be announced.
Promoter	Drag Illustrated
Broadcast	Live stream. Partner to be announced.

THE RECORD

Runnings	Seven - 2017, 2018, 2019, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026
Champions	Seven. No driver has won it twice.
Defending	Aaron Stanfield
Closest final	.001 - King def. Jackson, 2025
Lowest qualifier to win	No. 32 of 32 - Spencer Hyde, 2023
Quickest winning pass	3.576 at 210.83 - Stanfield, 2026 (eighth-mile) 5.856 at 246.26 - Stevens, 2018 (quarter-mile)
Youngest invited	Preston Tanner, 23

ON-SITE INFORMATION

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Drivers are available in their pit areas throughout the event. Winner's circle access is granted to credentialed photographers and reporters immediately following the final round.

Drag Illustrated distributes results, round-by-round summaries and quotes following each day of competition.

New for 2027: a formal post-race press conference. Texas Motorplex has a dedicated media center, which the event has not had before. The champion and runner-up will be brought to a podium for a moderated availability, conducted the way the fight sports do it.

What it will not replace is the winner's circle. The car is pushed under the banner, the crew climbs on it, champagne goes up and several thousand hundred-dollar bills come down over all of it. Credentialed photographers and reporters have access from the moment the final round ends. It is not going behind a rope.

High-resolution photography is available to credentialed media on request.

STAGING LANE & STARTING LINE ACCESS

Media are issued hard-card credentials, not armbands. All personnel in restricted areas must wear closed-toe shoes and long pants. Anyone in the staging lanes, on the starting line or in the shutdown area does so at their own risk and must have signed a release. **Top end access is limited and must be applied for separately.**

PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO & DRONES

Still photography and video for editorial news purposes is permitted with a valid credential. Commercial use, resale or use in advertising requires written permission from Drag Illustrated. Live streaming of on-track competition by credentialed media is not permitted. Drone operation is prohibited on Texas Motorplex property without prior written authorization from both Drag Illustrated and the facility.

ON SITE AT TEXAS MOTORPLEX

Media center - Professional Pit Area, north side of the drag strip

Credential pickup - Texas Motorplex Main Office, primary facility entrance

Media parking - directly beside the staging lanes, south side. Limited reserved parking on request.

Travel and lodging - Motorsports Travel Services, the event's official service
317-619-5549 | motorsportstravel@gmail.com

Hours and wifi - to be published

BROADCAST

The 2027 Drag Illustrated World Series of Pro Mod will be streamed live. The broadcast partner, schedule and on-air talent will be announced.

Streaming has done more than distribute this race. It has recruited for it.

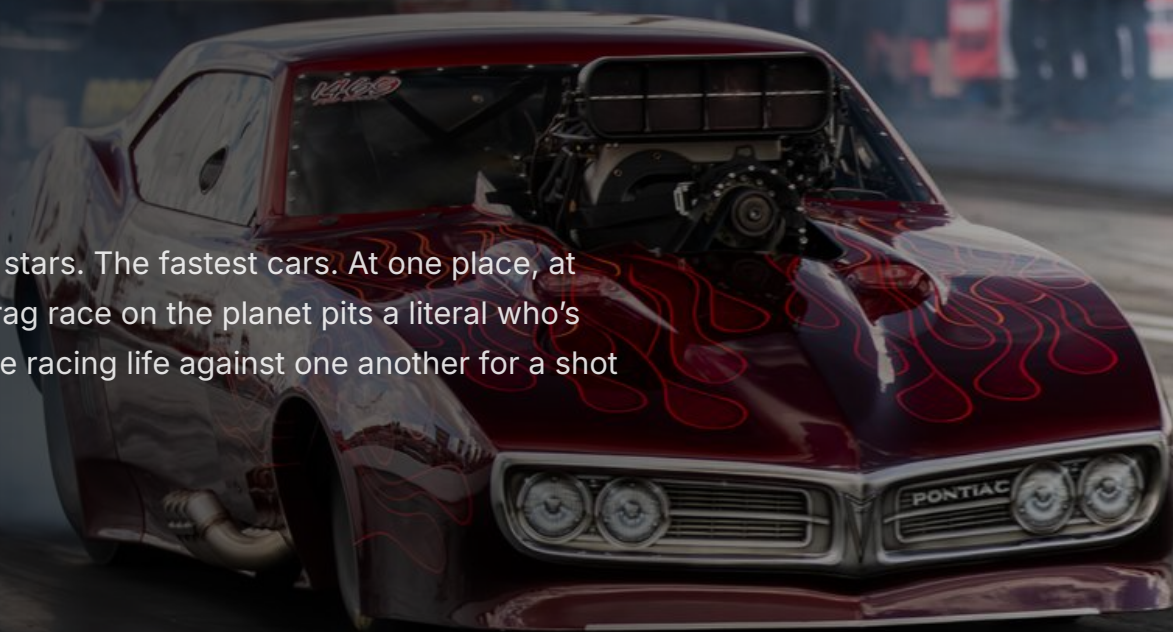
“It just sparked it in me. I was like, ‘I want to do that. It looks pretty dang fun.’”

AARON STANFIELD - ON WATCHING THE WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD BEFORE HE ENTERED IT

Stanfield watched Erica Enders run the World Series of Pro Mod on the stream, decided he wanted in, and won the race the following year on his third Pro Mod start.

03 THE RACE

The biggest names. The brightest stars. The fastest cars. At one place, at one time. The most competitive drag race on the planet pits a literal who's who of drivers from all walks of the racing life against one another for a shot at immortality.



THE CHIP DRAW

Qualifying decides one thing at the World Series of Pro Mod. Whether you are in. What happens next is the part nobody forgets.

Once the field is set at 32, every driver makes the walk to center stage and draws a custom-made billet aluminum poker chip with a number engraved on the back. There is no ladder. There is no seeding. The No. 1 qualifier can draw the No. 2 qualifier and there is not a thing either of them can do about it.

When all the chips are drawn, race director Gavin Carter asks the two drivers holding the No. 16 chips to step forward. Then 15. Then 14, all the way down to the final pair holding the No. 1 chips.

Media, cameras, live stream viewers, fans and fellow racers get the reactions in real time. The roars. The groans. The two drivers turning to face each other for the cameras, knowing exactly what they just drew.

It is electric, and there is nothing else like it in drag racing.

The format descends directly from the first World Series of Pro Mod in 2017, when there was no qualifying at all: sixteen invited drivers, pairings drawn at random a month before the race on Wes Buck's weekly live show, and the scoreboards switched off for the week. The intent then is the intent now. Take away the information that lets teams manage a race, and make them run.



2026 | THE QUALIFIED FIELD, BRADENTON MOTORSPORTS PARK. PHOTO: LUKE NIEUWHOF

THE FORMAT

32-car qualified field

Maximum 64 total entries

Eighth-mile

No qualifying ladder. Pairings by chip draw.

Single elimination. Sudden death.

Seven runnings, seven different champions

THE THING THEY KEEP

A trophy goes on a shelf. A check gets deposited. A ring gets worn.

We have awarded a championship ring at the World Series of Pro Mod since the very first one, at Bandimere Speedway in 1971. **Mike Bowman still wears his.** There has been one every year since.

What we have not done is make enough of it. That changes here, because of something specific about how racers actually carry a win.

Ask a driver about the biggest race he ever won and he will tell you where the trophy is. Ask him about a ring and he will show it to you, because it is on his hand. It goes to the shop. It goes to the grocery store. It goes to his daughter's wedding. And eventually it goes to somebody in his family who never saw the race but understands exactly what it means.

That is the difference between a prize and an heirloom.

**YOU DO NOT GIVE IT BACK.
YOU DO NOT PUT IT AWAY.**

THE TROPHY TRAVELS. THE RING STAYS.



2027 DESIGN CONCEPT | FINAL SPECIFICATION TO BE CONFIRMED

WHAT IT SAYS

A World Series of Pro Mod ring records the things that cannot be taken back. The year. The venue. The driver's name. It marks membership in a group that, after ten years and seven runnings, still numbers seven people.

Every professional sport that has built genuine mythology has an object at the center of it. Golf has a jacket. Hockey has a cup. Football has a ring, and no player who owns one has ever needed to explain why it matters.

Pro Modified has had one since 2017. What is changing is how seriously we treat it.

THE COMPANY IT PUTS YOU IN

Nobody has won the World Series of Pro Mod twice. Seven runnings, seven champions, no repeats. Whoever wins at Texas Motorplex on March 7, 2027 becomes the eighth name in a decade, and the first to be handed one of these in the house that Billy Meyer built.

The list is short by design, and it gets harder to join every year.



2026 | AARON STANFIELD, MINUTES AFTER STEVE KING HANDED HIM THE TRAVELING TROPHY.
PHOTO: LUKE NIEUWHOF

THE RING

Awarded to - champion of the World Series of Pro Mod

First awarded - 2017, Bandimere Speedway

Awarded every year since

2027 ring - redesigned for the move to Texas Motorplex

Metal, stones, weight - to be announced

PRO MOD'S STANLEY CUP

Every champion of the three Bandimere years was presented with a championship belt on the starting line. When the race came back in Florida it needed a new object, and it got one.

After Steve King won the 2025 event driving his car, team owner Gene Pilot commissioned a traveling trophy for the race. Each champion's name is engraved on it. Each champion keeps it for the year between runnings. And then, in the winner's circle, the outgoing champion hands it to the new one in person.

The only people who have ever touched it are the seven who earned it.

At Bradenton in 2026, Steve King presented the trophy to Aaron Stanfield.

“Steve let me know to soak it in and enjoy the moment, because that’s one of the bigger moments you can achieve and they’re hard to get. It’s cool for someone to be able to pass it on.”

AARON STANFIELD - 2026 CHAMPION

Unless Stanfield becomes the first repeat winner in the history of the race, he hands it to somebody else at Texas Motorplex in March 2027.

THE TRAVELING TROPHY

Commissioned by - team owner Gene Pilot, after the 2025 event

Modeled on - hockey's Stanley Cup

Each champion's name is added to the trophy

The champion keeps it for one year

The outgoing champion presents it to the new one



2025 | STEVE KING DRINKS OUT OF THE TRAVELING TROPHY ON THE ROOF OF HIS CAR IN THE WINNER'S CIRCLE

PILOT'S OTHER TROPHIES

Gene Pilot did not stop at one. He ordered five exact replicas of King's trophy and surprised the crew with them at the PDRA season opener a month later.

“Gene has preached and preached to run this team with a family atmosphere. He knows it takes a whole team, so he makes sure everyone gets a piece of the pie.”

STEVE KING - 2025 CHAMPION



3.3 THE WINNER'S CIRCLE

MAKING IT RAIN

The winning car is pushed under the Winner's Circle banner. The crew climbs onto it. Champagne goes up. And then several thousand prop hundred-dollar bills go into the air over the whole thing and come down slowly across the roof, the hood, the trophy and every person standing there. It is unapologetically theatrical, and that is the point.

2024 | DEREK WARD'S WINNER'S CIRCLE, BRADENTON MOTORSPORTS PARK. PHOTO: LUKE NIEUWHOF

THE RETURN ROAD

The ritual nobody planned happens before any of that. When the winning car comes back up the return road, the other teams come out of their pits to meet it.

“Every team - Scotty Cannon, Bubba Greene, the Tutterows - was out there as we rolled through, giving us high-fives and congratulating us. That was the highlight of my racing career.”

STEVE KING - 2025 CHAMPION

For the champion, the moment usually arrives before the result has landed.

“It was an unbelievable feeling,” Derek Ward said of 2024. “We took off and I didn't see the orange car at all. I was very happy, screaming in my helmet.”

Steve King had to ask. “I went through the finish line and I'm like, ‘Who won? Who won?’ Then I hear the guys on the radio start hollering.”



THE HANDSHAKE ON THE RETURN ROAD. PHOTO: SCOTT WITTY

SIX FIGURES, AND A RULE

When Drag Illustrated announced the World Series of Pro Mod in February 2017, the biggest Pro Modified races in America paid between seven and ten thousand dollars to win. The World Series opened at \$100,000, winner take all.

“This was absolutely unheard of,” Wes Buck said.

The purse has been as high as \$150,000. The rule since the beginning is simple: this race pays six figures. It has never paid less and it never will.

What is changing for 2027 is how the money is distributed. Winner-take-all did exactly what it was designed to do in the early years, which was to make the stakes impossible to ignore. The race has outgrown the need for it. Round money and qualifying money now spread a meaningful portion of the purse across the field, so a team that tows to Ennis, makes the show and wins two rounds goes home having been taken care of.

There is a reason that matters more than another zero on the winner's check.

RACERS DO NOT ENTER THIS EVENT FOR THE PAYDAY

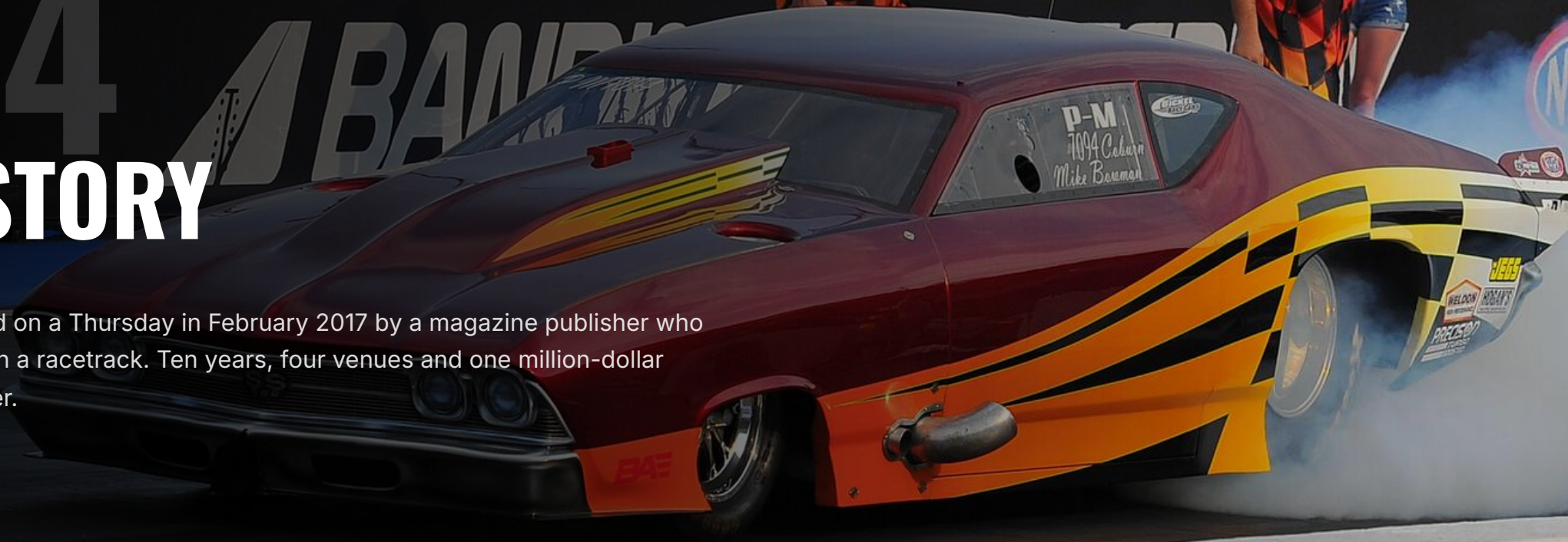
They enter it because seven people have ever won it and nobody has done it twice.



2024 | THE TEAMS COME OUT TO MEET THE WINNING CAR. PHOTO: LUKE NIEUWHOF

04 HISTORY

Announced on a Thursday in February 2017 by a magazine publisher who did not own a racetrack. Ten years, four venues and one million-dollar bounty later.



WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

“ARE YOU GUYS READY TO DO THIS?”

On February 9, 2017, Drag Illustrated announced it was going to hold a Pro Modified race that paid \$100,000 to the winner and nothing at all to anybody else.

Pro Mod had never raced for that kind of money. Doorslammer racing had never raced for that kind of money. And the man announcing it did not own a racetrack, did not run a sanctioning body, and had spent the previous eleven years publishing a magazine.

“We feel the time is right to disrupt the industry, to try something fresh and new.”
WES BUCK - FEBRUARY 2017

The answers he gave that spring read now like a blueprint for everything the race became.

Why Pro Mod. Buck called it the universal language of drag racing - the class every racer in every other category will admit they would run if money were no object. Put it on center stage instead of in a support slot and you get a show.

Why invitation only. Because he was not building a race. He was building a drag racing entertainment property, and that meant controlling the cast.

2017 - THE FIRST RUNNING
Announced - February 9, 2017
Contested - August 4–5, 2017, Bandimere Speedway
Field - 16 drivers: 14 invitations, one fan vote, one Wild Card winner
Purse - \$100,000, winner take all. No runner-up money. No points.
Qualifying - none. Pairings drawn at random one month early.
Scoreboards - off. Time slips cut in half.
Champion - Mike Bowman



Why draw the pairings a month early. So the sport had thirty days to argue about them. He was right in a way nobody could have scripted. Mike Janis and Stevie “Fast” Jackson drew each other in round one, the matchup was argued about for a month, and Janis drove twenty-two hours without stopping to get there. He won.

Why no scoreboards. The clocks stayed dark all week and time slips were cut in half. What Buck got was a paranoia the class had never experienced. During testing, a crew member went headfirst into a trash barrel to dig out the shredded remains of his driver's time slip.

Why Bandimere. The family believed in Pro Mod as the headline act. And a mountain at 9,000 feet corrected took everybody's data and threw it away. That was the point.

THREE VENUES, FOUR ERAS

2017–19 THE MOUNTAIN

BANDIMERE SPEEDWAY
MORRISON, COLORADO

Three runnings on Thunder Mountain. Sixteen invited cars, \$100,000 winner take all, no runner-up money and no points. The scoreboards stayed dark.

Mike Bowman won the first as a fan-vote entrant. Carl Stevens Jr. won the second and ran 5.856 at 246.26, still the quickest Pro Modified pass in the history of the facility. Scott Oksas won the third after drawing the NHRA Pro Mod points leader in round one and watching him red-light it away.

We did not leave the mountain because Bandimere closed. We knew their days were numbered, but the move was about being smart geographically more than anything else.



BANDIMERE SPEEDWAY, MORRISON, COLORADO

2020–22 THE DARK YEARS

NO RUNNING

The world shut down and Bandimere's days ran out. For three years the World Series of Pro Mod existed mostly as an argument at other racetracks.

Three years without a running. The idea did not go anywhere, and neither did the appetite for it.

“When the pandemic struck, it put a halt to the event - which allowed us to pause and reimagine.”

WES BUCK

2023–26 BRADENTON

BRADENTON MOTORSPORTS PARK
BRADENTON, FLORIDA

The race came back bigger. The 16-car invitational became a 32-car field. The quarter-mile became the eighth. The ladder was thrown out entirely in favor of a chip draw. Qualifying for it became an achievement by itself.

Spencer Hyde won from 32nd. Derek Ward won after his car refused to fire for the final. Steve King won from 30th by one thousandth. Aaron Stanfield won on his third Pro Mod start. The purse climbed to \$150,000.

“The event took on a new life in Florida and caught fire.”

WES BUCK



BRADENTON MOTORSPORTS PARK, BRADENTON, FLORIDA

2027– TEXAS

TEXAS MOTORPLEX
ENNIS, TEXAS

On March 5–7, 2027, the World Series of Pro Mod runs at Texas Motorplex for the first time, standing alone as a single event rather than the finale of a three-race series.

The chip draw stays. The sudden death stays. And rather than chase a bigger number, the race drills down on exclusivity to a level it has not applied since Bandimere.



TEXAS MOTORPLEX, ENNIS, TEXAS

05 THE CHAMPIONS

Seven names. That is the entire list. Two of them qualified 30th and 32nd. One got in on a fan vote. One had never sat in a Pro Mod car before the winter he won it.



SEVEN NAMES.

That is the entire list.

In a sport that has been handing out trophies for the better part of seventy years, only seven drivers have ever won the Drag Illustrated World Series of Pro Mod. There is no points chase to back into here, no season-long body of work that quietly forgives a bad weekend. There is one race. There is sudden death every round. You survive it or you load up and go home.

NOBODY HAS EVER WON IT TWICE.

Two of them qualified 30th and 32nd out of 32. One got in on a fan vote. One had never sat in a Pro Mod car before the winter he won it. That is not an accident, and it is not luck. It is a format built specifically to make those things possible.

These are the seven.



2017

MIKE BOWMAN

CHAMPION, DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

HOMETOWN	Los Angeles, California
CAR	Turbocharged 1969 Chevrolet Chevelle
VENUE	Bandimere Speedway, Morrison, Colorado
PURSE	\$100,000, winner take all
QUALIFIED	Fan vote entrant, 16-car invitational

RESULTS

- R1
- def. Derek Menholt
- R2
- def. Michael Biehle
- SF
- def. Shane Molinari
- F
- def. Steven Whiteley
- RT
- .024 reaction time, final round

He was not supposed to be there at all.

The inaugural World Series of Pro Mod invited fourteen drivers directly. A fifteenth spot went to a fan vote. The sixteenth was decided on Friday night in the Aeromotive Wild Card Shootout. Mike Bowman, a Southern California racer who worked for Coburn Equipment and had not raced at Bandimere since 1995, got in on the fan vote. He asked his boss for a few days off. Ray Coburn's answer went straight into the record: "Heck yeah! It's a hundred thousand dollars; you better go get you some of that!"

The scoreboards stayed dark all week and the time slips were cut in half, and then, for the final round, we turned the clocks back on. That was the reveal. Two Pro Mods, heads up, for \$100,000 on Thunder Mountain, with the whole drag racing world watching.

Neither car ran a number worth framing. Both drivers, tuning for a car they had not been able to measure all week, overpowered the racing surface within a few hundred feet of the starting line. **Bowman recovered first.**

It was a round of drag racing heard round the world. A legend was born, and so was a tradition.

"I figured we were going to be door-to-door and it would be settled at the Christmas tree. I was like, 'I can't let him beat me again on the tree.' I was digging hard."

MIKE BOWMAN - 2017 CHAMPION



2017 | MIKE BOWMAN AND THE CHEVELLE AT BANDIMERE SPEEDWAY

2018

CARL STEVENS JR.

CHAMPION, DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

CAR	Turbocharged 1969 Chevrolet Camaro, owned by Jim Bell
VENUE	Bandimere Speedway, Morrison, Colorado
PURSE	\$100,000, winner take all
WINNING PASS	5.856 at 246.26 mph

RESULTS

- R1
- def. Marc Caruso
- R2
- def. Erica Enders
- QF
- def. Mike Bowman by .007
- SF
- def. Michael Biehle
- F
- def. Danny Rowe - 5.856 at 246.26, track record

The second one belonged to a tuner.

Carl Stevens Jr. arrived as one of the few people in the field who could genuinely claim to understand what the altitude was doing to his engine, and he spent the weekend proving it in the only way the format allowed: by getting quicker on every single pass. Nobody could see it happening. The scoreboards were dark again.

He beat Marc Caruso. He beat Erica Enders. In the quarterfinal he beat defending champion Mike Bowman by seven thousandths of a second, which in a race with no time slips meant neither driver knew how close it had been until somebody told them. He beat Michael Biehle to reach the final against Danny Rowe.

Then he did the thing that made him a champion instead of a finalist. With \$100,000 on the line and a car that had improved on every run of the weekend, the conventional move was to leave the tune-up alone. His crew told him exactly that. Stevens went into the data instead, decided there was more in it, and turned it up.

He ran **5.856 at 246.26 miles per hour** - the quickest Pro Modified pass in the history of Bandimere Speedway, and it still is. In the winner's circle, a champagne cork caught him in the nose. That is how he knew it was real.

“This thing was on a mission.”

CARL STEVENS JR. - 2018 CHAMPION



2018 | CARL STEVENS JR. AND THE CHAMPIONSHIP BELT, BANDIMERE SPEEDWAY

2019

SCOTT OKSAS

CHAMPION, DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

HOMETOWN	Southern California
CAR	Twin-turbocharged 1967 Ford Mustang, RJ Race Cars
TUNER	Jeff Pierce
VENUE	Bandimere Speedway, Morrison, Colorado
PURSE	\$100,000, winner take all

RESULTS

- R1

def. Stevie "Fast" Jackson
- R2

def. Rick Snavelly - 5.863 at 247.57
- SF

def. Rick Hord - 5.872 at 247.79
- F

def. Doug Winters - 5.882 at 247.38
- RT

.053 to .053, final round

Scott Oksas died in March 2022. He is missed by everyone in this sport who knew him, and his name stays on this list forever.

Scott Oksas told people he was coming to win it. Then the draw handed him Stevie "Fast" Jackson in the first round.

Jackson was the NHRA Pro Mod points leader. He had driven a couple of thousand miles to be there. He was, by any reasonable measure, the last car in the field anybody wanted to see on the other side of a chip draw, and Oksas has never pretended otherwise. "That guy is a world-class racer and that was the most scared I've ever been in my car."

Jackson went .020 red. The run he threw away was a 5.932 at a corrected altitude of 9,000 feet, the quickest blower pass in the history of Bandimere Speedway. He knew he had fouled and drove it out anyway because he wanted to see what it would run.

Oksas never looked back. In the final against Doug Winters both drivers left on identical .053 reaction times, Winters' roots-blown Chevelle pulled ahead early, and Oksas drove around him. The celebration was, by universal agreement, the loudest in the history of the event. He was heard screaming over the sound of his own engine in the shutdown area.

"I install water heaters, that's what I do. I don't race cars for a living."

SCOTT OKSAS - 2019 CHAMPION



2023

SPENCER HYDE

CHAMPION, DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

HOMETOWN	Stratford, Ontario, Canada
CAR	Supercharged 1969 Camaro, "Jack & The Green Stock"
TUNER	Mark Savage
VENUE	Bradenton Motorsports Park, Florida
PURSE	\$100,000
QUALIFIED	No. 32 of 32

RESULTS

Q	No. 32 of 32, into the field by .001
R1	def. Tommy Gray
R2	def. Eric Latino
R3	def. Marcus Birt
SF	def. Jason Harris
F	def. Kurt Steding - 3.643 at 205.51 to 3.652 at 207.15
Note	Lowest qualifying position ever to win

The race came back after three years away, and it came back bigger. Sixteen invited cars became a 32-car field. The quarter mile became the eighth. The ladder was thrown out entirely and replaced with a chip draw.

Then the last car to make the show won the whole thing.

Spencer Hyde qualified 32nd out of 32, squeezing in by a thousandth of a second after a week that had gone badly in almost every way a week can go. Converter problems. Engine problems. And then, after the final qualifying session, his team found a broken frame rail. They fixed it overnight.

At the chip draw, Hyde came out first pair on Sunday morning. Mark Savage took that as a sign. "I told Spencer, 'I don't know if you believe in this stuff, but we've got some good juju going for us right now.'"

Hyde did not have the quickest car in a single round of eliminations except the last one. What he had was a car that was there every time, and a driver who did the rest on the starting line. "Our goal all week was just to be there and make it a drag race," Savage said. They fell his way four consecutive times.

"After second round, that's when I knew. There's days where you can't do any wrong. Brandon Switzer came up to me and said, 'You know you're going to win this, right?'"

SPENCER HYDE - 2023 CHAMPION



2024

DEREK WARD

CHAMPION, DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

HOMETOWN	Frederick, Maryland
CAR	Screw-blown 1968 Pontiac Firebird
TUNER	Jon Salemi, Resolution Racing Services
VENUE	Bradenton Motorsports Park, Florida
PURSE	\$100,000
QUALIFIED	No. 15 of 32

RESULTS

Q	No. 15
R1	def. Tommy Franklin - 3.70 to 3.71
R2	def. Dustin Nesloney - 3.684 at 205.98
R3	def. Marcus Butner on a holeshot
R4	def. Stevie "Fast" Jackson
F	def. Jim Halsey - 3.625 at 208.17

Ten days before the race, Derek Ward broke a chassis in a private test session.

Rather than leave the operation in Florida and fly home as planned, he drove the truck and trailer back to Maryland, took the car apart, pushed snow all night, then got up at four in the morning on a Sunday and drove to G-Force Race Cars near Buffalo. Jim Salemi put a new four-link bracket in it and back-halved one side of the car. Ward picked it up the following Saturday, got home Sunday, put the car together and left that evening for Florida.

Then he hurt the engine in pre-race testing. Then he chased a phantom oil pressure problem through two qualifying sessions before discovering the sensors were bad, bought a mechanical gauge and bolted it to the blower.

And then, staged and ready for the \$100,000 final round, his car would not fire. It was the starter. Wes Buck, race director Gavin Carter and Jim Halsey all agreed to allow the car back to the pits. Anybody who could get a hand on the Firebird pushed it back through the staging lanes to Melanie Salemi's pit area. **Halsey and his entire team waited.**

“I'm getting ready to get out of the car. Everybody was like, ‘No, stay in it! We're going.’ I was like, ‘You know my trailer's parked waaay down there past the finish line, right?’”

DEREK WARD - 2024 CHAMPION



2025

STEVE KING

CHAMPION, DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

HOMETOWN	Strasburg, Virginia
CAR	Screw-blown 2015 Chevrolet Corvette, "Savage"
TEAM OWNER	Gene Pilot
TUNER	Jon Salemi
VENUE	Bradenton Motorsports Park, Florida
PURSE	\$150,000
QUALIFIED	No. 30 of 32

RESULTS

Q	No. 30
R1	def. Cameron Hensley - 3.649 to 3.650
R2	def. Jeff Rudolf - 3.681 at 203.98
QF	def. Erica Enders - 3.654 at 203.34
SF	def. Jason Harris - 3.638 at 203.80
F	def. Stevie "Fast" Jackson - 3.629 at 204.82 to 3.653
Margin	.001 - closest final in race history

Steve King qualified 30th and then walked through the hardest four rounds anybody has ever run at this race.

He beat Cameron Hensley in round one by a thousandth on a slightly better light. He beat his friend Jeff Rudolf in round two with the slowest pass of his day, which tells you everything about how consistent the car was. Then the transmission started fighting them, tracked down to a bad regulator, and the team swapped engines after the second round looking for anything extra.

In the quarterfinal he drew six-time NHRA Pro Stock world champion Erica Enders. Enders cut a .007 light to King's .023 and it was not enough. In the semifinal he drew Jason Harris, the back-to-back PDRA Pro Boost world champion. That left two-time NHRA Pro Mod world champion Stevie "Fast" Jackson in the final.

Jackson left first, .029 to King's .052. King ran 3.629 at 204.82. Jackson ran 3.653 at 203.55. **The margin was one thousandth of a second - the closest final round in the history of the World Series of Pro Mod.**

“I went through the finish line and I’m like, ‘Who won? Who won?’ Then I hear the guys on the radio start hollering and it’s like, ‘We just did it. We really did it.’”

STEVE KING - 2025 CHAMPION



2026

AARON STANFIELD

CHAMPION, DRAG ILLUSTRATED WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

HOMETOWN	Bossier City, Louisiana
CAR	Harts Charger-boosted 1969 Camaro, Scott Tidwell Racing
TUNER	Chris Terry
VENUE	Bradenton Motorsports Park, Florida
PURSE	\$150,000
QUALIFIED	No. 8 of 32

RESULTS

Q	No. 8, after sitting 61st on Thursday
R1	def. Sidnei Frigo - 3.879 at 200.98
R2	def. Greg Blevins Jr. - 3.651
R3	def. Tommy D'Aprile - 4.033 at 193.65
SF	single - 3.614 at 210.37
F	def. Peter Norton - 3.576 at 210.83 to 3.585
Margin	.003

Aaron Stanfield had never sat in a Pro Mod car until the winter he won the biggest one.

A fourteen-time NHRA Pro Stock winner from a racing family, Stanfield watched Erica Enders run the World Series of Pro Mod the year before and decided he wanted in. He missed the field at the Snowbird Outlaw Nationals. He missed it again at the U.S. Street Nationals by three thousandths of a second, in what became the first all-3.50-second 32-car field in the history of Pro Modified.

Then Justin Bond became unavailable, Scott Tidwell and Richard Freeman agreed to put Stanfield in the silver Harts Charger Camaro, and qualifying got off to a rocky start again. After Thursday he sat 61st. He ended up eighth.

He pedaled the car in round one and won. In the third round both he and Tommy D'Aprile lost traction and Stanfield gathered his up faster, which he credits to having had to pedal it two rounds earlier. In the final Peter Norton left first by six thousandths. **Three thousandths of a second decided it.**

Richard Freeman put it plainly: "He didn't drive that car until he got here Wednesday. He's just that good."

“From winning an NHRA event in Pro Stock to winning the Pro Mod race, I don't think I've ever received that kind of acknowledgement from my peers.”

AARON STANFIELD - 2026 CHAMPION



2026 | AARON STANFIELD WITH THE TRAVELING TROPHY. PHOTO: LUKE NIEUWHOF

WIN THIS RACE AND YOU GO ON THE COVER

Seven champions. Seven covers. Every driver who has ever won the World Series of Pro Mod has appeared on the cover of Drag Illustrated.

That is not a coincidence and it is not a favor granted after the fact. It is part of what you win. The race is promoted by the magazine, which means the champion is not hoping somebody writes about him. The story, the cover shoot and the special issue are already built before the car rolls through the gate.

It is also the reason the archive behind this book exists at all. Every champion feature in the pages you have just read was reported and photographed by Drag Illustrated on the day it happened.

THE PLATFORM BEHIND THE RACE

Drag Illustrated has been the independent voice of drag racing since 2005. A partner in this event is buying association with the race and with the media company that built it.

4.2M+	Annual visitors to DragIllustrated.com
855K+	Social media followers
23.9M+	Annual social reach
11.2M+	Annual video views
150K+	Crew Chief Daily email subscribers
67,500+	Magazine readership, 71% active racers



2017
MIKE BOWMAN
DI 125



2018
CARL STEVENS JR.
DI 137



2019
SCOTT OKSAS
DI 149



2023
SPENCER HYDE
DI 182



2024
DEREK WARD
DI 188



2025
STEVE KING
DI 194



2026
AARON STANFIELD
DI 200

06 THE RECORD BOOK

Every champion, every final round, every record and every driver who has made the show. The list is short because the race is hard.

CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD

YEAR	CHAMPION	CAR	VENUE	PURSE
2026	Aaron Stanfield	Harts Charger '69 Camaro	Bradenton Motorsports Park	\$150,000
2025	Steve King	Screw-blown '15 Corvette	Bradenton Motorsports Park	\$150,000
2024	Derek Ward	Screw-blown '68 Firebird	Bradenton Motorsports Park	\$100,000
2023	Spencer Hyde	Supercharged '69 Camaro	Bradenton Motorsports Park	\$100,000
2019	Scott Oksas	Twin-turbo '67 Mustang	Bandimere Speedway	\$100,000
2018	Carl Stevens Jr.	Turbocharged '69 Camaro	Bandimere Speedway	\$100,000
2017	Mike Bowman	Turbocharged '69 Chevelle	Bandimere Speedway	\$100,000

NO DRIVER HAS WON IT TWICE. THE WORLD SERIES OF PRO MOD WAS NOT CONTESTED IN 2020, 2021 OR 2022.

EVERY FINAL ROUND

YEAR	WINNER	RUNNER-UP	RESULT	MARGIN
2026	Aaron Stanfield	Peter Norton	3.576 / 210.83 to 3.585 / 210.57	.003
2025	Steve King	Stevie "Fast" Jackson	3.629 / 204.82 to 3.653 / 203.55	.001
2024	Derek Ward	Jim Halsey	3.625 / 208.17 to 4.304 / 126.09	Halsey shook
2023	Spencer Hyde	Kurt Steding	3.643 / 205.51 to 3.652 / 207.15	Hyde from No. 32
2019	Scott Oksas	Doug Winters	5.882 / 247.38	Both .053
2018	Carl Stevens Jr.	Danny Rowe	5.856 / 246.26	Track record
2017	Mike Bowman	Steven Whiteley	Both drivers lost traction	Bowman recovered first

RECORDS

CLOSEST FINAL ROUND	.001 seconds	Steve King over Stevie “Fast” Jackson, 2025. King qualified 30th and beat Cameron Hensley, Jeff Rudolf, Erica Enders and Jason Harris to reach the final.
SECOND CLOSEST FINAL	.003 seconds	Aaron Stanfield over Peter Norton, 2026
LOWEST QUALIFYING POSITION TO WIN	No. 32 of 32	Spencer Hyde, 2023. Made the field by one thousandth, drew the first pair Sunday morning, and won the race.
SECOND LOWEST TO WIN	No. 30 of 32	Steve King, 2025
QUICKEST WINNING PASS, QUARTER-MILE	5.856 at 246.26	Carl Stevens Jr., 2018. Still the quickest Pro Modified pass in the history of Bandimere Speedway.
QUICKEST WINNING PASS, EIGHTH-MILE	3.576 at 210.83	Aaron Stanfield, 2026
FASTEST WINNING SPEED, EIGHTH-MILE	210.83 mph	Aaron Stanfield, 2026
LARGEST PURSE	\$150,000	2025 and 2026
YOUNGEST DRIVER INVITED	Preston Tanner, 23	-
QUICKEST QUALIFYING PASS	3.553 at 211.16	Eric Gustafson, 2026. The quickest pass ever made in qualifying at the World Series of Pro Mod.
FASTEST QUALIFYING SPEED	223.65 mph	Mark Micke, 2025. Micke was also low qualifier in 2024 and 2025.
LARGEST ENTRY LIST	80 cars	2025. Eighty entries for thirty-two spots.
DRIVERS WITH MULTIPLE WINS	None	Seven runnings. Seven champions.

BANDIMERE SPEEDWAY

MORRISON, COLORADO - 2017, 2018, 2019

Quarter-mile. Corrected altitude approaching 9,000 feet on race day. Quickest Pro Mod pass in facility history: Carl Stevens Jr., 5.856 at 246.26, 2018. First five-second door car pass in facility history: Mike Bowman, 2017 test session. Bandimere Speedway closed after the 2023 season.

BRADENTON MOTORSPORTS PARK

BRADENTON, FLORIDA - 2023-2026

Eighth-mile. 32-car qualified field. Chip draw introduced 2023. Four runnings, four different champions, two of the three closest final rounds in the history of the race.

TEXAS MOTORPLEX

ENNIS, TEXAS - 2027 ONWARD

Eighth-mile. 32-car qualified field, maximum 64 entries. The first all-concrete, stadium-style drag racing facility ever built, opened 1986.

EVERY DRIVER WHO HAS COMPETED

Every driver who has entered the Drag Illustrated World Series of Pro Mod, 2017 to 2026, with the years they entered.

Champions in red. The Kentucky Derby lists every jockey who has ever ridden in the race, and that completeness is a large part of why people feel permanently attached to it.

169
DRIVERS

319
ENTRIES

Robert Abbott 23 24 26
Khalid alBalooshi 23
Billy Albert 23 24
Joe Albrecht 23 24
Victor Alvarez 25 26
Gabriel Andino 26
Jerico Balduf 25
Billy Banaka 25 26
Jeffrey Barker 18
Lyle Barnett 23 24 25 26
James Beadling 25
Michael Biehle 17 18
Marcus Birt 23 24
Greg Blevins Jr. 26
Tom Blincoe 25
Justin Bond 23
Mike Bowman 17 23 24 25 26
Antron Brown 25
William Brown III 24
Manny Bugginga 23 24 26
Roderjan Busato 25 26
Bo Butner 26
Marcus Butner 24
Johnny Camp 23 24 25 26
Kyle Canion 25
Marc Caruso 18
Pierre Chicoine 25
Chris Cline 24
Clay Cole 25
Robert Costa 18 26
Jay Cox 23 25
Robert Cox 23 24 26
Tommy Cunningham 23 24 25
Tommy D'Aprile 26

Robert Davis 25 26
Mike Decker III 23 24 25 26
Mike Decker Jr. 23 24 25 26
Matthew Deitsch 24 25 26
Luis Deleon 26
Amber Denton 25
Mike DiDomenico 24 25
Ricky DiStefano 18
Ned Dunphy 26
Tim Dutton 25
Kyle Dvorak 26
Shawn Ellington 25 26
Erica Enders 18 25 26
Frank Falter IV 26
Derrick Ford 26
Tommy Franklin 23 24 25
Sidnei Frigo 25 26
Paolo Giust 24
Aaron Glaser 18
Bob Glenn 24 25
Keith Goolsby 25
JR Gray 23 24
Thomas Gray 23
Chad Green 18 23 24
Bubba Greene 24 25
Eric Gustafson 24 26
Terry Haddock 19
Jim Halsey 23 24 26
Andrew Handras 24 25 26
Keith Haney 23 24 25 26
Jason Harris 23 24 25 26
Travis Harvey 23 24 25 26
Rian Hayward 25 26
Cameron Hensley 25

Brylon Holder 26
Rick Hord 18 19 25
Blake Housley 24 25 26
Harry Hruska 17 18
Spencer Hyde 23 24 25 26
Stevie Jackson 17 18 19 24 25 26
Mike Janis 17
Nick Januik 24 25 26
Tommy Johanns 17 18
Justin Jones 23
Chris Juliano 25
Adriano Kayayan 26
Kye Kelley 25 26
Chip King 23
Steve King 23 24 25 26
Mike Knowles 17
Mike Labbate 19
Eric Laferriere 25
Kenny Lang 23 24 25 26
Scott Lang 24 25
Larry Larson 25
Eric Latino 17 23 24
Alex Laughlin 24 25
Jason Lee 23 24 25 26
Dean Marinis 23
Joey Martin 26
Ryan Martin 26
Raymond Matos 24 25 26
Steve Matussek 17 18
Kevin McCurdy 23
Daniel McKune 17
Jacob McNeal 26
Derek Menholt 17 26
Randy Merick 23

Mark Micke 23 24 25 26
Kallee Mills 26
Shane Molinari 17 18
David Monday 25
Todd Moyer 24
Ron Muenks 23
Dustin Nesloney 23 24
Peter Norton 26
Scott Oksas 18 19
Louis Ouimette 25
Scott Palmer 23 24 25 26
Chuck Parker 24
Brandon Pesz 18 23 24 25
Cole Pesz 25
Brandon Plyler 26
Ken Quartuccio 23 24 25
Scott Quesenberry 25
Jeremy Ray 18
John Ricca 25
Chris Rini 23
Kevin Rivenbark 23 24 25
Robin Roberts 25 26
Marty Robertson 23
Isaias Rojas 25
Danny Rowe 17 18
Jeff Rudolf 24 25
Zach Sackman 25
Melanie Salemi 23 24 25 26
Dimitri Samorukov 24 25
Jay Santos 25
Clint Satterfield 17 18 19
Nate Sayler 26
Jason Scruggs 23 24
Stan Shelton 23 24 25

Rickie Smith 23 24
Rick Snavelly 19
Brandon Snider 23
Aaron Stanfield 26
Bubba Stanton 23
Ethan Steding 26
Kurt Steding 23 24 25 26
Carl Stevens Jr. 18 19
Craig Sullivan 23 25
Justin Swanstrom 24 26
Preston Tanner 23 24
Frankie Taylor 23
Jimmy Taylor 25
Scott Taylor 25
Mike Thielen 23
Ed Thornton 19 26
Todd Tutterow 18 23 24 25
Ty Tutterow 23 25
Chuck Ulsch 23
Camilo Velez 25
John Vergotz 24
Joshua Vettel 25
Dave Walters 19
Derek Ward 24
Randy Weatherford 23 24 25 26
Joel Wensley Sr. 24 25 26
Mark Werdehausen 23
Jim Whiteley 17 18
Steven Whiteley 17 23
Jim Widener 24 25
Scott Wildgust 23 24
Tony Wilson 24 25 26
Doug Winters 19 23



07 TEXAS MOTORPLEX

In 1981 a Funny Car driver watched a sponsor's wife leave a national event covered in tire smoke with her hair ruined. Five years later he poured the first all-concrete drag racing stadium in the world in a cow pasture in Ellis County.

A MAJOR LEAGUE SPORT IN LITTLE LEAGUE BALLPARKS

The Texas Motorplex was not born out of a love of concrete. It was born out of an embarrassment.

In 1981, Billy Meyer brought his sponsor to the NHRA Winternationals at Pomona. U.S. Tobacco executive Lou Bantle's wife arrived in a Rolls-Royce wearing a mink coat. She left covered in what the sport used to call Akron fallout, the rubber and smoke thrown off the starting line, with her hair destroyed by the downwash of a television helicopter.

Not long after, the same couple went to Daytona for a NASCAR race and were served champagne and caviar.

“I knew we had a major-league sport, but we were playing it in Little League ballparks. It was just stupid.”

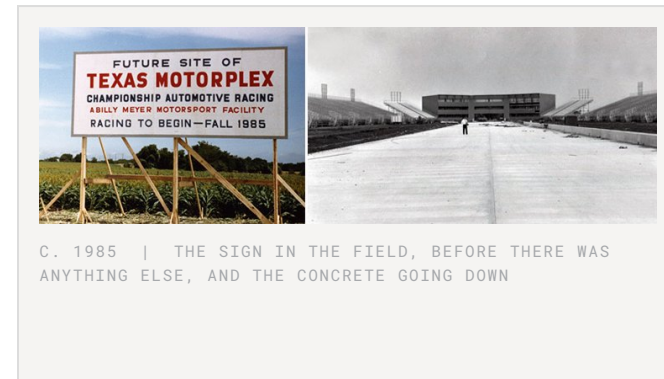
BILLY MEYER

That is the sentence the entire facility comes out of. Everything Meyer built at Ennis was an argument against that afternoon at Pomona, and he was explicit about who he was building it for.

“My goal was to service the three most important parts of the sport: the spectators, the sponsors, and the racers.”

BILLY MEYER

Every decision in the place follows from that list, in that order. And everybody told him he was crazy.



BILLY MEYER, FOUNDER AND BUILDER OF TEXAS MOTORPLEX

WHY ENNIS

Dallas-Fort Worth was one of the largest markets in America and had no major drag racing facility. Dallas International Motor Speedway had closed. Two parties announced plans to fix that: Meyer, and Kenny Bernstein with Norman Pearah. Meyer found the realtor, discovered their option had lapsed, and bought the land out from under them. He never built on it.

He built forty miles south of Dallas instead, and the two reasons he gives are not romantic ones. They are a promoter's reasons.

IN HIS OWN WORDS

“It was on a four-lane divided highway, and at the time, there wasn't a racetrack in America that was on a four-lane divided highway.”

“It was in a county of 50,000 people, so I could do an industrial bond loan.”

Then he spent months getting the property annexed into the Ennis city limits, because that meant legal footing on curfew and noise complaints. In 1985 he was defending a racetrack that did not exist yet against lawsuits nobody had filed. Forty years on, it still runs at night.

1,320 FEET OF SEAMLESS CONCRETE

Concrete had been tried before and it had a problem. Slabs need expansion gaps, and a gap is the last thing you want under a car making four thousand horsepower. Meyer went to VSL, a Texas post-tension specialist, and had the quarter mile poured as a single seamless surface, cables run through it and tensioned so it behaved as one piece: a **1,320-foot concrete launchpad** with nothing in it for a tire to find.

“Oil doesn't soak into concrete; it does in asphalt.”

BILLY MEYER

It is the same surface today. In four decades it has been ground exactly once.

“We're on our 30th anniversary, and all we've had to do was grind it one time.”

BILLY MEYER, 2015

WHAT THE SURFACE PRODUCED

On **April 9, 1988**, at the IHRA Texas Nationals, Eddie Hill ran **4.990** here. It was the first four-second pass in the history of drag racing, and he made it on seven cylinders after losing number seven at the launch. In October 1993, John Force ran 4.997, the first four-second Funny Car pass.



1986 | OPENING YEAR. EVERY SEAT FULL AND THE PARKING LOT OUT TO THE HIGHWAY.

HE BUILT A STADIUM

The word people reach for is racetrack. What Meyer built was a stadium that happened to have a drag strip in it, and the details give away what he was fixing.

THE ARGUMENT, IN DETAILS

Stadium seating wrapping the racing surface rather than strung along one side

A VIP tower straddling the track behind the starting line, with a tunnel running underneath it

More permanent restrooms than Texas Stadium - the home of the Dallas Cowboys - with attendants in all of them

Air-conditioned drivers' lounges, fully paved pits, full-matrix scoreboards, luxury suites, electronic timing

Counting the bathrooms at an NFL stadium and building one more is not an engineering decision. It is a statement about what a drag racing crowd is worth, made when nobody else was making it. Detail by detail, almost all of it became the industry standard, which is easy to miss now because every good facility built since has copied it.

FIRSTS

1986 - first all-concrete, stadium-style drag racing facility in the world

1997 - first facility with a permanent VIP hospitality structure

1997 - first non-NHRA-owned track to host two national events in a season

2004 - first NHRA track with starting-line balcony seating

OPENING DAY

The original business plan gave the place a 25-year lifespan. Meyer assumed noise abatement and suburban sprawl would eventually finish it.

It opened with a Division 4 event in August 1986 and immediately outran every projection anybody had made about it. Highway 287 backed up in both directions. Spectators parked on the medians, on the shoulders and in the fields.

“It looked like Woodstock.”

GLENN MENARD

The Chief Auto Parts Nationals followed that September, and the surface answered the question about itself in a single weekend.

Darrell Gwynn became the first Top Fuel driver into the 5.20s and the first over 275 miles an hour, running 5.280 at 278.29, then 5.261 at 278.55. Six cars qualified in the 5.30s or quicker, a record bubble at the time.

Kenny Bernstein became the first Funny Car driver into the 5.40s at 5.425, alongside a record 16-car field. Worth sitting with: the man whose racetrack Meyer bought out from under him set a national record on Meyer’s concrete the first time anybody raced on it.



TEXAS MOTORPLEX | THE TOWER, THE SUITES AND THE STADIUM SEATING BILLY MEYER BUILT

THE FACILITY TODAY

Texas Motorplex is still family owned. Christie Meyer Johnson serves as co-owner and general manager. The concrete her father poured in 1986 is still the racing surface. The facility runs March through November, anchored by the NHRA Texas Fall Nationals and the Stampede of Speed festival built around it, and annual prize money across the property exceeds \$2 million.

The Champions Club is a 9,600 square foot banquet hall taking groups from 50 to 450. Suites are climate controlled with full catering, closed-circuit feeds, WiFi, tower access and VIP parking. The starting-line balcony seating is the only outdoor version on the NHRA tour.

“The World Series of Pro Mod belongs in Texas, and we couldn’t be more excited to welcome it to the historic Texas Motorplex. It’s an honor that Wes chose to partner with us, and we’re ready to roll up our sleeves and help grow this event into something even bigger than anyone imagined.”

CHRISTIE MEYER JOHNSON - CO-OWNER AND GENERAL MANAGER, TEXAS MOTORPLEX



BILLY MEYER AND CHRISTIE MEYER JOHNSON, CO-OWNER AND GENERAL MANAGER OF TEXAS MOTORPLEX

WHY IT MATTERS THAT THE RACE IS GOING THERE

Billy Meyer poured concrete in a cow pasture because he believed drag racing was a major league sport being played in minor league buildings, and everybody told him he was crazy. Thirty-one years later, Drag Illustrated put \$100,000 on a Pro Mod race, turned the scoreboards off and invited sixteen drivers to a mountain in Colorado. A good number of people said the same thing. In March 2027 those two ideas end up in the same place.

08 UNDERSTANDING PRO MOD

The only professional class in drag racing that was invented by the racers rather than the sanctioning body. It has no single founder and no agreed starting date.

WHERE PRO MOD CAME FROM

Pro Modified is the only professional class in drag racing that was invented by the racers rather than the sanctioning body. Ask ten people when it began and you will get at least three defensible answers.

1981	Jack Weller fields a blown 1959 Corvette called Proud American, driven by former nitro Funny Car pilot R.C. Sherman. Historian Bret Kepner points to this as the beginning.
Fall 1983	Charles Carpenter bolts nitrous oxide to his all-steel 1955 Chevy and runs an 8.3. The same car had run 10.50 two years earlier.
March 1987	Bill Kuhlmann runs 202 miles an hour in a door car at the IHRA Winternationals in Darlington, and the argument is effectively over.

The class was really born in the staging lanes of eighth-mile tracks in the Carolinas. Promoters were booking mountain motor Pro Stockers as the draw, the local door cars kept outrunning them, and promoters started paying those door cars to leave bracket racing and match race instead. That became the Quick Eight. When IHRA owner Billy Meyer asked Kuhlmann how he proposed to race a class with no rules, Kuhlmann gave the answer that is still the class motto.

“You run whatcha brung and hope ya brung enough.”
BILL KUHLMANN

The name was decided late one night during the 1989 IHRA Fall Nationals at Bristol; Pro Stalgia, Pro Nostalgia and Pro Outlaw were all considered and discarded. The first cars to carry the designation ran at Atco Dragway, New Jersey in October 1989 as a 16-car exhibition. Bill Kuhlmann won it. Pro Modified became an official IHRA professional eliminator at Darlington in March 1990, won by Ed Hoover, a diesel repair shop owner from Columbia, South Carolina.

Pro Mod was born and raised in the IHRA. It did not stay there. The class spread to ADRL, the PDRA and eventually NHRA, and the modern landscape now includes 39 Pro Mod races a year across five sanctioning bodies with rules that do not match each other.

THE POWER ADDERS

Pro Modified permits several fundamentally different ways of forcing air into an engine. That diversity is the single biggest reason the class is compelling, and the single biggest reason its rules are argued about constantly. Every combination is given a different minimum weight in an attempt to keep them even.

SCREW BLOWER

A positive-displacement supercharger mounted on top of the engine, driven off the crankshaft, compressing air internally between two meshing rotors. Hard torque early, which is why screw cars tend to be strong off the line and to mid-track. This is the visual most people picture when they picture a Pro Mod. Regulated by an overdrive limit - currently 92 percent, meaning the blower may spin no more than 1.92 times crank speed.

ROOTS BLOWER

Also positive displacement and top-mounted, but more an air mover than a true internal compressor. Less thermally efficient than a screw, and usually given a lighter minimum weight to compensate.

NITROUS OXIDE

Chemical rather than mechanical. Injects an oxidizer to allow more fuel to be burned. Typically paired with very large displacement naturally aspirated engines.

CENTRIFUGAL

An impeller-driven compressor, also crank-driven, but boost builds with engine speed rather than arriving all at once. Thermally efficient and very strong through the back half of the run. Flat hood, no blower visible. Regulated by the physical size of the head unit rather than by an overdrive limit.

TWIN TURBOCHARGERS

Compressors driven by exhaust gas rather than mechanically off the crank. Capable of enormous power, and the combination that won this race most often in its quarter-mile era - Bowman, Stevens and Oksas all ran turbochargers.

THE ARGUMENT

The most persistent debate in modern Pro Modified is whether screw blowers and centrifugals are fairly matched. Screw cars are capped by a hard overdrive limit; centrifugals are limited by head unit size but have no overdrive cap. Expect racers to raise it unprompted.

2027 RULES

Weight breaks and the overdrive limit will be published in winter 2026.

GLOSSARY

CHIP DRAW

The method used at the World Series of Pro Mod to determine eliminations pairings. After qualifying sets the 32-car field, names are drawn at random. Qualifying position confers no advantage.

EIGHTH-MILE

660 feet. The distance run at this event. Most Pro Mod racing outside NHRA is contested over the eighth-mile.

ET (ELAPSED TIME)

Time from leaving the starting line to crossing the finish line. The winner is the car that gets there first, which is not always the car with the quicker ET.

REACTION TIME

The delay between the green light and the car leaving. A .000 is perfect. A negative number is a red light, a foul and a loss. This is the driver's contribution, not the car's.

HOLESHOT

Winning with a slower elapsed time by leaving quicker. One of the most admired things a driver can do.

SIXTY-FOOT

Time to cover the first sixty feet. The best single indicator of how well a car is leaving. Elite Pro Mods are now running under .890.

TIRE SHAKE

A violent vertical oscillation of the rear tires when they lose and regain grip rapidly. Extremely hard on the car and the driver, and usually ends the run.

PEDALING

Lifting off the throttle to regain traction and then getting back on it. A driver who can pedal a Pro Mod and still win the round has done something genuinely difficult.

BURNOUT

Spinning the rear tires in water before the run to heat and clean them.

STAGING

Rolling forward into the beams at the starting line. Deep staging, shallow staging and staging duels are all tactical.

BUMP SPOT

The elapsed time required to make the field. At the 2026 U.S. Street Nationals, every one of the 32 qualifiers ran in the 3.50s.

OVERDRIVE

How much faster a supercharger spins than the crankshaft. 92 percent overdrive means the blower turns 1.92 times crank speed.

BOOST

The pressure of air forced into the engine, in psi. The best screw blowers make 45 to 46. Centrifugals are making north of 60.

WHEELIE BARS

Rear-mounted bars that prevent the car rotating too far under acceleration.

CHUTES

Parachutes deployed after the finish line to slow the car.

RETURN ROAD

The road used to bring cars back to the pits. At this event, it is also where the other teams come out to meet the winner.

8.4 · HOW TO READ A TIME SLIP

FIELD	WHAT IT TELLS YOU
Reaction time	The driver's response to the green light. .000 is perfect.
60 foot	How the car left the line. Under .890 is elite.
330 foot	Early mid-track. Where positive-displacement blowers show up.
660 foot / ET	The finish. The number everybody quotes.
660 mph / speed	Trap speed. The best single indicator of horsepower.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

A quick sixty-foot with a slow ET usually means the car left well and gave it back. A slow sixty-foot with a strong ET usually means it struggled off the line and made it up on the back half.

Any elapsed time significantly slower than about 3.80 in modern Pro Mod is almost certainly an aborted run - tire shake, tire spin, a pedal or a mechanical failure. Do not treat those numbers as competitive data.

Speed tells you about power. Elapsed time tells you about the whole package, including traction and the driver.

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PARTNERS

2027 partner categories are being committed now. The partner index and official designations will appear in the next edition of this guide. Partnership enquiries: wes@dragillustrated.com.

COLOPHON

Published by Drag Illustrated. Display type set in Oswald; text in Inter; data and captions in Roboto Mono. Printed in the United States.

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