



MRS B LEES
86b COTSWOLD AVENUE
BUSHEY
WATFORD HERTS

With eleven funny cars listed in the programme and a fantastic crowd turnout the World Finals looked set for a good weekend, unfortunately the weather had other ideas, but more about that later.

Contenders for this event were as follows. Ragnar Nokdii with his Plymouth Arrow from Sweden, Steiner Enger with the Super Brut from Norway, Martin Glantz and Rune Fjeld also from Norway. Tom Hoover with the revamped Showtime and Harlan Thompson in the Budweiser Funny Car being the American contingent. Canadian driver Frank Hawley was piloting Tony Bodens Hit Man for the weekend. The British contingent was made up of our own Owen Hayward with SLDO HOUND OG, Dave Page with Panic, and although in the programme Stuart Prior never turned up at the track with his car.

Saturday morning started cloudy but gave way to sunshine by midday, then cooled off and clouded over again by mid afternoon. Most cars had their initial warm up and check over and were called to the collection area ready for their qualifying runs. First pairing was the Panic car recording 6.72 @ 188mph against Thompsons Budweiser who had problems and only managed 13.75 no speed. After various runs by Pro Comp cars it was HOUND OG's turn to show us the way through the quarter mile.

Driving in his last World Finals competition Owen drove into the spectator lane and performed a lovely smokey burnout. Then the gremlins struck and the engine was shut down towards the top end of the strip. The tow truck raced to the rescue and towed the funny car off the strip and back to the top of the fire up road. The problem was caused by a sticky throttle causing a very high idle and made it impossible for Owen to select reverse after the burnout. Nitro was 94% by the way.

Another two bye runs followed us. Super Brut who had problems and didn't get any times followed by Tom Hoover in Showtime with an early shut off 7.89 @ 170.

Shortly after we saw World Funny Car champion Frank Hawley in the Hit Man record 6.79 @ 180. Apparently along with his normal luggage Frank Hawley bought along a massive 14:71 blower that was sitting on top of Tony Bodens engine for this meet.

The HOUND OG team were not allowed to run again in the first session of funny car qualifying so had to wait for the second session scheduled for 5.30pm.

Before this the rain came but around 8.00pm we heard the sound of two funny cars fire up. Remember that it was now dark and the atmosphere was very cool and damp, in fact it was getting colder by the minute. HOUND OG was in the pit lane against Rune Fjeld in Motown Shaker. After another smokey burnout Owen managed to select reverse and the car was brought back to the start line. As Rune Fjeld was preparing to go into stage frantic signals were going on between Nobby and Owen. The body of HOUND OG was lifted up and then engine cut off. Rune Fjeld soloed through at 9.85 @ 132mph. The problem this time was caused by HOUND OG's windscreen misting up and Owen couldn't even see Nobby let alone the end of the strip. Nobby couldn't see Owen and Ray couldn't hear Nobby because of the engine noise and by the time the body was lifted and Ray lent in to clear the screen Rune Fjeld had staged and as the body was put down and Owen edged forward Stu Bradbury the chief start line marshall had no choice but to tell Owen to cut the engine because Rune Fjeld had started his run.

A minute or two later with the windows clear the car was started on the strip and Owen cruised through at 13.05.

Soon after Hit Man went through on a very cold damp strip recording

7.97 @ 155, followed by Finnish driver Martin Glantz 12.73 and Norwegian Ragnar Nordi who lost fire.

With the racing over for the day we all went back to various places and settled down to some good hot food and a few drinkies to help us unwind for the night and so to bed

Sunday saw the weather wet and cold. Some cars and bikes managed to put in a few runs between showers and after each shower all car owners were asked to drive up and down the strip to dry it out.

2.30pm saw the first round of Funny Car. The first pair were Harlan Thompson winning with a 7.59 @ 219 to Hit Man with a 7.61 no terminal speed but this run was terminal for the block as some rods went through the side.

Then came the lovely HOUND OG 84 Corvette against Tom Hoovers immaculate Showtime 80/81 Corvette. Two good burnouts and then reversing back. Ray poured the traction compound under those huge slicks as Chris watched out for any signs of damage or smoke under the car. As the green light came on Tom Hoovers car with front wheels climbing skywards raced up the strip. The HOUND OG came off the line badly but managed to lock up and fight doggedly through the quarter mile shutting off early. Now listen to this folks. Tom Hoover won with a 6.36 @ 195mph, Owen Hayward ran 6.71 @ 175mph. Yes folks the Corvette has managed to squeeze a six second run out at the Pod. Lets hope that is the first of many many more to come.

By now the clouds were rolling over blacker than ever and we all anticipated a storm. But not before one more pair could run. This was Super Brut whose blower belt broke on the line and Rune Fjeld with 7.36 @ 141mph.

Then it happened, the heavens opened and tipped all it could find on the race track. Oh boy, talk about rain, thunder, lightning the lot. You name it we had it. We had such a downpour and for so long the BDRA finally called off the meeting.

Don't forget that Owen Hayward will be at the November meeting for the last time in competition, so please be there so we can give him a real big cheer.

See you at the Pod

Brenda Lees