

turning up the HEAT



Veteran Mod Motor racer Gary Youngblood of Brookwood, Ala., made a big jump from way back in the pack to 11th place in championship points with a runner-up finish at Gainesville.

The Fun Ford points races begin getting serious at Gainesville.

By **ROD SHORT**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THE AUTHOR

When Fun Ford was in its infancy, it used to be that people were more interested in seeing what a Mustang could do than they were deciding championships. It was pretty much run what you brung and go have some fun. As the sport has matured and exposure has increased, it's more about making every race and winning championships than just running for the heck of it. Such was the case at Gainesville, Fla., this year. For a season that was just four races old, there was a lot of hard racing and maneuvering to get as many championship points as possible.

SUPERCIPS PRO 5.0

Nowhere was this more evident than in Fun Ford's quickest and fastest category. For as well known as John Gullett, Doug Mangrum, Chuck Samuel and Jim Summer have become, none have any FFW championships to show. In a class that has seen costs escalate even faster than performances, having a season title in hand should go a long way towards securing sponsorship for next season.

Chuck Samuel, who had set both ends of the national record

with a 6.57/216.38 at Atlanta, came into Gainesville well back in the points because of a final round crash there that kept the team out of the third event at Houston. With some new paint and a different hood scoop, the team uncorked a simply incredible 6.54 at a whopping 218.07 to lead the field in qualifying by more than two-tenths. Gullett trailed in the second qualifying position with a 6.73 at 207.61 while Summer rounded out the top three with a 6.78/206.18 in the first pass ever for his new car. Brandon Switzer, Brit Floyd, Mark Davis and Steve Davis rounded out what promised to be an excellent field.

Breakage, however, had begun to rear its ugly head by the time qualifying was done. Switzer was nowhere to be found on Sunday morning due to what was reported to be a set of burnt pistons. That didn't mean there would be some surprises, however. Davis was the recipient of a huge present when Summer's car slid through the beams while staging to win with an 8.79/120.62 to a 6.91/205.85. Defending series champion Floyd then tree'd Gullett with a .501 light and won with a 7.18/195.56 to a 7.22/207.27.

Both Chuck Samuel and Steve Davis then took advantage of a bye run with an easy pass to advance on to the next round. Davis's luck ran out in the semifinals when Samuel slapped a



John Edwards took his '99 Steeda all the way to the semi-finals in Mod Motor at Gainesville, but lost when David Smith's .409 reaction time at the start forced Edwards to break out with a 12.62 on a 12.67 dial-in.



Jeff Chambers made the long haul from Ohio a worthwhile trip by winning Street Warrior at Gainesville. Chamber beat defending series champion Jeremy Martorella in the finals with a slight holeshot and a 11.29 to 11.31 run.



Steve Erickson's blown '93 Lightning truck was the class of the field with a 9.37 second ET at 149.00 during qualifying. Erickson's rig had trouble during his run in the first round of eliminations, however and lost to Ron Jagish of Bradenton, Fla.



Tom Lesperance continues to impress at every event with his '00 Focus. Tom qualified number one with a 13.65 at 90.78 with his turbocharged car and made it to the finals before losing to Tommy Hussey in a double breakout race.



Officer Ron Bradley of the Davie County Police Department was on hand to compete in Street Warrior with his 306 powered '86 Mustang. Bradley surprised Kevin Enlow in the first round before losing to number two qualifier Kinson Cook, Jr.



Former FFW champ Kevin Enlow of Coatsville, Ind., has made all four Fun Ford races this season and left Gainesville in a tie for second in the championship points race. Enlow qualified fifth with an 11.49 at 116.48 mph, but lost in the first round.



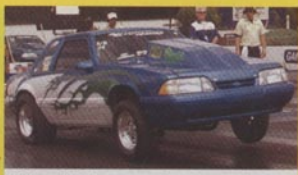
Defending national champ Lupe Davila (near lane) qualified second and made quick work of the field before meeting up in the final round against Kevin Todd. Davila was the winner with a 11.01 on a 10.96 dial-in from his '73 Ford truck.



Chuck Simons of Amelia, Ohio, puts his mark on the track during qualifying in Street Bandit. Simon qualified first with a 9.22 at 147.15 in this all-motor class and went on to make it two wins in a row in Fun Ford Weekend competition.



Although he's only made two events this year, defending series champion Richard Lelsz showed that he was still a force to be reckoned with by taking runner-up honors.



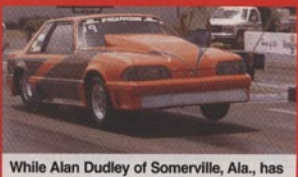
Although he's yet to win an event this year, Angle Padilla of San Antonio, Texas, has shown that consistency pays off. Padilla and crew left Gainesville ranking second in points and within striking distance of the lead.



Mike Freeman continues to tear through Street Renegade with his 8-second ProCharger-equipped '88 Mustang. Freeman won his second event in four races by defeating number three qualifier Adam Louramore in the final round.



Leading the charge in Street Renegade qualifying was Manny Geno, who qualified first with a stunning 8.91 at 153.08 mph, but lost to Freeman in the semi-finals.



While Alan Dudley of Somerville, Ala., has only made half the events this season, he remains a threat wherever he goes. Dudley qualified second and then set low ET for the class in the finals with a 7.49/188.56 conquest of Steve Lee.



Unheralded Steve Lee of Boynton Beach, Fla., only qualified in the second half of the field with an 8.00/174.68, but he was there in the final round. Lee overcame points leader Elias Dellatorre in round one, beat Mike Calvert in the following round and then drew a bye run before losing to Alan Dudley.



Brad Brand's '92 Stang, complete with wiper blades, continues to be one of the most potent Street Outlaw coupes around. Brad's car has run in the 7.40 zone and was runner-up to Elias Dellatorre at FFW Atlanta this year.

greater than four-tenths holeshot on him and ran a 6.66/211.91 to make it into the finals. Floyd then ran another 7.18 with bracket like consistency in sending the other Davis home. The finals saw Samuel turn another 6.66 at 211.66 to take his first victory of the year while Floyd did not register a time. That win helped the team make up some ground in a hurry by moving them up to third place in points.

PROCHARGER STREET OUTLAW

While Pro certainly had its moments, Street Outlaw was nothing but surprises. Qualifying saw an extremely strong field. Elias Dellatorre, who came into Gainesville leading the points race in both Fun Ford and NMCA, grabbed his customary number one qualifying position with a straight and true 7.52/182.22. Alan Dudley followed in second with a 7.57 with Dennis Ramsey, Brad Brand, Randy Leavy and Chip Havemann all following behind with 7-second runs of their own.

Things got weird during eliminations, however. Dellatorre lost in round one against number seven qualifier Steve Lee when his car slid through the staging beams as he brought his rpm up before the tree went down. Brad Brand then had the exact same thing happen to him against Mike Calvert. That meant two different 7.40-second cars had lost before the tree had even turned green.

By the time the semifinals had rolled around, only Lee was left along with two former Pro 5.0 competitors in Dudley and Dennis Ramsey. In what proved to be the best race of eliminations, Dudley overcame a slight .011-second holeshot to motor past Ramsey for the win 7.67/181.96 to a 7.71/185.83. While no one expected Lee to have a chance against Dudley in the final, he did put up a good fight by pasting a .040 holeshot and a 7.83/179.46 on the scoreboards. What would have been a winning run last year wasn't good enough, however, as Dudley laid down the law with a stout 7.49 at 188.56 mph to post the quickest ET of eliminations.

While that win moved Dudley up to seventh in championship points, Dellatorre still managed to leave for home with a comfortable lead in points. Former Renegade champ Havemann managed to stay within striking distance in second place, however, despite the fact that he has yet to make a final round this season.



Brandon Switzer made a rare Fun Ford appearance at Gainesville and qualified with a 7.02 at 181.63 mph. Switzer was gone by Sunday morning, as a burned piston kept him from making the start of eliminations.



Qualifying under the lights at FFW Gainesville proved to be no problem for John Gullett as the Orange Park, Fla., resident took his entry to a 6.73 at 207.61. Gullett was upset in the opening round of eliminations by defending series champ Brit Floyd the next day.



While he's never been the quickest or the fastest, Brit Floyd still continues to amaze by finding a way to go rounds at nearly every race. The "for sale" sign on his car at Gainesville confirmed rumors that he wants to step up to a new car next year.



After crashing at Atlanta, Chuck Samuel and Kevin Marsh returned to the sport with a vengeance. Samuel qualified first with a 6.54 at an unheard of 218.07 mph to become the quickest and fastest Pro 5.0 of all time.

FUN FORD GAINESVILLE RESULTS

Superchips Pro 5.0	R/T	ET	Speed
W Chuck Samuel	.613	6.66	211.66
R/U Brit Floyd	.000	No time listed	
ProCharger Street Outlaw			
W Alan Dudley	.520	7.49	188.56
R/U Steve Lee	.480	7.83	179.46
Vortech Street Renegade			
W Mike Freeman	.558	8.95	155.38
R/U Adam Louramore	.623	9.39	145.44
JBA Headers Street Bandit			
W Chuck Simons	.561	9.33	147.68
R/U Richard Lelsz	.497	9.54	143.42
Tremec Street Warrior			
W Jeff Chambers	.526	11.29	119.34
R/U Jeremy Martorella	.534	11.31	118.90
	R/T	Dial-In	ET
Steeda-Hyland Mod Motor			
W David Smith	.414	12.97	13.02
R/U Gary Youngblood	.506	12.61	12.60
JDM Engineering Top Truck			
W Lupe Davila	.521	10.96	11.01
R/U Kevin	.502	18.86	19.06
Focus Central Focus Frenzy			
W Tommy Hussey	.541	17.89	17.88
R/U Tom Lesperance	.833	14.15	13.92
Diesel Duel			
W Robert Hindman	.686	16.95	17.03
R/U Joe Charles	.778	15.85	15.91





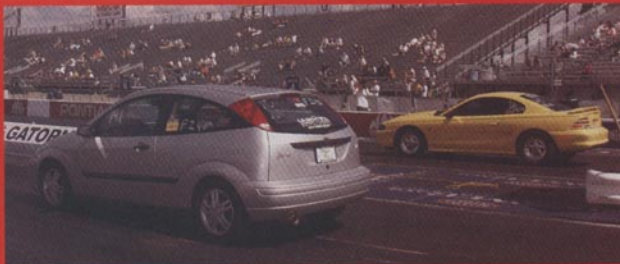
Twenty-two year old Erica Ortiz-Lugo of Casselberry, Fla., was the winner in True Street with this 342-cid turbocharged notchback. Lugo ran an average of 9.48 seconds during Saturday's time trials.



Tyler Chicerchia of Daytona, Fla., leads a pack of cars from the grounds of Gainesville raceway onto the streets for a thirty mile cruise. Tyler, who finished 20th in the program with a 12.84 second average, continues to command one of the top cars in True Street at every event. After finishing second at Atlanta, Spry had a combined averaged 9.75 seconds from his 351-powered '85 Mustang to finish second in the program at Gainesville.



Floridians Jake LaMotta and Christine Eldert combined their efforts to come in third in True Street with their unique SVO Mustang which features a turbocharged Cobra Mod Motor. They averaged 9.97 seconds during time trials.



VORTECH STREET RENEGADE

While Pro and Street Outlaw may have seen a lot of the top contenders go out early, it was business as usual in Renegade. It takes an 8-second combination to win in this class now as class record holder and series points leader Mike Freeman has been showing the rest of the field. Manny Geno of Booneville, Miss., was the number one qualifier with a sub-record 8.91 at 153.08 mph.

Freeman was second with a 9.03 at a faster 154.79, while in the quarterfinals, Geno took care of Kevin Morris and Adam Louramore beat Shelly Howard. Freeman advanced with a bye.

The semifinal match-up between Freeman and Geno had big implications in the points race as this pitted the number one and two points cars, respectively. Freeman pulled out all the stops by leaving the line first with a .028-second advantage and then running an 8.92/155.30 to defeat Geno's slowing 9.15 at 131.27 mph. Louramore, who advanced out of the semis on a bye, then had the huge task of trying to tame Freeman in the finals. Freeman's holedshot with an 8.95 at 155.38 made it no contest between the two as Louramore settled for runner-up honors with a 9.39 at 145.44 mph.

JBA HEADERS STREET BANDIT

While kids may have enjoyed playing Simon Says in kindergarten, no one seemed to have fun in trying to match Chuck Simon's performance in Street Bandit at Gainesville. Simon led every round of qualifying and wound up with a 9.22/147.15 from his 360-powered Stang, which runs without the benefit of any power adders.

Defending series champ Richard Lelsz was a distant number two qualifier some three-tenths back with a 9.54 at 144.00 mph. Angle Padilla, Kevin Toothman and James Black rounded out the Top Five qualifiers. This quintet were all winners in the first round along with Derek Branders. In round two of eliminations, Simons overwhelmed Toothman, Branders upset Padilla and Lelsz upended Black to put three cars into the semi-finals. Simons then made short work of Branders to face Lelsz who advanced on a bye.

In the finals, Lelsz did all he could by cutting a .064 better light only to watch Simons drive by for a 9.33/147.68 to a 9.54/143.42 win. With his victory at Gainesville, Simons assumed the series points lead from number two driver Angel Padilla.

