

Al-Thani Wins it All at ADRL in Virginia

PETERSBURG, VA (May 22, 2010)—This weekend's American Drag Racing League (ADRL) Speedtech U.S. Drags III marked only the second ADRL race of KH Al-Thani's career, but in a Pro Extreme class loaded with top talent on a record-breaking weekend, it was the Qatar native who proved to be the quickest learner.

Al-Thani didn't set any time or speed records with his supercharged 1968 Camaro on the eighth mile at Virginia Motorsports Park (VMP) on Saturday, but he did emerge as the most consistent Pro Extreme competitor, knocking off Joshua Hernandez in the championship round in front of a near-capacity crowd.

Al-Thani's Al-Anabi Racing teammate Shannon Jenkins also won in Pro Nitrous, Gary White of Titan Motorsports prevailed in the Extreme 10.5 final, Brian Gahm successfully defended his 2009 Extreme Pro Stock event title and Ashley Owens scored his second consecutive Pro Extreme Motorcycle win.

After qualifying second, Al-Thani knocked off veteran Brian Daniels, rookie Mick Snyder, and former two-time class champion Jason Scruggs to reach Hernandez, the winningest driver in Pro Extreme, in the final round.

Al-Thani turned in a strong 3.65-second pass at 210.60 mph to beat the 4.00 at 183.22 mph by Hernandez, who had to pedal his Fight Me MMA (mixed Martial Arts)-backed '57 Chevy to regain traction.

Al-Thani, the 2009-10 Arabian Drag Racing League Pro Extreme champion, said having teammates like crew chief Frank Manzo and newcomers to the team, Tim and Kim Richards, were critical to his success.

"They've made a big difference," Al-Thani said of the Richards' tuning contribution. "You wouldn't believe how many things they've changed on the car."

After celebrating his 56th birthday and the top qualifying spot on Friday, Jenkins (left) followed up with a consistent performance on raceday that included overcoming a holeshoot by Steve Vick in round one, winning with his own holeshoot over Jim Halsey in round two and outrunning Al-Anabi teammate Burton Auxier in the semi-finals.

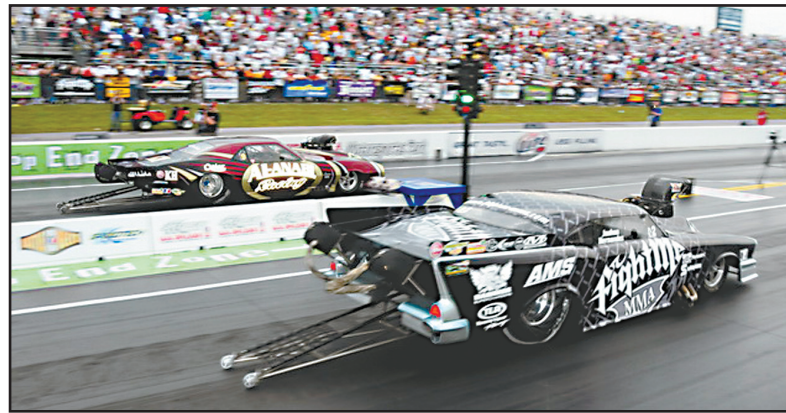
That set up an entertaining side-by-side race against "Tricky Rickie" Smith in the final round that began with the Pro Nitrous legends engaging in a short staging duel before Jenkins, known as "The Iceman," left with the starting-line advantage, then went 3.89 at 194.27 mph in his '68 Camaro to beat Smith's 3.95 at 188.83 in a similar ride and earn his first ADRL win in 10 months.

"Rickie's always going to do what Rickie does," the Tuscaloosa, Alabama-based driver said of his longtime rival making him wait on the line. "But that's okay; I just do what I always do, too. It's fun to race against him."

In Extreme 10.5, New Market, Alabama's White emerged as the Speedtech U.S. Drags III champ, having beaten Dwayne Wolfe, David Hance, Jeff Naiser and Todd Moyer, setting low elapsed time (ET) of each round along the way.

In the final, Moyer made his best pass of the day with a game 4.03 at 194.55, but White left with a sizeable holeshoot and set low ET of the meet for the class with a 3.95 run at 186.74 mph in his turbocharged, six-cylinder 2007 Scion.

"My guys have the Titan car running so well right now they've made it easy for me," said White, who



Al-Thani (above, far lane), the 2009-10 Arabian Drag Racing League Pro Extreme champion

started from the second qualifying position. "It's really a pleasure to drive it right now."

Gahm, from Lucasville, Ohio, qualified his Extreme Pro Stock '07 Mustang in the seventh position, then led stripe-to-stripe over every one of his opponents, including Cale Aronson, Dean Goforth, John Montecalvo and Cary Goforth in the final.

In a classic Ford vs. Chevy showdown, Gahm left first, then won with a 4.10 pass at 175.07 to Goforth's 4.12 at 175.57 mph in his '08 Cobalt.

"That's fun to do," Gahm stated. "There are so many great teams out here that it really gets you up on the wheel to race every one of them. This is the best racing of its kind anywhere in the world."

Owens, of Decatur, Alabama, did almost exactly as he did at the ADRL's previous race last month in Georgia, only this time he left with not only the race win and a new ET record; he reset the official Pro Extreme Motorcycle speed record, too.

After qualifying his Fast by Gast 2010 Suzuki on top with a then-record 4.06 pass, Owens cruised past Derrick Holloway and Eric McKinney before officially lowering the

class elapsed time mark to 4.05 in a semi-final win over Kim Morrell, who earlier in the day had become the ADRL's quickest and fastest female bike rider.

In the final round, Owens met up with number-two starter Terry Schweigert from British Columbia, Canada, who made a decent 4.16 run at 169.40, but it was no match for another 4.06 at a record 178.21 mph by Owens.

"That felt like a near-perfect run," Owens said. "I like to think we can always go a little faster, but I've done this long enough to know you eventually reach a wall that can be hard to break through. We'll see how it goes at the next race."

Fourteen-year-old Morgan Benfield of Virginia Beach, Virginia, (below) finished out the Speedtech U.S. Drags III winners list with the second Pro Jr. Dragster title of her career, making her the first repeat winner in the class.

The American Drag Racing League returns to action June 11-12, with the ADRL Ford Drive One Summer Drags VI at U.S. 131 Motorsports Park in Martin, Michigan.

(ADRL/Richards photos)

Outlaw Drag Racing Association (ODRA) at U.S. 19 Dragway - Albany, GA

Motorsport America attended the ODRA race on May 29th in Albany, GA but unfortunately, it was rained out. However, MSA brought back some photos. You really need to go to one of these ODRA events. For the schedule and results of past races, visit www.odracing.com

