

## 37th Alabama State Championships at East Alabama Speedway

Story / Photos: Phillip Prichard, MSA

The 37th Alabama State Championships were held at East Alabama Speedway on September 24-27. The Super Late Models were sanctioned by the Southern All Star Dirt Racing Series and two Southern All Star champions took the wins in the pair of 40 lap \$4,000 to win events.

Sunday's action saw Weaver dominate as he set fast time in Group 1 in the White Performance qualifying and led all 40 laps to get his 31st career series win. Jason Croft set the fastest time of 15.242 seconds but because he was in Group 2, he started on the outside of the front row. Weaver took the lead on the first lap. The battle behind Weaver was between Madden and Jason Hiett as these two swapped second back several times with Madden taking the second spot, third to Hiett, fourth went to Riley Hickman who again worked his magic and came from deep in the field and Dylan Ames topped his weekend with a fifth place finish.

Sixth place went to Clint Smith who came from deep in the field, seventh to outside pole sitter Jason Croft, eighth to Cody King in his first top ten with the series, ninth to Joe Armistead and tenth to John Henderson.

After the Sunday race, East Alabama Speedway officials put Weaver and Madden into a two lap match race at the end to determine the Alabama State Champion as they were tied at the end of the day with one win each

and Weaver came out on top and was crowned the Alabama State Champion.

In Saturday night action, Weaver of Crossville, TN, set fast time in White Performance qualifying and set the pace early in the race as he built a lead over the rest of the field with Madden, Austin Smith, Clint Smith and Dylan Ames all battling it out for the second spot. These four drivers all ran in the second spot at one time or another during the race with Madden falling back as far as fourth, but then got back to the second spot and worked his way back to Weaver as he encountered lapped traffic. Madden caught and then passed Weaver on the outside and then went on to get his 46th career win with the series, Weaver finished second, with Riley Hickman of Ooltewah, TN, working his way into a third place finish from his 19th starting spot. Fourth went to Austin Smith and fifth was Clint Smith in his first run with the series this season.

Riley Hickman was crowned the 2015 Southern All Stars Champion and Dillon Tidmore won the 2015 Cruise with the Champions/Dirtondirt.com Rookie of the Year.

In the Crate Late Model Feature, Terrence Nowell in the 55 started on the pole with Montana Dudley in his 55 second. On lap 11, a lap car caused Nowell to spin and he was side lined with damage. Dudley started checking out on Lap 33, but the battle for second was Dykes, Hen-



derson and Riley Hickman. The top five finishers were Montana Dudley; Rodgerick Dykes; Matt Henderson; Riley Hickman; and Corey Hedgecock.

Other winners of the Alabama State Championships were: Michael Page in the 10x won the Super Street Race; Justin Sapp in the #5 won the Hobby Race; and Dustin Miller in the #14 won the Bomber Race.

East Alabama Motor Speedway (Phenix City, Alabama) is now eagerly preparing for the 41st Annual National 100, which will be held on Thursday-Sunday, October 29th-November 1st. Check out <http://www.eamsdirt.com/> for more information.

## Hall of Fame Drag Racer Hubert Platt Passes Away

By Phillip Prichard, MSA

Hall of Fame drag racer Hubert Platt, 83, passed away on September 26. Platt, from Cumming, GA, was diagnosed with gallbladder and liver cancer several weeks ago. Platt was born in 1931 in Conway, SC and moved to Georgia in 1958, making Cumming his home.

He entered the sport of drag racing in its infancy in the 1950s and went on to be inducted into nine different drag racing hall of fames. His greatest achievement was receiving the National Hot Rod Association's Lifetime Achievement award for his contribution to the sport. In 1986, Platt was inducted into the NHRA Hall of Fame. In 1995, he was enshrined into the Super Stock & Drag Illustrated Hall of Fame and was inducted into the East Coast Drag Times Hall of Fame in 2002. In 2001, he served as the Grand Marshall for the NHRA Southern Nationals at the Atlanta Dragway in Commerce, GA.

In 2006, Platt was inducted as a member of the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame in Dawsonville, GA, an organization he remained active with by attending reunions, special events and ceremonies until his passing. In 2014, Platt also served as the Grand Marshall for the annual Mountain Moonshine Festival in Dawsonville.

In 1963, Platt built the first of his famed "Georgia Shaker" race cars. In 1964, he began racing full time, running out of his shop in Chamblee, GA, and racing on the match race circuit the following year. In the golden era of drag racing, when top drivers from across the nation ran head-to-head in well-publicized match races, few had the star power of Hubert Platt. Platt raced on a circuit that included his brother Huston Platt, Don Nicholson, Arnie Bestwick, Phil Bonner and others.

One of Platt's favorite racing achievements came in 1965, as he bested NASCAR star Richard Petty in a match race at Lassiter Mountain Drag Strip in Birmingham, AL. Petty, who moved to drag racing for the 1965 season after NASCAR banned the high powered Chrysler Hemi engine in competition, was topped by Platt's Georgia Shaker III Ford Falcon.

From there, Platt would build one of the first modern type Funny Cars, sponsored by Dick Walters Ford. After that, Platt moved to the Holman-Moody built Ford team. It was in this ride that Platt would make his mark in the drag racing history books, winning in the 1967 NHRA Winternationals, along with setting the NHRA A/XS record twice. Platt would also win twice on the short lived NASCAR drag racing tour.

In 1968, Platt would partner with Rome, GA's Randy Payne to head up the Eastern Ford Drag Team. The duo would travel the country scoring wins and setting records with Platt's CJ Mustang and Payne's Torino Cobra.

Platt would continue to race until 1977, when he got tired of all the traveling, and hung up his racing helmet for good. He did not retire, he continued to travel and promote the sport of drag racing.



The "Georgia Shaker" was beloved by the racing industry and his beloved fans.

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