

First-Annual F-Body Nationals 2017 - Memphis International Raceway By Taylor Haney

The first ever F-Body Nationals in Memphis, TN celebrated 50 years of the Camaro and Firebird at Memphis International Raceway September 15-17. This event had a lot to offer with an impressive car show turnout for their first event including an autocross course, street and pro-mod drag racing and even a jet car. Although called the "F-Body Nationals", the name did not deter several other non-F-Body Camaros, Firebirds, and other makes and models from showing out. Paid attendees were even entered to win 1976 Camaro built by A&R Restorations, which was won by David Gladwell.

Drivers came from all over to celebrate the long-adored Camaro and Firebird platforms and lay down some rubber on the drag strip as well as the Autocross course. One driver, Valerie Pichette, came all the way from Phoenix, Arizona touring across the country. She stated that she came to compete primarily in the "autocross challenge sponsored by CCP and run by Autocrossguys.com." Valerie has been driving her 1988 Pontiac TransAm GTA for 8 years competing in Autocross, but had her start in drag racing. She tours the country with "Dragonlady," as she calls the TransAm, and her husband Tom Pichette.

Valerie reflected on the event via email, "The course was tight and fairly technical given the space allowed. There was a fairly tight Chicago box on the back end that was particularly difficult and a fun short straight in the center of the course that ended in a tight 180 turn." Valerie was met with some skilled contenders including Brian Finch, Kyle Tucker and Mark Golovin who, according to Valerie, are well-known in the F-Body and Pro-Touring communities. After being involved in BFG's Share the Ride program for the last three years, Valerie found herself giving a lot of ride alongs during events. "Mark and several other competitors joined in as well and everyone seemed to enjoy introducing new people to the sport."

Valerie's TransAm is currently running a 418 CI LS3 with a LS3 intake, GMPP CNC LS3 heads, Lunati 227/239 cam in a Texas Speed short block with forged Texas Speed internals. This car really rips some tires on the autocross course! To learn more about the "Dragonlady," follow her on Facebook at facebook.com/DragonladyGta.

The following is the weekend's racing results retrieved from the Memphis International Raceway:

Bonus Race Saturday:

Junior Eliminator - 1/8th mile

Winner: Kyle Rumley, Huntington, TN 1998 TransAm

Runner Up: Greg Rushing, Jackson, TN 1980 Camaro

Super Eliminator - 1/8th mile

Winner: Jim Keliher, Batesville, MS, 67 Camaro

RunnerUp: Ron Hollis, Groveland, FL 68 Camaro

Bracket Races Sunday:

DOT/Street - 1/4 mile

Winner: Tommy Jackson, Millington, TN 1998 TransAm

RunnerUp: Patrick McGrath, Branson West, MO 1967 Camaro SS

Junior Eliminator 1/8th mile

Winner: Kyle Rumley, Huntington, TN 1998 TransAm

RunnerUp: Kenny Bomar, Bartlett, TN 1969 Camaro

Super Eliminator 1/8th mile

Winner: David Glidewell, Corinth, MS 1968 Camaro

RunnerUp: Tommy Jackson, Millington, TN 69 Camaro