

Paid Vacation

By Michael Beard, Photos by Chris Simmons



Despite being claimed out of IHRA Summit Pro-Am events, and having already qualified for the season-ending Tournament of Champions race (not to mention currently being in the Top 3 in Heat Wave Stock points to erase a potential competitor from the ladder), Myron Piatek showed his commitment by making the long drive from Holly Hill, Fla. to MIR. Although he didn't "have" to attend the race, for the second year in a row, Piatek made that trip worthwhile, as he captured the Stock title at the IHRA Maryland Nitro Jam.

"I went from local bracket racing to IHRA Crate Motor because I figured there would be more consistent opportunities to win more money and I could get more exposure for the people and companies that help out. Now I'll be on TV twice this year!" said Piatek. "I thank God that I somehow developed the ability to do well enough to keep going and make it through the leaner years. It's not easy, but racing is like a vacation that lets me get away from it all."

Piatek's Maryland vacation was made a little easier with the help from not only his sponsors, but also some great friends.

"I'd again like to thank Don and Carm Dimeler and Monty and Nicole Cornwell for their hospitality at home, and their support at the track."

Piatek encountered problems early in qualifying, but he got things sorted out by the time an unscheduled and fortuitous third qualifying session came around. He qualified 24th with a -.848 under 11.402 from his Locomotion J/CM '75 Dart Sport in a field led by Brian Rowe's -1.357 under 11.493 in the Richie Decola-owned F/FIA '90 Camaro.

"Luckily, there were three time trials," Piatek said. "That was a big factor. Otherwise, the car ran flawlessly. The new motor built by Larry Whitley has been awesome. I surprised myself with how consistent the car was, and my reaction times were more consistent than normal. My biggest worry was Michael Beard. It was my turn. I had a rubber duck hanging in a noose. It must've helped! Maybe next time I'll put needles in it!"

The combination of car and driver were positively untouchable right from the start of eliminations. Piatek's worst reaction time was an .020, in the opening frame against Duane Eiskant. He trailed Beard with a .005 light, and used a .007 package to oust John Kenney.

"After two double-ohs, that was getting a little tight, and I didn't want to change what I was doing, so I changed the car, and took two pounds of air out of the front tires," he explained.

Piatek took out Stock rookie Jeff Serra in the quarters with an .015 bulb to earn a semifinal bye



*If there's a racer in IHRA competition who walks softly and carries a big stick it has to be foot-brake specialist Myron Piatek. Piatek was up to his old tricks again at the Maryland Nitro Jam, driving his Holly Hill, Florida-based J/CM '75 Dodge Dart to yet another winners circle celebration with a victory at MIR.*





run, where he posted an .018-initiated 11.477. Lee Truell proved his versatility by making the final round in his debut in the Sloan Racing Engines G/CM '85 Camaro by defeating Brian Rowe in the semifinals. Truell had the tree, .026 to .040, and won a dead heat double-breakout, 10.624 (10.63 dial-in) to 11.504 (11.51).

In the finals, Piatek drilled the tree once more with a .009 to Truell's .021, and backed into an 11.490 (11.47) victory over a 10.647 (10.61). Combined with his Immokalee Sportsman Nationals win and his standings in the Heat Wave points, Piatek has now effectively knocked out two potential competitors from the Tournament of Champions.

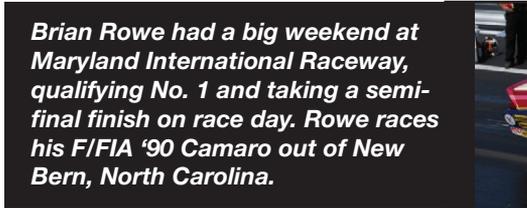
"I defended my title from last year," said an elated Piatek. "I've realized that I beat on the steering wheel, whether I win or lose. I have good days and bad, but this is probably the best performance I've had, without a hiccup. The track was excellent all weekend, despite the heat.

"The combination of sponsors and contingency just make beautiful music, and I can't thank them enough!" he concluded.

Those supporters include Daytona State College, Holeshoot Wheels, Amsoil Synthetics/The Lube Page, Larry Whitley at Eastern Performance Engines, J.W. Performance Transmissions, Bearden Oil/Sunoco Race Fuels, Ronnie Robinson Performance, Hoosier Tire, TTI Exhaust, Auto Meter, Harland Sharp, ROL Gaskets, Pioneer Performance, Volusia Drivetrain, Gary's Driveline, Ishihara-Johnson crank scrapers, and AI's Signs.



*Lee Truell, of Lexington, North Carolina, placed his G/CM '85 Camaro in the No. 2 spot during qualifying, and he advanced from there to the final round Sunday. He finished the weekend as the Stock runner-up.*



*Brian Rowe had a big weekend at Maryland International Raceway, qualifying No. 1 and taking a semi-final finish on race day. Rowe races his F/FIA '90 Camaro out of New Bern, North Carolina.*



*Reinholds, Pennsylvania's Jeff Serra represented sponsor Moser Engineering well at the Maryland Nitro Jam. He drove his K/SA '66 Chevy Nova to the quarterfinals Sunday afternoon.*

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