

# NEWS RELEASE



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

O'Reilly NHRA Spring Nationals  
***Houston Day 2 Recap***

## **TEAM HAMMONDS GETS BIRTHDAY GIFT OF QUALIFYING**

***(Baytown, Texas, Mar. 28, 2009)*** - - Cool air equals fast times on a drag racing track, which was no different for today's qualifying at the O'Reilly NHRA Spring Nationals at Raceway Park in Houston, where Team Hammonds qualified in 16th place going into tomorrow's elimination competition.

The team did not let the onset of inclement weather to start this weekend's event deter them from their goal of qualifying. With only three qualifying tries over the course of the weekend, they were able to carry over Friday's enthusiasm into today's competition.

"With my birthday being yesterday, this is a good weekend for us. It is just icing on the cake to qualify," said a joyful Tom Hammonds, owner and driver of the No. 20. Race for Achievement Chevy Cobalt presented by the US Marine Corps. "We are looking forward to coming out with our Race for Achievement Chevy Cobalt presented by the US Marine Corps and seeing what we can do."

The final run of the day Hammonds registered an elapsed time of 6.627 seconds at 209.14 mph against the 15<sup>th</sup> qualifier Larry Morgan (6.628 sec./210.01).

**-MORE-**

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Crew Chief Tomi Laine is happy the team was able to qualify and the air presented good racing conditions. Overall, he was not happy with the Chevy Cobalt's runs.

Laine said, "In the last run, the car did something that I did not expect it to do. We really made a bad run. The car was loose down the track; not very good in low gear."

Before this run, Laine elected not to make any major modifications other than tweaking the transmission to get the right rpm and make up for reaction time lost in the first qualifying session of the day.

In the first session, with slightly better air producing a fast session, Laine felt the Chevy Cobalt made a good pass, but lost at least a few thousandths seconds when Hammonds had to short shift to get the car back in the groove when it veered left. Hammonds was still able to register an e.t. of 6.611 seconds at 209.14 mph against the round's seventh qualifier Justin Humphries (6.599 sec./208.88 mph), to occupy the 12<sup>th</sup> spot remaining in the qualifying field.

For tomorrow's elimination both Laine and Hammonds agree major adjustment to the car and set-ups will be made to have a shot at winning.

"I like our chances. I do not think our runs have been indicative of what our performance can be. Tomi will make some changes tonight," explains Hammonds. "Hopefully, we can make better runs tomorrow morning."

"I am going to change a lot of things in the car that I have already run before. We are going back to some parts we tested that showed good promise," commented Laine. "We are number 16 and made it to the show. The game plan for tomorrow is to figure out the combination to beat Jason Line."

Hammonds will face number one qualifier Jason Line (6.554 sec./211.49 mph) in the first round of eliminations. Hammonds faced Line in the first round of eliminations only once in his career, this season in Phoenix, where he fouled.

Competition will be live on ESPN2. Check local listings for times.

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**About Tom Hammonds and Tom Hammonds Enterprises, LLC (THE)**

Racing since the age of 16, Chevrolet backed Tom Hammonds made a triumphant return to full-time drag racing at the Gatornationals Gainesville Raceway in March 2007. He is the only African American owner (Tom Hammonds Enterprises, LLC) and driver of a race team on the NHRA circuit. Previous owner of a Chevrolet dealership, Hammonds was drafted 9th overall in the 1989 NBA draft and enjoyed his career with Washington, Denver, Charlotte, and Minnesota, where he completed his career. Before his illustrious NBA career, he played college basketball at Georgia Tech, where his jersey was retired for being the fourth all time leading scorer and received a

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bachelors of science in business management. A native of Crestview, Fla., he was inducted into the All Sports Association Hall of Fame of Fort Walton Beach, Fla. in March 2007.

Tom Hammonds Enterprises, LLC (THE) is located in Holt, Fla. and was formed in 2005. THE takes pride in promoting high performance and safety in the sport of drag racing. Housing such programs as Tom Hammonds Engines, a program specifically for performance drivers to rent custom built engines, and Tom Hammonds Race for Achievement, a school program dedicated to revving the engines of education through student achievement, the company's mission is to make an impact on the sport of drag racing. THE is the only African American owned and driven team on the NHRA circuit. For more information, visit [www.tomhammondsracing.com](http://www.tomhammondsracing.com).