**Rickey Smith Bio**

Rickie Smith was an all-star athlete in high school with college scholarship offers waiting for him upon graduation. However, his love and fascination with racing was stronger so in 1973 he began his drag racing career in a Chevy powered Nova. From that day on, he has been a winner in multiple classes and associations.

Driving a Jack Roush powered Ford, Rickie notched his first IHRA Super Modified Championship in 1976 and his second one the following year. In 1979 he switched classes and in 1982 won his first of five IHRA Pro Stock World Championships. He also won consecutive IHRA Pro Stock World Championships in 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989. He dabbled in the oval track world part time in 1988 at the wheel of a NASCAR Busch Grand National car while still racing in IHRA Pro Stock.

Rickie began competing in NHRA events in 1990, making his first NHRA Pro Stock winner circle appearance in 1993 at Sears Point Raceway in Sonoma, CA. In 1996 he teamed up with Troy Humphrey in a Pontiac Firebird Pro Stock car and finished the year fifth in the NHRA standings. Halfway through the 1997 season he moved back to his IHRA roots in its Pro Modified class where he would finish third in the Championship points race.

In 1999 he was able to claim another NHRA Pro Stock win at the NHRA Supernationals in Houston, TX. For the next three years Rickie moved back and forth between IHRA in a Pro Modified car and NHRA in a Pro Stock car but when NHRA announced it would be hosting a Pro Modified class beginning in 2001 he not only moved over into that class, he also won NHRA’s first ever Pro Modified event.

Smith competed in Pro Modified on a limited basis in 2002 and 2003 but was able to post wins both years at the prestigious NHRA U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis, IN. He returned to the IHRA circuit again in 2006, this time in a Pro Stock Cobalt. Proving he was still a force to be reckoned with, he won his first return visit to the class. Along with finishing tenth in the IHRA Pro Stock Championship Points race his first year back, in 2007 he was named IHRA’s No. 1 Mountain Motor Racer of All Time and he captured its Pro Stock Tuner Challenge Award. In 2009, Rickie was inducted into the Bristol Motorsports Hall of Fame and also into its 220 MPH Club.

In 2010 Rickie was inducted into the North Carolina Drag Racing Hall of Fame. That same year, he added an additional class to his competition list, IHRA’s Nitrous Pro Modified class and he added another Association to his list, the American Drag Racing League where led its Championship Points race most of the season. 2014 was another good year for him where he won three NHRA Pro Mod Series races and his second Pro Mod Championship.

The years leading up to 2023 have proven to be very successful for Rickie with him posting numerous wins in Pro Mod. In 2016 he won a third NHRA Championship in the class and was able to lead the points from start to finish that year. Adding to his various Association wins and honors, in 2015 he competed on the PDRA circuit and won its class Championship. In 2023, Smith cut back and only ran three NHRA National events but ran a full season in PDRA finishing fourth in the class.

Even after suffering through serious back surgery and having to step out of the driver’s seat for part of a couple of seasons, Rickie has maintained his winning ways both as a crew chief and back in the driver’s seat notching class wins every year.

Adding to his other firsts, in 2013 his son Matt became the NHRA Pro Stock Motorcycle Champion and Rickie won the NHRA Pro Mod Championship, making them the first father/son Class Championship winners.