



MIKE GREEN: Crew Chief, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster

Birthdate: April 7, 1960

Birthplace: Sacramento, California

Hometown: Sacramento, California

Residence: Brownsburg, Indiana

Spouse: Diane

Children: Alexis

Mike Green loves a challenge. His quiet confidence exudes positivity on which all eight crew members of the U.S. Army Top Fuel team and eight-time NHRA Top Fuel champion Tony “The Sarge” Schumacher thrive. His journey has been filled chasing adrenaline with some of the greats to ever compete in professional drag racing.

The 2017 season marks Green’s ninth year directing the U.S. Army Top Fuel team and driver Schumacher, his legendary driver who claimed his eighth career Top Fuel world title in 2014 followed by a runner-up finish to Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammate and fellow U.S. Army driver Antron Brown in the 2015 championship chase, and an uncharacteristic eighth-place finish in the final standings in 2016.

Green, Schumacher and the U.S. Army camp look to return to the machine-like form they exhibited in 2014 and 2015 when they netted eight event titles, seven No. 1 qualifying efforts and a first- and second-place finish in the standings over a two-year span in which the NHRA’s Top Fuel class rose to its most competitive level in terms of potential winners week in and week out than ever before. That run came after a somewhat excruciating 18-month period of developing a brand new six-disc clutch system that finally began paying off big-time in the middle of that 2014 championship season.

And it’s a true testament to the foresight and creativity of Green the crew chief, who at the final run of the final weekend of the 2012 season found himself standing on the starting line at Auto Club Raceway in Pomona, California with a shot at claiming his second world championship only 1,000 feet away.

The way the season unfolded was classic Green style. A number of final-round appearances early in the season provided the foundation, and a June victory at Bristol (Tenn.) Dragway ended a winless streak that stretched to late in the 2010 campaign. In August, the U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster competed with a unique canopy cockpit that Green helped develop. Just weeks later, he helped Schumacher earn his record ninth U.S. Nationals Top Fuel victory. A good start and strong finish to the six-event Countdown to the Championship gave the U.S. Army team a chance to become a champion again.

But this time, the Hollywood ending didn’t play out. The team lost by .0081 of a second on the track and just seven points in the standings.

He and the U.S. Army team endured one of their most frustrating seasons in recent memory in 2013 when, despite three event titles and three other final-round appearances over the season’s opening 11 stops on the tour. Schumacher finished seventh in the season-ending point standings after a the last half of the season netted just a pair of semifinal-round appearances while a series of new setups, as well as new parts and pieces on the U.S. Army Dragster, just did not produce the expected results.

But the opportunity to win continues to drive Green, who has an intense passion to become the best.

With more than two decades of drag-racing experience under his belt, the native of Sacramento, California didn’t know racing was in his future despite his father’s affinity for restoring and performing other work on cars. Green also had a friend whose father worked at a machine shop. Ironically, as a senior in high school, Green worked at a machine shop through a regional occupational program that built racing engines of all kinds, with a blown alcohol drag boat running out of its shop.

He became involved with the drag boat and eventually met Don Turner, who owned a Top Alcohol dragster. Green’s budding friendship with Turner helped launch his career in drag racing.

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Green eventually went to work full-time with Top Alcohol Dragster racer Bill Barney and later with Kirk Lawrence in the same class. He crewed for Darrell Gwynn during the 1987 season on the Budweiser Top Fuel Dragster. After the first two events in 1988, he joined Gary Ormsby's Top Fuel team working with crew chief Lee Beard. Green played a vital role in Ormsby's 1989 Top Fuel world championship and runner-up finish in 1990.

Following the 1990 campaign, Green left Ormsby to lead the Top Fuel team owned by former Major League Baseball star Jack Clark. After financial problems sidelined that team, he went to work for Doug Herbert until the end of 1991 before making the switch to team owner Larry Minor's multicar operation.

He was hired primarily to assist Beard on the Ed McCulloch-driven Top Fuel Dragster but also assisted Beard on Cruz Pedregon's Funny Car, which Pedregon drove to the 1992 championship.

Green worked as crew chief on Pedregon's Funny Car before Joe Gibbs assumed ownership of the team in 1995. He rejoined Beard on the Top Fuel team, which Cory McClenathan drove to second place in the standings.

When Beard left the team after the 1996 season, Green was appointed crew chief on the Dragster driven by McClenathan, winning 13 events during the next two seasons and finishing second in the points both years. The pair collaborated to win 12 events from the second half of 1997 through the first half of 1998, including sweeping the grueling three-event "Western Swing" and winning five of six events during one stretch.

When Gibbs began to scale back his operation in 1999, Green left and reunited with Beard on Kenny Bernstein's Top Fuel team. After a year with Bernstein, he joined Don Prudhomme's Funny Car team, working 10 events in 2001. He started the 2002 season with Prudhomme's team and finished the year working on Darrell Gwynn's Top Fuel team with driver Andrew Cowin.

Green was rehired by Prudhomme for the 2003 season, working with Funny Car driver Tommy Johnson Jr. He spent five seasons in that role through the end of the 2007 season before joining DSR.

He began his stint with DSR tuning the FRAM Top Fuel Dragster piloted by Schumacher's teammate McClenathan. The Green-McClenathan duo finished third in the points after totaling one win in three final-round appearances and eight semifinal-round advancements.

Following that season, Green was selected to build a team that would surround Schumacher in his effort to win a sixth consecutive Top Fuel championship.

The 2009 season may go down as one of Green's greatest. He captured his first world championship as a crew chief while wearing the U.S. Army colors for the first time. Along the way, he directed Schumacher to five wins in seven final-round appearances with one of the victories coming at the prestigious Mac Tools U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis.

In 2010 and 2011, Green and his crew positioned Schumacher to battle for event wins and provided him a shot at winning the championship. Each year they finished inside the top-five in the points while collecting seven final-round appearances and six No. 1 qualifying spots.

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