



U.S. Army NHRA Racing

U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway Opening-Round Qualifying Report

Date: Aug. 31, 2012

Event: Lucas Oil NHRA Nationals (Round 17 of 23)

Series: NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing Series

Event: U.S. Nationals

Location: Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis

Provisional Pole Winner: Tony Schumacher (3.814 seconds at 324.67 mph)

U.S. Army Racing Lineup: Schumacher 1st (3.814 seconds at 324.67 mph)

Antron Brown 6th (3.844 seconds at 319.37 mph)

U.S. Army NHRA Racing Top Fuel drivers Tony “The Sarge” Schumacher and Antron Brown accomplished their first mission in Friday’s opening round of qualifying for the 58th annual U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis. Schumacher, the eight-time winner of this NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing Series event, looked right at home in earning the provisional pole with a run of 3.814 seconds at 324.67 mph in the U.S. Army ROTC Top Fuel Dragster. Brown posted a run of 3.844 seconds at 319.37 mph, sixth-best in the field of 26 Top Fuel entrants.

“Probably because of the weather conditions and the forecast of rain, more cars were more conservative,” said Schumacher, who is looking to earn his fourth top qualifying award of the season. “You had to play it smart and go out there and get it down the track. The key was to get the car down the racetrack. (U.S. Army crew chief) Mike (Green) and (assistant crew chief) Neal (Strausbaugh) did a great job getting it down the track and it was low (elapsed time). The entire U.S. Army team is definitely in a ‘refuse to accept defeat’ mode, and that bodes well for the rest of the weekend.”

With the possibility of foul weather during the remaining qualifying rounds Saturday and Sunday, Friday’s run was vital. Brown, the 2011 U.S. Nationals Top Fuel winner, made sure he put himself solidly in the field with a consistent pass to begin his run for a second straight U.S. Nationals victory.

“We expected a little more, but it was a good solid run to get us in the show and that’s what you need at the U.S. Nationals,” said Brown, who leads the Full Throttle Top Fuel standings heading into Saturday’s second and third rounds of qualifying. “The good part is that we made it down the track, and that’s the key element. We could’ve gone out there and been over-aggressive and found ourselves on the outside looking in because we didn’t make it down the track. I wouldn’t want to be in that position right now because, if the weather doesn’t cooperate the next couple of days, we’ll have to race based on what we did tonight. It took the kind of focus, precision and determination of the Army Soldiers we represent to get the job done today. I’m truly proud.”

For nearly a decade, Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis has been a personal stomping ground for Schumacher. His eight U.S. Nationals victories tie him with legendary drag racer “Big Daddy” Don Garlits. With a victory Monday, he would stand alone in the Top Fuel ranks. Friday’s opening-round qualifying run underscored his passion for racing in Indy.

“I’d rather race here than anywhere else because of the amount of success we’ve had,” said Schumacher, who has made it to 10 U.S. Nationals finals in 16 appearances at Lucas Oil Raceway. “We went nearly two seasons with one victory, so it feels good to be getting back to the way we used to be – (being here at Indy) with the car running well.”

Two more qualifying sessions are scheduled for the Top Fuel cars Saturday at 3:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. EDT, and within those qualifying rounds will be the \$100,000-to-win Traxxas Nitro Shootout. Brown enters that all-star race-within-a-race as the top seed and will face Brandon Bernstein in the opening round. Schumacher is the third seed and will face Morgan Lucas.

Qualifying concludes Sunday. Monday’s race is slated for an 11 a.m. start. ESPN2 will broadcast qualifying coverage Sunday at 11 a.m. and 5 p.m. Coverage of Monday’s elimination rounds will be live on ESPN2 beginning at 11 a.m.