



ARMY STRONG®



TONY SCHUMACHER & ANTRON BROWN

U.S. Army Teammates Venture into Historic, New Territory at New England Dragway

EPPING, N.H. (June 19, 2013) – Just a week removed from the U.S. Army’s 238th birthday celebration at the NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals at Bristol (Tenn.) Dragway, the U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster duo of Tony “The Sarge” Schumacher and Antron Brown head for the first time to a historic part of the country where it all began for the U.S. Army back in 1775.

An hour’s drive north of Boston, one of the sites where the first Continental Army was assembled for the purpose of protecting our Nation from impending invasion by the British, Schumacher, Brown and their fellow NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series competitors will take to New England Dragway in Epping, N.H., for the first national event in series history – this weekend’s Auto-Plus NHRA New England Nationals.

That means New Englanders will catch their first live glimpse of the 10,000-horsepower Top Fuel Dragsters driven by Schumacher, the seven-time world champion and current Top Fuel points leader, and Brown, the defending series champion. Both Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) drivers are on a mission to prove that only the strongest wear the colors of the U.S. Army, and that its Soldiers possess a mental, emotional and physical strength like no other at the historic dragstrip that opened back in 1966.

Schumacher and Brown have captured two event titles apiece through the season’s first 10 events, a number surpassed only by Al-Anabi Racing’s Shawn Langdon, the season’s only other multiple-event winner with three victories. Schumacher retook the Top Fuel lead despite a second-round exit Sunday in Bristol. On the strength of his event titles at Phoenix and Las Vegas, five final-round appearances altogether, and a 20-8 elimination-round record this season, “The Sarge” and the U.S. Army Dragster team are certainly in championship form.

Brown, meanwhile, is looking for a fresh start in this weekend’s brand new setting for the Mello Yello Series after he and the Matco Tools/U.S. Army Dragster team for DSR have endured their struggles, of late. Brown powered his way to event titles in impressive fashion at Gainesville, Fla., and Atlanta earlier this season, but those efforts have been offset by the disappointment of first-round losses at five of the last six stops on the tour, dropping Brown to fourth in the Top Fuel standings behind Schumacher, Langdon and DSR teammate Spencer Massey.

No matter, considering each member of the U.S. Army Racing team plays a vital role in the success of the car on the track, just like every Soldier, no matter which of the more than 150 career options he or she chooses in the Army, is vital to the success of the mission, it’s a good bet both Schumacher and Brown will thrive in the place where it all began for the U.S. Army a week and 238 years ago this weekend.

TONY “THE SARGE” SCHUMACHER, driver of the U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster:

You’re heading to a brand new event for the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series this weekend. What does that mean for the U.S. Army team?

“It means the locals can feel safe, the U.S. Army’s in town. What it means is that we’re bringing the U.S. Army team, which represents the strength of our Nation, and whose Soldiers are the strength of our Army, to a whole new audience, live and in-person. We will proudly put on display this Army-NHRA partnership, which provides Americans a platform to experience the power, speed, teamwork and technology that drives that strength. It’s always special to participate in an inaugural event. Historically, it seems like we’ve won inaugural races quite often, or at least performed well. Most importantly, I’m glad they picked a beautiful part of the country to visit at this point in the schedule. This is just a magnificent place in every respect. There is history. The U.S. Army has history there. The track has been there for almost a half-century and has been the focal point for drag racing in New England. This will be its first national event, and I know they’ve worked hard to be sure it’s ready for the kind of crowds we expect this weekend, as well as all that goes with our travelling road show. It’s going to be really cool because I’m sure most of the fans who come out this weekend have never seen the power and the excitement of Top Fuel racing. We’re going to love showing what we do out there from week to week to a whole, new audience. It’s an incredible show and the fans are in for a real treat.”

Considering you'll be seeing the track for the very first time when you arrive this weekend, do you change your usual approach at all?

"Anyone who knows me knows that I don't change my ways for any reason. On one hand, it's a beautiful setting, and we're happy to be racing in that part of the country for the first time. On the other hand, we have to treat it like every other race. There is just one chance to win an inaugural race, so there is perhaps that extra motivation to be the first name on the list of winners at the racetrack. I think it's going to be spectacular, to tell you the truth. The air conditions are going to be beautiful. We'll be down right around sea level. Once it's showtime, we'll be focusing on getting our U.S. Army Dragster down the track just as fast as we possibly can each and every time. That focus never changes, no matter where we're at."

You're back in the lead in the Top Fuel championship, albeit by just one point over Shawn Langdon. This is shaping up to be quite the battle between you two for the championship. How do you see the rest of the regular season playing out?

"It's going to be an absolutely crazy, wicked battle all the way. We have two teams who are very familiar with each other, who at one time had very similar equipment and approaches to racing, now racing each other as closely as we have been with dramatically different stuff and approaches. We're trading punches each and every week and it's become a classic battle of two great teams, two great driver lineups, and that's the kind of stuff people tune in to watch on TV and pay money to come see in-person. If I'm a fan, that's just the way I want it to be. But, by no means are we holding court while the others are standing by. There are a dozen cars out there who could win at any time, so it's about as competitive from top to bottom as it's ever been. Look at that great performance Steve Torrence and his team put in last week at Bristol. Bob Vandergriff and our teammate Spencer Massey have won races this year. But, in the big picture of things, it has indeed come down to the Schumacher and Al-Anabi teams, and it'll be a matter of which team is more capable of excelling during those monster moments that make or break a championship run, and fighting off all the other teams that emerge as championship contenders. This is what it's all about."

ANTRON BROWN, driver of the Matco Tools/U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster:

It's been a rough stretch for you and the Matco Tools/U.S. Army team. This weekend, you get a fresh start at a new addition to the schedule for the NHRA's top competitors. What is the team's mindset headed to New Hampshire?

"We just have to keep staying on our plan and keep our focus. We just need to beat this resistance with persistence. It beats you up, gets you frustrated. But I'm on this team because things like this bring us closer together. They're all working hard, and we know eventually hard work will pay off. We learn from every experience that we have in this sport. I've been in it for 16 years, now. When you go through the down times, you can't let it keep pulling you down. You have to keep picking at it. I'm confident it will turn around."

You tested Monday in Bristol. How did that go, and did you discover any new wrinkles that will help you at New Hampshire?

"It was all good. We accomplished what we wanted to by changing a couple of things so we can start off right at Epping. We're going through a point, now, when you have to regroup, but it shows how tough the competition is. As a team, we're just down a little bit, now, but we're getting back to where we need to be. We have to take those bumps and bruises and keep on pushing."

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