



Schumacher Races U.S. Army Dragster to Chicago Victory **Seven-time Top Fuel Champion Defeats U.S. Army Teammate Brown in Hometown Triumph**

Date: June 30, 2013

Event: 16th annual O'Reilly Auto Parts Route 66 NHRA Nationals (Round 12 of 24)

Series: NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series

Location: Route 66 Raceway (Joliet, Ill.)

Top Fuel Winner: Tony Schumacher of Don Schumacher Racing

U.S. Army Racing Finish: Tony Schumacher – started 2nd, defeated Clay Millican in final round.

Antron Brown – started 11th, lost to Schumacher in semifinal.

It was the perfect exclamation point to a superb week for U.S. Army Top Fuel driver Tony “The Sarge” Schumacher. The Chicagoland area native started the week by celebrating his beloved Chicago Blackhawks winning the Stanley Cup, and he closed the week thrilling his legion of fans at his hometown track by winning his 72nd career Mello Yello Series Top Fuel event Sunday in the 16th annual O'Reilly Auto Parts Route 66 NHRA Nationals at Route 66 Raceway in Joliet, Ill.

The week ended on a pretty good note for his U.S. Army teammate Antron Brown as well. The 2012 Top Fuel champion raced to his sixth semifinal of the season before being edged out by Schumacher. With their efforts, the U.S. Army Racing duo continues to remind Americans that the Army is the strength of the Nation, and the Soldiers are the strength of our Army.

Schumacher, driver of the U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster for Don Schumacher Racing (DSR), raced to his fourth Route 66 Raceway victory in dramatic fashion as his dragster exploded across the finish line. He beat Clay Millican in the final with a run of 3.930 seconds at 269.29 mph after taking out David Grubnic, Khalid alBalooshi, and Brown en route to his 125th career final appearance.

“You get to the final at your hometown track and you tell yourself that you don’t get many opportunities like this,” said Schumacher. “You’re sitting there and thinking I’ve got one shot at this. Three seconds from now I can be holding that trophy. There’s so much pressure to win at your home track, but it’s so gratifying when you can actually pull it off. I couldn’t do it alone, and I always say my U.S. Army team is pressure team. They know how to identify pressure situations and also had to perform in them. Those guys battled all day to keep a great car underneath me. The conditions were unlike anything we had on Friday and Saturday. I know everyone is a little disappointed we blew it up (in the final round), but we were going to blow it up either way. Winning is certainly the better outcome.”

The seven-time Top Fuel champion, who started the 2013 season by winning two of the first four races, won for the first time in seven events and was part of a DSR Funny Car and Top Fuel double. DSR’s Matt Hagan added to his lead in the championship standings by racing the Magneti Marelli/Rocky Boots Dodge Charger to victory over John Force just before Schumacher scored his victory.

“It was a great day for Don Schumacher Racing with another double-up [Matt Hagan’s Funny Car win],” said Schumacher. “That makes 37 times DSR has won both the Top Fuel and Funny Car trophies at an event. I’m just privileged to have been part of 21 of them. Today was so personally gratifying with all the family and friends I had here rooting us on. We’re leaving with the points lead and thinking big picture. It was a great weekend for everyone involved with this team.”

For Brown, the first goal Sunday was to snap a run of four consecutive first round losses. The reigning champion had circled Chicago as place where he could turn things around in the Matco Tools/U.S. Army Dragster. Brown won the event last year and proved to be Schumacher’s toughest obstacle Sunday.

“We gave our teammate a run for the money,” said Brown. “We were right there with him all the way, and he just nipped us at the end. We lost a cylinder a little bit before the finish line and that might have been the difference. Being there with him at the stripe was refreshing. We really don’t want to let wins get away, but being that close today charges us up even more to go into the next race.”

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Brown opened the event by taking out his DSR teammate Spencer Massey with his best pass of the weekend at 3.789 seconds at 320.51mph. In the second round, he raced past Bob Vandergriff, who had beaten Brown in three previous 2013 matchups.

“We needed this,” said Brown, who advanced to his sixth semifinal of the season. “It was definitely a great weekend for our whole Matco Tools/U.S. Army team. We kept pulling together. We took a lot of bumps, bruises and blows during the last seven races, but we just stayed together. It’s just a testament to how great the unity of this team is. The rougher it got, the more we pulled together. No one was fighting or causing more turmoil. We just got closer and closer. Those four first round loses really brought our team together even stronger and closer with the new guys we have on our team.”

The victory also moved Schumacher back to the top spot in the Top Fuel point standings. He leads Shawn Langdon by 37 points (973-936). Brown remains in fourth and trails the leader by 208 points.

With 12 events complete on the 24-event NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series calendar for 2013, the top-10 drivers in the Top Fuel standings are:

- 1. Tony Schumacher (973 points)**
2. Shawn Langdon (936 points, -37)
3. Spencer Massey (869 points, -104)
- 4. Antron Brown (765 points, -208)**
5. Doug Kalitta (703 points, -270)
6. Khalid alBalooshi (657 points, -316)
7. Clay Millican (620 points, -353)
8. Morgan Lucas (608 points, -365)
9. Bob Vandergriff (559 points, -414)
10. Steve Torrence (549 points, -424)

The next event is the seventh annual Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals July 5-7 at Summit Motorsports Park in Norwalk, Ohio.

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