



‘The Sarge’ Makes History at U.S. Nationals ***Schumacher Wins Ninth Top Fuel Crown; Brown Races to Semifinals***

Date:	Sept. 9, 2012
Event:	U.S. Nationals (Round 17 of 23)
Series:	NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing Series
Location:	Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis
Top Fuel Winner:	Tony Schumacher of Don Schumacher Racing
U.S. Army Racing Finish:	Schumacher – started 4 th , defeated Spencer Massey in final Antron Brown – started 3 rd , lost to Massey in semifinal

There is just something about Indianapolis that brings out the best in U.S. Army NHRA Top Fuel driver Tony “The Sarge” Schumacher.

Despite having to wait an extra week to complete his mission of becoming the all-time winningest Top Fuel driver in U.S. Nationals history, Schumacher returned to his old form, delivering four consecutive knockout punches at the famous Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis drag strip en route to his record-breaking ninth U.S. Nationals Top Fuel win Sunday.

Schumacher beat his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammate Spencer Massey in the final with a run of 3.806 seconds, 315.34 mph. Massey trailed at 3.828 seconds, 319.37 mph.

U.S. Army driver Antron Brown flexed his muscle early but narrowly missed joining Schumacher in the final when his DSR teammate Massey took him out with a run of 3.807 seconds, compared to Brown’s run of 3.829 seconds in the first semifinal.

“Today was probably the most gratifying of the nine wins,” Schumacher said. “With the chance to win my ninth, I have to go against my teammate, who I know has been qualifying better and running as good as or better than us, and for them to have lane choice, it was just a perfect moment. To leave on Spencer at the light was just great. My goal for the day was to leave on everyone at the light. I did that. (Crew chief) Mike (Green) and all the Army guys made the car go fast, and here we are with another trophy.”

After winning eight U.S. Nationals titles in a 10-year span, Schumacher seemed to have Indy locked down every year. But when he didn’t win drag racing’s most prestigious event in 2010 or 2011, some questioned if there was a changing of the guard in the Top Fuel division. But Schumacher made it clear Sunday that he still has a firm grip on Indy.

“What a special place,” said Schumacher, who defeated Hillary Will, Morgan Lucas and Shane Langdon on his way to his 11th final in 17 U.S. Nationals appearances. “Indy has been so great. The U.S. Nationals was my first-ever Top Fuel race in 1996. From the first push of the pedal at this racetrack, it’s been special to me. And it was right here back in 2000 when the U.S. Army teamed up with us. There were a lot of great Soldiers here today, so to be able to give back to them what we’ve created with these wins is so rewarding. The freedom they give us and sacrifices they make just so we can do this is unbelievable. I love every one of them. What an awesome win and an awesome place.”

The victory pushed Schumacher past Top Fuel legend “Big Daddy” Don Garlits and tied “The Sarge” with Pro Stock legend Bob Glidden as the only drivers with nine U.S. Nationals victories.

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“I really wish ‘Big Daddy’ would’ve been here today,” Schumacher said. “I know he’s at home taking care of his wife, and family always comes first. I really appreciated the fact that he was behind my car and clapping when we won my eighth (in 2009). He’s done so much for the sport. I don’t ever want to feel like we’re taking anything away from him. He had a great record in a different time period. He accomplished so much. Someday someone is going to pass me, I’m sure.”

Despite being derailed in his attempt to become only the sixth driver to win consecutive U.S. Nationals in the Top Fuel division, Brown had another solid outcome in the MATCO Tools/U.S. Army Top Fuel dragster.

“We had a great weekend,” said Brown, who defeated T.J. Zizzo and J.R. Todd in the opening rounds. “We secured the No. 1 spot for the Countdown, so we accomplished the mission we set out to do. We wanted to bring it to the winner’s circle, but a clutch disc disintegrated on our last run against Spencer. This is going to serve as some motivation for all of us heading into the Countdown.

“Our hats are off to Spencer and his Prestone/FRAM boys, and of course to Tony for winning the U.S. Nationals again. It was great to see our DSR teammates in the final, but trust me, I wish it was our team enjoying the win.”

The O’Reilly Auto Parts NHRA Nationals presented by Super Start Batteries Sept. 14-16 at zMax Dragway in Concord, N.C., kicks off the six-race, 10-driver Countdown to the Championship. The Top Fuel standings were reset following the first 17 rounds of the 23-race schedule. Brown earned the No. 1 seed and heads to Charlotte with a 30-point advantage on Massey and a 40-point edge on Schumacher. Just 110 points separate Brown from No. 10 seed Bob Vandergriff Jr.

Ranked in order by their seeding, the drivers competing for this year’s NHRA Top Fuel championship are:

- 1. Antron Brown (2,110 points)**
2. Spencer Massey (2,080 points, -30)
- 3. Tony Schumacher (2,070 points, -40)**
4. Steve Torrence (2,060 points, -50)
5. Doug Kalitta (2,050 points, -60)
6. Morgan Lucas (2,040 points, -70)
7. Shawn Langdon (2,030 points, -80)
8. Brandon Bernstein (2,020 points, -90)
9. David Grubnic (2,010 points, -100)
10. Bob Vandergriff Jr. (2,000 points, -110)

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