

**AFTER HISTORIC MOMENT FUNNY CAR DRIVER COURTNEY FORCE READY TO KEEP PUSHING FORWARD**

Growing up around the sport and having a legendary driver for a father, Courtney Force knew all about the history of females succeeding in the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series and what was on the line as she faced off with Funny Car veteran Cruz Pedregon in the final round at Topeka on May 25th.

But as she prepared to make her own historic moment in earning the milestone 100th NHRA victory by a female, Force could not help but think back to her childhood.

“As a kid growing up watching my dad (John Force) race, his biggest competitor out there was Cruz Pedregon,” Courtney Force said. “They both had good cars and they were both great drivers. I kind of felt like I was a part of history, always watching him race my dad. Then to have me in the lane next to him, all of my childhood was flashing before my eyes. Cruz is one of the toughest guys out there and luckily we were able to get that win.”

Several of those childhood memories certainly came at Bristol Dragway, which plays host to the 14th annual Ford NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals. It marks the 10th of 24 events during the 2014 NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series season and historic Thunder Valley has served as the backdrop for many spectacular John Force moments, including last year when the elder Force picked up his fourth win at the scenic track on Father’s Day weekend by beating Pedregon in the final.

Steve Torrence (Top Fuel) and Rodger Brogdon (Pro Stock) also were last year’s winners of the event that will be televised nationally on ESPN2.

But Courtney Force has a landmark moment of her own, thanks to her victory in Topeka. She was thankful for the immediate opportunity to again try for the 100th

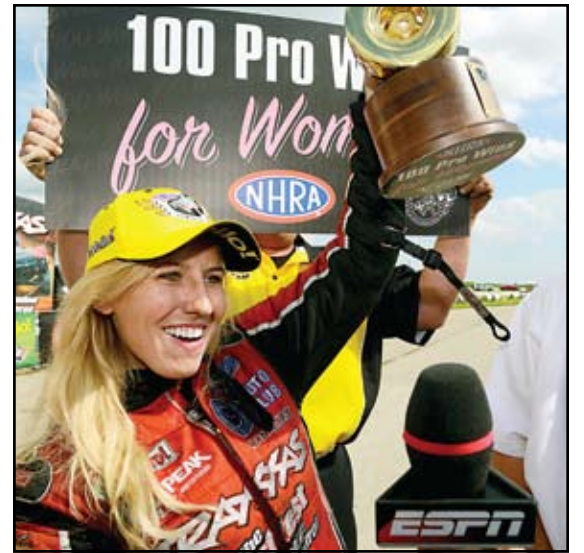
win by a female after an emotional final-round loss the previous week in Atlanta to teammate and Funny Car points leader Robert Hight.

Force responded in impressive fashion in Topeka, as she and her sister, Top Fuel driver Brittany Force, both qualified No. 1 to become the first pair of sisters to qualify No. 1 at the same event in NHRA history. She then went 4.148 seconds in the final round en route to making history in her Traxxas Ford Mustang.

“It was a very memorable moment for me to get that milestone and have my name in the history books,” Force said. “It wasn’t until that win light came on that I started going, ‘Oh my gosh, we just did that.’ There was so much going through my head at the time, but it was definitely a huge accomplishment for my team.”

“I had the passion and that was the most important thing,” Force said. “I was a kid telling all my elementary class that I was going to grow up and be a racecar driver and compete against my dad. Everybody kind of thought that was a pipe dream. (But) we definitely have the passion and drive for it. We work hard and have a great team behind us. I think that’s what makes you a better driver, the passion you have for it. As long as you come back and try again the next weekend, I think that’s the most important thing.”

Coming off her historic moment, Force is ready to push forward and continue her strong stretch. Perhaps this season she can give her dad a Father’s Day present with a victory at Bristol Dragway. The recent win and back-to-back final round appearances could be the jumpstart to her season as she currently sits fifth in points. Hight and the elder Force are well ahead of the pack in the standings, while other drivers to watch in the 10,000-



horsepower category at Bristol include Ron Capps (three wins), Del Worsham (two wins), local favorite and Southwest Virginia cattle rancher Matt Hagan and two-time season winner Alexis DeJoria.

“Consistency is the key,” Force said. “To be a champion, you have to take it one race at a time. That’s definitely where I ultimately want to be. I want to get my first championship for myself and for women (in Funny Car). You have to work hard. There’s some tough competitors out here. We’re just going to work hard and hopefully have a consistent race car.”

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