

BROWN RACES TO THIRD MAC TOOLS U.S. NATIONALS WIN

Antron Brown completed the weekend sweep with a victory over NHRA Full Throttle Drag Series Top Fuel points leader Del Worsham to score his second career US Nationals victory in Monday's 57th annual Mac Tools U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway near Indianapolis, Ind.

Hector Arana III celebrated his first career NHRA win in Pro Stock Motorcycle, while Funny Car points leader Mike Neff and Pro Stock leader Greg Anderson took home victories in the final race of the season before the Countdown to the Championship begins

In a matchup pitting two former US Nationals champions, Brown - a US Nationals winner in the Pro Stock Motorcycle class in 2004 - defeated Worsham, the 2005 US Nationals Funny Car champion, to claim his 14th Top Fuel victory and 30th-career NHRA victory.

After winning the no. 1 qualifier spot on Sunday, Brown topped Shawn Langdon, Doug Kalitta and Larry Dixon to reach his third final round appearance in the last four races to take on Worsham, who knocked off Troy Buff, Terry McMillen and Brandon Bernstein to reach his eighth final of the year.

Facing each other for the first time in the finals, both drivers hit great lights to leave the starting line side by side, running dead even until Brown edged ahead in the final 400 feet to take the win with a run of 3.813 at 321.73 mph over Worsham, who ran 3.830, 320.43.

Brown's win marked the first time since 1999 that the US Nationals Top Fuel winner wasn't Larry Dixon or Tony Schumacher.

"Words cannot even describe how this feels," said Brown. "To come here at Indy, where the biggest stage is set...and do what we did.

"We qualify no. 1, then to come

out here on race day, race Larry Dixon, the champ, get past him and get Del Worsham, the other AI-Anabi car - if they don't get you once, they got another one coming - and when you get two bullets shot at you like that, you got a slim chance at making it, but we made it. To get this win, it goes beyond words."

Despite the loss, Worsham remains the Top Fuel points leader by 110 over Brown.

Funny Car points leader Mike Neff moved into the Countdown with his fifth victory of the season after beating Bob Tasca III with a pass of 4.068 at 314.61 mph after Tasca lost power at the 600-foot mark.

Neff advanced to his first US Nationals final round after winning out over teammate Robert Hight, Jeff Arend and Matt Hagan to face Tasca, who bested John Force, Melanie Troxel and Ron Capps.

Neff, who spent 2010 as John Force's crew chief before being tapped to sub for Ashley Force Hood in the John Force Racing Ford Mustang this season, enters the Countdown as the Funny Car points leader by 215 points over Jack Beckman.

Greg Anderson finally got the edge up on teammate Jason Line with his fifth Pro Stock win of the season, ending Line's final round win streak at four.

Anderson, who just barely lost the no. 1 qualifier position to Line on the final run of Sunday's qualifying session, topped Mark Martino, Rodger Brogdon and Mike Edwards to meet Line, who cruised to his fifth final round of the season with wins over Buddy Perkinson, Erica Enders and Allen Johnson.

After losing to Line in the finals three times previously this season, Anderson got the win with a holeshot victory, nailing a .033 light at the line and leading all the way with a 6.552



Photo courtesy of NHRA

at 210.50 mph over Line, who went 6.538, 210.83 and finished up the regular season trailing Anderson by 53 points.

In Pro Stock Motorcycle, Hector Arana III - the son of former series champion and Indy winner Hector Arana - ended Gerald Savoie's Cinderella run, winning his first career NHRA nationals victory in just his 10th-career start.

Arana took out Angie Smith, defending Indy winner LE Tonglet and Chip Ellis to advance to his second straight final round, taking on fellow rookie Savoie.

Savoie, a 52-year old alligator farmer from Louisiana, pulled off holeshot victories over Karen Stoffer and Eddie Krawiec and then eliminated Jim Underdahl to reach his first career final round.

The final, Savoie got off the starting line first with a .006 light, but Arana trucked him down to post the win with a 6.867, 192.60 over Savoie's 7.005, 189.36.

"It doesn't get any better than this," said Arana III. "This is the biggest race of the year. I did it in my rookie year, and for all my family it's a hometown event.

"At the final round at Brainerd,

we slipped and we didn't look at the weather and we got lost on our tuneup and it cost us the win, this time we made sure we stayed on top of the weather, and we picked up tremendously. We did good this time."

Krawiec finished up the weekend still holding the PSM points lead over Tonglet by 68 points.

- Story by Pete McCole



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