

2015 NHRA Amalie Motor Oil Gatornationals

Story by Phillip Prichard, MSA

The NHRA swung into Auto-Plus Raceway in Gainesville, Florida for the 2015 NHRA Amalie Motor Oil Gatornationals for the first eastern stop on the 2015 schedule. The race sponsor, Amalie Motor Oil is headquartered in Tampa, Florida. The four-day event kept fans on the edge of their seats for the racing action.

The Top Fuel Division and the Funny Car Division was dominated by Don Schumacher Racing.

Spencer Massey defeated team mate, Tony Schumacher in the final round with a quick time of 3.882 seconds in the 1000 foot track with a speed of 320.74 mph. Spencer Massey defeated his team mate, Antron Brown in the Semi-Finals. Schumacher defeated point's leader, Shawn Langdon in the semi-finals.

Ron Capps defeated John Hale in the Funny car Final with a time of 4.115 seconds with a top speed of 311.05. Capps defeated Tim Wilkerson in the Semi-Final and John Hale defeated Blake Alexander in the Semi-Final.

Car owner, Don Schumacher was on hand to savor the victories. This was first trip back to the races following cancer treatment for Stage 1 cancer of his tongue

and neck. Capps stated having Don here was his incentive to win. Schumacher stated he was now cancer free.

Greg Anderson ended at 59-race drought with a 6.538 second victory over his team mate, Jason Line. Last season, Greg Anderson missed the season's first five race due to heart surgery.

Karen Stoffer won the Pro Stock Motorcycle Division with a winning time of 6.9 seconds and 195.11 MPH defeating Eddie Krawiec. Her one Suzuki motorcycle, one engine team, made history with the 198th victory by a woman in NHRA. This was Stoffer's first victory since 2011 and her seventh overall.

Bob Rahaim picked up the Pro Mod victory on Sunday with his Corvette with a 5.957 second pass.

A scary crash occurred on Saturday when Larry Dixon's Top fuel dragster broke apart and went airborne at 280 mph. At about three quarters through the 1000-foot run, the car bowed and broke in half. The rear portion with the engine and cockpit went about 20 feet in the air. Dixon was not injured. The crash caused a 47-minute delay to clean up the wreckage.

Point leaders headed into the Four Wide Nationals at ZMax Dragway are Shawn Landon, Top Fuel; Matt Hagan, Funny Car; Roger Brogdon, Pro Stock



THANKS KEN HOLDER (NATIONAL SALES MANAGER AMALIE OIL CO.) FOR THE HOSPITALITY TO MSA AND ALL THE FANS WHO ATTENDED.
Photo: F.L. Hanyon

and Karen Stoffer, Pro Stock Motorcycle.

Brittany Force in the John Force Racing Top Fuel dragster was the top performer of the JFR cars making it into the quarter finals. All of the three JFR Funny Cars ere defeated in the first round.

The Gatornationals is an annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) national drag racing event held each March in Gainesville, Florida. The event was held for the first time in 1970. This the traditional East Coast opener and the

season's first of 16 events for Pro Stock Motorcycle riders. The event is one of the sport's most revered with a rich tradition of history-making performances. This hallowed ground has entertained spring-break-loving fans for decades with such notable occasions as the first 260-mph Top Fuel and Funny Car runs in 1984 and the first 270-mph and 300-mph Top Fuel passes, in 1986 and 1992, respectively. Its 675-foot concrete launchpad is one of the longest on the tour.



All photos by F.L. Hanyon unless otherwise noted