

Capps, Langdon, Nobile and Arana, Jr. earn victories at the NHRA Sonoma Nationals

In an exciting Funny Car final, Ron Capps raced to his second win of the season Sunday and continued his recent domination at the NHRA Sonoma Nationals.

Shawn Langdon (Top Fuel), Vincent Nobile (Pro Stock) and Hector Arana Jr. (Pro Stock Motorcycle) also were winners of the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series event, the 15th of 24 in the 2013 season.

Capps powered his NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger to his fourth win at the scenic Bay Area track with a holed performance of 4.085 seconds at 307.79 mph to hold off the Castrol GTX Ford Mustang of 15-time world champion John Force in the final round. It marked the 40th career win for the California native.

"You're not just racing any car in the final - you're racing John Force," said Capps, who has won at Sonoma Raceway three of the last four seasons. "It can be intimidating to a lot of people."

"This place has a lot of great memories," he added. "We have a big NAPA presence here and were the only Don Schumacher Racing car in the final. No pressure, right? I try to stay humble. I have a lot of great people behind me to keep me focused. I think we can accomplish that goal of getting to the top."

Capps outran Del Worsham, Jeff Arend, and Courtney Force to reach the final round. He leaves the event No. 2 in the Mello Yello points standings, his highest ranking since he left the Gainesville event tied for first in mid-March. Event top qualifier Matt Hagan, who was upset in the opening round by Alexis DeJoria, continues to lead the series standings by 27 points over Capps.

In Top Fuel, points leader Langdon claimed his fourth win of the season and fifth of his career by defeating former high school classmate Morgan Lucas in the final round. Langdon powered his Al-Anabi Racing dragster to a performance of 3.920 at 240.47 to hold off Lucas'



Ron Capps

GEICO/Lucas Oil dragster, which slowed near mid-track.

"This is a dream season," Langdon said. "To get four wins at this point in the season feels like we have a strong car. Racing Morgan was pretty cool because we grew up together and went to high school together. A lot of memories racing with friends."

With the win, his first at Sonoma, Langdon extends his series points lead to 102 over second place Spencer Massey. Langdon outran Houston winner Bob Vandergrieff, veteran Doug Kalitta and defending world champion Antron Brown to advance to the final round.

In Pro Stock, Nobile and his Mountain View Tire Dodge Avenger team picked up their second win of the season. In the final round, Nobile drove to victory with a performance of 6.572 seconds at 208.58 mph against four-time world champion Jeg Coughlin Jr. whose JEGS.com/Mopar Avenger shook the tires and shut off.

"This was an interesting day for sure but we were long overdue for a win," Nobile said. "In the final, our engine was hurt in the water box and I thought I was a sitting duck. That's a helpless feeling. Jeg is someone I've always looked up to when I was little. He is still one of the best, if not the best driver out here."

The victory is Nobile's second of the season and seventh of his career, moving him to fifth in points. Nobile defeated Jason Line, points leader and event top qualifier Mike Edwards and Greg Anderson to reach the final round.

In Pro Stock Motorcycle, Arana Jr. claimed his fourth

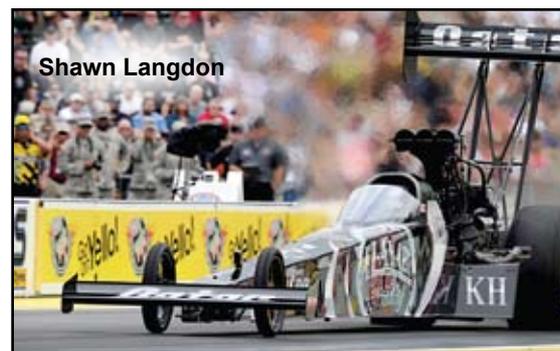
win of the season, riding his Lucas Oil Buell to a performance of 6.878 at 195.45 to beat event top qualifier and Viper Motorcycle Company Buell rider Matt Smith in the final round. It is Arana Jr.'s seventh career victory and first at Sonoma.

"It was nice to have a little momentum to get back to the top," Arana Jr. said. "It had been a while for us. After I won those three races, I started to think about winning the race before winning the first round. Not anymore."

Arana Jr. beat Scotty Pollacheck, Jerry Savoie and Katie Sullivan to reach the final round. With the victory, Arana Jr. remains the series points leader. With the runner-up finish Smith clinched a berth into the Countdown to the Championship, NHRA's six-race postseason playoffs that begin Sept. 13-15 at zMAX Dragway near Charlotte, N.C. (Photos courtesy of NHRA Media)



Hector Arana, Jr.



Shawn Langdon



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