

"Here Be Dragons"

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Photos by MSA Staff

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Mythology tells us that centuries ago — mapmakers formerly placed the warning — "Here Be Dragons" — at the edges of their known world. This marked the boundaries of regions where only the fearless dared to venture.

Recently, I discovered a region of racing — one that I had not witnessed in person — where that phase could very well be applied.

I watched courageous drivers, two by two — buckle themselves into

ferocious, fiery monsters — and then launch those beasts into the unknown. It was nitromethane drag racing — and I will never be the same!

I wish that you all could have been there with me — viewing the staging area — as the crews fed these man-made dragons appetizers of methanol to give them a rumbling awakening — and then hear the explosive change as they began to feed nitromethane to the monsters.

And then — with raw fuel bellowing out of the exhaust pipes — daring pilots rolled these rockets through "a water box" and lit their tires. Thundering and ear piercing — but the "burn out" was only a tease. The best



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was yet to come.

When the two dragons were staged and ready to race — a green light! Suddenly an explosion comparable to igniting TNT takes place. The ground under your feet quakes — the shock blast from the explosion hits your body — and the roar is deafening!

The two dragons — drinking nitromethane and breathing fire — flamed down the track — crossing the finish line in approximately four seconds — with speeds approaching

330 mph!

According to GOOGLE — when the nitro cars accelerate from the starting line — an earthquake registering up to 3.9 on the Richter scale takes place. The sound of the explosion can be heard up to eight miles away.

TrackBite

The NHRA preps their tracks with a biodegradable resin called TrackBite — a sticky compound that



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