

# "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!

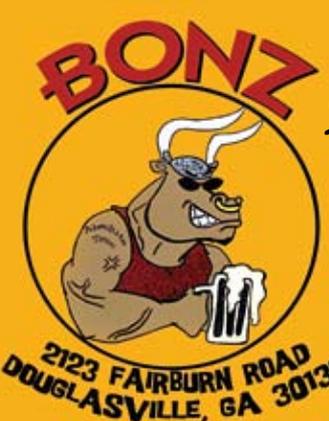
The two dragons — drinking nitromethane and breathing fire — flamed down the track — crossing the finish line in approximately four seconds — with speeds approaching

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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