

# 49th Annual Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals at Gainesville Raceway

Story: Phillip Prichard, MSA / Photos: MSA Staff

Hector Arana Jr. made history by breaking the 200-mph barrier on his Pro Stock Motorcycle, becoming the first rider to enter the DENSO Spark Plugs 200 MPH Club and received a \$10,000 prize.

His 200.23 mph pass during the second qualifying session eclipsed his record of 199.88 set at Charlotte 1 in 2015.

Jack Beckman claimed his first Funny Car victory at Gainesville with a hole-shot win of 4.035 seconds at 323.58 mph in his Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T against teammate Matt Hagan. After earning the No. 1 qualifier on Saturday, Beckman secured his first victory since St. Louis 2017.

“Winning this race was such a bucket-list thing,” Beckman said, “The Gatornationals came on the schedule in 1970, that year was a big year for our sport and it has been at this track ever since and I’ve never gotten close.”

Beckman raced against Jim Campbell, Del Worsham, and Shawn Langdon before entering his first final round of the season.

Matt Hagan and Robert Hight experienced side-by-side explosions during the quarterfinals destroying the Funny Car bodies of both competitors. Hagan brought out a back-up car to defeat teammate Ron Capps in the semi-finals to advance to his second final round of the season.

Richie Crampton took home the Top Fuel victory. Crampton got the uncontested win when he piloted his Kalitta Air/DHL dragster to the winning run of 3.854 seconds at 314.90 mph after Shawn Reed had to shut off his dragster on the starting line. This is Crampton’s first Wally since 2015, first victory at Gainesville Raceway and eighth overall.

“This is probably one of my most rewarding wins, ever,” Crampton said. “All I ever wanted to do was stand in the winner’s circle with (team owner) Connie Kalitta. Not a lot of people have had that luxury and I’m not taking this one lightly.”

Reed, who raced to his first career final round, started from the No. 12 position and defeated Pat Dakin, Tony Schumacher, and No. 1 qualifier Clay Millican before the final.

In Pro Stock, Tanner Gray powered his Gray Motor-sports Valvoline Chevrolet Camaro to victory with a run of 6.588 seconds at 210.18 mph to defeat defending category world champion Bo Butner in the final round. This is his first win at Gainesville and is a third-generation event winner.

“We’ve been struggling since the beginning of the season,” Gray said. “Today was our first-round win of the season. It has definitely been a struggle, but I think it is starting to come around.”

Gray was the first driver since 2015 to win from the No. 11 qualifier position and defeated Deric Kramer, Chris McGaha, and Vincent Nobile. Butner qualified in the fifth position and bested Jeg Coughlin Jr., Alan Prusienky, and Drew Skillman before facing Gray.



**HECTOR JR. ON THE WAY TO 200 MPH PLUS**



**ONE HAPPY ARANA JR**



**BRITTANY AND A BABY GATOR**



**TANNER PULLING AWAY FROM BO**



**EARLY ROUND AND JOHN GOES UP 3 RACES IN A ROW-PHOTO COURTESY OF Doug Elwell**



**FORCE AND SCHUMACHER-STILL FEUDING???**

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