



# 38TH ANNUAL ARIZONA NATIONALS HEATS UP THE DESERT : LAST NHRA EVENT AT WILD HORSE PASS MOTORSPORTS PARK

Posted on March 29, 2023 by Ron Williams, Prescott eNews Sportswriter



*Photo: Justin Ashley on his 317 mph championship race in Top Fuel category*

The Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Race Park saw its final National Hot Rod Association racing event on Sunday. This was second of 21 events in the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series. The proposed widening interstate 10, and possibly a new entertainment district, will force closure of part of the 450 acre complex, that was built in 1983. The land is owned by the Gila River Indian Community. Radford Racing School and courses are said to remain open.

The weather was picture perfect all weekend for fans, crews, and drivers alike, as the 38<sup>th</sup> and final Arizona Nationals event sold out each of the three days. The finale Sunday was amazing from start to finish.

*Photo: Funny Car driver Robert Hight won reaching a speed on 328 mph*

Robert Hight left Ron Capps behind to win Funny Car with a time of 3.93 seconds and a top speed of 328.62 mph. Hight said, "This was a big one. We had a great day. I won my first round of racing here, so it's special. I really hope this isn't the last race here, but if it is, we've got the Wally ."

*Photo: Camrie Caruso is only the second woman to win the Pro Stock class*

In just her second year in Pro Stock, Camrie Caruso beat Bo Butner to be the second woman to win in that category. Getting to that point though, came with a little controversy, from her second race of the day against Cristian Caruso.

As they went to stage, Caruso lit both staging bulbs, which is not an illegal move, but not the best of etiquette. Once the first driver turns on the second staging light, the other has a maximum of seven seconds in which to stage. In the split-second confusion, Cuadra was timed out, and not permitted to make the run.

His father, teammate, and car owner Fernando Cuadra Sr. was angry on the starting line as his son's car was removed, and he claimed

incorrectly that her move was illegal. Taking the PA mic, he said, "My son is educated by my family to be courteous, and this is discourtesy. It was a good show that didn't happen."



Dave Connolly, Caruso's crew chief, said his driver simply made an innocent mistake. "It was just an accident on Camrie's part. No harm intended. She just took too much of the first bulb, and got them both."

Caruso's thoughts mirrored her crew chief, saying, "Honestly, I took way too much of the first bulb. I went in extremely early to the second bulb. I would never do that intentionally to anyone. I definitely didn't mean to do it. He (Cuadra) is a great racer, and it would have been a tough race, if we would have gone.

Putting that issue behind her, she came through in the final to beat Butner. Dedicating her trophy to her grandfather, Papa Joe Caruso, she said, "I'm not going to lie. I wasn't really sure if I won or not until I pulled off the racetrack, because I like to just focus on going straight. I don't really look around, but it was so awesome. I just went up there and tried to make it just another round and tried my best to do my job, because I knew the guys were going to do theirs." Her win makes her the 19<sup>th</sup> woman to win in a NHRA pro category.

*Photo: Brad Burton leaps out ahead of Kyle Rizzoli, going on to win in Super Stock*

The final race of the day and the win went in Top Fuel to Justin Ashley who edged out the win over Shawn Langdon with a top speed of 317 mph. Brittany Force had the fastest speed of the day, topping out at 336.23mph in the first round in Top Fuel. Ashley said, "You are only as good as the team that surrounds you. We learned from last weekend and applied it. It's all about the team. the fans here were fantastic all weekend. There is only one last race in Arizona. This is one we really wanted."

As the fans slowly filed out of the stands, many paused based on memories, perhaps saying bye to a friend, and looking back for one final time.

#### **NHRA ARIZONA NATIONALS Results-Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park**

Top Fuel -- Justin Ashley, 3.705 seconds, 329.34 mph def. Shawn Langdon, 3.732 seconds, 329.58 mph.

Funny Car -- Robert Hight, Chevy Camaro, 3.930, 328.62 def. Ron Capps, Toyota Supra, 5.534, 136.80.

Pro Stock -- Camrie Caruso, Chevy Camaro, 6.592, 210.31 def. Bo Butner, Camaro, 6.593, 209.23.

Competition Eliminator -- Bruno Massel, Chevy Cobalt, 7.043, 185.28 def. Ralph VanPaepeghem, Bantam, 7.301, 181.64.

Super Stock -- Brad Burton, Pontiac Firebird, 9.332, 136.75 def. Kyle Rizzoli, Chevy Cobalt, 9.085, 139.88.

Stock Eliminator -- Jody Lang, Chevy Malibu Wagon, 12.125, 94.65 def. Tony DeFrank, Chevy Camaro, 19.726, 65.29.

Super Comp -- Thomas Bayer, Dragster, 8.938, 163.08 def. Brandon Dolezal, Dragster, 8.942, 180.45.

Super Gas -- Chris Bishop, Chevy Corvette, 9.966, 154.67 def. Bill Dennis, XLR, 9.926, 166.46.

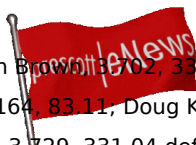
Top Sportsman -- Sammy Gonzales, Pontiac Grand Am, 7.157, 192.49 def. Lance Abbott, Chevy S-10, 6.895, 193.16.

Top Dragster -- Chad Axford, Dragster, 6.808, 193.32 def. Dylan Hough, Dragster, 6.650, 202.48.

#### **ROUND BY ROUND**

Final round-by-round results from the 38th annual NHRA Arizona Nationals at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park, the second of 21 events in the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series:

**TOP FUEL:**



ROUND ONE -- Shawn Langdon, 3.716, 331.28 def. Antron Brown, 3.702, 332.34; Brittany Force, 3.682, 336.23 def. Josh Hart, 10.780, 59.32; Mike Salinas, 3.715, 333.25 def. Clay Millican, 10.164, 83.11; Doug Kalitta, 3.760, 327.59 def. Rob Passey, 11.283, 70.74; Austin Prock, 6.455, 96.71 def. Jim Maroney, Broke; Leah Pruett, 3.729, 331.04 def. Buddy Hull, Foul - Red Light; Steve Torrence, 3.735, 328.62 def. Krista Baldwin, 3.846, 314.17; Justin Ashley, 3.741, 329.67 def. Tony Schumacher, 4.879, 160.33;

QUARTERFINALS -- Torrence, 3.737, 331.85 def. Prock, 3.768, 327.59; Pruett, 3.725, 333.74 def. Force, 9.864, 73.42; Ashley, 3.743, 330.80 def. Salinas, 3.750, 332.34; Langdon, 4.007, 318.54 def. Kalitta, 6.511, 125.11;

SEMIFINALS -- Ashley, 3.740, 327.82 def. Torrence, 3.743, 305.84; Langdon, 3.719, 331.85 def. Pruett, 3.761, 326.79;

FINAL -- Ashley, 3.705, 329.34 def. Langdon, 3.732, 329.58.

**FUNNY CAR:**

ROUND ONE -- Bob Tasca III, Ford Mustang, 3.922, 319.45 def. Jim Campbell, Toyota Solara, Broke; Alexis DeJoria, Toyota Supra, 3.906, 327.66 def. J.R. Todd, Supra, 3.923, 328.38; Chad Green, Mustang, 4.618, 178.80 def. Bobby Bode, Mustang, 5.046, 150.53; Blake Alexander, Mustang, 3.962, 285.11 def. Paul Lee, Dodge Charger, 4.034, 305.77; Matt Hagan, Charger, 4.178, 225.79 def. Cruz Pedregon, Charger, Broke; Ron Capps, Supra, 3.912, 324.36 def. Alex Laughlin, Charger, 7.591, 80.73; Tim Wilkerson, Mustang, 4.003, 315.27 def. Terry Haddock, Mustang, 4.031, 309.13; Robert Hight, Chevy Camaro, 3.911, 325.37 def. John Force, Camaro, 4.286, 219.26;

QUARTERFINALS -- DeJoria, 3.949, 323.35 def. Wilkerson, 4.678, 175.96; Green, 3.984, 323.97 def. Hagan, 4.962, 165.90; Capps, 3.982, 318.09 def. Alexander, Foul - Red Light; Hight, 3.936, 330.07 def. Tasca III, 3.966, 321.88;

SEMIFINALS -- Capps, 3.930, 322.73 def. DeJoria, 3.935, 323.35; Hight, 3.900, 329.34 def. Green, 3.955, 322.96;

FINAL -- Hight, 3.930, 328.62 def. Capps, 5.534, 136.80.

**PRO STOCK:**

ROUND ONE -- Camrie Caruso, Chevy Camaro, 6.564, 210.57 def. Deric Kramer, Camaro, 24.425, 39.45; Greg Anderson, Camaro, 6.561, 209.26 def. Troy Coughlin Jr., Camaro, Foul - Red Light; Bo Butner, Camaro, 6.565, 208.17 def. Erica Enders, Camaro, 6.569, 208.88; Matt Hartford, Camaro, 6.552, 210.24 def. Mason McGaha, Camaro, 6.636, 209.69; Aaron Stanfield, Camaro, 6.558, 208.55 def. Jerry Tucker, Camaro, 6.616, 209.92; Kyle Koretsky, Camaro, 6.567, 209.49 def. Chris McGaha, Camaro, 6.624, 208.17; Cristian Cuadra, Ford Mustang, 6.562, 209.79 def. Alan Prusiensky, Dodge Dart, 16.551, 50.35; Fernando Cuadra Jr., Mustang, 6.574, 210.05 def. Dallas Glenn, Camaro, 6.561, 209.88;

QUARTERFINALS -- Butner, 6.591, 208.17 def. Cuadra Jr., 6.607, 209.26; Caruso, 13.793, 62.23 def. C. Cuadra, Foul - Red Light; Koretsky, 6.589, 209.20 def. Anderson, 6.644, 209.43; Hartford, 6.559, 209.49 def. Stanfield, 8.201, 124.94;

SEMIFINALS -- Butner, 22.587, 34.08 def. Koretsky, Foul - Red Light; Caruso, 6.568, 210.41 def. Hartford, 6.566, 210.47;

FINAL -- Caruso, 6.592, 210.31 def. Butner, 6.593, 209.23.

**UPDATED POINTS STANDINGS-Top 10**

Two of 21 events in the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series -

**TOP FUEL**

1. Steve Torrence, 168;
2. Mike Salinas, 157;
3. Leah Pruett, 155;
4. Justin Ashley, 145;
5. Doug Kalitta, 140;
6. Shawn Langdon, 128;
7. Brittany Force, 122;
8. Austin Prock, 109;
9. Antron Brown, 86;
10. Tony Schumacher, 84.



**FUNNY CAR**

1. Robert Hight, 169;
2. Matt Hagan, 165;
3. Ron Capps, 157;
4. Alexis DeJoria, 154;
5. Chad Green, 149;
6. Bob Tasca III, 123;
7. J.R. Todd, 121;
8. John Force, 97;
9. Blake Alexander, 91;
10. Tim Wilkerson, 84.

**PRO STOCK**

1. Troy Coughlin Jr., 156;
2. Camrie Caruso, 149;
3. Kyle Koretsky, 133;
4. Matt Hartford, 130;
5. Mason McGaha, 129;
6. (tie) Greg Anderson, 128;
7. Bo Butner, 128;
8. Dallas Glenn, 114;
9. Cristian Cuadra, 95;
10. Aaron Stanfield, 94.