

NHRA dragster world champion Antron Brown shoots for victory lane again at Gateway Motorsports Park

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ST. LOUIS – Over the past decade, nobody has won more Top Fuel Dragster races than Antron Brown (50, good for the fourth-most in history) nor have they won more NHRA world championships (three: 2012, 2015 and 2016).

And for four years, the 42-year-old New Jersey native literally owned Gateway Motorsports Park's victory lane, winning the AAA Insurance NHRA Midwest Nationals here in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.

Yet, after a shake-up at his Matco Tools Toyota dragster team left much of the team in a learning process early on, many in the sport started to write him and even fans would come up and tell them how sorry they were about his struggles.

Brown's team might have been a little behind, but certainly not out of the running. In the final six races heading into the playoffs, Brown rebounded by advancing to three final rounds and winning his 50th Top Fuel race in Seattle.

“You have people that doubt and they always go with the one who's doing well at the time,” said Brown. “The thing about it is we've been here before. This isn't anything different for us. We've been to all these places before and been in difficult times before. The season is a marathon for the first 18 races. Now we're off to a six-race sprint. We just wanted to make sure that we were ready to go when the Countdown started and that's where everybody has to know that you've got set yourself up for that sprint. I think we've got our Matco Tools Toyota in a great position, now we have to make sure we have that kick at the end.”

Make no doubt, nobody in Top Fuel is writing Antron off now as he begins his hunt for his fourth championship. Currently he sits in fifth place in the Countdown to the Championship, just 103 points behind leader Steve Torrence.

AAA Insurance NHRA Midwest Nationals at Gateway Motorsports Park

The second of six races in the NHRA playoffs, GMP's AAA Insurance NHRA Midwest Nationals will feature the incredible thrills of 10,000-horsepower, nitromethane-burning cars reaching speeds in excess of 330 miles per hour. Fans will be entertained under the lights during Friday qualifying and then get to experience the intense, high-stakes action on Sunday as the top stars in Top Fuel, Funny Car, Pro Stock and Pro Stock Motorcycle battle for critical championship points.

Steve Torrence (Top Fuel), Ron Capps (Funny Car), Greg Anderson (Pro Stock) and LE Tonglet (Pro Stock Motorcycle) were last year's winners of the event.

The AAA Insurance NHRA Midwest Nationals also will feature thrilling competition in the E3 Spark Plugs NHRA Pro Mod Drag Racing Series presented by J&A Service, which will have its 10th of 12 races.

Fans will also have the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to interact with a few of the most renowned names in drag racing during the NHRA Legends Tour. This will feature meet-and-greets, autograph sessions, and a variety of other activities. The legends scheduled to attend the AAA Insurance NHRA Midwest Nationals include Shirley Muldowney and others.

Along with the exciting on-track action, the AAA Insurance NHRA Midwest Nationals will honor first responders with NHRA's Salute to First Responders celebration.

As always, fans can interact with their favorite drivers as they're granted an exclusive pit pass to the most powerful and sensory-filled motorsports attraction on the planet. This unique opportunity gives fans direct access to the teams, allowing them to see firsthand the highly-skilled mechanics service their hot rods between rounds, and get autographs from their favorite NHRA drivers.

Kids 12 and under are free in general admission areas with a paid adult.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

7:30 a.m. – Parking lots open.

8 a.m. – Spectator gates open. Sportsman qualifying.

Noon -- Midway opens.

2:30 p.m. -- Pro Stock Motorcycle autograph session at NHRA midway display.

3 p.m. -- NHRA guided walking tour. Starts at the Mello Yello display.

3:15 p.m. -- Pro Mod qualifying session.

4 p.m. -- Pro Stock Motorcycle and Pro Stock car qualifying session.

4:30 p.m. – Top Fuel Dragster and Funny Car qualifying session.

5:45 p.m. -- Pro Mod qualifying session.

6:15 p.m. -- Pro Stock Motorcycle and Pro Stock car qualifying session.

7 p.m. -- Top Fuel Dragster and Funny Car qualifying session.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

7:30 a.m. – Parking lots open.

8 a.m. – Spectator gates open. Sportsman eliminations.

9:30 a.m. -- Midway opens.

12:15 p.m. -- Nitro School. Hosted by Robert Hight and Alan Reinhart.

1 p.m. -- Autograph session at the Mello Yello display.

1:15 p.m. -- NHRA guided walking tour. Starts at the Mello Yello display.

1:30 p.m. -- Pro Mod qualifying session.

2:15 p.m. -- Pro Stock Motorcycle and Pro Stock car qualifying session.

3 p.m. -- Top Fuel Dragster and Funny Car qualifying session.

3:45 p.m. – First round of Factory Stock Showdown.

5 p.m. -- Pro Stock Motorcycle and Pro Stock car qualifying session.

5:30 p.m. -- Top Fuel Dragster and Funny Car qualifying session.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

7:30 a.m. – Parking lots open.

8 a.m. – Spectator gates open.

9 a.m. -- Midway opens; NHRA guided walking tour starts at the Mello Yello display.

9:30 a.m. -- Sealmaster Trackwalk.

9:45 a.m. – Race day review, pre-race ceremonies.

11 a.m. – First round of Top Fuel Dragster and Funny Car eliminations.

Noon – First round of Pro Stock eliminations.

12: 20 p.m. – First round of Pro Mod eliminations.

1 p.m. – Second round of Top Fuel Dragster and Funny Car eliminations.

1:15 p.m. – Second round of Pro Stock eliminations.

1:30 p.m. -- Pro Mod semi-finals.

2 p.m. -- Factory Stock Showdown semi-finals.

2:10 p.m. -- Top Fuel Dragster and Funny Car semi-finals.

2:30 p.m. -- Pro Stock semi-finals.

2:45 p.m. -- Pro Mod final eliminations.

3 p.m. -- Factory Stock Showdown final eliminations.

3:40 p.m. -- Pro Stock final eliminations.

3:45 p.m. -- Top Fuel Dragster and Funny Car final eliminations.

Schedule subject to change.

For more information on Gateway Motorsports Park, please call (618) 215-8888 or visit www.gatewaymsp.com. Follow GMP on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram.

About Gateway Motorsports Park

Gateway Motorsports Park is the home of INDYCAR, NASCAR and NHRA racing in the St. Louis region. Located just five minutes from downtown St. Louis and covering more than 340 acres, Gateway Motorsports Park is the largest outdoor entertainment facility in the area. Gateway Motorsports Park's facilities include a 1/4-mile drag strip, 1.25-mile superspeedway, 1.6-mile road course, a state-of-the-art karting facility and a 14-acre, multi-purpose dirt off-road venue. Gateway Motorsports Park was the recipient of the 2017 Outstanding Facility of the Year Award from the Race Track Business Conference and the 2017 Spirit of St. Louis Award from St. Louis Attractions Association.