

A MAJOR

The Spring Fling Million Is A Major Draw In The Field Of Bracket Racing



WORDS/PHOTOS JOHN DiBARTOLOMEO

In the world of the Professional Golf Association (PGA), there is an event held almost every weekend of the year. In NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing, we know there are 24 national events a year. However, when it comes to the PGA tour, there are really only four “majors” which golfers look forward to; the Masters, The Open, PGA and the British Open. In NHRA, there too are “majors,” although not exactly listed as such; Pomona, Gatornationals, Indy, etc. Those are the races everyone wants to win.

In the bracket racing world, there too is a high dollar race on almost every weekend. Here though, you do have “majors,” one of which is the Spring Fling brand of races.

The story has been told before, but in 2010, friends Peter Biondo and Kyle Seipel teamed up to produce their

own version of an event they would have liked to race. Both partners have enough experience as race winners and champions to know what racers want. As such, their Spring Fling brand of events have grown from the first one in Bristol, TN, to the city of lights, Las Vegas, and also last year, Galot Motorsports Park in North Carolina. They have become the “majors” in the world of high dollar bracket racing, the one everyone wants on their resume. And that was before the Spring Fling Million became “the” race to win two years ago.

With backing from K&N Filters and Optima Batteries, the third Spring Fling Million returned to the “new” Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway in the city of lights. “New” in regards to the fact the facility was re-configured over

the past winter in four-wide regalia to mimic its east coast cousin; zMax Dragway in North Carolina. However, nothing in Vegas is ever done half way. Both the existing two lanes as well as the two new ones were repaved and ground smooth to offer the best drag racing surface in the world, with the Spring Fling run on the “old” two lanes only.

This year’s event included as many as 445 cars. One of only a handful of rules at the ‘Fling is that a car can only go down the track one time per round. While drivers might double up and race two cars, they must be two separate cars, which makes the number 445 all that much more impressive.

If there is one notorious thing about Vegas though, it’s





The name Randell Reid (center) will now be carved in the record books as only one of three men so far who have held a Spring Fling Million Dollar trophy. Reid took his place beside Jeff Verdi (left - 2016) and Luke Bogacki (right - 2017).



the wind. Despite some “breezy” days, track officials continued to stay on point, sweeping, spraying and dragging the track to offer the best possible conditions when big money is on the line.

“We could put on a race,” said Biondo, “but it’s really the racers who have the confidence and trust in us that we’re going to give them everything we promised and more. They are the ones who have become one big family to us, our own ‘Fling family.’”

It’s for that reason, this year’s event included racers from 36 states as well as Puerto Rico, Canada and Mexico. And it is family that takes care of their own. At this year’s event, one particular racer broke an engine and it didn’t take long for another one to be offered.

Last year, Brian Cireddu was a runner-up on the last day of the 2017 event. On his way home, his truck, trailer and race car were stolen. Immediately, social media went haywire and a short ten days later, the entire operation was found near Las Vegas. Back again from Ohio to run in the Pro 38 class and scoring another runner-up finish on the final day of the event, he said, “This is a great track and the new surface is really



With a Reher-Morrison engine between the frame rails of his American Race Cars dragster, Randell Reid used a slew of great runs to score his biggest win to date.

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SPRING FLING



Don't tell Don Meziere you can't bracket race with these guys in a Top Sportsman car. Meziere used numerous 4.40 runs to score a runner-up finish in the Silverstate Refrigeration Wednesday race.



The event is much more than just a race. It's a family gathering where this year Sally Martini and a group of others organized an egg hunt in true pirate fashion for the kids, all with dozens of prizes.



If there is one seemingly constant in Vegas, it's the wind. Breezy conditions... no make that very windy... might have played havoc with dial-ins, but you wouldn't know that by the amount of dead-on the dial runs.



Left: How good are these guys and gals? More perfect reaction times popped up on the scoreboards during time trials than maybe ever seen. The same numbers seemed to happen all throughout eliminations.

SPRING FLING

smooth." Interestingly enough, Cireddu was racing off the bottom bulb rather than with a delay box in the car, which makes his efforts all that much more outstanding.

When Biondo and Seipel took their brand out west six years ago, they did so running two classes; Super Pro or box and Pro, no box. The change to a potential million-dollar payday included having to eliminate the Pro class. However, concerned not to offend those Pro class racers who have supported them in the past, they instituted the Pro 38 class. An exclusive 38-car field pre-entered the event. On each day, those Pro 38 cars raced each other until a final, after which the winner is assimilated into the following round of Super Pro.

As for the Million Dollar event, with a \$2,000 entry fee, it does tend to limit how many enter. From the minute the gates open right up until Million Dollar Friday, raffles are held to allow as many as possible to enter the event. There was also a Tuesday night Practice Tree race with the winners receiving entry into the Million.

As for maybe the "elephant in the

room," this year's Million included 260 entries, with a guaranteed \$200,000 to the winner regardless of car count. From 200 to 400 cars, the winner's share matched the car count; in essence with winner Randell Reid walking away with \$260,000. From there, the purse in-

creases exponentially with a million-dollar payday requiring 550 cars. Even so, \$260,000 to one winner of one race is more than any other drag race regardless of class.

Run on the eighth-mile, it's amazing just how consistent these cars are, as



Chad Reynolds of BangShift.com was an ironman all week, standing for hours on a platform in the wind each day filming every run from start to finish at the event for the live feed.

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well as the drivers. More times than none, a reaction time advantage off the starting line won the race. If you were to sit and watch the announcer's display in the tower and noticed just the reaction time prior to the pair crossing the finish line, you could almost bet on the winner. And dead-on the dial runs... you couldn't begin to count how many there were. All this despite at times 40+mph winds. How anyone could ever dial, is a miracle in itself.

Wednesday night's runner-up Don Meziere was driving his Top Sportsman

Cavalier and while the Top Sportsman class is basically a bracket race with no disrespect to those drivers, it is certainly on a different level. However, rattling off a string of 4.40 elapsed times, Meziere proved you CAN run a Top Sportsman car at a big bucks bracket race and be successful as evidenced by his runner-up finish along with a number of late round appearances.

On Friday morning prior to the Million, a special time trial session, Run For The \$50K, was held. For a \$50 entry fee, with a dial on your car, a perfect



Left: Each of the Pro 38 racers were given a special hat with their names embroidered on it. Little things like that are what makes this event so special.



In addition to entries from 38 states, Canada and Puerto Rico, a large contingent of racers, family and crew from Mexico show up every year to enjoy the celebrations.

THE WINNER



For Randell Reid, the experience of winning one of the biggest races of the year has been unbelievable. "I've won three PDRA races and I never experienced a quarter of the support I've had from this race," says Reid. "The notoriety I've gotten, the phone calls and messages far outweighs any other race I've won. I'm just so humbled and appreciative of everyone's support."

The 33-year old from Midland, Texas used a series of great reaction times and dead-on the dial runs to add his name to the history books as only one of three so far to win the Spring Fling Million.

With him enjoying the 'Fling Experience was his father Darrell, good friends Aaron Gee, and Randell and Eric Works.

"My wife Taylor wasn't able to go with us, having to stay home with our kids, but I know she was listening every round," said Reid. "She and our kids are my biggest supporter and I really wished she could have been there. But I'm really proud to have won this for them because they're the reason I'm able to do this. We were doing all that celebrating and I just had to say 'Stop, I need to call my wife.' We were both crying and it was amazing and moving. Almost too good to be true to come out on top. I was thankful my father was there as it was a real special moment for us."

As for the final round, Reid was every bit as good as it'd been all day. A .008 reaction time and a 4.680 on a 4.67 dial was enough to overcome Lobner's .012 and 4.854 on a 4.84 dial. And the party was on from there.

SPRING FLING

package got you \$50,000. Prior to that day, there had already been three perfect package runs forcing co-promoter Seipel to say, "I got a bad intuition about this. I think there's probably at least a 60-percent chance that we're going to be handing over \$50K to somebody. If a perfect run doesn't happen, the best package will receive a set of Brodix cylinder heads. Second place gets \$2,000 and third place a free three-day entry to the 2019 Vegas Fling. But I still believe it would take at least a .002 package to win the Brodix heads."

He was close. No perfect runs but there were three .003 packages forcing officials to pull names to see who won what. Larry Webb was awarded the three-day entry, Dan Northrop picked up the \$2K and Mike Bloomfield walked away with the heads.

This event has turned out to be the epitome of "don't bring a knife to a gunfight." But don't be afraid to jump into the water. To quote an old lottery commercial, "You gotta be in it to win it." ¶

BOXSCORE

K&N Spring Fling Million
presented by Optima Batteries

The Strip at Las Vegas
Motor Speedway



American Race Cars Dragster
Shootout

W-Lori Warden, Tustin, CA
R/U-James Warden, Tustin, CA

Silverstate Refrigeration
Wednesday

W-Marko Perivolaris,
Petaluma, CA
R/U-Don Meziere, Escondido, CA
Pro 38 Winner-Andy Schmall,
Idaho Falls, IA

Racepak Thursday

W-Luke Bogacki,
Carterville, IL
R/U-Lane Dicken,
Lebanon, TN
Pro 38 Winner-Steve Stockton,
Colfax, WI



Spring Fling Million

W-Randell Reid, Midland, TX
R/U-JR Lobner, Gardner, KS
Pro 38 Winner- Andy Schmall,
Idaho Falls, IA

FTI Saturday

W-Vinny DiMino, Maspeth, NY
R/U-Brian Cireddu,
Brunswick, OH
Pro 38 Winner-Brian Cireddu,
Brunswick, OH

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