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Ray, Star Racing Open Gainesville Qualifying in 12th

Gainesville, Fla., March 11, 2011 – After a two-year absence, the Star Racing team made a return to NHRA Pro Stock Motorcycle competition on Friday at the Tire Kingdom Gatornationals in Gainesville, Florida. During the first day of qualifying team owner George Bryce, crew chief Ken Johnson and rider Michael Ray faced the daunting combination of competing against 26 other teams in near-perfect conditions, requiring they extract the maximum from their S&S powered Buell. Despite not making a completely clean run, the team was still able to make a representative 6.933-second, 187.52 mph run, good enough for 12th midway through the qualifying procedure, leaving the 26-year-old New Braunfels, Texas native satisfied but looking for more.

“I’m glad to be back out here and feel really good on the bike,” said Ray. “George has been coaching me to use these qualifying runs for testing, so we’re keeping the same routine, with nothing changed except these count. As you can see by the numbers on the sheet, the conditions were pretty good today. We just seem to be battling a little bit of a directional issue trying to make it go in a straight line.

“In our first run, I felt like a fuel bike rider, leaning one way while the bike was trying to go the other way, but we still ran a 6.93 which has us in. Fortunately, everybody seems to be having the same problem, so we are all playing in the same court. We’re not quite sure what happened on the second run when it decided to go hard right. We’re going to try something different with the tire tomorrow to see if we can make it run better in the morning.

“Although we certainly want to be closer to the top of the page, we are still having a good time. We have all our sponsors here this weekend, and we want to put on a good show for them. Our plan for tomorrow morning is to try and repeat some of the numbers that we had in testing where we ran a 6.88. We had high expectations coming into today, but had some issues that I would chalk up to growing pains, being that I’m a rookie and this is our first race, which we hope to put behind us tomorrow.”

As the first race flying the colors of Lister Herrell’s Xtreme Rebellion eyewear and apparel company the Star Racing crew had set the bar high in terms of performance, despite the long lay-off and his rider’s rookie status on this type of motorcycle. Having yet to reach his goals, the ultra-competitive Bryce saw today’s showing as an added challenge in his pursuit of a return to the front-running form for which his organization is known.

“Although we’re glad to be out here with our friends, today didn’t feel all that great,” said Bryce “We actually thought we would do better. In fact Ken (crew chief Johnson) and I have been walking around with our tails between our legs this afternoon because we know we have a better horse than we have shown so far.

“We have a great opportunity with all our friends from Texas putting their money together to get Michael and Star Racing back out again, and then to sign the deal last week Lister Harrell and his Xtreme Rebellion and 2listers.com companies was really cool, allowing us to put them out in front of this Gatornationals crowd this weekend. But we are in a performance-based program – if we do well here, we

get to go to another race, and if we do well there, we get to go to the next one, and so on, so the pressure is on us to perform.

“We’re scrambling a little bit right now, trying to get all our ducks in a row. We know it’s there for us – after all, we were No.3 at the eighth mile on the first run before the bike decided to turn right. We did find a few things we needed to correct including a little Kurt Busch-style stagger in the back wheel, so we turned it around to see if it will run straight, and if it does, we should be in good shape. If we have similar weather, I believe there is a tenth left in it, which would be a good place for us to land on our first try after all this time.”

Michael Ray and Star Racing would like to thank the following sponsors for their support in this effort - Xtreme Rebellion, 2listers.com, GOTTSPEED Racing, Jet Aircraft Interior Services, Javelina Harley-Davidson, Gruene Harley-Davidson, Hot Licks Racing, S&S Cycle, Mickey Thompson, Royal Purple, Diamond Bar Choppers.

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