



Contact: Jon Knapp
KGPR
Ph: 704.662.3121
J2Racing@aol.com

Michael Ray & Star Racing Encouraged by Gainesville Showing

Gainesville, Fla., March 13, 2011 – Heading into Sunday's final eliminations of the Tire Kingdom Gatornationals in Gainesville, Florida, Michael Ray and the Star Racing team knew they faced an uphill battle in their return to the NHRA's Pro Stock Motorcycle category. Although they had recorded a representative 6.933-second time in qualifying 13th, the six-time championship team acknowledged they had not yet reached their S&S powered Buell's potential, and entered race day determined to find the right set-up for the increased temperatures.

Further complicating their assignment was a lack of lane choice, which meant they would be delegated to the left-hand side of the track, which throughout qualifying had appeared to be a disadvantage. Undeterred, the talented tandem of team owner George Bryce and crew chief Ken Johnson pored over the data and came up with a plan that would give them the best opportunity to advance against #4 qualifier Karen Stoffer, who was riding the same bike on which she had set the national elapsed time record a year ago.

For the first time all weekend, the beautiful Star Racing bike and its rider seemed in sync, as Ray virtually matched his more-experienced opponent on the starting line and drove straight down the quarter-mile, hitting his shift points and tripping the finish line timers in 6.946-seconds at 190.03 mph, the third-quickest time in the dreaded left lane, where only two rounds were won all day. Unfortunately, their valiant effort came up shy of unseating their opponent's 6.844-second run. Although naturally disappointed by their premature exit, Bryce quickly dissected their performance and found reasons to be optimistic as he looked forward to the next race in Houston.

"Considering this was our first race back in two years, and our first with Michael aboard our Star Racing S&S powered Buell, we feel pretty good about our performance," said Bryce. "Given all the circumstances, being able to come back in eliminations and make a good hit in the heat of the day says a lot about this organization, and the people we have supporting us.

"This was only Michael's third start on a Pro Stock Motorcycle, and yet he had a good .035 light, went straight down the track and shifted on time. We spun the tires really hard on the 1-2 shift, losing five hundredths from our 330-foot time on Friday. That would have brought us down to a 6.89. On top of that, because he went so straight and so far, we went into a new tuning range that we hadn't been in before with higher rpm's so we didn't have the fuel-injection set quite right, which cost us another couple hundredths in the back half. If you put it all together, it could have been an interesting race.

"It all comes down to knowing exactly what the bike needs. It would have been nice to make that run yesterday, because we would have been better prepared for today, but we didn't, so

we'll take the lessons learned here and move forward. Right after we got back to the trailer, we had a meeting with the entire team, as well as Lister (Herrell, co-owner of the Xtreme Rebellion eyewear and apparel company) and all our other sponsors who were at the track with us.

“We decided to practice a couple times before Houston, flying Michael in so we could go to SMGP (South Georgia Motorsports Park in Valdosta, GA) and make some runs to see if we can dig all the bugs out before we go to Houston. We're excited about taking an even-better prepared horse to Houston Raceway Park, and picking up where we left off.”

As his first race with the legendary Star Racing team, rookie rider Michael Ray acknowledged that the weekend had been a three-day learning experience for all involved, with a few growing pains along the way. Even so, he quickly echoed his team owner's positive sentiments about their initial outing, as well as optimism about their program moving forward.

“As a racer, you never like to lose, but considering that run in the first round was our only straight pass of the weekend, we have to be happy with the progress we made,” said Ray. “Of course, we would have loved to come out here made four great runs in qualifying and go deep into eliminations, but all things considered, we did okay. This was our first actual race as a team, and we had to learn to work together, yet we were still able to qualify ahead of some racers that had been doing this a lot longer than I have.

“This Star Racing team is awesome, and I want to thank George and Jackie for the opportunity. We're also lucky to have the support of Lister Herrell and everyone at Xtreme Rebellion and 2listers.com, GOTTSPEED, Jet Aircraft Interior Services and all our other sponsors. It was great to have them here with us, and to see how excited they were about our program. Thanks to them, we're going to do a little testing over the next few weeks before heading to Houston, where I hope we can put ourselves in the thick of the battle. We know the performance is there – we just have to find it, and we will.”

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, and Diamond Bar Choppers.

###