

Kind of a Drag...

The following text is a brief explanation about the mysteries of drag racing and the organizations that govern it.

Mustangs are one of the most recognizable cars at the drag strip, especially the Fox-bodied Mustangs of the mid 80's and mid 90's. These Mustangs are some of the most popular and economical cars to be competitive. Fox-bodied Mustangs lead the group of all year Mustangs in one of the most exhilarating sports you can experience in a quarter of a minute or maybe much less...

Drag racing usually involves two cars racing each other over a set distance, usually the quarter mile. Races of this nature test a vehicle in terms of acceleration and top speed, as well as the driver with regard to skill required and concentration. Although the driver doesn't have any turns to negotiate or opponents to defend against, apart from the competitor in the other lane, he or she must be very accurate with gear shifting and throttle modulation.

Eight cylinder vehicles:

- Naturally aspirated 8 cyl. Engine* (typical) = 190hp-550hp
- Turbocharged 8 cyl. Engine* (typical) = 485hp-1000hp
- Supercharged 8 cyl. Engine* (typical) = 350hp-765hp
- "Top Fuel" 8 cyl. Engine (typical) = 6,500hp-plus, these are 500-cubic-inch V8 Hemi Engines running on a mix of 85-percent nitromethane to 15-percent methanol—they produce phenomenal power and propel the vehicle to speeds of over 320 mph in under five seconds.
- Nitrous oxide may be added to all but the top fuel engine configuration. Nitrous oxide will produce different levels of added power depending on mechanical considerations. For instance: A nitrous oxide injection setup will add far more power to a vehicle equipped with a turbocharger but without an intercooler/aftercooler than a vehicle with an intercooler/aftercooler due to adiabatic efficiency considerations. Adding nitrous oxide can produce as little as ten additional horsepower, or as much as 300 to 500 horsepower in some high-performance applications. The National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) oversees the majority of drag racing events in

North America. The next largest organization, the International Hot Rod Association (IHRA), is about one-third the size of NHRA. Nearly all drag strips are associated with one sanctioning body or the other. The NHRA is more popular with large, quarter-mile nationally recognized tracks. The IHRA is a favorite of smaller 1/8th-mile local tracks. One reason for this (among others) is the IHRA is less restrictive in its rules and less expensive to be associated with.

There are literally hundreds of different classes in drag racing, each with different requirements and restrictions on things such as weight, engine size, body style, modification, and many others. NHRA and IHRA share some of these classes, but many are solely used by one sanctioning body or the other. The NHRA boasts over 200 classes, while the IHRA has fewer. There is even a class for aspiring youngsters—Junior Dragster.

However, there are only 5 pro classes (4 NHRA, 4 IHRA), which are:

• **Top Fuel Dragster** (NHRA and IHRA)

The rail dragsters or "diggers" are the fastest class—85-percent nitromethane fuel is used. There are also Top Alcohol—100-percent methanols or ethanol is used, and Top Gas Dragster—gasoline only is used.

• **Top Fuel Funny Car** (NHRA and IHRA)

Nearly as fast as the diggers, the "flopsters" marginally resemble actual cars. IHRA did bring back Top Fuel Funny Car in 2006 and Alcohol Funny Car is already a pro category in IHRA.

• **Pro Modified**

Some engine restrictions, extremely high power. Cars can run superchargers of nitrous oxide. Cars running blowers are limited to 8.6 L (527 cubic inches) while cars with nitrous oxide can run up to 12.1 L (740 cubic inches).

• **Pro Stock** (NHRA and IHRA)

Cars must maintain stock appear-

ance. NHRA cars can run no more than 8.2 L (500 cubic inches), while IHRA cars can run a maximum of 13.4 L (820 cubic inches) "Mountain Motors."

• **Pro Stock Bike** (NHRA only)

Heavily modified motorcycles.

In addition to the above professional classes, these are some other popular classes:

- **Top Alcohol Dragster**
- **Top Alcohol Funny Car**
- **Super Comp/Quick Rod**
- **Super Gas/Super Rod**
- **Super Street/Hot Rod**
- **Super Stock**
- **Stock**
- **Sport Compact**

(smaller cars with smaller engines)

• **Top Sportsman**

(IHRA only but at NHRA Divisional Races)

• **Top Dragster**

(IHRA only)

• **Top fuel funny bike**

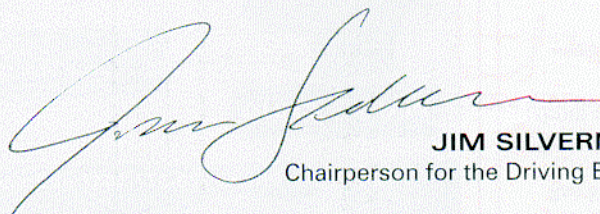
(high-performance 5-second bikes)

As you can see, drag racing is a highly organized sport and the Mustang plays a large role. Typically a Stock Mustang runs from the mid 15's to the mid 12's in street or modified trim. There are many Mustangs out there that can play in the 12- to 8-second quarter-mile crowd and many of these are also found on the street driving every day.

So what does this say about our Mustangs?

In this Mustang fanatic's opinion, it says they are one of the most all-around cars. Mustangs can take the family to the mall and on a long trip in comfort with great gas mileage. Mustangs can be taken on the track driven at some of the fastest times through a road race. And yes, our Mustangs can be driven down the drag strip, playing with the best and winning.

And you wonder why we love our Mustangs!



JIM SILVERMAN

Chairperson for the Driving Events

Phone: 508.584.8848

