



HISTORY

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Drag Racing is two cars accelerating from a standing start over a distance on a straight track. The traditional race distance is a quarter mile (402,34 metres) or eighth mile (201,17 metres). The professional classes or higher amateur classes compete in dragsters with horsepower well over 1.000 hp. The reaction time of a driver as well as their ability to maneuver that kind of horsepower on a specially prepared track make the difference between victory and defeat.

Drag Racing began in 1940s in USA when young people started racing illegally on the highways between intersections. Films like American Graffiti and Rebel Without a Cause take up this topic. Usually two cars raced from one set of traffic light to the next. These match races soon where converted into legal race events mostly on airfields, that where abandoned after the war. In California they even used the dried salt flats as racetracks. The first official racetrack exclusively for drag racing was introduced in 1950 in Santa Ana, California. And even in Germany and England drag racing was a popular past time for American soldiers.

In 1951 the *National Hot Rod Association* (NHRA) was founded and since then has been the largest Drag Racing organisation. The second most important organisation in american Drag Racing is the IHRA, the *International Hot Rod Association* .

From the late 1950s up to the 1970s muscle cars in the USA where tuned by the manufactures for use on the quartermile. The most popular where the 1969 Dodge Charge, the 1970 Plymouth Hemi Cuda and the 1969 Chevy Camaro Yenko. The latter Held the record on the quartermile over years with 11.82 seconds. Which makes it the fastest stock vehicle. Even the 1970 Chevy Chevelle SS with the largest stock engine by Chevrolet a 7.4 Litre (454 cid) and 331kW was not able to beat the Camaro.

Rules

In 1997 the FIA established the European Championship for Drag Racing. For this Purpose the FIA cooperates with the american NHRA and adoped their rulebook. The classic distance for a drag race is a quartermile (402,34 m). The run out area is about the same distance. Some tracks that do not have the capacity run an eighth mile (201,17 m). Generally two drivers compete against eachother. The elapsed times (ET) run during Qualifying are decisive for the pairings for the race, that is carried out with an elimination system. The elapsed times are recorded using light beams. Especially the reaction times at the startline are a decisive factor for victory or defeat.

In Public Race the competitors can participate with stock vehicles, that are fastern than 16.50 sec. but slower than 11.99 sec. The class Modified Public is reserved for modified stock vehicles, that are faster than 12.00 sec. but slower than 10.90 sec. With these so called bracket races the slower vehicle leaves the startline first with a handicap so that the faster vehicle should have the chance to catch up so that both should reach the finish line at the same time, so it really comes down to reaction time and how well you know your vehicle. In order to prevent excessive upgrading of vehicles and to allow fair competition between cars with a varying degree of performance some amateur classes compete under a class index. Going below the class index will result in disqualification of a competitor. Therefore it is common for a competitor to lift the accelator before the finish line in order not to go under his class index. The ability of a competitor is more of a decisive



factor rather than engine performance. Class index: Super Street 10.90 sec., Super Gas 9.90 sec. and Super Comp 8.90 sec.

Vehicle Classes

Public Race is reserved more or less for tuned street legal cars. Modified Public is reserved for modified street cars. Super Street and Super Gas are cars with extensively modified engines and bodies. The cars used in the higher amateur classes Super Comp and Competition Eliminator are dragsters that are purposely built for drag racing.

The professional classes consist of Pro Stock, Pro Modified, Top Methanol Funny Car, Top Methanol Dragster, Nitro Funny Car and Top Fuel Dragster. The elapsed time on the quartermile in these classes range from 7 second down to under 4 seconds. Especially in the USA Pro Stock is popular due to similarity of the cars with stock vehicles and the very competitive field of cars. Whereas in Europe Pro Stock has a very limited amount of competitors, most of which are from Scandinavia.

Race Procedure and Timing System

Top-Fuel-Dragsters can reach more than five times gravitational acceleration, which makes them the fastest accelerating vehicles next to Jet Dragsters. When it comes to acceleration even a Formula-1 race car cannot keep up with a Top-Fuel-Dragster.

After the *burnout*, the driver *stages* his vehicle at the startline. Two white bulbs on the start tree (start light) that are triggered by two light beams indicate the position of the vehicle. When both vehicles are staged (in start position) the starter initiates the start sequence and three yellow bulbs on the start tree glow, depending on the class they either glow after each other or all at once followed by the green start light.

If the driver leaves the startline before the green light the red-light is on resulting in Disqualifikation. After the run the driver receives a time slip with the incrementals of his run. The first incremental is at 60 Feet. Another incremental is the elapsed time and speed typically at the 1/8-mile as well as for the 1/4-mile. The elapsed time and speed is shown on the score boards for the spectators as well as a light to indicate the winner.

Race Events

Drag Race Events for the professional classes are held on specially prepared drag strips. These race events are governed by the rules of the FIA, NHRA or DMSB and partially Count for the European Drag Racing Championship. Professional events are held in England, Sweden, Finland and Germany. The race Events at *Santa Pod Raceway* in Podington (GB) as well as the annual NitrolympX at Hockenheim in August are some of the largest events in Europe.

Next to the professional events there are numerous official race events for sportsman classes, where anyone can compete. In Germany these type of events are usually held on airfields.

Source: Wikipedia

