

Stewart To Compete In Full NHRA Schedule

BROWNSBURG, Ind. (Feb. 14, 2023) – After making his NHRA driving debut in a Top Alcohol dragster at last year's NHRA Nevada Nationals, Tony Stewart is ready to compete full-time in the NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series for McPhillips Racing.

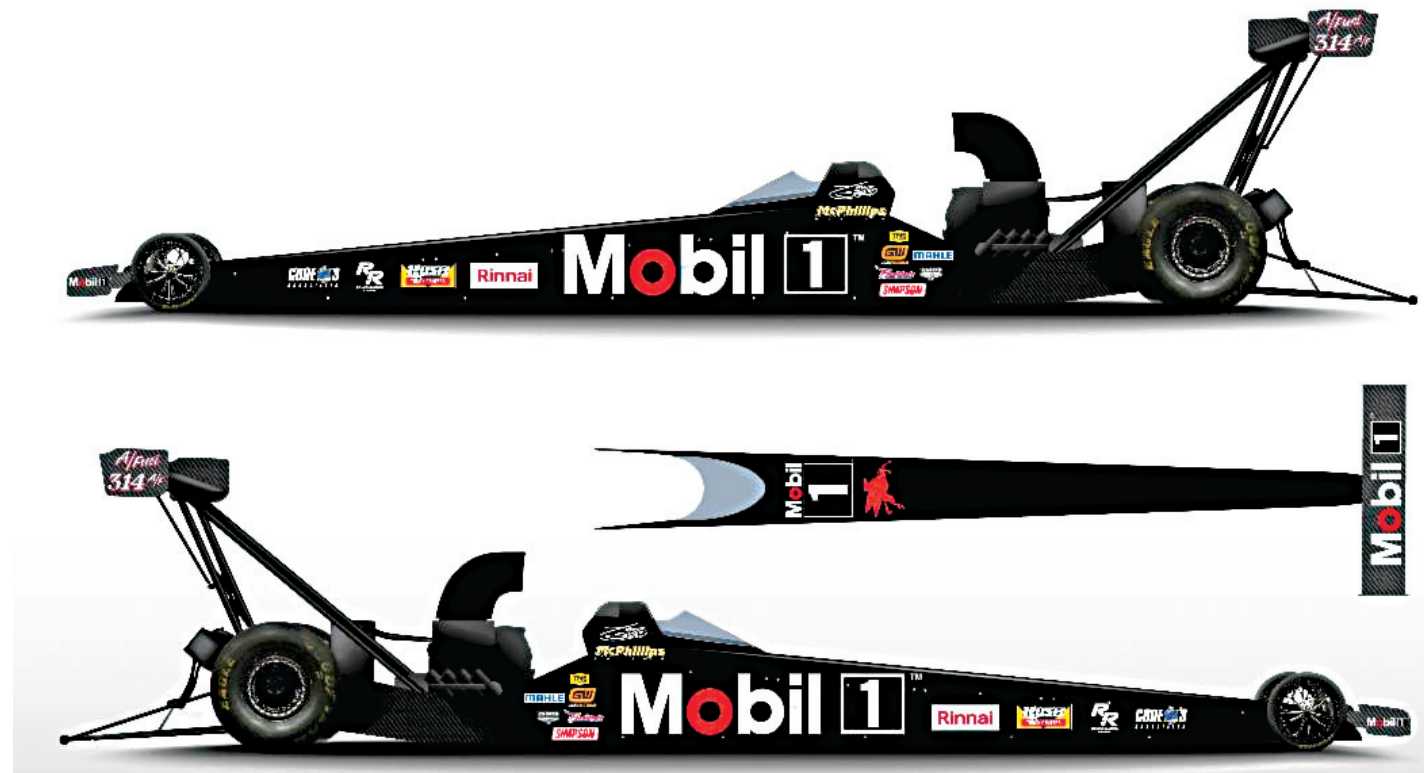
Stewart advanced to the Finals in his first NHRA event at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway last October, where he finished second to Madison Payne by two-10,000ths of a second. Stewart's 5.258-second, 271.57 mph run in the Finals came up just one inch short out of 15,840 inches on the quarter-mile long drag strip, which made his desire to return to the seat even stronger.

"I am super excited about the season," Stewart said. "It's been a long winter and I think what's made it feel even longer is the fact that we've been working on putting this package together with the McPhillips family to expand on what we did at Las Vegas last year and get back in the seat. I want to keep learning about the sport and have the opportunity to go compete more this year with a team I really enjoy. To be able to go to Vegas last year with the McPhillips family was really special. Pops (Rich McPhillips) and Richie (McPhillips Jr.) are an unbelievable family to drive for. Everyone on the crew is a fun group of guys to race with. It's nerve-racking to try and do something different, but when you have a team like what the McPhillips Racing team has, it makes everything a lot easier."

The adaptable racer has earned championships across NASCAR, INDYCAR and USAC, along with hundreds of victories on oval tracks, dirt tracks and road courses. While his goal is to gain more experience behind the wheel of a dragster, he will be eligible to earn a NHRA National Championship to add to his impressive resume. Each Top Alcohol Dragster driver is eligible to earn points at their first ten national events. Their best six national finishes from their eligible points earning events will constitute their NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series national championship points total.

"It's hard to sit there and know what expectations we should have for the year," Stewart said. "I think as long as I keep learning more and more as I go by trying to be more consistent with driving the car, keep it in the groove, trying to stay consistent on reaction times and improve reaction times, those are all goals for me. I want to keep learning and get better every weekend and every race we go to."

On top of National events, he will also compete in select races in the Divisional Series, starting with the Division 2 Baby Gators, March 1-5 at Gainesville Raceway.



"Getting prepared for this season over the winter has been about trying to understand what the schedule is going to look like," Stewart said.

"I'm just trying to prepare for every race track we go to – the shutdown areas and which way to turn off the race track. Just simple things and small details that the people that have been in this sport for years already know. That's what this sport is all about, small details. Preparing for the season is thinking about all the small details it takes to be successful.

"You compete against so many talented people like Madison (Payne) at Las Vegas last year. There was no disgrace in finishing second to her because she is a great race car driver. It was an honor to be as close to her as we were in our first event. There are a bunch of great drivers and teams in that class and they really made me feel welcome. That's one of the things I'm so excited about is that they make you feel like you're a part of the family."

With 13 driving championships to his resume, Stewart is looking forward to the year he'll have in his Mobil 1 Top Alcohol Dragster and the potential to add a 14th title to his name.

"It's been like being a little kid all over again," Stewart said. "When I was racing go karts, I couldn't wait for the winter to be over so I could go racing. That's where I'm at all over again. I'm going to have great teammates in Matt Cummins and Jasmine Salinas. They are two people that have won a lot of races and

championships. Having them as teammates will be an asset. The hard part is sometimes I'll have to race them for the win. Hopefully we don't get paired up until the end of the day and it's a win for the team as a whole. I'm excited and honored to be a part of the NHRA."

Stewart and his Top Alcohol counterparts in the Southeast Division begin their 2023 NHRA season March 1-5 in Gainesville, Florida for The Baby Gators. Q1 will take place on Thursday,

March 2 at 9 a.m. EST. Qualifying continues on Friday, March 3 with Q2 at 8:30 a.m. EST. Q3 will take place on Saturday, March 4 at 8:30 a.m. EST, followed by Round 1 of eliminations at 9 a.m. EST, and continue through Sunday, March 5, with track action beginning at 9 a.m. EST. All the action will be streamed live on NHRA.TV.

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