

# Lucas Oil Alcohol Dragster champ Bill Reichert

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For the second straight year, Bill Reichert won the NHRA Lucas Oil Top Alcohol Dragster national championship, and for the second straight year, he made it look easy. As he did in 2006, Reichert got off to a fast start, reaching the final round at seven of his first nine events. Of those seven finals, he won five, including national events in Houston, Chicago, and Madison, and never looked back. He finished with six wins and three runner-ups in the 10 events at which he earned championship points for a total of 750, 42 more than runner-up Tom Bayer. But it really wasn't that close.

"A lot of people have won one, but not many have won two," said Reichert, who became just the fourth driver in the history of the class to win consecutive titles and is the first since Rick Santos, who won five straight from 1997 to 2001. "It's something I'm really proud of."

After capping his 2006 championship season with a win at Automobile Club of Southern California NHRA Finals in Pomona, Reichert came out firing on all eight in 2007. The 56-year-old engine builder from Owosso, Mich., wheeled his Bar's Products Rislone Engine Treatment A/Fuel Dragster to a 5.23 on his first run of the season en route to a runner-up at the ACDelco NHRA Gatornationals in Gainesville.

"To run as well as we did right out of the box even surprised me," said Reichert, who lost the final on a holeshot to Randy Meyer in the quickest race in Top Alcohol Dragster history, 5.222 to 5.205. "We definitely left there with a pretty good feeling about things."

Reichert, who before losing to Meyer had won his last seven national event finals dating back to 2005, got back on the winning track at the O'Reilly NHRA Spring Nationals in Houston. In one of the most dominating performances in class history, Reichert qualified No. 1, set the national e.t. and speed records with the quickest and fastest runs in history, and won the event. If that wasn't enough, his team also received the Best Appearing Crew award.

"That was definitely the race of the season for us," said Reichert, who ran an all-time-best 5.103 in the semi's and won the final with a 5.153 at 284.75 mph, the fastest run ever. "We didn't leave anything on the table."

Weeks later, and as a direct result of Reichert's performance in Houston, NHRA reduced the maximum nitromethane percentage for injected dragsters from 97 to 96. Initially, the change did little to slow Reichert, but eventually it would.

"The first race we went to on 96 percent was the Norwalk divisional, and we ran a 5.24 and won the race," he said. "At that point we thought that it might not hurt us too bad, but it was cool there and not really a good test. As it got warmer, it really started to affect the car."

After a runner-up at the Reading divisional, Reichert won the Torco Racing Fuels Route 66 NHRA Nationals in Chicago, then lost in the semi's a week later at the Chicago divisional before returning to Norwalk for the Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals.

"We had run well there in the spring on 97 percent, and we figured we could just put the same tune-up in the car," said Reichert. "But it was considerably warmer, and we couldn't get it to run. We really struggled. We won the race, but it certainly wasn't because of our performance."

It didn't take Reichert long to figure out how to get that performance back, however. He reached the final at three of his next six events, scoring divisional wins in Madison and Columbus, Ohio. With his runner-up at the Division 3 finale in Bowling Green, Ky., in late July, Reichert took a commanding 144-point lead over his closest pursuer, Jim Whiteley, and held on despite some ensuing bad luck.



Back-to-back first-round losses at the Mac Tools U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis, where he inadvertently shut the car off after backing up from his burnout, and at the O'Reilly NHRA Fall Nationals in Dallas, where he lost on a holeshot after qualifying No. 1, gave Whiteley a chance, albeit a slim one. But when Whiteley lost in round two in Dallas, it delivered the title to Reichert.

"It was kind of a weird deal," said Reichert. "There was no fanfare or anything, it was just over. Last year we clinched it [at the national event] in Virginia when I won the semifinal round, and that was a little more exciting."

As he did a year ago, Reichert capped his championship season with a victory at the Automobile Club of Southern California NHRA Finals in Pomona. Despite a six-week layoff, Reichert dominated, qualifying No. 1 and setting low e.t. en route to his third straight Finals title and fourth national event win of the season.

"Winning Pomona is the best thing that can happen," he said. "I'm in the garage right now working on the car with a big smile on my face. There's a lot of work to be done in the off-season, and winning the last race of year is a great motivator."

As for next season, Reichert said he may put someone else in the seat, as he did at the Division 2 finale in Reynolds, Ga., where Lindsey Wood drove the car.

"We've talked about it," he said. "As of right now, there's nobody else. My plan is to drive, but that could change. We're talking to several people."

One thing that won't change is Reichert's primary sponsor, Bar's Leaks.

"If it wasn't for Bar's Leaks, we wouldn't be racing," he said. "Next season will be our 14th year with them, and I definitely want to thank those guys. We've had Lane Automotive on the car almost as long, and NGK has supplied us with product for a long time, so I have to thank them as well."

#### **Reichert's 2007 Track Record 750 points**

ACDelco NHRA Gatornationals	Runner-up
O'Reilly NHRA Spring Nationals	Won event
Summit Racing Equipment Motorsports Park (Div. 3)	Won event
Maple Grove Raceway (Div. 1)	Runner-up
Torco Racing Fuels Route 66 NHRA Nationals	Won event
Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Southern Nationals	Won event
Route 66 Raceway (Div. 3)	Won event
National Trail Raceway (Div. 3)	Won event
Lucas Oil NHRA Nationals	Semifinals
Beech Bend Raceway Park (Div. 3)	Runner-up

Reference:

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