

Person of the Week: Dan Rudd

Wednesday, September 21, 2009 -



Dan Rudd Biography



Born April 1, 1958 in Akron, Ohio, Daniel J. Rudd was a typical American kid who fell in love with drag racing at an early age - first as a spectator, then as a collector (remember plastic models, back when you had to build your toys, not run to Wal-mart and buy diecast), followed by being a young motorcyclist, leading up to racing himself. Like many of us, Dan grew up in a forgotten era created by the likes of cartoonist Ed "Big Daddy" Roth.

Dan started riding motorcycles when he was 12 years old starting with a '69 Honda Mini Trail 50 before graduating to several dirt bikes and finally a Kawasaki H-1 in high school. His uncle, Glen, took him to a drag race at Dragway 42 in West Salem, OH in 1970. Watching "Grumpy" Jenkins, "Dyno" Don Nicholson, Don "Snake" Prudhomme, and Tom "Mongoose" McEwen, Dan quickly fell in love with the sport. As a fan of drag racing, Dan started building every drag race model he could afford.

Dan's first time to drag race was on his mini trail 50 at Dragway 42 in 1972 during a local motorcycle dealers appreciation day at the track. The main attraction that day was Russ Collins on his "Sorcerer" V-8 Top Fuel motorcycle. Three years later Dan was racing a Kawasaki H-1 at National Trail Raceway.

In his twenties, Dan worked for the Rick Case Kawasaki / Yamaha dealership in Ohio, but started tinkering with electronics and started looking for a new location that he could start his own business in a place that allowed year-round testing. He ended up in the Orlando, Florida area in 1983.

Working initially for a Kaw/ Suz / Yam dealership, ironically in Casselberry where his shop stands today, Dan started doing his mail order business out the back door. When asked if the owner knew about his extra curricular activities, he said, "They knew about it, didn't like it much, but let me do it anyway." Thus Motorcycle Performance Specialties (MPS) was born.

Dan said he got the idea to sell air shifters back in 1980 when Mike Murdoch was still working out of his garage. He sent off for an air shifter, but it wasn't what he had in his mind. So, he built what was in his mind himself. It was an electric over air shifter. The first person to buy his air shifter was none other than Byron Hines.

Dan later developed the first ever aftermarket part for a fuel bike; a mixture control unit. It was featured in Motorcyclist magazine, which essentially put MPS on the map.

MPS has been an AMA Dragbike contingency sponsor from the very beginning, back in the IHRA Motorcycle Division days. In the early years of IHRA and Prostar Dan also was crew chief for Funnybike racer, Chris Iovine out of Evansville, Indiana. Today, MPS is stronger than ever and at the forefront of racing electronics. Dan "The Man" Rudd is here to stay, both as a competitor and crew chief for a long time to come.

Other areas of interest:**Residence:** Winter Springs, FL**Better Half's Name:** Beth Delzingaro**Children's Names** (ages): Mandy (22)**Occupation:** Owner MPS (Motorcycle Performance Specialties)**Home track:** Orlando Speed World – South Georgia Motorsports Park**Team Name:** MPS**Crew Members:** Beth Delzingaro**Sponsors:** MPS**Accomplishments:** Championships: 1986 IDBA Comp Eliminator Champion
National Event Wins:

1986 IDBA Comp Eliminator Sunshine Nationals – Edgewater, OH

1986 IDBA Comp Eliminator Firecracker Nationals – Norwalk, OH

1993 Pro ET Prostar Dixie Nationals – Huntsville, AL

1994 AMA Prostar, Pro ET, Dixie Nationals – Richmond, VA

1996 Pro ET AMA Prostar World Finals – Gainesville, FL (\$10,000 race)

1999 Harley ET AMA Prostar Sunshine Nationals - Gainesville, FL

2004 Super Gas SEMDRA Cycle Masters Nationals – Douglas, GA

2006 Pro ET SEMDRA MPS Finals – Jackson, SC

2008 Pro ET AMA Dragbike Bike Week Nationals – Valdosta, GA

2008 Top Gas SEMDRA Rockdale Cycles Nationals – Valdosta, GA

Special Recognitions: 2006 AMA Prostar Sportsman Mechanic Of The Year (Bruce Sauer Award)

History of racing bikes and classes:

1975 – 1976 Kawasaki H-1 Pro ET

1976 – 1977 Kawasaki H-2 Pro ET

1977 – 1983 Kawasaki Z-1 Pro ET

1984 – 1987 Kawasaki ZX750 Turbo Competition Eliminator

1988 – 1992 No Race Bikes – Business takes precedence over racing.

1993 – 1994 Kawasaki Z-1 Pro ET

1995 No Race Bikes

1996 Kawasaki Z-1 Pro ET

1997 - 1999 No Race Bikes – Business takes precedence over racing again.

2000 – 2004 Suzuki Hayabusa Street ET

2004 – 2005 Kawasaki Z-1 Pro ET

2006 – Present Suzuki Hayabusa Top Gas

Current race bike / class: 2006 Suzuki Hayabusa – D&G Chassis Top Gas**Goals:** To win a championship in a Pro Class as a crew chief**Interest outside of racing:** Stock Market, Firearms, Golf, Concerts, Boating, and Street Riding with friends**Favorite foods:** Seafood & Mexican**Favorite movie:** The Jerk – South Park**What's your daily driver:** 2004 Chevrolet Pick-up**First motorcycle:** 69 Honda Z-50 Mini Trail

Hero: John Myers & Elmer Trett

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