

John “Sporty” Bandimere Stresses Importance of Proper Training Following His Hawley Super Class

Frank Hawley’s Drag Racing School makes annual stops at some of the finest NHRA National Event tracks all across the country and one of them is Bandimere Speedway, a picturesque facility just outside of Denver, Colorado. Recently, Executive Vice President and General Manager, John “Sporty” Bandimere took part in Hawley’s Super Class when it was held at the Morristown, Colorado track.



“We have actually been sending high school kids over the years to be instructed by Frank,” Sporty explains. “Our High School program is very-very strong and we have always awarded our two High School Champions the opportunity to go to the school and go through Frank’s Super Class. Every time that the winners have taken the class, the kids and the parents comment to me that it was the most fabulous and fun experience. That Frank was great, the guys were great and it was just phenomenal.”

“My daughter attended Frank’s school a few years ago and had just a wonderful experience,” he continued. “I’ve driven a lot of different door cars, but never a dragster. I got to thinking that this would just be good timing to attend the Super Class during Frank’s trip here and try to license in another type of vehicle.”



While Sporty knew that driving the dragster during his class was going to be a lot of fun, he was most looking forward to Hawley’s classroom lectures. “I really and truly enjoyed listening to Frank,” he pointed out. “I feel that whether you are a competitor, a race track operator or even just a fan, to have the opportunity to get a different perspective and maybe in some cases a little deeper perspective is a great thing. Even since the school, I have had the chance to talk to people about the school and share some of the things that Frank taught us and educated us on and to some degree, entertained us with.”

Bandimere noted that he witnesses many new drivers throughout the year make their licensing runs at his facility and how important he felt his training with Hawley was by helping him improve as a driver and how it would transfer to his responsibilities as a track operator signing license applications.

“For me, going through and having Frank critique my runs helps me to watch things a little bit differently for these competitors that are coming in to license,” he explained. “Another thing that I think it really did for me as a track operator was that it helped me to remind myself and communicate to our competitors that just because you made your runs down a racetrack and you now have your license, doesn’t constitute the fact that you are now a racer. There is still so much more to learn.”

When asked about the importance of proper training, such as a driver receives at Frank Hawley’s Drag Racing School, Sporty pointed out the huge differences in working with Hawley verses the way some new driver hopefuls may do on their own.

“You know you may have your own car or a buddy’s car and they say, ‘Here’s the brake, there’s the gas, here’s the button, look here and go’. You don’t always know if they are using or learning how to use their safety equipment properly. They may know about the car, they may not,” he said. “I think what going through the school does is that it takes somebody like Frank, who has twenty-six years of experience, who has seen what works, what doesn’t, what people’s apprehensions or anxieties are and says let’s deal with them. Everybody is going to be different and handle this experience different and Frank is great about having drivers just start right at the beginning.”



“Let’s face it, there are many times that a driver on their own will go out there on their very first run and make something like a 9.98 pass and you tell them, ‘no, you aren’t ready for that yet’ and that they need to first learn to respect the race car, the speed and the dangers of this sport and take it at a certain pace to make sure that driver completely understands what they are doing before moving on to the next step,” he continued. “So to have someone with Frank’s experience, videoing the runs and educating each driver is very important. It gives each driver a very good base to start with.”

Bandimere has driven in Super Street and Super Gas and his concerns coming into Hawley’s class that he may feel somewhat claustrophobic strapped into a dragster were quickly quashed. “I really enjoyed it,” he confessed. “I didn’t have that feeling at all, I felt really comfortable. I just had so much fun.”

“The whole class was just a really fun time for me. I have to be honest, being a race track operator I felt a little more pressure to not go out there and look like an idiot,” Sporty paused to laugh. “Frank, along with Matt and Jimmy, did such a great job as far as making you feel comfortable, making sure that you understood what was going on. Unless you are just not mentally paying attention, it’s pretty difficult for a driver to not be able to do it, based on the caliber of the instruction.”



While Sporty is quite busy with his day-to-day responsibilities as a track operator at Bandimere Speedway, he commented that “he would love to get out there and race someday.”

“Taking part in Frank’s school and driving a dragster was just part of my bucket list,” he admitted. “I am so very glad I did it and again, it was a whole lot of fun.”

For more information on Frank Hawley’s Drag Racing School, including all locations and class offerings, visit www.frankhawley.com or call 866-480-7223.