



Drag racing is all about top end power. So make sure the machine has a stronger power-to-weight ratio.



Buy all the upgrades that can be removed, and pick and choose the ones that give you the broadest power band.



Drag racing is not just about being a good rider, it's also about setting up the chassis in order to become a good rider.

15

Drag Racer

SPEED RECORDS, SPILLS AND THRILLS

Rickey Gadson, the 10 time world drag racing champion, tells us more about drag racing and its first ever event organised in India.



FHM: When and where did you first attend a drag race, and what was it about drag racing that drew you towards it?

Rickey: I attended my first drag race in 1983. I was dirt bike riding with friends when they decided to ride to the drag strip and I followed them. They walked me through registering my bike so I could try it too. That was my first time drag racing and the 1st motor that I let go off as I blew up the motor on my first day, but was hooked on drag racing ever since!

FHM: Besides the adrenaline rush, what else goes through your mind when you are on the drag race track?

Rickey: When I'm on the track, I try to make each run better than the run before. You always try something different when tuning the bike and it's great seeing it materialise into your best run ever. So when I'm lining up, I worry if I made the right move or could that move lose this race for me. But when I am staging (the starting line), I'm only thinking about giving it everything I've got every time.

FHM: When does one realise that he/she can race professionally?

Rickey: I realised it when I won a lot of races on my own without major sponsors and also beat a couple of noted fast guys.

FHM: Is there any other side of drag racing that interests you?

Rickey: I run my own drag racing

school where I teach others my techniques and how to be their best in a drag race. The other thing that interests me about racing is the camaraderie you experience with family and friends. I've raced with some of my best friends on the track.

FHM: What is the best part about drag racing?

Rickey: It is the fastest accelerating form of Motorsport racing and it's exciting each time I get to turn on a win light.

FHM: Does drag racing require a proper team or is it a one man show?

Rickey: One man can do a lot of things on his own, but drag racing is surely not one of them. I had help from some of the best guys over the years. You can be the best rider in the world, but if you don't have a properly set up bike, you cannot win no matter how good you are.

FHM: You are the 10 time World Champion, so what's in store for you next?

Rickey: I had a small feature in the movie *Biker Boyz* and assisted quite a bit on set with actors Tyson Beckford and Derek Luke. I really enjoyed that. I would love to do more TV and movies and maybe even have my own show. Also, eventually I'd like to start my own race team.

FHM: What is your opinion about young Indian drivers?

Rickey: Young Indian riders have

the "eye of the tiger" and the ambition and drive that makes me love the sport and realise that some things are the same about drag racers no matter where you are from.

FHM: Since our country is not exposed to such extreme Motorsports, how does one make his/her way to the international circuit?

Rickey: I would say a good start is to come to the States and enroll in a drag racing school for technique to see where you measure. Places like *dragbike.com* have drag racing news and updates, while *dragbikelive.com* is where racers go to watch live streaming of races. Now racers can communicate from anywhere in the world and connect with other racers.

FHM: How important is it to find a sponsor?

Rickey: For the average racer, it's very important as it gets difficult to afford to race at a pro level. There's a lot more money that goes out to be competitive than there is going back in your pocket in drag racing.

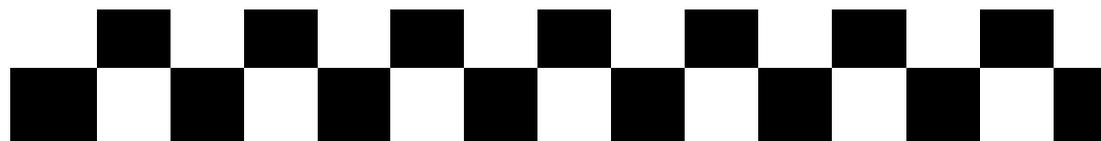
FHM: Have you ever tried car drag racing?

Rickey: Yes, I actually set the track record in South Africa in 2003 in a top alcohol dragster at 7.52.

FHM: How different is car drag racing from motorbike drag racing?

Rickey: Too many doors...lol.

Words: Nishant Nayyar



The goal of drag racing is pretty basic: Cross the quarter mile first and snag a lower elapsed time than your opponent.