



In one second, Vincent Nobile '14 drives his NAPA/Mountain View Tires Dodge Avenger from 0 to 100 miles per hour; a street car reaches 60 miles per hour in four seconds. It takes him 6.5 seconds to finish a drag race on a quarter-mile track.



PURSUING A BUSINESS DEGREE

FULL THROTTLE

"The hardest part of the race is doing a good burnout," says Mr. Nobile, who won his first race in Houston, Texas, in May. He had been racing for less than three months. "You need to make sure you heat up your tires good and burn over a specific spot on the starting line to lay down rubber for when you launch."

To slow down before reaching the finish line, Mr. Nobile pulls a lever that releases two parachutes on each side of his car. He drives another quarter mile to stop.

"Everything happens so fast," Mr. Nobile says. "Me and my opponent were neck and neck at the finish line and I won the race by .016 of [a] second, which equates to three inches. It was an indescribable feeling considering I am the youngest to ever win a national race event," says Mr. Nobile, referring to his first place in the factory hot rod category at the National Hot Rod Association's Spring Nationals, held in Houston last May.


It was a touching victory for Mr. Nobile and his team of five mechanic experts, led by Nick Mitsos, who make the Dodge run smoothly. "I got out of the car and was still in shock," Mr. Nobile says. "It took about a minute for my dad and crew to get to the finish line. As soon as I saw them, I broke down in tears of happiness." Mr. Nobile learned the secrets of drag racing from his father, John, owner of Nobile Trucking, Inc. "My dad is definitely my role model," he says.

In pursuit of an Adelphi business degree, which would enable him to take over his father's business or start his own, Mr. Nobile balances classes and racing. "I'm a full-time student, so I haven't been able to practice [racing]," he says. "It gets a little tough at times." Long Island has no drag racing tracks and the nearest practice space is Atco, New Jersey.

During his freshman spring semester, he arranged his schedule so that he had no courses on Fridays. Every other weekend, he'd fly to California, Florida, Nevada, Texas, Georgia, or wherever his next race took him, after his last class on Thursday. He'd return Sunday nights, in time for his first class, Monday afternoon. Only a few classmates knew that Mr. Nobile's weekends were filled with a little more adrenaline than those of other college students. Those who did, admired him for being on ESPN 2 and NHRA.com. He's also been covered by *Newsday* and the *New York Times*.

Drag racing is costly. You need a sponsorship of about \$1 million to become a professional drag racer, according to Mr. Nobile. And the sport is dangerous. Mr. Nobile wears a fire suit and helmet during races. "I try not to think about the danger," he says. "I just try to go as fast as I can."

Mr. Nobile wants to beat the world record speed for drag racing, 6.49 seconds per 215 mph; with a personal record of 6.5 seconds per 214 mph, he's almost there. He'd also like to win the Rookie of the Year award in the NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing Series in Pomona, California, in November. In June, he won his second NHRA event in Norwalk, Ohio, becoming the first rookie to win two pro stock events in one season.

"I love the competition and the speed," Mr. Nobile says. "I'd much rather it [drag racing] became my profession." 

By Ana Barbu '10

1 Vincent Nobile '14 triumphs at the NHRA 2011 Spring Nationals.

2 Vincent Nobile '14 is the youngest driver to win an NHRA drag race.