

# Bench racing is over - Zizzo returns from Spain ready for Houston

By [Zizzo P.R.](#) on April 6, 2010 5:08 PM



BAYTOWN, Texas - If competition in NHRA Full Throttle Drag Racing isn't fierce enough on the track, you can always follow the competition away from the track as well. "I was hoping to have lost more weight than Cory Mac (McClenathan)," Zizzo laughed. "I ran into him at an event this winter and he looked lean. I had lost 12 lbs. until I ate all of those Tapas in Spain. So, now my dad will have to squeeze me in the car with a shoehorn."

Fresh from a trip to Barcelona Spain to make good on a 15-year-old promise to his wife, T.J. Zizzo had time to reflect on the task of competing at this weekend's O'Reilly Auto Parts NHRA Spring Nationals at Houston Raceway Park. During a long winter of "bench racing", teams, crew chiefs and drivers spend endless hours toiling and tuning their dragsters to new world records - or at least new personal bests. The PEAK / HERCULINER Top Fuel team from Zizzo Racing is no different.

"We just dug the transporter out of a snow bank three weeks ago," Zizzo said. "Now, I return from Spain and it's 80 degrees in 'Chitown'. That is crazy. We did a lot of bench racing over the winter. According to our bench racing numbers, we're going to run 3.86 at 315 mph on our first pass in Houston... I love bench racing!"

Zizzo spent his winter managing the family auto body business and updating the racing equipment with the team, and he's confident they're ready.

"I know we'll need a few runs to get up to speed. There is never enough time, but we are as ready as we have ever been. I will need to dust the cob webs off my driving suit and get the paint fumes out of my head from painting cars 12 hours a day. That first pass might be a little bit of shock to my system."

"I want to gain exposure off the track, but like any young hopeful driver I want to do well on the track too," he said. "I can't wait to stand at the ropes, talk to the fans and spend time with the media. I want them to be able to appreciate all of T.J.," Zizzo joked. "My wife, friends and team should not be the only people subjected to that. Without fans and media, there would not be a drag race in Houston."

Professional qualifying for the race begins Friday April 9 and continues on Saturday. Eliminations begin Sunday. ESPN2 HD will have same day coverage of qualifying on Saturday (11PM ET) and Sunday (8PM ET).

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