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 Mitch Myers, Epha and Codi Frazier!!

By Bob Frey
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Mitch Myers runs a Top Alcohol Dragster that has the name "Epha" on the side of it. And, if you look closely, you'll also see the name "Codi" on the back of the injector scoop on Mitch's car. So what do Mitch, Epha and Codi all have to do with one another? Well....

To begin with, Mitch Myers is not new to the sport of drag racing. He first went to the races back in the 1960's to watch his dad, Bill, race a 1963 Ford Falcon, similar to a car Mitch has today. A few years later he moved up to the funny car ranks and he campaigned a car with the help of one of the greats of the match race days, Twig Zigler. "Twig and I are more like brothers than just friends," Mitch said. "In fact, he calls my father 'dad,' that's how close we are." In addition to that, Mitch raced a series of sand drag vehicles and he still holds the record for fuel funny cars on the sand at almost 143 miles per hour. "It was a big old dual tire thing and we had a lot of fun with it. A lot of drag racers, like Rick Henkelman, Gary Scelzi, Danny Danell, Alan and Blaine Johnson all used to race sand drags," he said. "It was a lot of fun." Mitch also enjoys skydiving and says that he has over 20 hours of free-fall time to his credit based on over 2,800 jumps. "I loved skydiving and for a while I was testing experimental and high performance parachutes. Jumping with one of those was like driving a Ferrari as opposed to driving a Ford LTD. It was pretty exciting." Mitch raced some alky funny cars for a while on the divisional level and then said that when he got tired of all the tire shake and bouncing around he decided to take some time off. "Then I got talking to Rick Henkelman and he convinced me that a fuel-injected dragster was the way to go so I bought a turn-key operation from Jerry Darien and prepared to go dragster racing." Just about when he was ready to debut the car Mitch was diagnosed with stomach and gallbladder problems requiring major surgery and everything else took a back seat to simply getting better. "That experience was a real awakening and it gave me a whole new perspective on life. I've lost about eighty pounds since then and now I'm in better health than I've been for a long while."



Myers does a burnout.

The "Epha" on the side of Mitch's car refers to the family owned company, a firm that makes hose protection equipment and has customers in over sixty countries around the world. "General Dynamics, Bluebird Bus Company, John Deere and Freightliner are just some of our customers. We have up to fifteen employees but we have over 100,000 open door distributors around the world." The name of the company is in honor of his grandmother, Epha. "A lot of people think it stands for something, like Environmental Hose Protection Association or something like that," Mitch said. "But after submitting several names to the state and getting all of them rejected, we decide to honor my grandmother and name the company after her." The "Epha" Top Alcohol Dragster has been running very well lately and the team recently won the Division 6 race in Woodburn, Oregon and they qualified tenth at the national event in Sonoma this past weekend and went to the semi-finals. Those two highlights were sandwiched around a very rare DNQ at the Seattle race, but Mitch knows that not qualifying for an event isn't the end of the world, and that's where Codi comes in.



Codi Frazier

Codi Frazier is an eleven year old girl who has gone through more in her young life than anyone should have to go through in an entire lifetime. She has cancer, has had a leg amputated, has a blood disease, has lost a parent and more. Yet, as unbelievable as it may seem, she still finds time to smile and be optimistic about life. You can find out more about this remarkable young girl by checking out her web site at www.codibug.com. Mitch and his team first came in contact with Codi through a friend of his, Rich Bailey. "Rich does a lot with the Oregon Team Safety program and he takes some folks to area schools and talks to the kids about safety and things like that. Rich asked if we wanted to meet Codi so we made her a honorary team member for the Woodburn event in May. I can honestly tell you that meeting her has dramatically changed my life." Mitch goes on to talk about this amazing child and what she has been through and he says that it will put drag racing into its proper perspective in a hurry. "As much as we all love to race and win, when you see what Codi has been through, you look at everything, drag racing and life in a whole different light. When we didn't qualify at Seattle my guys were a little down and I told them that's it's only racing and I told them to think about Codi." After Mitch met Codi for the first time he told her that he would go out and set a record a win a race just for her. "Then we went to the Woodburn race, set the track record and won the meet and if that doesn't make you believe in a higher power..." While Mitch puts a lot of his racing and business efforts in a new light since meeting Codi, he does take a lot of pride in what his team has accomplished in a short period of time. "If you take a look at what we've done we really do have a lot to be proud of," he said. "We've won national event, set a couple of track records, and in the overall national standings last year we were sixteenth, but if you look closely at the points, we had the third best fuel injected car in the country and that's pretty special."

Mitch Myers is the first one to admit that things are pretty good for him. His wife, Debbie, runs a flower shop called "Petal Pusher" in their home town of Hermiston, Oregon, and she's his biggest fan even if she doesn't come to the races a lot. "We've only been married for seven years but I've known her since the '70's. She used to hang out with my older sister, Teresa. It's funny, I'll call her while I'm at the races and she's working at the store and she'll tell me all the things I have to do when I get home and not even ask about the car. But she supports everything I do with it," Mitch says. His son, Bill, and son in law Cassidy oversee the daily operations of "Epha" and he has two daughters, Nicole and Heather, a step son, Chadd and his mom, Sylvia. His father, Bill, retired after years of working as a general contractor, also works with the team when they're at the races. "Dad was instrumental in the start of EPHA, as it was

his years of working as a contractor that provided the seed idea for our beginning product line the Hose Protector. If it were not for the sacrifices of my parents and many others on our business team we would not have succeeded. Like I said, I'm very fortunate to have the support that I do. I only hope that our family can pass some of this love on to Codi and make her life a little brighter." But, as often happens in cases like this, Mitch goes on to say that, surprisingly, it's usually Codi who brightens his day. "Just to see her smile can turn your day around," he said. Mitch Myers and the "Epha" dragster may be racing, but everyone on the team is all thinking about and praying for Codi Frazier.