

## Top Fuel at Tierp Arena

There are no fewer than 13 entries in Top Fuel for the first FIA European Championship race at Tierp Arena. Qualifying will be a event on its own. The teams can't wait to make their first run down this brand-new super-track. And for the first time they will have to deal with a full concrete race-track. Who will make the best tuning calls and shall we see new European records?

Qualifying at the Main Event was great but Tierp will be even better. A record field of 13 teams have to do their very best to get into the 8-car elimination ladder. And after the rained-out eliminations in England, Tierp will see the first side-by-side confrontations between the best and fastest European (and one American) racers. The full concrete track is a new challenge for the crewchiefs but don't be surprised to see record-breaking performances during the Swedish round of the FIA European Top Fuel Championship.

After his performance at Santa Pod, Tommy Johnson Jr. will start at Tierp as one of the favourites. It might be an advantage that the American is used to concrete tracks and is the track specialist for Don Schumacher Racing. But Per and Karsten Andersen have already raced on American concrete tracks too, so in more than one way this is a strong combination. The same can be said about Urs Erbacher who already showed his speed at the Main Event with a number three qualifying position. The new European speed-record holder is Risto Poutiainen and the Finn was the most consistent Top Fuel driver in England with three 4-second-runs. Can the Rune Fjeld tuned car dip into the 4.6sec zone?

Anita Mäkelä had some troubles at Santa Pod but the ever-smiling Finnish fan favourite is eager to get that number one qualifying position. Although it's not as close as Mantorp Park, Tierp Arena is Micke Kågered's home race, so the Swede can welcome his sponsors and will do everything to show them the team's capabilities. Kågered was at Tierp Arena's opening race on May 7 and 8 and is one of the few who tested there. Jari Halinen and Timo Lehtimäki will come out for their second race in two weeks. The two Finns will try to improve on their Santa Pod performances where they qualified in sixth and seventh positions.

Tierp Arena means revenge for Andy Carter. The multiple European Champion did not qualify at Santa Pod, but he and his new Team West-Tec will do everything to improve their times and keep their championship dreams alive.

Five drivers will have their first race of the 2011 season at Tierp. Stig Neergaard could not make it to England and will start his season in Sweden. The Dane can surprise with fast times as he has done before and could be a championship candidate. It's almost a tradition that Monica Öberg takes part in the Swedish round of the FIA Top Fuel Championship and this year is no exception. Antti Horta will make his Top Fuel debut in the car Janne Ahonen raced last year to the number five position in the 2010 Championship. From Sweden, Håkan Fällström and Patrik Pers will enter the race and try to qualify for the eight-car field and maybe can take away championship points from some of the title favourites.

One thing is for sure, Tierp will be interesting in many ways.

Text by Remco Scheelings. Edited by Robin Jackson.