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IHRA Driver Profile

Living life to the fullest is winning strategy for Casey Spradlin

story by Glenn Boylan/photos courtesy of Spradlin Motorsports

You might not expect to find one of the best rib eye steaks in the Southeast in Ranburne Alabama, but that's exactly what you'll find at the Bulldog Restaurant on Main Street.

And when you meet Ranburne's Casey Spradlin, the personable and energetic Top Dragster driver, you might not expect to find out that his left leg is half the size of his right and that his left foot has been amputated. In fact, if you don't ask you may never know because Casey doesn't let it slow him down a bit. He never has.

Casey was born without one of the bones in his leg, and the doctors told his parents, Gary and Shelia, that they should have Casey's foot amputated. After talking with other parents whose children had the same problem, the Spradlins made the difficult choice to have the foot



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amputated when Casey was just 18 months old.

But once that was done, the Spradlins decided that Casey was going to live life as fully as he could. Using a prosthesis on his leg, he ran around just like any other kid, not asking for or getting any special treatment. Casey enjoyed swimming, football, and T-ball; at least until the T-ball games started to conflict with going to the drag strip.



Casey's car is based on a 235-inch Spitzer chassis. Amazingly, the only change necessary for Casey's leg was to add a 2-inch block to the brake pedal.

When Casey was growing up his dad Gary was bracket racing a '67 Nova. The Spradlins, including young Casey, were at the drag strip almost every weekend. It was a time that made a big impression on Casey.

"Growing up around racing like I did, I just knew I was going to be a race car driver," Casey said. "That's all I've ever wanted to do. As far as being handicapped, I wasn't going to let anything stop me."

As soon as he was old enough, Casey started driving the Nova and Gary stepped up to the team's first dragster. The next season, they purchased a second dragster from their friend Johnny Cofield for Casey to drive.

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Gary's abilities as crew chief, Casey's driving skills, and Shelia's unwavering support have resulted in a lot of success for Spradlin Motorsports. Casey took runner-up honors at his first IHRA divisional in 1999. In 2000, he won the divisional at US 43 and finished second in IHRA's Southeast Division. The 2001 season was plagued by transmission problems, but did result in Casey's career best 6.64 run. Thus far in 2002, Casey has won the Tuscola Motorsports divisional and sits in 5th place with one race to go in the season.

With his Electrical Engineering degree from Auburn just one semester away, Casey hopes his new income, along with some sponsorship money, will keep Spradlin Motorsports going for a long time. "My Dad and I have raced together a long time. I want us to be able to keep

racing as long as we can." Given what the Spradlins have overcome and accomplished so far, you can expect that they will keep racing - and winning - for many years to come. *

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