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**Henry
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Ashley Force-Hood

November 29, 1982-Present

Nationality: American

Started racing in 1999

Origins: Born and raised in California, Ashley was the second of four girls born to 14-time NHRA Funny Car champ, John Force, and Laurie, a NHRA licensed Super Comp dragster driver. Growing up, Ashley spent a great deal of time around the track, cheering her father on to victory or watching him compete on television, but John never thought his daughters were interested in continuing his racing legacy. Ashley showed some interest in mechanics but stayed on the sidelines, cheering her father on to his first NHRA championship in 1987.

Early Influences: During high school, Ashley was a varsity cheerleader, but also enrolled in welding and auto repair, in hopes of someday entering racing and joining a pit crew. Her initial interest shocked her famous father, but John Force supported Ashley's decision and offered her her first experience behind the wheel. Ashley enrolled in Frank Hawley's Driving Development program, a 16th birthday present from her father, and started competing in the Super Comp class. She felt she was ready to join the racing world, but her mother insisted Ashley attend college. After completing a B.A. in Communication from California State University-Fullerton in 2004, Ashley threw all of her efforts into racing, with the goals of becoming the first woman to qualify for the final round, win a race, and be named point champion in NHRA Funny Car.

Racing Accomplishments:

- Named 2004 Top Alcohol Dragster Division 4 Points Champion after winning Lucas Series races at Rusk, TX, Englishtown, NJ, and Belle Rose, LA.
- Finished 2006 Lucas Oil dragster series fifth in point standings after winning races in Gainesville, FL, and Atlanta, GA.
- Moved to Funny Cars in January 2007, becoming the 10th female to earn her NHRA Funny Car license and the first woman to compete since 2000. She finished the 2007 season in 10th, then the highest placing ever by a female driver.

- The 2008 season was a successful one for Force, with her becoming the first woman qualifier for the U.S. Smokeless Showdown, a Funny Car bonus race, where she was seeded number one, and first woman to lead the Funny Car point standings, after qualifying for the final round of the SummitRacing.com Nationals in Las Vegas.
- In April 2008, Force became the first woman to win a national NHRA Funny Car event after turning in a 4.827 second run at the Southern Racing Equipment Nationals in Atlanta. To make the accomplishment even more momentous, this historic victory came against her father and marked the first time Ashley beat him during a heat.
- Ashley became the first woman to lead the Funny Car point standings. Force placed 6th in the 2008 NHRA Funny Car point standings, resetting the bar for highest female point standing in the series.
- As of November 10, 2009, Force-Hood is currently in second place in the NHRA Funny Car standings, with two races remaining in the season.

Interesting Facts:

- Voted 2007 “World’s Hottest Athlete” by AOL Sports readers. In the informal poll, Force beat out male champion Tom Brady in a tournament-style voting system.
- The Force Family was featured in 2006-2007 A&E’s series *Driving Force*, a show that followed the family’s involvement in the sport and Ashley’s move up to funny cars and her first year in the series.
- Ashley’s cat Simba has gained quite an online fan following. He is now the subject of “Simba’s World,” a blog written from his perspective and dedicated to his experiences with Force Hood and racing.

Life off the Track: Force married Daniel Hood, her parts manager on the Castrol GTX team, in December 2008. Considering her two younger sisters are also part of the John Force Racing team and her older half-sister is married to John Force Racing driver Robert Hight, most races are family events. During the short off-season, Ashley enjoys girls’ nights out, shopping, riding her motorcycle, watching movies and spending time with her niece and family. She somehow also finds time to continue her love of movies, producing spoofs on holiday classics for the annual John Force Racing Christmas party. (These include 2008’s “Bi-Polar Express,” a nod to her father’s famous temper, and 2007’s “A Christmas Carol” starring John Force in the roll of Scrooge.)

Awards and Achievements:

- 2004 Driver of the Year and Rookie of the Year in Division 4’s Alcohol class.
- Named 2007 NHRA POWERade Drag Racing Series Rookie of the Year.
- The Castrol GTX Crew, Ashley’s was named the 2008 Full Throttle Pit Crew Challenge champion to honor the team’s qualifying consistency
- Awarded 2008 Female Athlete of the Year from the Jin Murray Memorial Foundation.
- As of October 2009, she holds the record for top speed in a Funny Car, clocking 312.13 mph.

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