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## **Hagan and Gaines Take Mopar to Final Round at Season-opening NHRA Winternationals**

- Matt Hagan earns runner-up finish at Pomona in debut of Mopar Express Lane graphics on his Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car
- Dodge Avenger Pro Stock driver V. Gaines advances to his first-career Pomona final round
- Mopar/J&J Racing teammates Jeg Coughlin Jr. and Allen Johnson exit early in eliminations
- Mopar to bring 426 HEMI 50th anniversary celebration to select NHRA events in 2014

February 9, 2014, Pomona, Calif. - Team Mopar drivers Matt Hagan and V. Gaines helped rev up the Mopar brand's year-long 426 HEMI 50th anniversary celebration, driving to runner-up finishes in the NHRA Funny Car and Pro Stock classes, respectively, in the elimination rounds at the 54th Annual NHRA Winternationals at Auto Club Raceway in Pomona, Calif.

The off-season evidently didn't leave any rust on Hagan, who picked up right where he left off after his season-ending Pomona victory at the 2013 NHRA Finals. The 2011 NHRA Funny Car champ bested Courtney Force to begin eliminations with a 4.036/322.73, but his run didn't end at the finish. Hagan's Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T continued off the drag strip and into the sand after one of his chutes failed to fully deploy, necessitating a little extra work for the Don Schumacher Racing crew.

In a quarterfinals showdown with another John Force Racing driver, Robert Hight, Hagan again came out on top, thanks to a modest holeshot. Hagan left the line first with a .063 reaction time (compared to Hight's .070) and recorded a 4.035/322.04 pass on his road to victory. In the semis Hagan's 4.030/318.32 sent home Del Worsham to clinch a spot in the final against 16-time series champ John Force — a rematch of the 2013 NHRA Finals money round. This time, however, Hagan smoked the tires early and watched Force drive to the win.

"We were just pushing hard," said Hagan, who advanced to his 25th career final and recorded his second Winternationals runner-up spot. "Force had been running 3.90s all weekend long. We knew we had to bring our A-game. He's got a great hot rod right now but we've got a pretty good one too. It's going to be a great season this year, and I can't wait to battle it out and turn some more win lights on."

Gaines, the No. 4 qualifier in Pro Stock, powered his Mopar HEMI-fueled Dodge Avenger past Greg Stanfield in round one with a 6.531/211.89 mark, earning lane choice against Erica Enders-Stevens, who knocked off Dodge driver Deric Kramer to advance to the quarterfinals. Gaines handled the always-tough Enders-Stevens, winning off the starting line (a .035 reaction time to Enders-Stevens .062) and at the finish with a 6.527/212.29 mark.

In the semifinals the veteran Gaines stopped No. 1 qualifier Vincent Nobile, using a superb .003 reaction time and 6.543/212.09 run to send the young driver to the trailer on a holeshot victory. In his 15th career final-round appearance and first-ever at Pomona, Gaines' quest for his first Winternationals win came up a hundredth of second short, as his 6.533/212.56 couldn't match Line's quicker 6.526.

"It was a good weekend and a good way to start the year, but losing such a close race in the final round isn't easy," said Gaines, who finished a career-best seventh in the 2013 standings, with four-runner-up finishes. "Erica [Enders-Stevens] has had my number, so beating her was pretty big. I'm tickled to death that we've picked up right where we left off in the Countdown last year, that we have a great car and great crew, and all the components that go with it."

Jeg Coughlin Jr. kicked off his Pro Stock title defense starting from the eighth position in his JEGS.com/Mopar Dodge Avenger and took down Rodger Brogdon to begin his day, with a winning 6.568/211.66 pass. In a second-round matchup against former J&J Racing teammate Nobile, Coughlin came out on the losing end with a slower 6.568/211.30 despite a slightly quicker reaction time.

J&J Racing team owner and driver Allen Johnson will look to rebound following a quick exit at Pomona. After a strong two days of qualifying in which he earned eight bonus points and put his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Avenger in the No. 2 position, Johnson suffered a first-round upset at the hands of Larry Morgan. Johnson's 6.567/211.36 effort, paired with an uncharacteristically sluggish .128 reaction time, wasn't enough to reel in Morgan at the finish. Rounding out the five-car Mopar Pro Stock field, Matt Hartford was unable to edge Jason Line at the top end in a first-round battle.

"I haven't been feeling well all weekend, but that's no excuse for getting distracted on the start," said Johnson, the 2012 Pro Stock champion. "We have a really strong package right now to build on, as the Mopar Express Lane Dodge was really great all weekend. I'm disappointed to start the season like this but I'll take the negative and turn it into a positive by making myself a little bit madder so I can come out at Phoenix with a vengeance."

Hagan's DSR Funny Car teammate Ron Capps sent home Dodge pilot Jeff Arend before exiting in his second round face-off with Bob Tasca III after his Dodge Charger R/T forcefully tapped the wall. In a first-round all-DSR Mopar Dodge showdown, Tommy Johnson Jr. used a 4.048/320.81 to defeat 2012 Funny Car champ Jack Beckman, before falling to John Force. Mopar-powered Dodge Charger racer Gary Densham exited in the quarterfinals, while Paul Lee was unable to make his first-round run against John Force.

The NHRA Winternationals also marked the first race to feature the Mopar brand's year-long celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the 426 HEMI engine. Special displays and activities, such as a unique 426 HEMI Heritage wall and a 426 HEMI birthday card available for fans to sign, will travel to select NHRA events at which the Mopar display rig is featured. Fans can enter to win a unique neon 426 HEMI 50th anniversary sign, with secondary prizes also up for grabs. Don Schumacher Racing driver Hagan will stage a unique salute to the legendary Mopar motor by campaigning a special 426 HEMI 50th anniversary graphics wrap on his Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car at the Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals and U.S. Nationals.

Next up for the Team Mopar NHRA contingent is the NHRA Nationals at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park in Chandler, Ariz., Feb. 21–23.

#### **2014 NHRA Championship Points Standings (following the NHRA Winternationals in Pomona):**

##### **PRO STOCK** (season wins in parentheses)

1. Jason Line – 118 (1)
2. **V Gaines – Dodge Avenger – 96**
3. Vincent Nobile – 86
4. Shane Gray – 73
- 5t. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Avenger 55**
- 5t. Erica Enders Stevens – 55
- 5t. Dave Connolly – 55
8. Larry Morgan – 51
9. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Avenger – 45**
10. Rodger Brogdon – 33

##### **FUNNY CAR** (season wins in parentheses)

1. John Force – 144
2. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 94**
3. Del Worsham – 76
4. Bob Tasca III – 71
5. Robert Hight – 61
6. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 55**
7. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 54**
8. **Gary Densham – Dodge Charger R/T – 51**
9. Alexis DeJoria – 39

### About Mopar Motorsports

Mopar's commitment to professional motorsports competition was established in the 1950s when a partnership ignited with drag racing pioneer Don Garlits, resulting in the breaking of numerous speed and performance barriers in HEMI®-powered vehicles over the next several decades. In 2014, Mopar celebrates the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the GEN III 426 Race HEMI® and looks to defend back-to-back NHRA World Championship titles (2012-2013) in the Pro Stock class and battle for another Funny Car World Championship after wins in 2011-2012. While Mopar remains involved in a various professional motorsports series, it continues to honor its roots by being a proud supporter of amateur racing within the NHRA with its sponsorship of the HEMI Challenge and Mopar Sportsman Cup.

### Mopar Brand

Mopar is Chrysler Group LLC's service, parts and customer-care brand and distributes 280,000 parts and accessories. With the creation of the industrial alliance between Chrysler Group and Fiat S.p.A., Mopar is extending its global reach, integrating service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance dealer and customer support worldwide. Mopar's global portfolio includes more than 500,000 parts and accessories that are distributed in more than 130 markets. Mopar is the source for genuine parts and accessories for Chrysler Group brands as well as Fiat brands.

Mopar parts are unique in that they are engineered with the same teams that create factory-authorized vehicle specifications for Chrysler Group and Fiat vehicles – a direct connection that no other aftermarket parts company can provide. A complete list of Mopar accessories and performance parts is available at [www.mopar.com](http://www.mopar.com).

### Mopar-first Features

Mopar has introduced numerous industry-first features including:

- **Vehicle-information apps:** first to introduce smartphone vehicle-information applications, a new channel of communication with customers
- **Electronic owner manuals:** first to introduce traditional owner manuals in a DVD and brief user-guide format. First to offer complete vehicle-information kits in Spanish
- **Wi-Fi:** first to offer customers the ability to make their vehicle a wireless hot spot
- **Wireless charging:** first to introduce in-vehicle wireless charging for portable devices
- **Electronic Vehicle Tracking System (EVTS):** first to market with interactive vehicle tracking device that sends owner a text when vehicle is driven too fast or too far based on pre-set parameters
- **wiAdvisor:** first to provide factory-connected tablet technology in the service lane for instant vehicle diagnosis
- **wiTech:** first to support vehicle diagnosis and software updates leveraging off-the-shelf personal computers and a dedicated wireless tool network
- **2011 Mopar Challenger Drag Pak:** first to introduce a 500-plus cubic-inch V-10 drag-race package car

### More than 75 Years of Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words Motor and PARTs) was trademarked for antifreeze product in 1937. The Mopar brand made its mark in the 1960s – the muscle-car era. The former Chrysler Corporation built race-ready Dodge and Plymouth “package cars” equipped with special high-performance parts. Mopar carried a line of “special parts” for super-stock drag racers and developed its racing parts division called Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use. The brand has expanded to include technical service and customer support.

### Mopar Express Lane Service

Mopar Express Lane service, offered at participating Chrysler Group dealerships, provides a dedicated service lane for fast oil changes, and much more, in order to maximize customer convenience for all make and model vehicles. Available services include oil and filter changes, multi-point vehicle checkup, tire rotation with brake inspection, air and cabin filter replacement, wiper blade replacement, headlight and light bulb replacement and battery testing. Mopar Express Lane service is a consumer's best choice for vehicle maintenance, with highly-skilled Chrysler Group dealership technicians ready to get to work and get you back on the road in no time. No appointments. No waiting. No worries.

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