

## **Coughlin Drives Mopar Dodge Dart to Winner's Circle at Rain Delayed NHRA Southern Nationals**

- Coughlin scores a second win for the Dodge Dart and his first of the 2014 season at the NHRA Southern Nationals near Atlanta
- DSR teammates Hagan and Capps both drive their Mopars to semifinal appearances
- Mopar teammates Beckman and Johnson Jr. both endure dramatic explosions during the rain-delayed weekend

May 19, 2014, Commerce, Ga. - After winning the 2013 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Pro Stock Championship, Jeg Coughlin Jr. was back in the winner's circle for his first win of the 2014 Mello Yello Drag Racing series season aboard the Mopar/JEGS.com Dodge Dart at the rain delayed 34th annual Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Southern Nationals near Atlanta, Georgia, on Monday.

The victory at Atlanta Dragway was the 57th of Coughlin's illustrious Pro Stock career and the second for the Dodge Dart, which made its debut earlier this season at Gainesville with a win by Johnson & Johnson (J&J) HEMI®-powered teammate Allen Johnson.

"Congratulations to Jeg Coughlin Jr. on taking Mopar to the winner's circle in Atlanta for his first win of the year and a second win for the new Dodge Dart." said Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO of Mopar, Chrysler Group's service, parts and customer-care brand. "After earning consecutive NHRA Pro Stock world titles in 2012 and 2013, our Mopar championship drivers Allen (Johnson) and Jeg (Coughlin Jr.) have set expectations even higher for this new season. We're excited for this win as it also helps celebrate the 50th anniversary of the legendary 426 race HEMI engine while we work to defend our championships this year amid some very tough competition."

Coughlin earned the win by defeating rival Greg Anderson following stellar 0.010 and 0.002-second reaction times by both competitors. The HEMI engine powered the five-time champion to a 6.558-second elapsed time run (211.63 mph) to edge his opponent's 6.588-second e.t (212.13 mph) for half a car-length advantage at the finish line.

"Winning the championship was fantastic, and we really felt like we had a ton of momentum coming into 2014," Coughlin said. "We've been hit and miss a little this year with both cars, and both cars were a little sluggish here at the start. Our teams did one heck of a job to rebound this weekend. We made some good calls, and it was great to get our first win of the season."

"This year we've been through some pitfalls and we wanted to pull our hair out, but as a team we said we need to be patient, we need to double-check each other, and we need to do as good a job as we can getting this car to go straight and be as efficient as it can, and results like today would have the opportunity to happen."

The national event was plagued by intermittent weather delays, included an eight hour wait on Sunday, and despite efforts to overcome difficult track conditions caused by the rain, led to the eventual postponement of activities to the following day. The challenges amplified by the ever-changing track conditions became the canvas for some difficult and sometimes dramatic attempts throughout the weekend to make it down the track unscathed by Mopar drivers in both Pro Stock and Funny Car categories.

Coughlin's drive to the winner's circle was the one redeeming moment of the extended weekend for Mopar after some atypical qualifying passes by both the Mopar/JEGS.com and "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart entries put them eighth and ninth respectively on the eliminations ladder. That put the teammates in the unfortunate position of not only facing each other in the opening round, but also being the first pair to put the rain battered track to

the test.

"We put ourselves in that position by qualifying badly," said Johnson whose disappointment with his loss and the difficulties both drivers encountered throughout the weekend was tempered upon seeing improvement with Coughlin's Dodge Dart in the quarterfinals upset of No.1 qualifier Erica Enders-Stevens.

"The conditions leading up to eliminations were just not very compatible with our new motor combination, but the track finally to us and we kept thrashing at it after each run," Johnson said. "We have a veteran team that just keeps digging no matter what. I kept telling Jeg 'We'll get it. We'll get it.' and we did and it worked out and we have something to start with next weekend in Topeka."

The difficult track conditions claimed V. Gaines and his HEMI-powered Dodge Dart as victims with loss of traction in the first round battle against Rodger Brogden.

In Funny Car, the Don Schumacher Racing Dodge Charger R/T entries of Matt Hagan and Ron Capps had some positives to tout.

Hagan had his best starting position of the year by qualifying his Mopar Express Lane Dodge fourth, earned four valuable bonus points for his efforts, and advanced to the semifinal round where he then fell to Courtney Force.

"I feel like our car is turning the corner and it couldn't have happened at a better time as we're going into back to back to back races." said an optimistic Hagan. "We soaked up some points this weekend and built a lot of confidence along the way so I'm looking forward to Topeka."

Mopar teammate Capps advanced to his fourth semifinal elimination round of the year and was able to move up a spot to fourth in the Funny Car points standings.

But the DSR team also saw their fair share of adversity this weekend.

Jack Beckman recovered from a final qualifying run that saw an engine explosion destroy the body of his Dodge Charger R/T and seeded him 10th to set him up for a first round loss against Capps.

Tommy Johnson Jr. also had a strong backfire cause minor damage to his Mopar in the first round then, in a quarterfinal match-up with Hagan, he emerged unhurt but shaken by a dramatic explosion that blew the Funny Car body off the chassis and into the air like confetti.

The next stop for Mopar teams and drivers is the 26th annual NHRA Kansas Nationals held at Heartland Park from May 23-25 in Topeka, Kansas, the second event in the stretch of ten in a 12 week span on the 2014 Mello Yello Drag Racing Series schedule.

## **2014 NHRA Points Standings** **(Following Atlanta NHRA Southern Nationals RACE FINAL)**

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

1. Erica Enders Stevens – 624 (2)
2. Jason Line – 514 (1)
3. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 509 (2)**
4. Shane Gray – 468
5. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 457**
6. Vincent Nobile – 448
7. Dave Connolly – 406
8. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 372**
9. Chris McGaha – 344
10. Jimmy Alund – 282 (1)

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

1. Robert Hight – 730 (4)
2. John Force – 524 (1)
3. Alexis DeJoria – 472 (2)
4. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 430**
5. Del Worsham – 400
6. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 380**
- 7t. **Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T – 369**
- 7t. Courtney Force – 369
9. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 368**
10. Tim Wilkerson – 329

#### **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 honour 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 (a simple contraction of the words Motor and PARTs) was trademarked in 1937 with the launch of an antifreeze product but truly made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era. From Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use, the brand soon expanded to include technical service and customer support.

Today, Mopar is FCA's service, parts and customer-care brand and distributes more than 500,000 parts and accessories in more than 130 markets, integrating service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance dealer and customer support worldwide. Mopar is the source for genuine parts and accessories for FCA brands.

Mopar parts are unique in that they are engineered with the same teams that create factory-authorized vehicle specifications for FCA 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

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