

Extra Incentive for Mopar Drivers at 14th Annual NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals

- Crowd favorite Johnson is chasing an elusive hometown win at 14th annual NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals on Father's Day
- Mopar drivers Coughlin and Johnson ride a combined three event Pro Stock win streak into Bristol Dragway and tied in the points standings
- Johnson and Coughlin second and third after two Pro Stock qualifying sessions
- Mopar Funny Car driver Hagan also looking for an elusive win this season in front of his home crowd
- Dodge Charger R/T driver Capps tops DSR teammates with third place spot on qualifying time sheets

June 13, 2014, Bristol, Tenn. - The 14th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Thunder Valley Nationals hold a bit more importance than usual for a few Mopar drivers this weekend. Since the national event was added to the NHRA Mello Yello drag racing schedule, there has been extra incentive to do well as a home event for the Greenville, Tenn.-native Allen Johnson and his engine builder, Roy Johnson, but the father-son duo have some unfinished business they'd like to take care of this Father's Day weekend in the new Dodge Dart.

While both the elder and younger Johnson have previously won sportsman races at Bristol Dragway as drivers — Roy did it twice in the early 1970s in Stock and Super Stock classes, while Allen won as a teen in 1981 in Super Stock— a Pro Stock win has eluded them. In 2012, on route to their first NHRA Pro Stock World Championship, they came as close to a win as is technically possible with the closest finish in NHRA history when Johnson's Mopar finished runner-up to competitor Mike Edwards by less than .0000 of a second. Johnson earned three consecutive pole positions from 2010 to 2012 and added a No.2 qualifier position last season. With three wins so far this year, two of which have been in the new Dodge Dart, Johnson is hoping to add another this weekend.

"This is the year," said Johnson who wrapped up the first two qualifying sessions on Friday evening by putting the Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar Dodge Dart provisionally second with a best elapsed time run of 6.657 seconds and speed of 207.37 mph. "The first run was a little conservative and the second one we got after it and had a little left. We've been close to a win here before but I'm feeling pretty confident with a good test here last week and with the Mopar team riding a good streak right now. It took some work to figure out the new car but we're seeing great progress. We've got a great product. We've got the tools. We just have to go out and do it on Sunday.

"It's no ordinary race for us. We appreciate being able to have the people who support me and this team here to let them have a little fun and give them a good show this weekend. That's what this race is about. A win would be great for them but I really want to do it worse for my dad because it is Father's Day. A win would make it special and a day neither of us will ever forget."

Fellow Johnson & Johnson HEMI-powered teammate and defending world champion Jeg Coughlin Jr., earned a Pro Stock win at the Thunder Valley Nationals in 2007 and comes into this weekend's competition riding a streak of three consecutive final round appearances in Atlanta, Topeka, and Englishtown, including a pair of wins, that propelled him from ninth to second place in the Pro Stock rankings, tying him in points with Johnson. They both trail points leader Erica Enders-Stevens by 123 markers. Strangely enough, following this event last year, the Mopar teammates were also tied for second in points.

Coughlin is right behind Johnson in third place on the qualifying time sheets with an identical e.t of 6.657-seconds but with a best speed of 206.64 mph.

"This race will be a fun one for all of us as the guys will be close to home, so we'll have lots of family and friends with

us," said Coughlin who would like to keep the win streak alive in front of the Johnson & Johnson team's home crowd. "That always makes it special, and of course you want to show off a little if you can. It won't be easy -- it never is -- but we'll be as prepared as possible to have a good weekend."

This event also holds extra incentive for Don Schumacher Racing Funny Car driver Matt Hagan who likewise considers Bristol a home track as it is just two hours from his Christiansburg, Va., home with the support of his own large contingent of friends and family in the stands. After posting a runner-up finish in the season opening event, he and his crew have struggled to get through elimination rounds consistently. Last year's championship runner-up is hoping to take his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T to the winner's circle for the first time at Bristol and this season to get a hot streak going.

"It would be awesome, especially with Bristol being my home track," said Hagan who is eighth on the time sheets after two runs with a best e.t. of 4.111 seconds / 308.99 mph. "Between there and Charlotte we have so many people come to hang out. We have a pile of people coming down this weekend. It has kind of blown me away how many people want to come to this race and support us. I'd love to win this for them."

Leading the DSR Dodge Charger R/T camp in qualifying so far is Ron Capps who has three titles wins at this event and posted an e.t. of 4.024 seconds at 316.38 mph for the provisional third place spot on the eliminations ladder. Tommy Johnson Jr. is currently in fifth spot with a best run of 4.074 sec. / 306.60 mph while Mopar teammate Jack Beckman is 11th with his 4.123 second / 308.99 mph pass.

Qualifying resumes with the final two sessions on Saturday, June 14, with highlights to be broadcast on ESPN2HD with a two hour broadcast at 6 p.m. (ET). Elimination rounds for the 14th annual NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals will be broadcast on Sunday, June 15, with two hours of coverage starting at 11 p.m. (ET).

2014 NHRA Points Standings **(Following Englishtown NHRA Summernationals Race Final)**

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Erica Enders Stevens – 791 (2)
- 2t. Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 668 (2)**
- 2t. Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 668 (3)**
4. Jason Line – 623
5. Shane Gray – 582
6. Vincent Nobile – 563
7. Dave Connolly – 535
- 8. V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 456**
9. Chris McGaha – 427
10. Rodger Brogden – 355

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Robert Hight – 847 (4)
2. John Force – 601 (1)
3. Alexis DeJoria – 564 (2)
4. Del Worsham – 535
- 5. Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 534**
6. Courtney Force – 527
- 7. Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 508**
8. Cruz Pedregon – 506 (1)
- 9. Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T – 480**
- 10. Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 454**

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.

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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