

Johnson Earns First Funny Car Win of the Season for DSR, Mopar at NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals

- Mopar driver Tommy Johnson Jr. earns first Funny Car title win of the season for DSR at 14th annual NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals
- Johnson drives his Make-a-Wish Dodge Charger R/T to third spot in Funny Car NHRA championship points standings
- Jeg Coughlin Jr. is highest finishing Mopar Pro Stock after red light start in a semi-final loss
- Hometown favorite Johnson falters in his bid for an elusive Pro Stock win at his home track with a first round loss
- Coughlin and Johnson now second and third in Pro Stock points

June 15, 2014, Bristol, Tenn. - Don Schumacher Racing driver Tommy Johnson Jr. drove his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T to the team's first Funny Car win of the season at the 14th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Thunder Valley Nationals at Bristol Dragway.

"This is third time I've won on Father's Day," said Johnson after earning his 10th career win. His last victory came 53 races and seven years ago, and also fell on Father's Day. "I love the fans, the sound of Thunder Valley. There's nothing like it. This is a great facility. It was a tricky racetrack today, and all the guys on my team did a great job.

"And it makes it even better to associate with Make-A-Wish and raise awareness for them, it's just great," added Johnson. "We just let everyone know what great things they do for these kids that are fighting life-threatening illnesses. To see them smile when they're going through tough things warms my heart and now we got them a win."

"All of us at Mopar would like to offer congratulations to Tommy Johnson Jr. on the win in Bristol," said Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO of Mopar, Chrysler Group LLC's service, parts and customer-care brand. "The Mopar-powered Funny Car package has been strong and it's great to see it back in the winner's circle. We look forward to seeing Tommy (Johnson Jr.) and his Don Schumacher Racing teammates contending for more wins in honor of the 50 year legacy of the 426 Race HEMI."

To get to the final elimination, Johnson defeated Cruz Pedregon and Robert Hight, only to be paired with his Mopar teammate Matt Hagan. The HEMI-powered duo treated fans to an exciting semifinal showdown won by Johnson with a 4.201 second (299.46 mph) elapsed time run to a 4.207 second (293.54 mph) pass by the Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T. Johnson then took the victory over Tim Wilkerson to leapfrog the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T four sports into third place in the championship points race.

In stark contrast to the Funny Car win celebrations, disappointment reigned in the Mopar Pro Stock camp as crowd favorite Allen Johnson, who has yearned for an elusive win at his home track for the last 14 years, saw his hopes dashed once more in the first round of eliminations.

"Dammit," said Johnson to convey his disappointment before explaining why his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart veered towards to centerline in a loss to Dave Connolly.

"When I left the starting line, it was pretty decent in first gear and then it started chattering the left tire and pushing me over there," Johnson said. "If you make a big correction you kill a lot of e.t. so I was trying to ease it back but never could get it to take hold. Then it made one big move and I was getting ready to relive Gainesville from a few years back (where he had a spectacular accident) if I had stayed in it. I thought, you know what? There's another

race next week."

In 2012, Johnson missed winning on home turf by less than .0000 of a second against Mike Edwards in the closest race in NHRA history, but went on to win the NHRA Pro Stock championship that season. While he's hoping that scenario perhaps might repeat itself, this weekend's loss will still sting.

"It's going to be sweet to win it one of these days," Johnson said. "We'll keep after it. Next year we'll work hard at it again and one day it will be our day. Today just wasn't."

While Jeg Coughlin Jr., also faltered in a bid to carry the Johnson & Johnson HEMI-powered banner through to the final round, there were still some positives to take away. The JEGS.com Dodge Dart posted low elapsed times in all three rounds against Kenny Delco, Vincent Nobile and even in the semi-final loss against Erica-Enders Stevens which was forfeited with a red light start.

"I let the clutch out and was so focused on getting the car down the lane that I never even saw the red-light," said Coughlin who failed to make the final round for the first time in four events. "I put the car in fifth gear and had a glance or two to the other lane. We got through the finish line and I never saw any win lights. Sure we hate to give one back, but that's just the way it was made out to be. We'll try harder in Epping [N.H.]."

The third HEMI-powered Dodge Dart entry of V. Gaines bowed out in the first round.

Coughlin takes over the second spot in the Pro Stock points with his Mopar teammate Johnson right behind in third, trailing Sunday's event winner Enders- Stevens who defeated Jonathon Gray in the final to extend her lead in the points.

The rest of the Mopar DSR Funny Car contingent didn't fare quite as well in the points standings as a first round upset dropped No.3 qualifier Ron Capps to seventh place, Hagan sits tenth after his semifinal loss and Jack Beckman fell out of the top-10 with his first round loss to find himself in eleventh place.

Mopar teams now get set for the second Mello Yello Drag Racing national event in a stretch of four straight when they make a return to the 2nd Annual NHRA New England Nationals next weekend in Epping, New Hampshire, just north of Boston, on June 19-22.

2014 NHRA Points Standings (Following Bristol NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals)

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Erica Enders Stevens – 908 (3)
2. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 753 (2)**
3. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 704 (3)**
4. Jason Line – 698 (1)
5. Shane Gray – 651
6. Vincent Nobile – 617
7. Dave Connolly – 587
8. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 487**
9. Chris McGaha – 459
10. Rodger Brogden – 390

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Robert Hight – 905 (4)
2. John Force – 640 (1)
3. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 547 (1)**
4. Alexis DeJoria – 619 (2)
5. Del Worsham – 593
6. Courtney Force – 581

7. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 571**
8. Cruz Pedregon – 538 (1)
9. **Tim Wilkerson – 533**
10. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 527**
11. **Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T– 512**

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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