

Mopar Looking to Keep Momentum Rolling into NHRA Nationals in Norwalk

- Allen Johnson is No. 2 and top Mopar in Pro Stock provisional qualifying at eighth annual Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals
- Ohio native Jeg Coughlin Jr. looking for elusive hometown win in JEGS.com Dodge Dart at Norwalk's Motorsports Park
- Tommy Johnson Jr. stays consistent as top Mopar and second quickest in Funny Car qualifying

July 4, 2014, Norwalk, Ohio - Mopar teams in both Pro Stock and Funny Car classes have combined to string together six consecutive winning weekends heading into qualifying for the eighth annual Summit Racing Equipment National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Nationals, to kick off the second half of the 2014 (NHRA) Mello Yello Drag Racing series season, and there is plenty of motivation to keep that streak going for each individual Dodge driver.

Rather than the sweltering heat that has been common place for the Independence Day weekend event, the air temperature for the start of qualifying on Friday late afternoon started at 75 degrees Fahrenheit (117 degree track temperature) and dropped steadily throughout the evening, setting the scene for one track record breaking run after another.

Allen Johnson is looking to take his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart to the winner's circle on Sunday for a fourth time this season as he battles his HEMI-powered teammate, Jeg Coughlin Jr., for second place in the Pro Stock standings, with just a one point deficit heading to Norwalk. Johnson drove to the top of the timing sheet with his first and quickest elapsed time run of 6.542 second (211.63 mile per hour) to set the track record, only to be outdone by rival Erica Enders-Stevens who took the provisional pole with a 6.523 (212.63 mph) pass lowering the track record for low e.t. and top speed. Johnson ended up third after two sessions.

For five-time Pro Stock Champion and Ohio native Jeg Coughlin Jr., who has won national events at 24 different NHRA facilities and is the all-time leader in that unique category, his home race presents one particular challenge for him; it is one of only two facilities he has not earned a Wally. While victory at the Epping, N.H., track eluded him at the second edition of that event last month, Coughlin is hoping his eighth attempt at Norwalk's Motorsports Park this weekend will end with success in getting it off his bucket list and add a third win to his season tally. After the first two qualifying sessions, Coughlin's Dodge Dart sits in the provisional sixth place spot with his quickest elapsed time run of 6.554 seconds at 212.03 mph.

Fellow Dodge Dart driver, V. Gaines, is looking for his first win of the season after two runner-up appearances earlier this season. Gaines sits 14th in qualifying after losing traction on his first run and then drifting out of the groove on his second, but posted a 6.628 second pass (190.40 mph).

After earning his first win of the year at Bristol Dragway, Tommy Johnson Jr. ran his first 3-second run, was No. 1 qualifier and posted a runner-up finish at Chicago last week and is now riding that momentum into Norwalk where the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T driver bested his Don Schumacher Racing teammates to run the second quickest pass of the day. Johnson's 4.030-second run at 319.67 mph was only topped by provisional pole sitter Del Worsham and his 4.000-second (317.34 mph) pass.

Coming off his first Funny Car win of the season last weekend at Route 66 Raceway near Chicago, Matt Hagan showed he was hungry for more with a provisional fourth place spot in qualifying with a 4.044 second (318.69 mph) run in his Rocky Boots/Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T.

2012 Funny Car champion, Jack Beckman is looking to shake a difficult first half of the season and start anew with a

win at this event to get back into the top ten in the standings. Beckman was sixth after posting his best run of 4.064 seconds (317.94 mph).

Leading his DSR teammates with a fourth place spot in the Funny Car points standings and hoping to make more gains, Ron Capps was second quickest with his first run in the Dodge Charger R/T, and then ninth after his second, posting a best elapsed time run of 4.083 seconds (310.48 mph).

Two more evening qualifying sessions will be held on Saturday, July 5th, with a two-hour, complete highlights broadcast slated to air on ESPN2 at 11 p.m. (ET). Three hours of elimination round coverage from the eighth annual Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals will be broadcast on ESPN2 starting at 9 p.m. (ET) on Sunday, July 6.

2014 NHRA Points Standings **(following NHRA Route 66 Nationals Final Qualifying)**

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Erica Enders Stevens – 1036 (3)
2. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 846 (2)**
3. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 845 (3)**
4. Jason Line – 830 (1)
5. Vincent Nobile – 785 (1)
6. Dave Connolly – 782
7. Shane Gray – 769
8. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 552**
9. Chris McGaha – 525
10. Jonathan Gray – 432

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Robert Hight – 1032 (4)
2. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 786 (1)**
3. John Force – 769 (1)
4. **Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 718 (1)**
5. Alexis DeJoria – 747 (2)
6. Courtney Force – 732
7. Del Worsham – 684
8. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 681 (1)**
9. Cruz Pedregon – 631 (1)
10. Tim Wilkerson – 603
11. **Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T – 581**

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