

Allen Johnson Takes Mopar to Provisional No. 1 Spot at Brainerd International Raceway

- Allen Johnson takes Dodge Dart to provisional No.1 Qualifier spot at 33rd annual Lucas Oil NHRA Nationals
- Four-time title winner at Brainerd, Jeg Coughlin Jr. is provisionally fifth while last year's runner-up V. Gaines is tenth
- Last year's runner-up finisher Matt Hagan leads Don Schumacher Racing teammates with sixth quickest run in provisional qualifying
- Defending title winner Ron Capps looking for fifth career win at Minnesota track

August 15, 2014, Brainerd, Minnesota - Without a title or a No.1 qualifier position to his credit at Brainerd International Raceway, Pro Stock driver Allen Johnson worked to rectify that as quickly as possible by going to the top of the provisional qualifying timing sheets at the 33rd annual Lucas Oil NHRA Nationals with his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart.

After posting the second quickest time in the first qualifying session with a 6.645-second (208.04 mile per hour) elapsed time pass, Johnson improved to a 6.614-second (207.98 mph) pass with his second lap to earn the provisional No.1 qualifier position. His pass was almost two-hundredths of a second quicker than Pro Stock points leader and rival Erica Enders-Stevens and her 6.630-second (207.69 mph) e.t. run.

"We absolutely murdered it the first 330 (feet) of the track and that's what it takes in this bad air, just like Denver, you got to really get it down low and get your momentum going," said Johnson who earned five of a possible six bonus points for his efforts on Friday and hopes to earn his fifth No.1 qualifier position of the season thus far after two more runs on Saturday. "We're in countdown mode right now and we're trying to get every single point we can. That's what's going to count when you get to the countdown."

Johnson's HEMI®-powered teammate and reigning NHRA Pro Stock World Champ Jeg Coughlin Jr. has four Pro Stock wins (1999, 2002, 2007, 2010) and five final round appearances at a venue he considers one of his favorites. Coughlin was fifth with his first run of 6.657 seconds (207.46 mph) and improved on his second with a 6.636 sec. /207.91 mph pass, remaining in the same spot. While Coughlin finds himself third in a tight top-5 battle in the Pro Stock standings in anticipation for the NHRA "Countdown to the Championship", with just two events left in the regular season, what he's looking for specifically is momentum heading into the playoffs.

"They do reset the points and separate us all by 10 points from 1-10 for the start of the Countdown," Coughlin said. "While you'd love to start higher up the grid, it's really a negligible difference between being third or fourth or second or third. It's more important to enter the Countdown with momentum, which we can start this weekend."

Last year's runner-up finisher at Brainerd, V. Gaines drove his HEMI-powered Western Motorsports Dodge Dart from 12th on the scoring sheets in the first session to provisional tenth place spot with his best run of 6.669 seconds at 207.98 mph. The fourth Mopar competing this weekend at the Lucas Oil Nationals is the Dodge Avenger of Deric Kramer who sits in 13th place with his best run of 6.788 seconds /205.04 mph.

The Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Funny Car Dodge Charger R/T contingent is hoping to repeat some of the success they had last year at Brainerd International raceway when Jack Beckman took No.1 qualifier honours, and No.2 qualifier Matt Hagan finished runner-up to teammate and title winner Ron Capps.

Tommy Johnson Jr. paced the DSR Mopars in the first session when he earned a bonus point for posting the third quickest pass with a 4.203 second (275.62 mph) pass in his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T.

Conditions improved along with the track times in the second session and soon it was Hagan aboard his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T leading his DSR teammates with the sixth quickest time by qualifying with a 4.138 second (308.21 mph) pass. Hagan and his Mopar team have made steady improvements after an early season slump. Following a win at Chicago in June, Hagan has battled his way to seventh place in the standings and is within 40 points of third place.

Beckman, who holds the track record for low e.t with a 4.018 second pass set in 2012, the year he won his NHRA World Championship, was eighth overall after making improvements on his second run with a 4.154-second (303.37 mph) pass. Not only is Beckman looking his first title win of the season, but he is in need of a strong result this weekend with just two national events left to make his way back into the Funny Car Top-10 in order to participate in the NHRA "Countdown to the Championship". He is currently on the outside looking in from his 11th place position in the points.

Defending title winner at Brainerd, Capps has a total of four victories at this event and is hoping to earn his third in a row this weekend to solidify his third place standing in the battle for position heading into the playoffs. Capps posted his best run of 4.162 second (306.46 mph) to put him in the provisional tenth spot.

Johnson Jr. ended up 12th based on his first timed run after he didn't make it down the track on his second attempt after blowing a supercharger. The Funny Car provisional No.1 qualifying position went to Robert Hight.

Two more sessions are scheduled to be held on Saturday afternoon at Brainerd International Raceway. Two hours of qualifying highlights from the 33rd annual Lucas Oil NHRA Nationals, the 17th of 24 events on the NHRA Mello Yellow Drag Racing series schedule, will be broadcast on ESPN2 this Saturday, August 16, starting at 11 p.m. (ET). Three hours of elimination round coverage will air on ESPN2 this Sunday, Aug. 17, starting at 9 p.m. (ET).

2014 NHRA Points Standings **(Following the NHRA Northwest Nationals Race Final)**

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Erica Enders-Stevens – 1229* (4)
2. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 1197* (4)**
3. Jason Line – 1192* (1)
4. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 1128* (2)**
5. Dave Connolly – 1075* (1)
6. Shane Gray – 1015*
7. Vincent Nobile – 959* (1)
8. V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 742
9. Chris McGaha – 718
10. Greg Anderson – 647

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Robert Hight – 1271* (5)
2. John Force – 1224* (2)
3. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 989 (1)**
4. Courtney Force – 980 (2)
5. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 975 (1)**
6. Alexis DeJoria – 961 (2)
7. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 949 (1)**
8. Cruz Pedregon – 894 (1)
9. Del Worsham – 848
10. Tim Wilkerson – 815
11. **Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T – 785**

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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