

Hagan, Mopar Kick-Off NHRA “Countdown to the Championship” as Provisional No.1 Qualifier at Carolina Nationals

Don Schumacher Racing HEMI-Power Sweeps Top Three Funny Car Provisional Qualifying Spots

- National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) kicks off the “Countdown to the Championship” six-race playoff series this weekend at the Carolina Nationals
- Three Pro Stock and three Funny Car Mopar drivers will battle the field in their respective classes in the Countdown
- Matt Hagan drives his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger R/T to Funny Car provisional No.1 qualifier position at zMAX Raceway
- DSR Mopars sweep top three spots in Funny Car provisional qualifying
- Jeg Coughlin Jr. paces the HEMI-powered Dodge Dart factory hot rods by earning the provisional No.2 qualifier spot

September 12, 2014, Concord, North Carolina -

The National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) kicked off the “Countdown to the Championship” six-race playoff series on Friday with qualifying at the seventh annual Pep Boys NHRA Carolina Nationals at zMAX Raceway near Charlotte, North Carolina, with three Pro Stock and three Funny Car Mopar drivers battling the field in their respective classes for the coveted crown. Matt Hagan got things rolling for Mopar in qualifying at the first of four national events in as many weeks by driving his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to the provisional No.1 qualifier position, while defending Pro Stock title winner at the Carolina Nationals, Jeg Coughlin Jr. was the top Dodge Dart by earning the No.2 spot.

Last year's NHRA Pro Stock Champion Coughlin Jr., along with his Mopar teammate 2012 Champion and 2013 runner-up Allen Johnson, as well as veteran racer V. Gaines will fight to earn the brand's third consecutive factory hot rod NHRA crown and are looking to start things off with a title win this weekend. In the Funny Car competition, DSR's Ron Capps, Tommy Johnson Jr., and 2011 Champ Hagan will work to drive their Mopars back to championship form after Jack Beckman's NHRA win in 2012. Beckman will look to play spoiler in the playoffs while chasing his first national title of the season after missing the Countdown by just 10 points.

Qualifying at the Carolina Nationals saw DSR sweep the top three provisional spots with Hagan, Capps and Beckman. The Rocky Boots / Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T driven by Hagan went to the top of the timing sheets with his second lap elapsed time run of 4.114 seconds at 304.25 mph. That helped Hagan add three valuable bonus points to the single marker he earned in the first session by posting the third quickest pass with a 4.192/290.19.

Capps, who leads the DSR contingent in the championship standings with a third place spot to start the Countdown, posted a 4.123/297.35 on his second pass to take the provisional No.2 position in qualifying at zMAX Dragway, while Beckman ended the day by rounding out the top-three with his 4.124/305.22 run. Tommy Johnson Jr., who had posted the second quickest pass of the first qualifying session with a 4.185/292.77 to earn two bonus points, ended up ninth after smoking the tires on this second run.

In Pro Stock qualifying, defending title winner Coughlin Jr. posted the second quickest elapsed time run of the first session with a 6.602 second pass at 209.33 miles per hour. Coughlin remained second to provisional No.1 qualifier Erica Enders-Stevens (6.591/210.11) with that initial elapsed time run after he was sixth quick of the second session with a 6.613/208.84 pass.

Fellow Johnson & Johnson HEMI-powered teammate, Allen Johnson improved from an eighth place e.t. of 6.619 seconds (208.94 mph) with his first qualifying attempt of the weekend to the provisional fifth spot with the fourth quickest run (6.609/208.81) of the second session. V.Gaines posted a best lap of 6.649/208.91 in his Dodge Dart to find himself in the 12th provisional spot heading into Saturday's qualifying sessions.

One hour of qualifying highlights from Friday's sessions at the seventh annual Pep Boys NHRA Carolina Nationals, the 19th of 24 events on the NHRA Mello Yellow Drag Racing series schedule, will be broadcast on ESPN2 tonight, September 12, starting at 11 p.m. (ET). An hour and a half of complete qualifying highlights will be televised on ESPN2 on Sunday, Sept. 14, at 2:00 a.m. (ET) and then three hours of elimination round coverage will air Sunday evening starting at 8:30 p.m. (ET).

2014 Countdown to the Championship Standings

(Following final eliminations at the Indianapolis NHRA U.S. Nationals)

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Jason Line* – 2110 (4)
2. Erica Enders-Stevens* – 2080 (4)
3. **Allen Johnson* – Dodge Dart – 2070 (4)**
4. **Jeg Coughlin Jr.* – Dodge Dart – 2060 (2)**
5. Dave Connolly* – 2050 (1)
6. Shane Gray* – 2040 (1)
7. Vincent Nobile* – 2030 (1)
8. V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 2020
9. Chris McGaha – 2010
10. Jonathan Gray – 2000

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. John Force* – 2110 (3)
2. Robert Hight* – 2080 (5)
3. **Ron Capps* – Dodge Charger R/T – 2070 (2)**
4. Alexis DeJoria* – 2060 (3)
5. **Tommy Johnson Jr.* – Dodge Charger R/T – 2050 (1)**
6. Courtney Force* – 2040 (2)
7. **Matt Hagan* – Dodge Charger R/T – 2030 (1)**
8. Cruz Pedregon* – 2020 (1)
9. Del Worsham* – 2010
10. Tim Wilkerson* – 2000

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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