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Hagan Drives Mopar to the NHRA Carolina Nationals Funny Car Title Win at Texas

Allen Johnson Puts Dodge Dart in No.2 Spot for FallNationals Pro Stock Eliminations

- Mopar Funny Car driver Matt Hagan defeated John Force in final elimination battle for the rescheduled Carolina Nationals title win at Texas Motorplex
- Final qualifying for NHRA FallNationals doubled as eliminations rounds to determine winners for last weekend's postponed Carolina Nationals
- Jeg Coughlin Jr. and V. Gaines drive their Mopars as far as the quarterfinals in the NHRA Carolina Nationals Pro Stock eliminations
- Allen Johnson paces Mopar's Pro Stock entries as No.2 seed for Sunday's NHRA FallNationals eliminations

September 20, 2014, Ennis, Texas - Mopar was back in the winner's circle with Don Schumacher Racing's Matt Hagan as he drove his Dodge Charger R/T to the Funny Car title win at the rescheduled National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Carolina Nationals elimination rounds at Texas Motorplex. It was Hagan's second victory of the season, but more importantly, the win was earned in the first race of the six-event playoff series called the NHRA "Countdown to the Championship" to propel him from seventh to third place in the points standings.

"Congratulations to Matt Hagan from everyone at Mopar on his Carolina Nationals title and a first win in this year's Countdown to the Championship for the Dodge Charger R/T," said Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO of Mopar, Chrysler Group LLC's service, parts and customer-care brand. "It is a great way for Matt and the Don Schumacher Racing team to kick off the playoffs and make Mopar a serious contender for this year's championship once again. It is also a wonderful way to show everyone that the legacy of the 426 Race HEMI engine continues to live on as we celebrate its 50th anniversary this season."

The completion of last weekend's eliminations rounds at the NHRA Carolina Nationals near Charlotte was rescheduled to run concurrently to Saturday's qualifying sessions at Texas Motorplex. Hagan's two qualifying laps also gave him round wins over Tim Wilkerson and Robert Hight, setting up a final showdown against veteran John Force. It was their seventh meeting in eliminations this season with a 1-5 win-loss record for the Mopar driver, but this time Hagan benefited from a premature red-light start by Force to earn his 12th career Wally trophy.

Hagan won the NHRA Funny Car World Championship for Mopar in 2011 and then came close to winning a second last season, finishing runner-up to Force. The Mopar driver posted a win in last year's playoffs as well, but it came in the season finale against Force. This time, starting off the Countdown with a victory has Hagan energized.

"It really does excite me that the car is coming around, we're qualifying well, and that's the biggest thing with the Countdown," said Hagan who qualified third for the Carolina Nationals and is now just 52 points behind points leader Force heading into Sunday's regularly scheduled FallNationals eliminations. "You have to set yourself up for the first round match-up and have a good opportunity to go down the racetrack and win. These first round losses will eat you up out here. You have those only six races to make something happen so our game plan is to pull down a couple of wins, a couple of semifinals and minimize first round losses, and I think things can really swing our way."

Also advancing past the first round of the Carolina Nationals was DSR teammate Ron Capps who then lost a quarterfinal battle to Bob Tasca III when he hazed the tires. Capps sits fourth in points behind Hagan heading into Sunday's title fight at the FallNationals for which he was seeded third with a best elapsed time run of 4.051 seconds at 311.92 mile per hour. He'll meet up with Tim Wilkerson in the first round. The No.1 qualifier position was taken by Courtney Force with a 4.039/314.90.

Tommy Johnson Jr. qualified his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T fourth with a 4.076/309.42 and will have Cruz Pedregon in the lane next to him in the opening round of eliminations.

Hagan will work to earn consecutive title wins from a sixth place spot on the eliminations ladder after qualifying with best time of 4.083/312.86 and will see Tasca as his first round opponent.

Jack Beckman had four strong qualifying runs at the helm of his Dodge Charger R/T with his best effort of 4.087/312.35 to give him an eighth place seeding to match up against Robert Hight in the opening round of eliminations.

In Pro Stock competition, Jeg Coughlin Jr. and V. Gaines had some unfinished business to attend to after advancing their HEMI-powered Mopars from first round of eliminations at the Carolina Nationals last weekend. Unfortunately, neither driver was able to get past their respective quarterfinal matches on Saturday at Texas Motorplex. Coughlin lost his second round match-up to Vincent Nobile, while Gaines lost traction against eventual title winner Jonathon Gray who defeated current points leader Jason Line in the final elimination showdown for the rescheduled event.

With the focus back on Pro Stock qualifying for the FallNationals, Allen Johnson was a much happier driver on Saturday after two strong runs in the "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart that also gave him some valuable bonus points. Johnson's first run of the day put him in the No.2 qualifier spot with a 6.574-second elapsed time pass at 210.54 mph and gave him two valuable bonus points for posting the second quickest pass of the session. Only competitor Shane Gray could dislodge Johnson from the top spot to secure the No.1 qualifier position with a 6.566/210.08 run. Johnson added another three points to his championship tally by posting the best run of the final qualifying session with a 6.587/210.50 pass. Johnson will see Matt Hartford as his opponent in the opening round.

"We've been off by just a beat the last couple of races and we studied our notes this morning and went all the way back to our home base set up and then went out there and made a really good run," Johnson said. "For the second session, we made the same changes to Jeggie's (Coughlin Jr.) ride and he went out and made a pretty dang good run too. I think we've got two really good competitive cars for Sunday.

Coughlin's best qualifying run of 6.596/209.59 from Friday kept the JEGS.com Mopar Dodge Dart in the eighth spot on the eliminations ladder to pit him against Greg Anderson in the first round. V. Gaines qualified his Dodge Avenger 14th with his best run of 6.650/209.95 to face Jonathon Gray in the first round. The top seeded position for Pro Stock eliminations was awarded to Shane Gray for his 6.566/210.08 elapsed time run.

An hour and a half of highlights from the completion of eliminations for seventh annual Pep Boys NHRA Carolina Nationals, as well as qualifying for the 29th annual AAA Texas NHRA FallNationals will be broadcast on ESPN2 on Sunday, Sept. 21, at 3:30 a.m. (ET) and then re-aired at 4 p.m. (ET). Three hours of elimination round coverage for the FallNationals, the second of four consecutive weekend events and the second scheduled stop in the six-event playoff series called the "Countdown to the Championship", will air Sunday evening starting at 8:30 p.m. (ET).

2014 Countdown to the Championship Standings

(Following qualifying at NHRA FallNationals in Texas)

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Jason Line – 2246 (4)
2. Erica Enders-Stevens – 2187 (4)
3. Shane Gray 2158 (1)
4. Jonathan Gray – 2152 (1)
5. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 2097 (2)**
- 6t. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 2104 (4)**
- 6t. Vincent Nobile – 2069 (1)
8. Dave Connolly – 2143 (1)
9. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 2052**
10. Chris McGaha – 2073

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. John Force – 2238 (3)

2. Robert Hight – 2193 (5)
3. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 2189 (2)**
4. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 2164 (2)**
5. Alexis DeJoria – 2144 (3)
6. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 2122 (1)**
7. Courtney Force – 2117 (2)
8. Cruz Pedregon – 2093 (1)
9. Tim Wilkerson – 2083
10. Del Worsham – 2075
11. **Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T – 942**

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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