

Hagan Takes Mopar Express Lane to Runner-Up Finish at NHRA Midwest Nationals

- Matt Hagan drove his Mopar Express Lane Funny Car to a runner-up finish at the third annual AAA Insurance National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Midwest Nationals
- Second final round appearance for Don Schumacher Racing's (DSR) Hagan in the first three of six-event NHRA "Countdown to the Championship" playoff series
- Hagan remains third in the Countdown points standings and in the hunt for his second NHRA Funny Car Championship
- Pro Stock semifinal finish for Jeg Coughlin Jr. and his JEGS.com Dodge Dart at Gateway Motorsports Park

September 28, 2014, Madison, Illinois -

For the second time in the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) "Countdown to the Championship", Don Schumacher Racing's Funny Car driver Matt Hagan battled his way to a final round appearance, this time earning a runner-up finish in the Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T at the third annual AAA Insurance Midwest Nationals at Gateway Motorsports Park near St. Louis, Missouri. Hagan previously won the opening round of the six-event playoff series with the Carolina Nationals title victory, and with Sunday's runner-up finish, retains his third place standing in the battle for the NHRA Funny Car championship with three national events remaining in the Countdown.

Hagan beat Alexis DeJoria, Jeff Arend and Chad Head to advance to his second consecutive final round appearance at Gateway Motorsports Park and his fourth of the 2014 Mello Yello Drag Racing series season. Hagan lined up his Dodge Charger R/T against Courtney Force and beat her off the starting line with a .056 to .076 second reaction time, but the Mopar driver's 4.121 second elapsed time run at 309.77 mile per hour was not quite enough to beat his opponent's 4.094 second run at 313.44 mph. Courtney Force's title win moves her ahead of Hagan and behind her father, points leader John Force, in the Countdown standings.

"All in all it was a very productive day, we stayed third (in points) which is tough to do with only three races left," said Hagan who is now just 42 points behind the leader. "We made some good moves, had some good rounds today and obviously we would've liked to gotten the win but it just didn't happen today so we will move on to (the next event at) Reading and hopefully qualify well there and get the job done on race day."

Hagan now has three more national events to try to better his runner-up finish in the Funny Car points last season and match his 2011 NHRA World Championship.

Fellow DSR driver Ron Capps (4.122/308.50) defeated his teammate Jack Beckman (4.153/306.19) in an evenly matched Mopar versus Mopar first round battle. It was Beckman's fourth straight event with an opening round loss.

Capps moved on to the quarterfinals to face points leader John Force, but despite leaving first, his 4.166/308.92 could beat a 4.111/312.50. With the loss, Capps remains in fifth place and 126 points behind the points leader.

After defeating Tim Wilkerson in the first round, DSR's Tommy Johnson Jr. saw any hopes of advancing his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T past the quarterfinals cut short following his burnout when his race car wouldn't shift into reverse. That forced him to abandon an attempt at running, but the Mopar driver moves from seventh to sixth in the standings.

In Pro Stock action, after No.2 qualifier Jeg Coughlin Jr. drove his JEGS.com Dodge Dart to a first round win over Deric Kramer, and Allen Johnson's "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart took the opening round win over Richie Stevens, the HEMI-powered teammates would unfortunately meet in the quarterfinals for all-Mopar showdown. The two had almost identical .02 second reaction times but Coughlin took the victory after Johnson made a sudden

move toward the centerline before pushing in the clutch.

"We had a good car but made some bad adjustments for that run," said Johnson who falls to the eighth spot in the Pro Stock points standings. "It wasn't what we needed to do to win this championship. Now we're really behind the eight ball we'll have to go to the next one and see if we can win three in a row because that is what it is going to take."

That set up the JEGS.com Mopar with a semifinal battle against Jason Line, and while Coughlin had the quicker elapsed time run with a 6.573/212.13 to his opponent's 6.595/211.53, his .050-second reaction time was beaten by Line's .024-second reaction time. Coughlin came up just 0.0042 seconds short at the finish line to advancing to the final round but his semifinal appearance helped him move up one spot in the countdown standings to seventh place with three events left in the playoffs to defend his 2013 NHRA Pro Stock world championship crown.

With a .041-second reaction time, V. Gaines (6.562/211.16) gave his Dodge Avenger a holeshot win in the first round over Shane Gray (6.546/211.30), beating him to the stripe to send the Mopar to a quarterfinal pairing against Dave Connolly. Gaines once again had a starting line advantage a .039 reaction time to his opponent's .060, but after an incredible close race down the quarter mile track, the battle was won by Connolly by just .0003 seconds or approximately one inch. Connolly went on to win the Midwest Nationals title with a final round elimination against Pro Stock points leader Jason Line.

Up next for Mopar's drivers next weekend is the 30th annual NHRA Nationals at Maple Grove Raceway near Reading, Pennsylvania, for the fourth stop on the six-event NHRA "Countdown to the Championship" in as many consecutive weeks. Mopar's three Pro Stock drivers —Coughlin, Allen Johnson, and Gaines — are still battling to earn the brand's third consecutive Pro Stock crown with just three events left in the playoffs. DSR's drivers Hagan, Capps, and Tommy Johnson Jr. are still in the hunt to capture the third championship for Mopar in the last four years.

2014 Countdown to the Championship Standings

(Following NHRA Midwest Nationals Race Final)

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Jason Line – 2364 (4)
2. Dave Connolly – 2338 (3)
3. Erica Enders-Stevens – 2297 (4)
4. Shane Gray 2256 (1)
5. Jonathan Gray – 2245 (1)
6. Vincent Nobile – 2241 (1)
7. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 2231 (2)**
8. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 2220 (4)**
9. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 2155**
10. Chris McGaha – 2104

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. John Force – 2344 (3)
2. Courtney Force – 2314 (4)
3. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 2302 (2)**
4. Robert Hight – 2253 (5)
5. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 2218 (2)**
6. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 2216 (1)**
7. Alexis DeJoria – 2196 (3)
8. Del Worsham – 2193
9. Tim Wilkerson – 2155
10. Cruz Pedregon – 2135 (1)
11. **Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T – 974**

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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