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Team Mopar Drivers Hagan and Johnson Continue Championship Chases at Vegas

- Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car driver Matt Hagan leads the field as he fights for his second championship
- Mopar-powered Dodge Dart driver Allen Johnson needs a strong outing at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway to keep his chances for a second Pro Stock title alive
- Hagan collects the provisional No. 2 spot and three bonus points in Friday Vegas qualifying
- All four Mopar-fueled Don Schumacher Racing Funny Car drivers crack the top-five
- Defending NHRA Pro Stock champion Jeg Coughlin Jr. takes the preliminary No. 2 spot to pace Team Mopar NHRA Pro Stockers

October 31, 2014, Las Vegas - Team Mopar NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series drivers Matt Hagan and Allen Johnson both enter the NHRA Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, the second-to-last event of the six-race NHRA Countdown to the Championship Playoffs, seeking a second NHRA championship in their respective classes. With just eight rounds of racing left in the 2014 season, Johnson sits fifth in Pro Stock points and remains optimistic he can pull off a monumental comeback, while Funny Car points leader Hagan is seeking to hold off his pursuers, including 16-time NHRA champ John Force.

The year-long duel between Hagan and Force was on full display during Friday qualifying at Vegas. Hagan was third and gained a bonus point in the first qualifying round, recording 4.140/311.13 run in his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car, and improved to 4.044/318.02 in his second attempt, moving up to the second spot and claiming two additional bonus points. Force, the preliminary No. 1 qualifier, also gained three bonus points of his own in round two.

"I've been in this battle with John (Force) for a long time," said Hagan, the 2011 NHRA Funny Car champ. "If this was a popularity contest, they would have handed him and his daughter (third-place driver Courtney Force) a trophy already. That's what makes it exciting, what gets me up on the wheel. I want to race John Force. I want to race Courtney Force. I want to race the best out there ... and we want to beat 'em.

"We started off this Countdown real strong, with two wins and a runner-up in three out of four races, so we are on a roll. We just have to go out there and do our thing and not worry about anyone else. We have the team that is capable of doing that."

With the chance of extra qualifying points, as well as cooler temperatures predicted for Saturday and Sunday possibly creating prime conditions for national records and the accompanying bonus points, Johnson doesn't need to win the final two events to earn his second overall Pro Stock title — although it wouldn't hurt.

"We are confident and have done really well at Vegas (three career wins) the last few years," said 2012 NHRA Pro Stock champ Johnson, who qualified in the preliminary fifth spot in his Magneti Marelli Quality Auto Parts Offered by Mopar Dodge Dart, clocking a 6.665-second elapsed time at 207.59 mph in his first run and improving to a 6.659 in his second attempt. "It's one of our favorite tracks, right behind Denver. We must win and need a lot of little points (qualifying bonus points) also to have a chance, but all things are possible in Las Vegas, right?"

Defending NHRA Pro Stock Series champion Jeg Coughlin Jr. put some fear into the field with his first Halloween qualifying run, posting a 6.658/207.21 to take the second spot and score two bonus points in his JEGS.com/Mopar Dodge Dart. The five-time NHRA Pro Stock champion and five-time Vegas winner was even quicker in his second qualifying attempt, a 6.653/207.69, adding two more bonus points and holding his position on the charts.

V. Gaines, driving a HEMI engine-powered Dodge Avenger after an on-track accident at the first NHRA Countdown playoffs race in Charlotte knocked his Dart out of commission, began his Vegas weekend with a 6.696/207.85 pass and followed it up with a 6.699/207.56, and is listed 12th heading into Saturday. HEMI-powered Deric Kramer was 16th on the charts with a quickest run of 6.794 at 203.31 mph and will need to race into the field tomorrow.

Hagan's fellow Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car teammate Jack Beckman posted a pair of strong runs, a 4.143/309.27 in round one and a 4.045/318.84 in round two to earn the preliminary third spot. DSR Dodge driver Ron Capps was No. 1 after the first qualifying round on Friday on the strength of a 4.121/311.54 pass, but fell to fourth in round two despite improving with a 4.058/318.62 pass.

The final driver in the DSR quartet, Tommy Johnson Jr., struck the tires early in his first qualifying attempt but rebounded impressively with a 4.065/311.41 mark to claim the provisional fifth spot, putting all four Mopar-powered DSR Dodge drivers in the top five on Friday. Jeff Arend was 10th in his Dodge after a best run of 4.145/290.69, while Paul Lee (4.273/279.73) ended the day 13th and will have to fight tomorrow to qualify for the elimination rounds on Sunday.

ESPN2 will broadcast 90 minutes of qualifying coverage from the NHRA Nationals at Las Vegas on Sunday, Nov. 2, at 1:00 pm (ET). Three hours of eliminations coverage from The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway will air Sunday evening starting at 6:00 p.m. (ET).

2014 Countdown to the Championship Standings (Following the NHRA Reading Event)

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Jason Line – 2421 (4)
2. Erica Enders-Stevens – 2386 (4)
3. Dave Connolly – 2370 (3)
4. Shane Gray 2322 (1)
5. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 2315 (4)**
6. Vincent Nobile – 2295 (1)
7. Jonathan Gray – 2279 (1)
8. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 2266 (2)**
9. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 2207**
10. Chris McGaha – 2104

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 2423 (3)**
2. John Force – 2387 (3)
3. Courtney Force – 2351 (4)
4. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 2309 (1)**
5. Robert Hight – 2288 (5)
6. Alexis DeJoria – 2268 (3)
7. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 2254 (2)**
8. Del Worsham – 2227
9. Tim Wilkerson – 2207
10. Cruz Pedregon – 2196 (1)

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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