

A Pair of Top-Five Starting Positions for Mopar at the NHRA Nationals

Sportsman Racer David Barton Wins Factory Shootout in Challenger Drag Pak

- Cooler temperatures quickened the pace in qualifying at 30th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Nationals at Maple Grove Raceway near Reading, Pennsylvania
- Matt Hagan earned No.3 seed on eliminations ladder in his Don Schumacher Racing HEMI-powered Mopar
- Allen Johnson was fourth quickest in final qualifying in his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart
- Sportsman racer David Barton earned Factory Shootout victory from his Stock Eliminator No.1 qualifier position in his 2010 Challenger 426 HEMI-powered Drag Pak

October 4, 2014, Reading, Pa -

While temperatures cooled into the 60 degree range at Maple Grove Raceway near Reading, Pennsylvania, for the final qualifying sessions of the 30th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Nationals, the competition heated up as Mopar drivers jostled for position on the eliminations ladders for Sunday's fourth race of the six-event playoff series known as the "Countdown to the Championship".

Matt Hagan's 4.008-second lap at 321.50 mph from Friday evening's run in his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger R/T kept him near the top of the Funny Car qualifying sheets but dropped him just one position to the No.3 seeded position for Sunday's eliminations where he will face Tony Pedregon in the first round.

I think we have a good racecar," said Hagan who is looking to earn his first title win at the Reading track and a second in the Countdown. "The track is really good out there. We made some great laps on Friday but struggled a little bit on Saturday after the rain we had this morning. It definitely made the track a little bit tougher on us today but (crew chief) Dickie (Venables) and the guys will get it figured out and I feel confident for race day."

"We have to go rounds on Sunday," added Hagan who is third in points behind leader John Force and Courtney Force. "There's no other way around it. We have to turn on win lights and go more rounds than those Force cars. That's the only way we can get around them."

Jack Beckman was the sole DSR driver to improve on his final lap by posting a 4.017/316.97, the fourth quickest run of the final session, to move into the sixth spot aboard his Dodge Charger R/T which was decked out in a pink Matco Tools "Tools for the Cause" scheme to honor those directly affected by breast cancer at the start of Breast Cancer Awareness month. Beckman will have Chad Head as his first round opponent.

In an unfortunate twist of fate, DSR's Ron Capps and Tommy Johnson Jr., both on the hunt for a world championship title from their respective fifth and sixth place spots in the Countdown points standings, will have to line up their Mopars next to each other to do battle in the opening round of the NHRA Nationals. Capps qualified eighth with his best lap of 4.063/320.20 while Tommy Johnson Jr. was seeded ninth with his 4.065/316.01 pass.

Jeff Arend made the field in his Dodge Charger R/T with a 4.093/310.55 to put him 13th on the ladder to pair him up with Courtney Force in the first round, while Mike Smith made a valiant effort to qualify his 2008 Dodge Stratus but fell short when his 5.142/228.07 left him in 17th place. The provisional Funny Car No.1 qualifier position was secured by Cruz Pedregon with the 3.991/319.52 he posted on Friday.

After two difficult Pro Stock sessions on Friday left him without a clean run or provisional qualifying position, Allen Johnson and his Mopar crew put a fresh set of tires on the "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart and came back strong for their final two runs. Johnson posted a 6.526 e.t at 211.83 mph run in the third session to move up to

the provisional fourth spot, and then turned it up a notch again on the final lap to post the fourth quickest run of the session once again with a 6.505/212.79 pass.

"We made a good recovery today," said Johnson whose fourth seeded position will give him lane choice over Larry Morgan as his first round opponent on Sunday. "Just a simple thing got us on the two runs yesterday. We went through everything with a fine tooth comb and determined the problem to be old tires. Once we got a new set on there today we were all good. Everyone really pulled together and worked hard and that got us a top-five starting position. I'm really proud of the team. With the exception of a couple of cars, we looked pretty good. We've still got a little on the table. We're a couple of runs behind so we'll take the first round tomorrow to try to build on it."

Defending Pro Stock title winner at Reading, Jeg Coughlin Jr. improved on his Friday qualifying efforts by driving his pink-schemed Dodge Dart for Breast Cancer Awareness month to the third quickest run of the third session with a 6.525/211.93 pass. While he wasn't able to take advantage of the cooler temperatures to make a quicker run in the final session, Coughlin will start from the seventh spot on the ladder to face Greg Anderson as his first round pairing and hopes to make his way through eliminations to make gains in the points in order to also defend his NHRA World Championship with just three races to go in the Countdown.

"We've made three really nice runs in qualifying, just missing it a touch in the final session," said Coughlin. "Even so, we are running this special edition pink car to help raise awareness for breast cancer and it's gone over so well I feel like we've won already before we've even let the clutch out on race day. We're very honored to run this paint scheme and we're thankful that our partners like Mopar, Traxxas and Speedco have joined us in recognizing such a great cause."

Saturday's cooling temperatures led to quicker Pro Stock runs as demonstrated by the track record 6.465/213.16 run set by Erica Enders-Stevens in the final session to earn the No.1 qualifier position. Coughlin, however, expects the action to intensify on race day morning with the possibility of a national record, and the 20 very important bonus points that go with it, to be up for grabs.

"Sunday should be great," added Coughlin who has more wins at this track than any other Pro Stock driver with four national titles. "We have a cold front moving in as we speak and they tell me we'll get down in the 40s tonight and only warm up to about 60 degrees tomorrow, which will be just perfect for these Pro Stock cars. It could be very, very fast. We already saw a near world record out there in Q4 so it's definitely within reach."

Mopar driver V. Gaines continued his strong resurgence in the Dodge Avenger after losing his new Dodge Dart as a result of on-track incident in the opening round of the Countdown. The HEMI-powered driver improved his qualifying numbers with his third lap down the Maple Grove Raceway track posting a 6.531/207.30 mph pass with his HEMI-powered Mopar to put him ninth overall after final qualifying. He'll see Jonathan Gray as his first round opponent.

In Sportsman competition this weekend, David Barton qualified his 2010 Challenger 426 HEMI-powered Drag Pak with a 8.778-second elapsed time run at 151.85 mph to earn the No.1 position in Stock Eliminator class. The local resident of nearby Robesonia, Pennsylvania, then drove his way past Sal Biondo in the first round, and then got a bye in the second to advance to a third round match-up against rival Victor Cagnazzi. The Challenger Drag Pak earned the Factory Shootout B class win over Cagnazzi's COPO Camaro who fouled out. That set up a Stock Eliminator Factory Shootout final between No.1 qualifier Barton and his 2010 Challenger Drag Pak and the No.2 qualifier, Mike Skinner and his 2014 Mustang. Barton had the starting line advantage and drove to victory over Skinner to earn the coveted Factory Shootout showdown and national title win.

An hour and a half of qualifying highlights from the 30th annual NHRA Nationals will be broadcast on ESPN2 on Sunday, Oct. 5, at 3:30 a.m. (ET) and then re-aired later that afternoon at 4:30 pm (ET). Three hours of elimination round coverage from Maple Grove Raceway, the fourth stop in four consecutive weekend NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series national events and the fourth race of the six-event playoff series referred to as the "Countdown to the Championship", will air Sunday evening starting at 8:00 p.m. (ET).

2014 Countdown to the Championship Standings

(Following Reading NHRA Nationals Final Qualifying)

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Jason Line – 2401 (4)
2. Dave Connolly – 2370 (3)
3. Erica Enders-Stevens – 2346 (4)
4. Shane Gray 2302 (1)
5. Jonathan Gray – 2279 (1)
6. Vincent Nobile – 2275 (1)
7. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 2266 (2)**
8. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 2255 (4)**
9. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 2187**
10. Chris McGaha – 2104

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. John Force – 2387 (3)
2. Courtney Force – 2351 (4)
3. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 2343 (2)**
4. Robert Hight – 2288 (5)
5. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 2254 (2)**
6. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 2249 (1)**
7. Alexis DeJoria – 2228 (3)
8. Del Worsham – 2227
9. Tim Wilkerson – 2187
10. Cruz Pedregon – 2176 (1)
11. **Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T – 1008**

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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