

Hagan Drives Mopar to Title Win and Funny Car Points Lead in “Countdown to Championship” at Reading NHRA Nationals

- Matt Hagan wins all-Mopar Funny Car final for title win at 30th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Nationals at Maple Grove Raceway near Reading, Pennsylvania
- Hagan earns second win in ‘Countdown to the Championship’ to put Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) HEMI-powered Mopar in the Funny Car points lead with two events left
- Runner-up finish for Allen Johnson after a perfect .000 light sent the ‘Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar’ Dodge Dart to the Pro Stock final elimination
- Jeg Coughlin Jr. concedes NHRA Pro Stock Championship title defense in wake of first round loss with only two playoff events left in 2014

October 5, 2014, Reading, Pa -

Matt Hagan drove his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger R/T to a memorable title win at the 30th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Nationals at Reading, Pennsylvania’s Maple Grove Raceway, as well as the points lead in the “Countdown to the Championship” with just two national events left in the six-event playoff series. The title win was Hagan’s first at Reading, a second in the playoffs, his third of the season and the lucky number 13th of his career as evidenced by turning the win lights on while crossing the finish line in a fireball.

"It is just a wild way to win," said Hagan, who took a 36 point lead over 16-time NHRA Champion John Force with the title victory. "That's probably the wildest way I've ever won out here on the NHRA circuit. Getting the points lead is huge but we showed up here to win a race. The points lead can change but these Wally [trophies] don't, so we did what we set out to do this morning and that was turn on four win lights."

"Congratulations to Matt Hagan from everyone at Mopar on another big win and the points lead in the Countdown," said Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO of Mopar, Chrysler Group LLC's service, parts and customer-care brand. "What a great way to show everyone that the 50 year legacy of the HEMI continues to live on by winning playoff races and making Mopar a serious contender for this year's NHRA championship once again."

Hagan began his race day assault with a 4.035-second elapsed time pass at 319.37 miles per hour with a solo run on his first lap after Tony Pedregon couldn't get his Funny Car started. He then beat his DSR teammate Jack Beckman with a 4.039/315.05 while his opponent lost traction. In the semifinal match up against Alexis DeJoria, Hagan used a holeshot and a 4.043/319.60 pass to reach the strip ahead of a quicker 4.043/319.64 to advance to his third final round appearance of the playoffs.

In an exciting all-Mopar final, DSR teammate Tommy Johnson Jr. lost traction early as Hagan's Rocky Boots Mopar powered past before his fiery finish.

"The guys did a great job today," said Hagan. "Our guys, they are busting their humps out here and they didn't make any mistakes. They're flawless. You can't have mistakes in the Countdown and they aren't making them. I'm grateful to have a great racecar underneath me."

With his runner-up finish, Tommy Johnson Jr. moved his DSR Make-A-Wish Mopar into fourth place behind rivals John Force and Courtney Force who both suffered first round upsets.

Ron Capps suffered a first round loss to teammate Tommy Johnson Jr. to drop him to seventh in the points, while Jack Beckman saw defeat at the hands of Hagan in the second round.

In factory hot rod action, Allen Johnson had a big day as he took his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart from its fourth seeded position to the final round appearance and then from eighth to fifth place in the points battle for the Pro Stock world championship. He did it with a first round win over Larry Morgan and then an important holeshot victory over Vincent Nobile to advance to the semifinals. Johnson's .010-second reaction time gave him the starting line advantage over Nobile's .039-second launch and then he used the Johnson & Johnson HEMI to power his way to the finish line with a 6.498/213.06 elapsed time run ahead of his opponent's career best 6.479/213.27 pass.

That victory set up a semifinal battle against Erica Enders-Stevens and Johnson rose to the occasion by launching with his first career perfect .000-second light (in eliminations) and then posted a 6.499/212.69 elapsed time run to beat his rival who encountered tire shake on her pass. That propelled the Mopar to a final round elimination against Roger Brogden where Johnson finished runner-up after tire shake off the start ruined his chances for a Countdown title win.

"We had a really good day," said Johnson, whose Mopar team rebounded from a difficult start to qualifying. "After Friday we all had our heads down and scratching our heads but the team kept digging and today we made three very nice conservative runs. We got a little too conservative in the final and that bit us but that's good momentum going into the last two events and our goal is still to battle in the top-three and for a championship. Today's result set us back on that path."

For last year's Reading Nationals title winner and the 2013 NHRA Pro Stock World Champion, Jeg Coughlin Jr., a first round loss on Sunday meant conceding any hopes of defending either.

"It's not a reality at this point to think we can defend the title, at least with this JEGS.com Dodge Dart," said Coughlin, who fell to eighth place in the Pro Stock standings with just two events left on the schedule. "Allen (Johnson) still has a chance, so we'll pull for him to keep the championship trophy with Mopar for a third year in a row."

Coughlin's first round opponent was a familiar one as he and Greg Anderson met for an 83rd time in eliminations. As good as a .010-second reaction time by the JEGS.com driver might have been, this time his rival's perfect .000 start and a 6.501/213.60 cleanly defeated Coughlin's 6.545/212.23 in a great drag race to the finish.

From his ninth seeded position on the ladder, Mopar driver V. Gaines took his HEMI-powered Dodge Avenger to a first round win over Jonathan Gray to see his day end in the quarterfinals against Erica Enders-Stevens. Jason Line remains the points leader in the category.

Mopar's Pro Stock and Funny Car drivers will now have three weeks to prepare for the final two national events in the NHRA "Countdown to the Championship"—The 14th annual NHRA Toyota Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on Oct. 30- Nov. 2 and the 50th Annual Auto Club NHRA Finals near Pomona, California, Nov.13-16.

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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