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Going for Three at the Gatornationals; Trio of Mopar Drivers Looking for Hat Trick at Third Event of NHRA Season

- Mopar drivers get set for the 46th annual NHRA Gatornationals in Florida, the third race of the 2015 NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing season
- Funny Car points leader Matt Hagan goes for three after earning wins in first two events of the year in the new 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger Funny Car
- Allen Johnson looking for third consecutive Gatornationals Pro Stock title
- Ron Capps hopes to add third title win in 21 attempts at Gainesville
- Racing pioneer Don Garlits presented with Mopar President's award at Hall Of Fame dinner for his lifetime of contributions in representing the brand
- Mopar presents its Pat Garlits Award to Joan Gwynn for her unsung contributions to the drag racing community

March 13, 2015, Gainesville, Florida - They say "good things come in threes" and there is a trio of Mopar drivers each hoping to prove the validity of that statement during this weekend's 46th annual NHRA Gatornationals in Gainesville, Florida, the third race of the 2015 National Hot Rod Association Mello Yello Drag Racing series season.

Don Schumacher Racing driver, Matt Hagan comes into this event having won the first two national titles of the season aboard the brand new 2015 Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T. The Funny Car points leader also posted two three-second runs on route to a dominant title win at the previous event in Phoenix. While Hagan has never won the prestigious Gatornationals, he and Mopar crew would love to keep their perfect streak alive and make it three-for-three.

"I want to win the Gatornationals more than I want to win Indy," Hagan said. "I want to win them all. I'm kind of greedy when I say that. It's true. If you go out there and you don't have that desire and drive to win, you shouldn't be sitting in the seat anyway. It's going to be a hard thing to do to win three in a row or four in a row, so to speak, now. There's just so much competition out there. Honestly, this team blows me away every weekend. The car performs, it runs. I try not to mess it up."

Hagan's round-win streak actually extends all the way back to include the final event of the 2014 season at Pomona, where he won both the title and the NHRA Funny Car World Championship.

"To be able to turn on 12 consecutive win lights on Sunday, to have the streak we've been on, be able to win a championship at the end of last year, win the race, come out here and win two more races to start the year off, it's been pretty phenomenal," added Hagan who is looking to extend his points lead en route to being a contender for a third world championship. "It goes to show you why we are a championship team. Hopefully it continues."

Also headed into this weekend's competition with a streak of his own is the driver of the "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart, Allen Johnson, who has won the previous two Gatornationals Pro Stock titles and is looking for his third consecutive career win at the Gainesville track.

"I always really look forward to racing here but it is a bit easier to unload the car with the confidence of having won

the title these last two years running,” said Johnson who drove his HEMI-powered Dodge Dart to its first win in its competition debut at the Gatornationals last year. “We’ve had some good success here with this car and it’s a track I just love to go to. We just have to pick up a little more speed than we’ve had lately and start being a little more aggressive and go in there with some confidence. Gainesville has always held a special place in my heart. While I was very nearly killed here in 1999, coming back to this track every year makes me feel very fortunate and blessed to still be here.”

The third Mopar driver looking to complete his own set of threes is Ron Capps who would like to take his new Don Schumacher Racing Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to the winner’s circle for a third time at this track . This year will mark the 21st time Capps has competed at the Gatornationals, winning back-to-back titles in 1996 and 1997. Although he came close with a runner-up finish in 2000, that third win has eluded him.

“We always have a car that can win, and winning the Gatornationals again would mean a lot to us,” Capps said. “It’s such an iconic event and one of our sports biggest ones. Every year when I drive on the road near the track and see all the campers who are already there reminds me how big this is. It’s the season-opener for NHRA fans on the East Coast. This is a huge event.”

Part of the festivities leading up famed race is the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame dinner held on Thursday evening. At this year’s event, racing icon and innovative engineer, “Big Daddy” Don Garlits, was presented with the Mopar President’s Award in recognition of his career long contributions to the brand, both on and off the track. The award was created to recognize motorsport pioneers and legends who have been affiliated with Mopar throughout their career.

“Don Garlits is a true gentleman, a racing pioneer and has been Mopar’s greatest brand ambassador for more than six decades, and this President’s Award is our way to express our gratitude for everything he has done for us,” said Pietro Gorlier President and CEO – Mopar Brand Service, Parts and Customer Care. “Mopar’s commitment to professional motorsports competition was established in the 1950s because of our partnership with Don, and together we spent the next several decades breaking of numerous speed and performance barriers in HEMI®-powered vehicles. His name has become synonymous with Mopar and this award is meant to recognize individuals like Don who truly epitomize our brand’s core values.”

Previous recipients of the Mopar President’s award include Allen and Roy Johnson (2013), and the man regarded as the “Father of the HEMI”, Tom Hoover (2014).

Mopar also joined Don Garlits in presenting an award named after his late wife, Pat Garlits, established to honor women whose unsung efforts and contributions to her drag racing family have been made behind the scenes or on the track. This year’s Mopar Pat Garlits Award recognized Joan Gwynn for her contributions to the drag racing community as a supportive wife of 57 years to drag racing legend Jerry Gwynn, mother to racer Darrell Gwynn, as well as her charitable work with the Darrell Gwynn Foundation, and especially her involvement with the Drag Racing Association of Women (D.R.A.W.) which has helped injured drag racers and their families for more than 30 years.

ESPN2 will provide television coverage of the 46th annual Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals with a two hour qualifying broadcast on Sunday, March 15 at 1:30 a.m. ET, and again at 7 a.m. ET. The eliminations broadcast is scheduled for Sunday evening from 7 p.m. - 9 p.m. ET.

2015 NHRA Championship Points Standings (following the NHRA Nationals in Phoenix):

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Rodger Brogdon – 205 (1)
2. Erica Enders Stevens – 184
3. Jason Line – 178 (1)
4. Drew Skillman – 177
5. Chris McGaha – 130

6. Shane Gray – 108
7. **Allen Johnson (Dodge Dart) – 107**
8. Larry Morgan – 89
9. Greg Anderson – 86
10. Vincent Nobile – 66
12. **V Gaines (Dodge Dart) – 63**

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. **Matt Hagan (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 231 (2)**
2. Del Worsham – 173
3. Robert Hight – 145
4. **Ron Capps (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 129**
5. Courtney Force – 123
6. **Tommy Johnson Jr. (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 118**
7. Alexis DeJoria – 110
8. Cruz Pedregon – 93
- 9t. John Hale (2014 Dodge Charger R/T) – 82
- 9t. Chad Head – 82
15. **Jack Beckman (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 38**

About Mopar Brand

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words Motor and PARTs) was trademarked in 1937 with the launch of an antifreeze product, but it 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 over 150 markets around the world. With more than 50 parts distribution centers and 27 customer contact hubs globally, Mopar integrates 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 engineered together with the same teams that create factory-authorized specifications for FCA vehicles. This offers 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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