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## Beckman, Johnson Lead Mopar in Friday Qualifying at NHRA Gatornationals

- Beckman takes the provisional No. 5 spot at Gainesville Raceway in his 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car
- Back in his primary Mopar Express Lane colors, Matt Hagan earns the provisional No. 8 spot in his 2015 Dodge Charger R/T
- Six Dodge Charger Funny Car drivers are fighting to make the Gatornationals field
- "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart driver Allen Johnson, seeking a third consecutive NHRA Gatornationals victory, is the provisional No. 6 starter in Pro Stock

March 13, 2015, Gainesville, Florida - A pair of Team Mopar drivers seeking their first victory of the 2015 season got off to a solid start in clamping down on that goal following the first two rounds of qualifying at the 46th Annual NHRA Gatornationals, with Jack Beckman earning the provisional No. 5 spot in the Funny Car class while Allen Johnson ranked sixth in the Pro Stock category.

Looking to turn around a slow start to his season after a DNQ and first-round exit in the first two events, Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Beckman earned the provisional fifth spot with a 4.081-second elapsed time (ET) at 309.56 mph in his first pass of the weekend at Gainesville Raceway. Beckman, the 2012 NHRA Funny Car champion, struck the tires and slowed to a 5.174/143.46 in his second attempt, but heads into Saturday buoyed by his quick first run and optimistic he can get back on the winning track at the tradition-rich Florida stop.

"Coming out of the trailer with a good run is huge," said Beckman. "You can win a race after struggling in qualifying, but going into Saturday without a solid run, it'll get you to start biting your nails. But when you run strong straight out of the box like we did today, it gives us the chance to try some things and get more data without worrying about it as much."

"We still need to get 20 runs to the finish line under full power to get [crew chief] Jimmy (Prock) all the data he needs to start consistently winning races. There is so much difference with this new car than what he has worked with in the past. But while we aren't quite where we want to be, we are getting closer with every run and we're still good enough to win on Sunday."

Undefeated thus far in 2015, Hagan returned to the primary Mopar Express Lane colors on his 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T for the first time since suffering an explosion in his second qualifying run at the season-opening Pomona event. After smoking the tires and slowing to a 5.388/132.04, the defending champ returned to the form that has powered him to back-to-back wins, posting a 4.132/308.43 pass in Q2 to move from 13th to the provisional eighth spot.

John Hale (4.304/234.04) was in the provisional tenth position in his Dodge Charger, while Blake Alexander (4.456/194.97) was one spot back at 11th. A pair of DSR drivers will have to fight to get their 2015 Dodge Charger R/T cars into the field. Tommy Johnson Jr. (4.995/152.16) was listed 14th, while Ron Capps (5.618/224.40) was 15th.

"Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart Pro Stock driver Allen Johnson, the 2013-2014 NHRA Gatornationals champ, began his bid for a third consecutive event title with two strong qualifying runs, opening with a 6.539/212.03 effort. The 2012 overall NHRA Pro Stock champion, in his 20th season behind the wheel of a Mopar-powered Dodge Pro Stock car, improved in his second qualifying attempt with a 6.534/212.90 to hold on to the provisional sixth spot.

"I'd say that we were very conservative on both runs and that we expect to be a bit more aggressive with our final two qualifying sessions," said Johnson, who enters Gainesville with 698 career elimination round appearances. "We got in some good testing this week just down the road in Bradenton, so we picked up today right where we left off in testing.

"Our new crew chief, Adam Hornberger, is very methodical and kind of eases into a set up instead of going for the jugular with his approach. As a team, we all agree this is a good way for us to work. I'm pretty happy with our progress today to make this Dodge Dart pretty raceable, so we'll kick it up a notch tomorrow."

V. Gaines' quickest run (6.648/211.33) came in his first attempt on Friday in his Mopar HEMI-powered Dodge Dart, while Alan Prusiensky (6.662/208.94) saved his best for the final Friday session in his Dodge Avenger. The pair was ranked 11th and 12th, respectively, heading into final qualifying on Saturday.

Two hours of NHRA Gatornationals qualifying coverage is scheduled to air on ESPN2 and ESPN2HD beginning at 1:30 a.m. EDT on Sunday, March 14, with a two-hour re-air beginning at 7 a.m. Two hours of eliminations coverage will air on Sunday starting at 7 p.m. EDT.

### **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](http://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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