

New Concrete Challenge for Mopar at NHRA Four-Wide Nationals

- Mopar ready to take on the challenge of a newly resurfaced track for NHRA Four-Wide Nationals at zMAX Dragway this weekend
- Persistent drizzle and temperatures in the low 50 degrees force cancellation of Friday qualifying sessions at zMAX Dragway
- Don Schumacher Racing working towards a fourth consecutive win for 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car
- DSR announces multi-year partnership with Pennzoil
- Three HEMI-powered entries will compete in Pro Stock field this weekend with addition of Buddy Perkinson II in a Dodge Avenger

March 27, 2015, Concord, North Carolina - Mopar fans and drivers will have at least four good reasons to look forward to this weekend's National Hot Rod Association's sixth annual Four-Wide Nationals, the only event to feature four vehicles competing at the same time across four lanes instead of the usual two. Apart for this event's unique side-by-side-by-side-by-side format, there are a number of items that should make this edition particularly interesting for Mopar aficionados; A newly resurfaced race track at zMAX Dragway that could produce record breaking speeds, a chance to see the Don Schumacher Racing 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car extend its season long win-streak, the addition of a championship-winning Dodge Avenger to the Pro Stock line up for this event, and a live eliminations broadcast on ESPN on Sunday.

An entirely new concrete surface has been laid out in all four racing lanes from the starting line to the 700-foot mark, with new asphalt covering the rest and extending beyond the finish line. Another improvement removes the level "launching pad" and the declining grade of the old race track and replaces it with a continuous one percent grade change from behind the starting line to the quarter-mile finish line. However, while the welcome changes could translate into a faster race track, it will also prove to be a challenge for all competitors as they contend with a brand new surface for which they have little to no data.

"Charlotte is going to be tricky this go-round," said Matt Hagan, reigning world champion and driver of the Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T, who set the first three-second run in Funny Car history at this track in 2011. "It's new, they resurfaced it and we only get one shot at every lane and you have to make the best out of it. You hopefully can go down the track four times in qualifying but in a fuel Funny Car that's hard to do. You have to gather as much data as possible and hope for the best. I know (Crew Chief) Dickie (Venables) will spend a lot of time talking to our other crew chiefs and track specialist (David) Fletcher and we'll be ready for anything."

Adding to that challenge is the loss of two qualifying laps after a persistent drizzle and temperatures in the low 50 degrees forced the cancellation of Friday's sessions. The skies are expected to clear up for the final two qualifying sessions on Saturday, but both drivers and fans can look forward to faster qualifying speeds with a forecast that calls for cool air temperatures to remain in the 50s.

The Don Schumacher Racing team and drivers are also looking forward to getting back on track quickly to help keep their win-streak going in the new 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T after Hagan opened the 2015 NHRA season with back-to-back Wally trophies and Ron Capps earned the victory at the Gatornationals.

"We'll go to the Four-Wide like we did when we rolled into Gainesville with the same goals," said Capps who is second in the Funny Car standings just 26 points behind Hagan. "Qualify in the top half of the (16-car) field so we have lane choice in the first round on Sunday and then win the trophy."

While there was no news to report on track on Friday, Don Schumacher Racing did announce a multiyear marketing partnership to make Pennzoil "The Official Oil Technology of DSR." The iconic Pennzoil logo will debut this weekend as a major associate on Hagan's 2015 Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car and will also maintain a presence on the team's other race cars throughout the season.

Additionally, Pennzoil will be a major associate for Hagan in two weeks at the NHRA event at Las Vegas and during the July 24-26 Mopar Mile-High Nationals near Denver. Pennzoil will also be the featured marketing partner on his Dodge for the Oct. 16-18 race at the Texas Motorplex near Dallas.

In the Pro Stock class, the Dodge Dart entries of Allen Johnson and V. Gaines will have some company with the addition of a third Mopar for this weekend's competition. Joining the HEMI-powered lineup at the wheel of Allen Johnson's 2012 championship winning Dodge Avenger, is 23-year old driver, Buddy Perkinson II.

"I'd been talking to Allen (Johnson) last year and through the winter hoping to put something together," said Perkinson who was last competed aboard a Pro Stock vehicle in 2013. "The timing finally worked out right to come to Charlotte. We're hoping to run a couple of races this year but we'll likely remain on the east coast, so if all goes well we'll be in Atlanta as well. This is a good race to start because with the new track everyone is on an even playing field."

"We did test here last week to get ready and it went great," Perkinson added. "We put in five good passes with our best run on our last outing. I'd like to get in some good qualifying laps and go at least one round because this is a tough field, but the team knows this car well and we should be fine."

Two hours of NHRA Four-Wide qualifying coverage is scheduled to air on ESPN2 on Saturday, March 28, starting at 8 p.m. EDT while eliminations coverage will be broadcast live on ESPN this Sunday, March 29, starting at 2 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.

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

-###-

Additional information and news from Stellantis are available at: <https://media.stellantisnorthamerica.com>