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Beckman Crowned for Third Time at Mopar Mile-High Nationals; Johnson Runs to Ninth Consecutive Final at Denver

- Jack Beckman drives his Mopar HEMI-powered Dodge Charger R/T NHRA Funny Car past John Force for his fourth win of the season
- The victory at Bandimere Speedway is the 11th in 14 events for the new 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car body
- Beckman is now second in the Funny Car standings behind teammate Matt Hagan
- Johnson records his fourth career runner-up at Mopar's marquee event, and his tenth overall Pro Stock final round appearance at the venue
- The "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart driver has now reached the finals at four of the last six races and has closed the gap on fourth place
- Supercharged and naturally-aspirated next generation Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak machines make their first exhibition runs at Bandimere Speedway
- Don Schumacher is presented with prestigious "Mopar President's Award"

July 26, 2015, Morrison, Colorado - "Fast Jack" Beckman powered to his third career Funny Car crown at the Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals on Sunday, running the record of the new 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to a dominating 11 victories in 14 events this season. In Pro Stock, Allen Johnson scored a runner-up finish after racing to his ninth consecutive final round at Bandimere Speedway — and taking part in a "burndown" for the ages.

The victory was Beckman's fourth of the year, a career best win total for a single season with 10 events still remaining. The triumph was also the 19th of his career, moving him to tenth on the all-time Funny Car win list past Ed McCulloch, Mark Oswald and active drivers Tim Wilkerson and teammate Matt Hagan. In addition, drivers piloting a new 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car have now reached the final round at 13 of 14 events this season.

"On behalf of everyone at Mopar I would like to congratulate Jack Beckman on his fourth victory of the season with the title win at our marquee event," said Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO — Mopar Brand Service, Parts and Customer Care, FCA. "To see the 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car drive to the winner's circle for a 11th national title this season is really exciting and reaffirms our dedication to providing quality products that translate to success on the track for our drivers."

Beckman led the Mopar NHRA Funny Car squad both in qualifying and on race day. Starting third, "Fast Jack" opened up his day against Todd Simpson. The 2012 Funny Car champ smoked the tires but was able to reel in his 2015 Mopar Dodge Charger R/T to score a winning 4.587/270.92. Next, it was HEMI vs. HEMI in the quarterfinals, as Beckman squared off with Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammate and Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T driver Hagan.

The pair was even in previous meetings, at 14-14. Beckman claimed the rubber match, recording a 4.124/302.48 as Hagan drifted toward the center line and slowed to a 4.391/228.11. Beckman was quicker and faster with a 4.184/295.40 against semifinals opponent Alexis DeJoria (who also redlighted), advancing to his fourth career final at Bandimere.

Beckman entered the final with a healthy 23-8 career record against foe John Force, and he left with 24 round wins over the 16-time champ. The two left the line with identical reaction times but Beckman quickly pulled away in his

Mopar-powered Dodge Charger R/T, taking out Force with a 4.190/293.92 to his opponent's 4.291/258.96.

"There is a comfortable level with this new 2015 Dodge Charger R/T body," said Beckman. "The added downward visibility is huge. Aerodynamically it's every bit as good and we don't even have that many runs on it yet. I think the proof is we've won 11 of 14 races with this new body. It's been a huge part of our success."

"A gratifying win today," added team owner Don Schumacher. "It was tremendous to go out there and have Jack win this race for Mopar, for DSR and to take that Force car out in the final with John (Force) driving it."

Tommy Johnson Jr. advanced as far as the quarterfinals in his DSR Dodge Charger R/T, losing to Tony Pedregon. Ron Capps was lightning quick with a 4.205/299.93 in the first round, but the DSR Mopar Dodge Charger R/T driver had the misfortune to be matched against the one driver in the round who could beat him, Cruz Pedregon, who was low of the session with a 4.157/287.17. Dodge driver John Hale exited in the first round against John Force.

It took an epic final round battle against Larry Morgan to end Allen Johnson's three-year reign at the Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals (as well as six wins in the last eight years). Still, the "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart driver can hold his head high after reaching his ninth straight final at his sponsor's race, and tenth overall. The final round showing was also his fourth of the year and the 55th of his career.

Johnson started from the No. 1 spot for the sixth time in his career at Bandimere Speedway thanks to a track-record 6.877-second elapsed time (ET) in qualifying. The J&J Racing owner/driver had the luxury of an unopposed first round run and used the clock as his competition, recording the second quickest run of the round with a 6.907-second elapsed time at 199.49 mph — his first sub-200 mph pass of the weekend.

In the quarterfinals, Johnson drove to a comfortable victory over Drew Skillman with a 6.905/200.05 to earn a berth in the semifinals. The 2012 Pro Stock series champ ran a 6.930/199.14 to best Shane Gray's 6.948/199.20 and earn a place in a space he hasn't been missing from since 2006 — the final round at the Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals.

Johnson met Morgan in the money round, a repeat of the final at the most recent NHRA stop in Joliet, Illinois, which Johnson won. The pair waged an old-school "burndown" battle in staging, taking more than a minute-and-a-half to light both bulbs. Morgan left first off the line with an .014 reaction time to Johnson's still-solid .035, giving him enough to score a holeshot win despite Johnson's quicker 6.930/199.23 to Morgan's 6.944/199.02.

"I can assure you that burndown wasn't planned by either of us, and I guess we both really wanted to go in last," said Johnson of the dramatic final elimination staging duel. "I had a great weekend. I can't say enough about the last two races and how this Magneti Marelli crew pulled together and did what they needed to do to put us in a position to win. I want to get that fourth spot in the points, and maybe even the third one, before the Countdown. That's our goal."

"We went to the final nine times in a row here at Mopar's event. We have to be proud of that. My car chief Mike Gott said to me, 'We're still King of the Mountain. No one's ever done that before.' We do that because we respect our sponsor and respect this wonderful facility. This is the place we're supposed to do this at, and we did it for a tenth time. We just let one get away. It's very disappointing but it was still a great weekend for us, for Mopar and the fans. We've got to hold our heads up."

Lakewood, Colorado, native V. Gaines will have to wait until next year to claim victory at his home track. Gaines was quicker in his Mopar HEMI-powered Dodge Dart with a 6.952, but a slower reaction time allowed Shane Gray to take the win with a 6.955 run. Deric Kramer nearly pulled off an upset in his Dodge Dart against the higher-qualified Johnathan Gray. Kramer left the line first and posted a 6.972/198.76 but was unable to beat the Gray brother to the finish stripe.

Next up for the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series is the second leg of the famed "Western Swing," the NHRA Sonoma Nationals, scheduled for July 31 – August 2 at Sonoma Raceway in Sonoma, California

New Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak Vehicles Make First Exhibition Runs

Fans at Bandimere Speedway were also witness to a special moment in Mopar history — the first exhibition runs of the next generation Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak.

Mopar Sportsman racer and three-time NHRA Stock class champion Kevin Helms drove the supercharged 354-cubic-inch Gen III HEMI engine Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, while Bandimere Speedway General Manager and drag racer “Sporty” Bandimere piloted the naturally aspirated 426-cubic-inch Gen III HEMI engine version. Helms took the win in the supercharged machine, which represents the first-ever offering by the Mopar brand of a supercharged package car.

The opening of orders for the new Mopar Drag Pak was announced at the Mopar Block Party in Golden, Colorado, on Thursday, July 23. Only 60 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak vehicles are slated for production — 35 of the supercharged Gen III HEMI engine and 25 of the naturally aspirated engine. Ordering will be available through authorized Dodge dealerships. Additional information on the new Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak is available at www.mopar.com/mopar-drag-pak.

“Mopar President’s Award” Presented to Don Schumacher

During a short pre-race ceremony presentation, Hall of Fame NHRA drag racer and team owner Don Schumacher was presented with the “Mopar President’s Award,” a special honor recognizing outstanding contributions by individuals that uphold the qualities and values that add to the Mopar brand’s legacy and reputation.

Ross McGinnis, Vice President, Mopar Sales and Product Development, and Tricia Hecker, Head of Mopar Marketing, presented Schumacher with the award on behalf of Mopar President and CEO Pietro Gorlier. Schumacher was recognized for his enduring loyalty and passion for the Mopar brand as both a racer and team owner. His Don Schumacher Racing drivers have racked up more than 250 event wins and have used Mopar power to capture four NHRA Funny Car championships.

The “Mopar President’s Award” was created to recognize motorsport pioneers and legends who have been affiliated with Mopar throughout their career. Previous recipients of the “Mopar President’s Award” include Allen and Roy Johnson (2013), the man regarded as the “Father of the HEMI,” Tom Hoover (2014), and drag racing legend “Big Daddy” Don Garlits (2015).

2015 NHRA Championship Points Standings (following Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals Eliminations)

1. Greg Anderson – 1201 (4)
2. Erica Enders-Stevens – 1164 (4)
3. Jason Line – 988 (2)
4. Chris McGaha – 925
5. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 845 (1)**
6. Larry Morgan – 842 (2)
7. Drew Skillman – 779
8. Shane Gray – 723
9. Vincent Nobile – 681
10. Johnathan Gray – 667
12. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 510**

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. **Matt Hagan – (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 1083 (4)**
2. **Jack Beckman – (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 938 (4)**
3. John Force – 891 (2)
4. **Ron Capps – (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 879 (2)**
5. Del Worsham – 868
6. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 855 (1)**
7. Cruz Pedregon – 782
7. Tim Wilkerson – 782 (1)
9. Alexis DeJoria – 731

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 2015, Mopar looks to add to its streak of five NHRA World Championship titles in the Pro Stock (2012 and 2013) and Funny Car (2011, 2012, and 2014) categories in four years. While Mopar remains involved in various professional motorsports series, it continues to honor its roots by being a proud supporter of amateur racing within the NHRA with its sponsorship of the HEMI Challenge and Mopar's Tom Hoover Sportsman Challenge.

Mopar

Mopar is the global name for Stellantis genuine parts and authentic accessories.

A simple combination of the words MOtor and PARts, Mopar offers exceptional service, parts and customer-care. Born in 1937 as the name of a line of antifreeze products, Mopar has evolved over more than 85 years to represent both complete vehicle care and authentic performance for owners and enthusiasts worldwide.

Mopar made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era with performance parts to enhance speed and handling for both on-road and racing use. Later, Mopar expanded to include technical service and customer support, and today integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Complete information on Mopar is available at www.mopar.com and the Mopar blog at www.blog.mopar.com. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit www.stellantis.com.

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