

National Record Run by Beckman in Dodge Charger R/T to Earn Pole at NHRA Gatornationals

Supercharged Mopar Challenger Drag Pak Makes Competition Debut

- Beckman drives DSR Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to national record 3.879 second run at 329.26 mph to grab pole at 47th annual NHRA Gatornationals
- Second No.1 qualifier position of the season for Beckman in three race events
- Jeg Coughlin Jr. paces the Mopars in Pro Stock qualifying by putting his Magneti Marelli Dodge Dart sixth overall
- Factory Stock Showdown features new supercharged Mopar Challenger Drag Pak driven by Jonathan Allegrucci
- Mopar and Don Garlits present the Pat Garlits Memorial Award at the annual International Hall of Fame banquet to Laurie Force for her contributions to the drag racing community

March 19, 2016, Gainesville, Florida - For the second time in three events this season, Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) pilot Jack Beckman earned the No.1 qualifier position, only this time he did it by taking his Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T for an impressive national record run at 47th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Gatornationals. With a 3.879-second elapsed time drive at a speed of 329.26 mph, both national records, Beckman earned his 17th career pole and his first at traditional East Coast opener for the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series.

Beckman had earned the provisional pole on Friday with a Gainesville Raceway track record pass of 3.913 seconds at 323.74 mph after opportune conditions for record setting runs were seen thanks to a two-hour "oil down" delay that moved both sessions into the late afternoon and early evening. He had also earned the No.1 qualifier position at the season opener, Circle K NHRA Winternationals, in Pomona last month.

Setting a national record was nothing new for Beckman who had previously set and reset it four times last season while earning a career-high seven national title wins and finishing runner-up in the Funny Car championship.

"I'm always excited to come here," said Beckman who has not yet won at Gainesville. "It's like another season opener. This place was setting records long before I ever came out here when I was reading about it in National Dragster. Driving for (Crew Chief) Jimmy Prock, we can set records most places we go."

Beckman will see Jeff Diehl as his first round opponent.

Driving into Gainesville as the points leader thanks to a trip to the winner's circle in the season opener in Pomona, Ron Capps qualified fifth with his DSR Dodge Charger R/T's best run of 3.929 seconds at 319.37 mph set on Friday night when he finished second to Beckman to earn two bonus points. Capps also goes into race day as the defending and three-time Gatornationals winner and will have John Hale's Dodge Charger R/T in the lane next to him for the first round of eliminations.

Matt Hagan took his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T to the fifth quickest time in both Friday sessions improving from a 4.034 second/ 304.05 mph to a 3.965 Sec /321.12 mph pass, and then building on that with a final run at 3.953/323.74 to put him sixth on the ladder for Sunday's eliminations where he will have lane choice over Alexis DeJoria in the first round.

"We had two good runs (Friday) and then had a really nice lap to close out qualifying tonight," Hagan said. "We're building confidence slowly but surely and that's what winning is all about. (Crew Chief) Dickie (Venables) is confident

and our team morale is good even if we've had a little rough start. We're getting a handle on it."

DSR teammate Tommy Johnson Jr. qualified tenth with his best pass of 4.016/307.65 to pair him up against Chad Head in the opening round.

Progress for Mopar in Pro Stock

Two-time Pro Stock national title winner at the Gatornationals, Jeg Coughlin Jr. is pleased with the progress he has seen his Elite Motorsports team make with the his fuel-injected HEMI-powered Mopar so far this season. Coughlin qualified sixth on the strength of a 6.627-second run at 207.88 mph.

"It's a big step for this brand-new program, and to see our Magneti Marelli offered by Mopar/JEGS.com Dodge Dart qualified sixth in this very tough field is a testament to a lot of hard work," said Coughlin who will have lane choice over Chris McGaha to start the day. "We basically started out by mimicking the efforts my teammate Erica (Enders) had in testing earlier this week and went from there. That tune-up didn't exactly agree with what the track wanted to give us yesterday, and we ran a 6.71 and a 6.69 in those first two runs. We all knew there was a bunch more in there.

"It's exciting because both cars are coming around, and even though it's taking a little time we're really blown away by how far we've come since mid-February."

Allen Johnson, who has also earned two Pro Stock titles at the Gatornationals for Mopar, saw his Marathon Petroleum Dodge Dart GT run consistent laps with a trio of 6.66-second passes. He posted his best run of 6.628-second at 207.91 mph in the final session to move up into the top half of the eliminations ladder and the seventh spot to give him lane choice over fellow HEMI-powered driver Erica Enders.

While Enders has two NHRA Pro Stock championships to her credit, missing from her impressive list of accomplishments is a Wally from the prestigious Gatornationals. Always up for a challenge, Erica will attempt to earn that elusive trophy from the tenth spot on the eliminations ladder after qualifying her Elite Motorsports Mopar Performance Dodge Dart GT with a solid 6.636 seconds lap at 208.33 mph.

"It's no secret that we've struggled a bit the first two races with an extremely new program, but it's just a matter of having more time to make more runs with this Dodge Dart and the HEMI powerplant," said Enders who did earn a bonus point for setting the third quickest run on Friday evening. "We're going to get better every race; I believe that wholeheartedly. My guys are so smart. They want it more than anything. We just have to be patient."

"I don't think that where we qualified is indicative of what happened on the track because on our run of record I had something go wrong and it certainly cost us a few hundredths of a second," Enders added. "We could have at least run a 6.62, so that's extremely encouraging."

The Dodge Dart of V. Gaines qualified 14th overall with a best run of 6.685/208.17 to face Greg Anderson in the opening round.

Jason Line was the top qualifier with a 6.587 second run at 210.44 mph for the fastest speed to date by a new era fuel injected Pro Stock car.

Supercharged Mopar Challenger Drag Pack Makes Debut at Gatornationals

Last year in NHRA Sportsman competition at the Gatornationals, Mopar's Kevin Helms, of Schriever, Louisiana, earned the overall Stock Eliminator victory aboard his 426 Race HEMI Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak.

This year, Mopar had a notable entry in the Factory Stock Shootout as the very first supercharged 354-cubic-inch Gen III HEMI®-powered Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak made its competition debut in the Factory Stock (FS/XX) class with Mayfield, Pennsylvania, native Jonathan Allegrucci at the wheel of the Ray Barton prepared vehicle.

Allegrucci qualified the Chip Hoynitski-owned supercharged Mopar Challenger Drag Pak seventh in class with a solid 8.568 second pass at 159.14 mph to make the eight-car field for Factory Stock Shootout, a contest design to showcase the Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, the Chevrolet COPO Camaro, and the Ford Mustang Cobra Jet competing against each other.

"It was a lot of work to get here and we didn't even get a chance to test like we wanted coming into Gainesville, so Friday's run was the first full pass we ever made with the supercharged Mopar Drag and we're very happy with the outcome," said Allegrucci. "The first goal was to make it to the track in time and we had a lot of sleepless nights to make it. Then the goal was to make the top eight (to make it into the Factory Shootout). There is no doubt that without the direction and help of Ray and David Barton we would never be at this point and there is still a lot more to learn."

"Fans seem very happy to see the new Drag Pak out there," added Allegrucci regarding the attention the newest version of Mopar's modern day package car has garnered so far. "There are a couple of videos on Youtube and friends are sharing photos and there's definitely some excitement. There is a sense of pride for us to know that we're running the first ever supercharged Mopar Challenger Drag Pak."

Unfortunately, a red light foul in the first round of the Factory Stock Showdown halted their progress but Allegrucci expects to take the supercharged Challenger to more events this season compete in the three remaining Factory Stock Showdowns this season with the next stop taking place at the NHRA Summernationals at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park in Englishtown, N.J., June 9-12. The third race will be held at the Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals in Norwalk, Ohio, June 23-26, and the final event will take place at the prestigious U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis, Labor Day weekend, August 31 through September 5.

The availability of a total of 60 new-generation Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak vehicles, with 35 built of the supercharged 354-cubic-inch Gen III HEMI® engine and 25 of the naturally aspirated engine, was officially announced in June 2015 and began production late last year. The Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, a factory-prepped package car specifically geared for drag racing, combines the latest in Sportsman racing technology, a host of upgrades and improvements from the previous generation Drag Pak and unique heritage design cues.

Pat Garlits Memorial Award presented by Mopar

Prior to on track activity at the famed Gatornationals, the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame dinner was held on Thursday evening with Mopar legend, racing icon and innovative engineer, "Big Daddy" Don Garlits presenting an annual award named after his late wife, Pat Garlits. The memorial award was established by Mopar in 2014 following her passing to honor women, behind the scenes or on the track, whose unsung efforts and contributions to their drag racing family and passion for the sport embodies the spirit of Pat Garlits. This year's Pat Garlits Memorial Award presented by Mopar recognized Laurie Force for her contributions to the drag racing community over more than four decades as a supportive and ever-patient wife of winningest Funny Car driver John Force, and mother to three drag racing daughters, Ashley Force Hood, Brittany Force and Courtney Force.

The inaugural award was presented to Barbara Hamilton, the first woman licensed by NHRA to drive supercharged cars in 1964, and then Joan Gwynn was honored in 2015 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 the Drag Racing Association of Women (D.R.A.W.) which helps injured drag racers and their families.

Eliminations coverage for the 47th annual AMALIE Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals at Gainesville Raceway, near Gainesville, Fla., the third of 24 NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series events this season, can be found on Fox Sports (FS1) with a three hour eliminations broadcast, including live finals, scheduled for Sunday, March 20 starting at 1 p.m. ET.

About Mopar Motorsports

The Mopar brand'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 2016, Mopar will look to once

again vie for a NHRA World Championship title in both Pro Stock and Funny Car categories. While Mopar remains involved in a various professional motorsports series, it continues to honor its roots by being a proud supporter of Sportsman racing within the NHRA with its sponsorship of the HEMI Challenge and Mopar's Tom Hoover Sportsman Challenge.

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.

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