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Hagan No. 1 Qualifier; Beckman Wins Explosive Traxxas Shootout in Final Qualifying at NHRA U.S. Nationals

- Final day of qualifying for Pro Stock and Funny Car classes at prestigious 59th annual NHRA U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis
- Beckman wins Traxxas Shootout and \$100,000 prize in an explosive finish
- Hagan remains No.1 qualifier and tops the final session in the DSR 'Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar' Dodge Charger
- V. Gaines leads the HEMI-powered contingent in Pro Stock qualifying and is seeded second for final eliminations
- Mopar's Coughlin third, Johnson eighth and Nobile eleventh in final qualifying results for the U.S. Nationals

August 31, 2013, Brownsburg, Ind. -

There was plenty of action in the final day of qualifying for the 59th annual NHRA U.S. Nationals, with Don Schumacher Racing's Matt Hagan backing up his No. 1 qualifier designation aboard his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar," preliminarily earned on Friday, with the quickest run in the final Sunday qualifying session. But it was Hagan's teammate "Fast" Jack Beckman that stole the attention with the explosive manner in which he won the Traxxas Shootout and \$100,000 payout.

The first round of Sunday's Funny Car qualifying at Lucas Oil Raceway doubled as the opening battles of the \$100,000-to-win Traxxas Funny Car Shootout. Beckman was triumphant in his Mopar-powered Dodge Charger R/T in a duel with his Don Schumacher Racing Mopar Dodge teammate Ron Capps, tripping the timing lights first with a 4.062/310.20 pass to Capps' 4.118/304.46. Although "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" driver Hagan fell in the first round of the Traxxas Shootout to Tim Wilkerson after recording a 4.109/311.20, Hagan still maintained the No. 1 qualifier position based on his track-record 4.007/319.22 pass on Saturday night. Another DSR Mopar Dodge driver, Johnny Gray, also held his spot (No. 2) from the previous night despite losing to Courtney Force in the Shootout.

In the final qualifying session, Beckman bested Courtney Force in the Traxxas Shootout semifinals with a 4.082 to Force's 4.099, setting up a fight with Cruz Pedregon in the Shootout final (a non-qualifying round). Hagan's track-record mark held to give him his fourth pole of the season, and the 2011 Funny Car champion added an exclamation point, recording the quickest run of the last session with a 4.048/313.58 mark. Hagan will square off against another Dodge driver, No. 16 Jeff Arend, in the opening round tomorrow.

Johnny Gray smoked the tires in his last qualifying shot but will start No. 2 based on his 4.012 pass from Friday, with a match against Tony Pedregon to begin his Sunday. Capps also overpowered the track but maintained his previous No. 5 position (4.049), putting three Mopar HEMI-powered Funny Car racers in the top five of tomorrow's field. Capps will draw Alexis DeJoria in the first stanza, while Beckman, though \$100,000 richer, will start in the back of the DSR pack at No. 8 (4.062) and get a date with Chad Head in round one. Part-time HEMI-powered Charger R/T driver Paul Lee claimed the eleventh spot and will meet John Force in the first round.

For the Traxxas Shootout final, Beckman (4.086 sec) was first out of the gate with a quicker reaction time (0.052 to 0.075 seconds) than Pedregon (4.066 sec) to beat his competitor on a hole shot at the finish line, where his Funny Car celebrated the win by blowing the body right off in a spectacular explosion that thankfully left the Mopar driver unscathed and retaining his sense of humor.

"I don't remember what happened. What day is this and where are we right now?" Beckman quipped. "Our car was hauling, and then all of a sudden the body's gone, but I knew we were at the finish line. Todd Smith (Beckman's crew chief) gets on the radio, and this is what a great guy he is: He didn't care about anything but me. He said, 'Are you okay, are you okay?' I said, 'I'm fine. Did we win?' Once he gave me the 'yes' I felt even better."

"It was an expensive explosion," Beckman added. "We used up every bit of that hundred grand, and then some. We will fix the car, we will come back tomorrow and we are going to do our damndest to double up at Indy."

Sunday's first Pro Stock qualifying session saw cooler temperatures than the previous two rounds, and as a result elapsed times and speeds improved. Points leader Mike Edwards (6.621 seconds) topped the session, followed by the HEMI-powered Dodge Avenger of V. Gaines, (6.637 sec) and Mopar's Jeg Coughlin (6.637) rounding out the top three and scoring bonus points. Allen Johnson, who's Mopar Express Lane Dodge Avenger previously held the provisional pole, unfortunately did not improve his time and found himself seventh with an elapsed time run of 6.646 seconds (207.50 mph).

Conditions didn't improve for the final Pro Stock qualifying session and as a result, neither did qualifying positions for the Mopar entries. Edwards led the session with Jason Line and Greg Anderson all scoring bonus points; Johnson

was quickest of the Mopars in fourth spot ahead of Gaines and Coughlin, fifth and sixth respectively, and then Vincent Nobile in tenth place.

The final results gave Edwards his 13th No.1 qualifier position of the year, with Gaines as the highest qualified Dodge in second place, and Coughlin and his JEGS.com Mopar in third place. Johnson ends up eighth overall and Vincent Nobile will be seeded eleventh.

Gaines' second place showing matches his best qualifying effort at Pomona, Phoenix and Denver this season, and makes it six straight events in which he has qualified within the top five spots. Following two runner-up performances at Denver and Brainerd this year, Gaines is hoping to add a third and do what he wasn't able to in 1997, when he had his very first career final-round appearance at Indianapolis — earn a prestigious U.S. Nationals title.

"Oh man, that would be fantastic," Gaines said. "To go to the finals at Indy — it's every driver's dream. But we'll just take it one round at a time and do the best we can. Right now we have a great car, great crew and great support staff."

Gaines is feeling pretty good about the work and improvements they've made.

"I think a big thing was that the weather was a lot better," said Gaines. "The run we had on Friday night was probably just as good of a run, but we got a little loose in the beginning. We should have been No. 1 on that one. Going to No. 2 in that right lane was a big, big deal, because that right lane isn't quite as forgiving as the left lane. I was hoping to improve a bit [on the last pass of the day]. Going into the left lane, which is a little better, I thought we could pick up a little bit."

For Johnson, who has never made it to a final round at Indianapolis, his final run has him feeling a bit better about his eighth-place spot on the eliminations ladder

"We made a good run that last run," Johnson said. "It's a very, very tight field, but I think we have a good race day setup. That last run, it's always good to make a really good run, and we did it, so we have confidence going into tomorrow. The track should also be better tomorrow, because it's supposed to be a little cooler. We put ourselves in a position where we're really going to have to work for it now. If we can win first round, we might have Mike (Edwards, the current points leader) in the second round. But the field is so tight, you just have to get it done as a driver. A big win here would certainly give us a shot of momentum heading into the playoffs, for the team, for the driver — for everybody."

ESPN2 and ESPN2HD will provide six hours of U.S. Nationals eliminations coverage from Lucas Oil Raceway starting at noon (ET) on Monday, Sept. 2.

FINAL QUALIFYING Results from 59th annual NHRA U.S. Nationals

PRO STOCK (e.t / mph / top mph)

- 1 Mike Edwards - 6.621 sec / 208.20 mph
- 2 V. Gaines, Dodge Avenger - 6.637 sec / 208.59 mph**
- 3 Jeg Coughlin, Dodge Avenger - 6.637 sec / 206.99 mph**
- 4 Greg Anderson - 6.640 / 208.10
- 5 Rickie Jones - 6.644 / 207.85
- 6 Shane Gray - 6.644 / 207.85
- 7 Jason Line - 6.645 / 207.98 / 208.33
- 8 Allen Johnson, Dodge Avenger - 6.646 / 207.88**
- 9 Mark Martino - 6.661 / 207.72
- 10 Curt Steinbach - 6.661 / 205.98 / 206.07
- 11 Vincent Nobile, Dodge Avenger - 6.674 / 206.95**
- 12 Larry Morgan - 6.676 / 206.76
- 13 Greg Stanfield - 6.689 / 206.39
- 14 Rodger Brogdon - 6.689 / 206.39 / 206.61
- 15 Warren Johnson - 6.696 / 206.70
- 16 Chris McGaha, Dodge Avenger - 6.706 / 206.45**

FUNNY CAR (e.t / mph / top mph)

- 1 Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T - 4.007 sec / 319.22 mph**
- 2 Johnny Gray, Dodge Charger R/T - 4.012 sec / 312.13 mph**
- 3 Del Worsham - 4.045 / 313.15
- 4 Bob Tasca III - 4.046 / 313.88
- 5 Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T - 4.049 / 315.27**
- 6 John Force - 4.052 / 313.58
- 7 Robert Hight - 4.056 / 310.91
- 8 Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger R/T - 4.062 / 310.20 / 310.55**
- 9 Chad Head - 4.064 / 308.35
- 10 Cruz Pedregon - 4.068 / 309.06
- 11 Paul Lee '10 Charger - 4.072 / 297.61**
- 12 Alexis DeJoria - 4.081 / 309.77
- 13 Tim Wilkerson - 4.086 / 312.50
- 14 Courtney Force - 4.088 / 316.30
- 15 Tony Pedregon - 4.091 / 306.26
- 16 Jeff Arend '13 Charger - 4.138 / 306.12**

2013 NHRA Championship Points Standings (following Final Qualifying at U.S. Nationals):

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Mike Edwards (5) – 1587 *
2. **Allen Johnson (4) - Dodge Avenger – 1426***
3. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. (2) - Dodge Avenger – 1312***
4. **Vincent Nobile (3) - Dodge Avenger – 1145***
5. Shane Gray – 1068*
6. Jason Line (1) – 1046*
7. Greg Anderson – 1013*
8. **V. Gaines - Dodge Avenger – 918***
9. Erica Enders-Stevens (1) – 779*
10. Rodger Brogdon (1) – 755*

*clinched berth in Countdown to the Championship

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. **Matt Hagan (4) - Dodge Charger R/T – 1297***
2. **Ron Capps (3) - Dodge Charger R/T – 1163***
3. **Johnny Gray (4) - Dodge Charger R/T – 1105***
4. Cruz Pedregon (3) – 1099*
5. John Force (1) – 1095*
6. Courtney Force (2) – 1071*
7. **Jack Beckman - Dodge Charger R/T – 1050***
8. Tim Wilkerson – 983
9. Bob Tasca III – 944
10. Robert Hight – 935

*clinched berth in Countdown to the Championship

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 2013, Mopar looks to defend its two NHRA 2012 World Championship titles in Pro Stock and Funny Car categories, and celebrates 25 consecutive years as title sponsor of the Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals in Colorado. While Mopar remains involved in a 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 Sportsman Cup.

Mopar Brand

Mopar is Chrysler Group LLC's service, parts and customer-care brand and distributes 280,000 parts and accessories. With the creation of the industrial alliance between Chrysler Group and Fiat S.p.A., Mopar is extending its global reach, integrating service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance dealer and customer support worldwide. Mopar's global portfolio includes more than 500,000 parts and accessories that are distributed in more than 130 markets. Mopar is the source for genuine parts and accessories for Chrysler Group brands as well as Fiat brands.

Mopar parts are unique in that they are engineered with the same teams that create factory-authorized vehicle specifications for Chrysler Group and Fiat vehicles – 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

More than 75 Years of Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words Motor and PARTs) was trademarked for antifreeze product in 1937. The Mopar brand made its mark in the 1960s – the muscle-car era. The former Chrysler Corporation built race-ready Dodge and Plymouth "package cars" equipped with special high-performance parts. Mopar carried a line of "special parts" for super-stock drag racers and developed its racing parts division called Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use. The brand has expanded to include technical service and customer support.

About Magneti Marelli

Based in Italy (Corbetta, Milan), Magneti Marelli was established in 1919. The company is a subsidiary of Fiat Group and has a presence and reputation in racing, including Formula 1 and World Rally Championship (WRC) and now the NHRA. With 2012 revenues of \$7.5 billion and approximately 36,900 employees, Magneti Marelli designs and produces advanced automotive systems and components. The company has 83 production facilities, 12 research and development centers and 26 application centers in 19 countries. The group supplies leading automakers in Europe, North America, South America and the Far East. Magneti Marelli USA coordinates the activities of all Magneti Marelli divisions in the NAFTA region from its North American headquarters, located in Auburn Hills, Michigan.

Magneti Marelli has established a significant presence in the world of aftermarket and service networks in the US, thanks to the partnership with MOPAR

Mopar Express Lane Service

Mopar Express Lane service, offered at participating Chrysler Group dealerships, provides a dedicated service lane for fast oil changes, and much more, in order to maximize customer convenience for all make and model vehicles. Available services include oil and filter changes, multi-point vehicle checkup, tire rotation with brake inspection, air and cabin filter replacement, wiper blade replacement, headlight and light bulb replacement and battery testing. Mopar Express Lane service is a consumer's best choice for vehicle maintenance, with highly-skilled Chrysler Group dealership technicians ready to get to work and get you back on the road in no time. No appointments. No waiting. No worries.

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