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Johnson Back on Top of Thunder Mountain with Provisional Pole at Mopar Mile High NHRA Nationals

- Defending Pro Stock title winner Allen Johnson earns provisional pole position at Mopar Mile High Nationals
- Johnson looking to earn a fifth consecutive No.1 qualifier position at the event he has won five times in seven years
- Colorado native V. Gaines has two runner-up finishes the last two years at his home track and is fourth quickest in Pro Stock qualifying
- Ron Capps led the Mopar HEMI-powered Funny Car contingent with the provisional fifth quickest pass after two qualifying sessions
- Matt Hagan drives the HEMI 50th Anniversary tribute Mopar to eighth spot in Funny Car qualifying

July 18, 2014, Morrison, Colorado - Defending title winner of the Mopar Mile High National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Nationals, Allen Johnson, picked things up right where he left off last year by earning the provisional No.1 qualifier position after two sessions at Bandimere Speedway near Denver, Colorado, on Friday evening.

Johnson not only has won five Pro Stock titles in seven years (2013, 2012, 2010, 2009, 2007) at Mopar's signature event, but also has seven consecutive final round appearances and four straight No.1 qualifier positions at the scenic Rocky Mountain drag strip. This weekend, he is working to keep those streaks of success going with the new "Magnet Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart which made its debut at the Gatornationals and that Johnson has already taken to the winner's circle for two of his three wins this season. The HEMI-powered driver went to the top of the score sheets on his second qualifying pass with an elapsed time run of 6.928 seconds at 198.90 miles per hour to set the track speed record.

"We were hoping to run a 6.91-second pass," said Johnson who is looking to remain the top seed for eliminations after two more qualifying sessions on Saturday. "We left that much on the table but we'll go out there tomorrow and keep tuning on it and see if we can do better."

"It's your sponsor's race and it's the 50th anniversary of the HEMI and everything about this event makes us step up and do it," added Johnson when asked what it was about this track that breeds success for his Mopar team. "We've really worked our tails off at this track testing over the years, trying to come up with a package that is superior, so that we can impress all the Mopar and Chrysler executives that come to out to see us this race."

Johnson, however, was quick to point out that it has become much more difficult to stay on top as the competition in Pro Stock is stronger than ever and his competitors have made obvious improvements at this track.

"The gap has shrunk tremendously as I think in years past we were maybe two-hundreds of a second ahead of the pack and now we are just one thousandths ahead. The other guys are figuring out how to run the track too. But you know we've got a great Dodge Dart, we've got great engineers behind us, and we've got all the people in the stands. This place is tremendous and the Bandimere family does a great job so all the stars are aligned for us to do well and we're going to do our best to put that 50th anniversary HEMI in the winner's circle."

Colorado native and driver of the HEMI-powered Western Motorsports Dodge Dart, V. Gaines is going to try to give Johnson a run for his money after finishing runner-up at his home event the last two years. Gaines took the provisional fourth spot in qualifying with his elapsed time pass of 6.944 seconds at 198.15 mph.

Driver of the JEGS.com Dodge Dart, Jeg Coughlin Jr., has back-to-back wins (1998-99) and four final round appearances at Bandimere Speedway, but had a more difficult time on his qualifying runs in Friday's sessions than he expected and sits 13th in the provisional order after posting a 7.024-second e.t. at 197.02 mph as his best pass of the day.

A total of five Mopars are competing in the Pro Stock class at this event with the addition of Matt Hartford aboard his Dodge Avenger in the ninth spot (6.984 / 197.31) and Deric Kramer in his Dodge Avenger with the 11th quickest run (6.993/ 196.87) of the day.

Ron Capps led the Mopar HEMI-powered NHRA Funny Car contingent on their first qualifying attempts at Thunder Mountain, running to the provisional No. 5 spot on the strength of a 4.087/311.92 pass and earning one bonus point.

Capps' Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) compatriot, Tommy Johnson Jr., powered his own Dodge Charger R/T to a 4.102/308.21 mark, good for sixth after Friday's two sessions.

Debuting the special Mopar 426 HEMI engine 50th Anniversary graphics on his Dodge Charger R/T, Matt Hagan lost traction in his first shot at the Bandimere Speedway strip, but recovered nicely in his second Friday pass. The 2011 Funny Car champ improved to a 4.111/300.73 effort in his tribute car to Mopar's famed "elephant" engine, stampeding up the charts to earn the preliminary eighth position.

Jack Beckman rounded out the four-man DSR Dodge contingent with a 4.153/304.32 run, and will look to move up from the 11th position tomorrow in the final two qualifying attempts for the Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals.

ESPN2 will provide coverage of the Mopar Mile High NHRA Nationals with two hours of qualifying highlights on Saturday, July 19 starting at 11 p.m. (ET). Three and a half hours of elimination round coverage will air on Sunday, July 20, starting at 2:30 p.m. (ET).

2014 NHRA Points Standings (following previous NHRA event at Norwalk)

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Erica Enders Stevens – 1166 (4)
2. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 925 (3)**
3. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 900 (2)**
4. Dave Connolly – 875
5. Jason Line – 863 (1)
6. Vincent Nobile – 840 (1)
7. Shane Gray – 833
8. Chris McGaha – 600
9. V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 562
10. Jonathan Gray – 484

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Robert Hight – 1067 (4)
2. John Force – 889 (2)
3. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 846 (1)**
4. Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 845 (1)
5. Alexis DeJoria – 779 (2)
6. Courtney Force – 764
7. Del Worsham – 748
8. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 739 (1)**
9. Cruz Pedregon – 726 (1)
10. **Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T – 655**

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 2014, Mopar celebrates the 50th anniversary of the introduction of the GEN III 426 Race HEMI® and looks to defend back-to-back NHRA World Championship titles (2012-2013) in the Pro Stock class and battle for another Funny Car World Championship after wins in 2011-2012. While Mopar remains involved in a various professional motorsports series, it continues to honour 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 (a simple contraction of the words Motor and PARTs) was trademarked in 1937 with the launch of an antifreeze product but 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 more than 130 markets, integrating 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 unique in that they are engineered with the same teams that create factory-authorized vehicle specifications for FCA 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

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