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Bullseye: Johnson Drives Mopar Pro Stock Dodge Dart to Historic First Win in Race Debut at NHRA Gatornationals

- In the race car's competition debut, Allen Johnson takes the Dodge Dart all the way to victory
- Team Mopar racer Johnson scores back-to-back NHRA Gatornationals triumphs and his second consecutive win of the 2014 season
- Johnson puts his 'Magneti Marelli Quality Auto Parts Offered by Mopar' Dodge Dart in the points lead for the NHRA Pro Stock series championship
- Mopar Dodge Pro Stock cars are 1-2 in the standings after three events, with final-round appearances in each race thus far
- Coughlin reaches the quarterfinals in the debut of his Mopar/JEGS.com Dodge Dart
- Capps races his Mopar-powered Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to the semifinals

March 16, 2014, Gainesville, Fla. - Allen Johnson had boldly predicted that the new Mopar Dodge Dart NHRA Pro Stock car will ultimately rank among the greatest to compete in the class — and it looks like the Team Mopar veteran might have a bright future as a prognosticator. In the vehicle's competition debut Johnson wasted no time in igniting a winning legacy for the Dodge Dart, powering to a history-making event win at the 45th Annual NHRA Gatornationals in Gainesville, Fla.

Johnson also captured his second consecutive NHRA Gatornationals crown and his 22nd career win in 47 final-round appearances en route to become the first Pro Stocker to drive a Dodge Dart into Victory Lane. The win is also the Greenville, Tenn., native's second in a row this season —Johnson raced his Dodge Avenger to a farewell victory at the recent NHRA Phoenix event before christening the Dodge Dart in triumphant style.

"Congratulations to Allen Johnson for taking the new Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar Dodge Dart straight to the winner's circle in its debut to earn the prestigious Gatornationals title," said Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO of Mopar, Chrysler Group's service, parts and customer-care brand. "What a fantastic way to demonstrate the quality of Mopar products and team work. To defend his title, earn consecutive wins and take the early lead in the championship points makes us very excited about the future of the Dodge Dart and Allen's bid for another NHRA Championship amid some strong competition."

In the maiden race for his Dodge Dart, and the first with "Magneti Marelli Quality Auto Parts Offered by Mopar" as his primary sponsor, Johnson qualified No. 4 and recorded his fastest career run with a speed of 214.04 mph. He navigated a nail-biting route to the semifinals, tracking down rookie Jonathan Gray in the first session of eliminations after Gray recorded a near-perfect reaction time. Johnson used a 6.559 second /211.83 mph run to catch Gray (6.593/209.98) just past the 1,000 ft. mark.

Johnson's Dodge Dart veered sharply left in the quarterfinals as he fought the machine down the strip, however, opponent Shane Gray encountered even more trouble on his way down the quarter-mile, and Johnson was able to reel in his ride for a winning 7.414/149.88 pass. Johnson showed that the new Dodge Dart is ready for prime time in the semis, unleashing a 6.569/211.79 to knock off top qualifier Dave Connolly (6.583/211.20). In the money round Johnson demonstrated that the driver is just as important as the car, leaving first with a quicker .017-second reaction time to score a holeshot win over Erica Ender-Stevens, despite a 6.566/211.73 pass to her quicker and faster 6.551/211.96.

"What a great job the Mopar engineers, everybody at Chrysler Group, Dodge and SRT did," said Johnson, the 2012

NHRA Pro Stock champ and 2013 series runner-up. "I just can't say enough. For the last two weeks since the Phoenix win, it's been nonstop. My guys haven't had a day off. It says a tremendous amount about our crew, and the engineering efforts behind it (the Dart).

"Everything to do with the design of the Dart, the engineers took our input and really came up with a great car. To be able to do that (win in its first race) is a huge accomplishment."

After posting his fastest speed ever (214.62) mile per hour during qualifying in the debut of the Mopar/JEGS.com Dodge Dart, defending NHRA Pro Stock series champ and No. 3 starter Jeg Coughlin Jr. bested Rodger Brogdon in the opening round, reaching the finish line first with a 6.550/211.89 paired with a .019 reaction time.

Coughlin's reflexes were even quicker in the quarterfinals, leaving on Vincent Nobile with a .015 reaction time compared to his opponents slower .021. Unfortunately, the 6.591/211.69 pass by Coughlin wasn't enough to overcome Nobile's quicker 6.580/210.60 at the stripe.

The Pro Stock points leader entering the NHRA Gatornationals following two runner-up finishes to start the season, V. Gaines slipped to No. 2 after Gainesville. His 6.571/211.79 in his Dodge Avenger (Gaines will take delivery a new Dodge Dart body shortly) couldn't match the 6.535/212.59 laid down by Enders-Stevens in the quarterfinals. Mopar-powered Dodge driver Matt Hartford drew Connolly in the first-round, where his day ended.

No. 6 qualifier Ron Capps was forced to take out two fellow Mopar-powered Dodge Charger R/T drivers in the first two rounds, sending home Jeff Arend to start Sunday on the strength of a 4.132/308.14 run. In a showdown of Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammates, Capps' Dodge (4.136/307.16) came out on top in the quarterfinals, with No. 3 starter and Mopar Dodge pilot Jack Beckman (5.844/121.34) dealt the loss. Facing Robert Hight with lane choice in the semifinals, Capps saw his hopes for a Gatornationals triumph go up in smoke early, smoking the tires and slowing to a 7.663/89.63 as Hight pulled away to a 4.168/301.20 winning pass.

Seeking his first final-round appearance at the Gatornationals, Matt Hagan's DSR Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car led past the 660-ft. mark but made a sharp move near the finish in his first-round duel with Courtney Force, forcing the 2011 Funny Car champ to reel it in. The result was a losing 4.307/226.92 to his foe's winning 4.102/315.56. Hagan's DSR teammate Tommy Johnson Jr. was defeated by Del Worsham in the opening round (4.157/303.78 to 4.117/308.92), and Dodge Charger R/T pilot Blake Alexander also was sent to the trailer in round one, losing to Bob Tasca III (4.251/296.24 to 4.140/308.14).

Next up for NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series Team Mopar competitors is the NHRA Nationals in Las Vegas, Nev., scheduled for March 28–30.

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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