



Permatex/Follow A Dream Reaches Semifinals in Norwalk



MARSTONS MILLS, Massachusetts - May 24, 2016 - Jay Blake's Permatex/Follow A Dream Top Alcohol Funny Car team continued to strengthen its overall game in this past weekend's NHRA Lucas Oil Racing Series Division 3 meet at Summit Motorsports Park in Norwalk, Ohio.

Driver Phil Burkart, who joined the Follow A Dream team earlier this year, drove the 2015 Chevrolet Camaro to the semifinals of the Cavalcade of Stars presented by Budweiser. Three weeks ago, Burkart took the team to the finals at Virginia Motorsports Park.

"We lost in the semifinals to Johnny Lindberg," team owner Jay Blake said. "We slowed down a little bit and had a 5.63. Still, it was nice to run well. We're learning every run and every lap."

Burkart qualified No. 3 for the eight-car event. He defeated Ray Drew in the first round of competition, but then the team ran into an unusual situation heading into the semi's.

With more than 700 cars racing over the weekend, action was pushed back at times. Unfortunately, several members of the Follow A Dream team had to catch airplanes to get back home. But that didn't stop Blake and Burkart.

Thanks to the brotherly spirit in the Top Alcohol Funny Car ranks, members of both Drew's team and Tony Barbore's team volunteered to help the Follow A Dream team.

"That's what's neat about drag racing," Blake said. "You race a guy one round and he's helping you in the next round. That was pretty cool. It was a nice day. It was neat to be racing and nice to do well."

Sunday was a bittersweet day for Blake. It was the 19th anniversary of the industrial accident that took Blake's vision away.

But in his always-positive, upbeat manner, Blake didn't dwell on memories of his accident. Rather, he made a new friend and new drag racing fan.

"I met a 10-year-old boy that lost his sight," Blake said. "He was there with his dad and stepmother.

"They had seen a piece on me and they were real excited to have Ryan meet me. That was kind of cool because that's what Follow A Dream is all about. We were able to give the kid a shot in the arm and connect with him."

Upon leaving Norwalk Sunday night, Blake gave a speech Monday in front of the TA Truck Service Group in Lodi, Ohio.

From there, it's on to Maple Grove Raceway in Reading, Pennsylvania, for the Lucas Oil Racing Series Division 3 meet on Friday and Saturday before Memorial Day.

For more information on Jay Blake and the Permatex/Follow A Dream team, go to FollowADream.org.