



Permatex/Follow A Dream TA/FC team looks to rebound from disappointing showing at Chicago



MARSTONS Mills, Massachusetts (July 12, 2016 - Jay Blake's Follow A Dream/Permatex Top Alcohol Funny Car team looks to rebound after a disappointing showing this past weekend in suburban Chicago.

One week after winning its first race of the season in a NHRA Lucas Oil Series regional event at Lebanon Valley Dragway in New York, the Follow A Dream team did not have the result it hoped for in the K&N Filters Route 66 NHRA Nationals at Route 66 Raceway in Joliet, Illinois, a Chicago suburb.

For the first time in recent memory, the team failed to qualify for a race, unable to crack the 16 cars that went on to compete in the elimination rounds on Sunday.

"It was a major disappointment," team owner and crew chief Jay Blake said.

While servicing the car for its first qualifying attempt, it was discovered that a rear main bearing in the engine had gone bad, and which had also impacted the crank in the car.

The team swapped motors, but struggles continued, including smoking the tires in the first qualifying run. Then came ignition problems prior to the second round, but the car was able to get down the track with a time of 5.742 seconds at 257.33 mph. That would prove to be the only complete run the team would have for the weekend.

Then, in the third and final qualifying attempt on Saturday, the car once again spun the tires, ending the team's last hope of making the eliminations.

"It's a humbling sport," Blake said. "These cars can be very tricky and difficult. The crew worked their tale off. You just hate when this kind of thing happens."

But Blake isn't letting the Route 66 disappointment linger. He's looking forward to the next race, a Lucas Oil Series regional event July 22-23 at New England Dragway.

Blake's team will go into that race still ranked No. 1 in the Division 1 Eastern Region standings. The next NHRA national event that the Follow A Dream/Permatex team will attend is the legendary Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals in suburban Indianapolis.

And in an ironic twist, even with failing to qualify at Route 66, driver Phil Burkart actually improved in the Lucas Oil Series national point standings, going from ninth place to eighth. Burkart is 203 points behind national TA/FC series leader John Lombardo Jr.

The Follow A Dream/Permatex team has this coming weekend off before resuming next weekend at New England Dragway, but Blake said the team will be very busy in the interim. Not only will the team build a new engine, it will also test prior to next week's race at New England to get the car back on the right track.

"It's the sport, it's what it is, this is not easy," Blake said. "There were 23 of the best cars in the country. We are definitely one of the best cars in the country, we have one of the best teams in the country and we have the best sponsors in the country."

"Bad things happen, but you can't let that stop you. You regroup and try to learn from this experience and move forward and let this work energize you."

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

