



**MARSTONS MILLS, MA** (May 2, 2017) - The Permatex/Follow A Dream Top Alcohol Funny Car team went into this past weekend's NHRA 4-Wide Nationals with high hopes and expectations. It left with disappointment and frustration.

After driver Phil Burkart qualified No. 8 in the national event, he had a strong run in the first round of eliminations (5.610 seconds at 265.33 mph), losing to Kris Hool (5.569 seconds at 261.72 mph). And just like that, the Jay Blake-owned Follow A Dream team's hope of a potential win in the national event was over.

"When you lose in the first round, it stinks," Blake said. "We just couldn't find the right setup for the whole weekend. The conditions were hot and humid, compared to Gainesville (March 16-19), where the air was great and you could make power very easily." "We just couldn't find the right combination to be where we wanted to be."

The team has returned to its Marstons Mills, Mass. Home base and will spend the next three weeks in an attempt to regroup before its next race, a Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series regional meet, on Memorial Day weekend at Maple Grove Raceway in Pennsylvania. "We're going to test on the Thursday prior to Maple Grove," Blake said. "Anthony Terenzio ( tuner) has done some research on our computer and talking to people. We have some things we're going to try."

"We have all the right people and all the right pieces. We just have to find the right tune-up. It's a finicky thing and there's all these different elements you have to make work together to find the right setup, and it can be a fine line.

There's not a ton we have to change. We just have to find it, make it work and make it consistent."

"That's one of the things that's so frustrating, when you perform like we did this weekend. The car ran okay, but we have the potential of running so much better and winning the race. It just wasn't our weekend."

One bit of consolation for Blake was speaking in front of more than 900 students at NASCAR Technical Institute in Mooresville, North Carolina, three days before the start of the 4-Wide Nationals. He also welcomed in 10 local high school students and two teachers into the Permatex/Follow A Dream Chevrolet Camaro's pit area, which the group enjoyed greatly.

But now the focus is solely on Maple Grove and to get things back on track.

"We're hoping we can go and win the race," Blake said. "It's a regional race, an important race and sentimentally, it's a big deal."

"It was at Maple Grove in 1998 that I decided to start Follow A Dream right around the anniversary of my accident (an industrial accident that took Blake's sight a year earlier). There's a lot of personal things that go into that race."

During the next three weeks prior to Maple Grove, Blake will also realize two milestones in his life: one of his daughters is getting married, while the other is graduating from college.

"Those are the big things happening between now and Maple Grove," Blake said proudly.