

## Permatex/Follow A Dream TA/FC team continues strong recent run, reaches semifinals at Richmond



**MARSTONS MILLS, MA** (August 29, 2017) - The Permatex/Follow A Dream Top Alcohol Funny Car team continued its recent strong run, reaching the semifinals of this past weekend's Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series event at Virginia Motorsports Park.

The race was rescheduled from a rained-out event in April.

In its three events prior to Virginia, the Follow A Dream team won races at New Jersey's Atco Dragway and the team's home track, New England Dragway in Epping, New Hampshire, and finished runner-up at Cecil County Raceway in Maryland.

Team owner Jay Blake was hoping for a third win at VMP, but their car suffered unexpected adversity in its first round of eliminations, prompting a change of transmissions.

"We put a complete new long-block in the car prior to Virginia so we'd have a very dependable running motor on the bench for Indianapolis (the upcoming U.S. Nationals this weekend) if we had any issues," Blake said.

"We had one pass to test the track, set up the car, test the new motor we put in and that the fuel system would be what we hoped it would be.

"We ran a 5.66 second pass and it showed it had great potential. Plus, the track was in good shape. But in the first round of eliminations, we had a bye run. The car broke the rear end right as it left the starting line.

"The team thrashed and we serviced the whole car and swapped rear ends and set it up for the next run. We got put in the left lane, which was the less-desirable lane, and basically the car spun the tires.

"We hadn't spun the tires for several races. We never had a real good run on the track at Richmond; there was a bunch of new stuff on it and it just wasn't our day."

With a new trans in place, the team went back on-track and advanced to the semifinals.

However, it could not go any further when the Permatex-sponsored 2016 Chevrolet Camaro spun its tires at the starting line in its semifinal run against eventual event winner Kris Hool.

"It wasn't what we were planning on," Blake said.

Now, the team travels for the biggest race every season on the National Hot Rod Association national event schedule: this weekend's (Aug. 30-Sept. 4) Chevrolet Performance U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway in suburban Indianapolis.

"We were fortunate in a way to get the bugs out of the way at Richmond before we get to Indy," Blake said. "It looks like it was a parts failure. The rear end only had about 15 passes on it. But now it's on to Indy. It's back to business as usual. You've just got to go and race it."

Blake will have two qualifying rounds on Friday and Saturday, while there are two rounds of eliminations on Sunday and the semifinal and final round of eliminations on Monday.

Even with the semifinal loss at VMP, Follow A Dream driver Phil Burkart Jr. remains seventh (402 points) in the Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series' AA/FC national standings, one point out of sixth and 47 points out of fifth.

A strong run at Indianapolis could help Burkart come close to clinching the Lucas Oil East Region championship. He heads to Indy with a commanding 160-point lead over the next closest driver.

The U.S. Nationals have not been the most hospitable host to the FAD team over the years. In more than 15 starts there, the team has only reached the semifinals once.

Blake hopes to break that string of bad luck of early first round and quarterfinal exits this weekend, especially in light of its two recent wins and runner-up finish in its three races prior to VMP.

"Indy's never been a great race for us, but like everything else, you have to put yesterday in the mirror and go forward," Blake said. "We'll go to Indy with what we've learned, hopefully the weather will be good and the track conditions will also be good, and we'll get after it."

Prior to the team's race at VMP, Blake visited and gave an inspiring speech to injured military troops at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, just outside the nation's capital, Washington, D.C.

"That was a great visit there," Blake said.

It was the fifth time Blake has spoken at the nation's preeminent facility for treating soldiers injured in the line of duty.

The Follow A Dream team has been a staunch supporter of our nation's military for more than a decade.

To illustrate that, the rear of the FAD Chevrolet Camaro carries dozens of signatures of military members who've visited with the team over the years.

The car also carries this saying on its rear window: "Free to dream, thanks to our troops."