

## Permatex/Follow A Dream TA/FC team falls short of second straight win by a split-second in divisional race at Cecil County, Maryland

**MARSTONS MILLS, Massachusetts** (August 22, 2018) – In about the blink of an eye, the Permatex/Follow a Dream Top Alcohol Funny Car team came up short of winning its second consecutive race in this past weekend's Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series regional event at Cecil County (Maryland) Dragway.

In the final round of eliminations on Saturday, August 18, Follow A Dream driver Phil Burkart did everything he was supposed to do to win: he was faster (261.07 mph) than opponent Dan Pomponio (256.06 mph), was quicker (5.601 seconds to Pomponio's 5.639) and reached the finish line first.

However, Burkart – one of the best leavers from the starting line in the sport – inadvertently, and in an extremely rare instance, jumped the “go” light on the Christmas tree and was automatically disqualified.

The margin of Burkart's red light faux pas was a mere .002 of a second. That's right, two-thousandths of a second, about the blink of an eye!

“Phil rarely red-lights, but Pomponio is really good at the starting line,” Follow A Dream team owner Jay Blake said. “But we have the faster car and Dan Pomponio knows it and we know it, but sometimes the faster car doesn't always win.”

To add insult to injury, unless Burkart can rally for another win and Pomponio exits in the first round of the final regional race in two weeks, Burkart's red-light will likely mean Pomponio will win the East Region Championship, depriving Burkart and Blake of a second consecutive title.

“It was a huge round because it probably decided the championship,” Blake said. “It was an enormous round, there was a ton riding on it and he (Pomponio) knew it.”

“It really sucks, but that's part of this sport, it's part of what we do. You're racing a guy who's known as a great leaver, Phil did a great job on the tree all weekend and he wants it as bad as anybody.”

“Stuff happens. It stinks, it's terrible but sometimes you get to the starting line and the car shakes, or the tune-up's not right. There's just so many ways to win and lose these things.”

“The driver feels horrible because he did it. It sucks. But, it's what it is.”

The team was hungry to follow up its win two weeks ago at Atco Dragway in New

Jersey, and almost pulled it off.

Burkart was the No. 1 qualifier at Cecil County, just like he was at Atco. He received a first-round bye, won his second-round and then lost so closely to the always formidable Pomponio.

"We've been to the final round the last three races," Blake said. "We've been No. 1 qualifier at all three races and the car has been performing very well, the team has been performing very well."

"So if you look at where we started the year and where we're at now, it's shown great improvement. I'm very proud of what we've done and where we are."

The Follow A Dream team has the next two weekends off before returning to the regional racing battles with an event Sept. 7-9 at the team's "home track," New England Dragway in Epping, New Hampshire.

That will be the final divisional race of the year – and hopefully Blake and Burkart can emerge with the championship.

"We need Pomponio to go out in the first round and we have to probably win the race to win the championship," Blake said. "It's going to be tough, but anything can happen."

"We need a miracle. But miracles do happen sometimes. We're keeping our hopes up."

Following New Hampshire, the team then will embark upon its final two national event appearances of the 2018 season: Sept. 13-16 at Maple Grove Raceway in Reading, Pa., and Oct. 11-14 at zMAX Dragway in Concord, N.C.

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