

Permatex/Follow A Dream TA/FC Team Reaches Quarterfinals of Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals

MARSTONS MILLS, Massachusetts (June 27, 2018)

If there's one song the Permatex/Follow A Dream Top Alcohol Funny Car team doesn't want to hear for a while, it's "Raindrops Keep Fallin' On My Head."

For it was rain – and lots of the wet stuff, indeed – that hampered the team from getting a good baseline or advancing past the quarterfinals of this past weekend's Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals at Summit Racing Motorsports Park in Norwalk, Ohio.

Rain interrupted the weekend numerous times, including seven – count 'em SEVEN times – on Saturday, leaving the Follow A Dream team with just one qualifying attempt before eliminations on Sunday.

"It was brutal," Follow A Dream team owner Jay Blake said. "It's difficult for the whole team. You try to get ready, you're waiting and waiting, but you're just hanging around. Physically, you're not working hard, but mentally it just wipes you out."

"It was a rain-soaked weekend, but NHRA worked real hard to keep things dry and kept things going, but we really had just one qualifying pass."

"We wanted to make a soft, easy run and we did that and the car performed well. We normally get three qualifying runs, but that just wasn't going to happen because of all the rain they had there in Norwalk."

Things got off in a promising note in the first round of

eliminations when Follow A Dream driver Phil Burkart (5.514 seconds at 266.95 mph), who qualified ninth, defeated always-strong Kris Hool (5.691 at 261.57 mph).

“The car performed very well in the first round,” Blake said.

That very stout run by Burkhart offered promise for an even stronger run in Burkhart’s quarterfinal matchup with Sean Bellemeur. Unfortunately, Burkhart uncharacteristically fouled with a rare red light at the starting line, allowing Bellemeur to move on to the semifinals.

Said Blake, “We made some adjustments for the second round for the track conditions and Phil red-lit and the car shook the tires. Either way, we weren’t going to win. That was the end of the weekend.”

Blake, Burkart, tuner Anthony Terenzio and the rest of the team now move on to the Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series regional event at Lebanon Valley, New York, this weekend.

The team has a good overall record at Lebanon Valley, including a win there in 2016.

“We need a good race,” Blake said. “We need to go and win and I believe we can, and that’s what we’re hoping to do. We’ve performed very well there in the past.”

Even though the Follow A Dream team has struggled at times this season, Burkhart is ranked a solid third in the LODRS East Region, just 32 points behind series leader DJ Cox Jr.

A good and strong performance this weekend not only would get the Follow A Dream squad back on-track, it also would go a long way toward Burkhart moving up the points rankings and potentially earn a second straight regional championship by season’s end.

“You’ve just got to go and perform well,” Blake said. “That

helps the time off. We'll work on the car and stuff during the off-month."

"But part of it is the crew gets a well-deserved break. These guys are not a full-time professional group, so the break can be very beneficial."

"Everybody can get a break, catch up on work, have weekends off. They all love doing it, but it's work. They need a good rest."

After the upcoming event at Lebanon Valley, the Follow A Dream team will have a month off from the racing battles before returning to action for another regional event August 3-5 at Atco (New Jersey) Dragway.

JAY BLAKE SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS:

Blake enjoyed two speaking engagements prior to the race at Norwalk.

First was in front of a large crowd at Permatex's Solon, Ohio facility, while the other was at a Quaker Steak and Lube restaurant near Norwalk.

"We did a cruise night there before Norwalk, but things are quiet during the week before Lebanon Valley," Blake said.

Blake does not have any speaking engagements prior to Lebanon Valley, but expects to have several during the month's down-time.

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