

Follow A Dream/Permatex TA/FC team reaches semifinals of JEGS All-Star Race and quarterfinals of JEGS Route 66 NHRA Nationals national event

Follow A Dream – Route 66 Nationals race wrap-up – Tuesday, June 5, 2018

MARSTONS MILLS, Massachusetts (June 5, 2018) – The Follow A Dream/Permatex Top Alcohol Funny Car team had a mixed weekend of success and adversity in this past weekend's racing action at Route 66 Raceway in Joliet, Illinois (outside Chicago).

On the success side, the Jay Blake-owned team reached the semifinals of the prestigious JEGS All-Star Race for Top Alcohol Funny Cars. Driver Phil Burkart qualified sixth in the eight-car field and defeated D.J. Cox Jr. in the first round before losing to Doug Gordon in the semifinal match on Saturday.

Then, in Sunday's eliminations of the NHRA national event, Burkart won in the first round vs. Steve Burck, but lost to Kris Hool in one of the strangest outcomes the Follow A Dream team has ever experienced.

Burkart had a much better reaction time (0.057 seconds to 0.109) than Hool and appeared headed to an easy win when Hool spun the tires early in the run.

However, adversity struck the Follow A Dream squad yet again this season when the motor on their tried-and-true Chevrolet Camaro saw two rods break through the engine at about three-quarters of the way down the 1,320-foot track.

When that happened, automatic safety equipment engaged, deploying the parachutes to quickly slow the car and minimize a small fire that occurred as a result.

At the same time, Hool, seeing Burkart's car was in trouble, got back into the gas and barely passed Burkart just before the finish line to take the win.

While disappointed in the outcome of that run, Blake was still happy at how most of the weekend turned out.

"The car ran great," Blake said. "I really believe we've worked through our issues that we had had previously this season. We serviced the car and went out for that second round run. Fortunately, the fire wasn't that bad and it went out pretty fast."

"The new safety equipment that NHRA has mandated did its job just as it was designed to do. It automatically deployed the parachutes when there's a backfire in the supercharger."

"We have a spare engine and we certainly would have tried to make the next round if we would have won that one."

Despite coming up short for the national event, Blake said there were still gains the team made that it can utilize going forward.

"It was good that the performance of the car was back," Blake said. "We believe we came to it in Pennsylvania (at the Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series regional race two weeks ago) and we were looking to Joliet because we felt we were back on right track."

"When we got to Joliet we were on the right track. It was going well, a parts failure like that is not something that happens normally. It was very frustrating."

The Follow A Dream team will now enjoy nearly three weeks off before it returns to on-track action June 21-24 at the Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals at Summit Racing Equipment Motorsports Park in Norwalk, Ohio.

“We will put another motor in the car and then go to Ohio with a car that we know can win the race,” Blake said.

“We’ve been struggling all year trying to make the race car go fast. We have fixed those issues and now we’re on track to give it hell. I’m feeling very good about the car and the way we’re headed.”

BLAKE’S UPCOMING SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS: Jay Blake will speak at Permatex’s manufacturing facility in Solon, Ohio (Wednesday, June 20) en route to the Norwalk race.

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