

Follow A Dream/Permatex TA/FC team produces big horsepower, but loss of traction ends hopes of Gatornationals win

Follow A Dream Gainesville Gatornationals race wrapup Wednesday, March 21, 2018

MARSTONS MILLS, Massachusetts (March 21, 2018) In its first two races of the 2018 season, the Follow A Dream/Permatex Chevrolet Camaro Top Alcohol Funny Car has shown it has tremendous horsepower and speed.

But unfortunately, for the second time in just over a week both times at Gainesville (Fla.) Raceway the team again suffered an early exit in this past weekend at the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series Amalie Motor Oil Gatornationals.

A little over a week ago, Follow A Dream driver Phil Burkart just barely lost in the quarterfinals of the NHRA Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series regional race at Gainesville to Sean Bellemeur, who would go on to win the event.

One week later during the Gatornationals, Burkart, who qualified seventh, looked for revenge against Bellemeur in the quarterfinals.

But this time Burkart spun the tires while Bellemeur once again went on to victory both in that round and eventually in the overall event.

"We missed the setup and shook the tires again," Follow A Dream team owner Jay Blake said.

There was some consolation for the Follow A Dream camp in

defeat, though. Burkart led all Alcohol Funny Car drivers in the Gatornationals with the top speed of the event, a monstrous 273.39 mph (at 5:52 seconds) effort during their first qualifying run.

Not only was it the top speed of the event, it was also the all-time top speed ever for the Follow A Dream team, giving promise of even greater speeds going forward in the season.

"We're putting out tons of horsepower," Blake said. "All we need to do is find some consistency now."

"You just keep tweaking on it, make some little adjustments, so that's what we'll keep doing."

Blake and the team now return to their New England home base and have nearly a month to look for that consistency ahead of the team's next race, the Virginia Regionals, April 20-22, in Petersburg, Va.

Back at Gainesville, Blake and the Follow A Dream team hosted several teachers and students from speaking engagements the week before at both Universal Technical Institute and Orange Technical College in Orlando.

"We also had a nice kid from Georgia, named Austin", Blake said. "He's blind (like Blake is). We gave him a tour of the car and we went up to the starting line for the first round of eliminations, so that was real cool."

Blake now prepares for one of the events he looks forward to the most each year, the prestigious National Automotive Technology Competition at the Javits Center in New York City.

"It's a big one," Blake said. "Permatex and Follow A Dream have been involved in the National Automotive Technology Competition for a bunch of years now and we really enjoy it every year."

"I'm also the keynote speaker for the kickoff breakfast. There will

be 30 teams from all over the country competing to be the champion. One school will win the whole contest."

"We always look forward to the show and interacting with some of the brightest minds in automotive technology. I can't wait to go back there again in two weeks."

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