

Follow A Dream/Permatex TA/FC team reaches semifinals of Lucas Oil regional event, feels it has turned the corner

MARSTONS MILLS, Massachusetts (May 31, 2018) – The Follow A Dream/Permatex Top Alcohol Funny Car team feels it has turned a corner and is headed in a positive direction after this past weekend's Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series regional event at Maple Grove (Pa.) Raceway.

Driver Phil Burkart qualified the Chevrolet Camaro TA/FC sixth of the seven drivers entered in the field and reached the semifinals before being defeated by eventual event winner Sean Bellemeur.

Yet despite the loss, Follow A Dream owner Jay Blake believes many of the early season struggles the team has endured may finally be gone.

"We tested on Thursday before the event," Blake said. "We've been searching and the whole team has been working extremely hard."

"We came up with some things on Friday and it looked like we maybe rounded the corner and after reaching the semifinals, it does appear as if we've rounded the corner."

"It was a combination of a couple of things, but it looks like we've worked through them. But we have to make some more runs and make sure we're really brewing, but it looks like we're on the right track. I'd say we're cautiously optimistic for this weekend's NHRA national event at Chicago."

Indeed, the Follow A Dream team comes into this weekend's JEGS Route 66 NHRA Nationals at Route 66 Raceway, approximately 50 miles southwest of downtown Chicago, with the hopes of earning two wins.

The first would be capturing its first national event win of the season in a race event that historically attracts some of the best TA/FC drivers and cars in the country.

The second potential win would be in Saturday's race-within-a-race, the JEGS All-Stars, which pits eight of the best Top Alcohol Funny Cars that have qualified for it, including the Follow A Dream squad.

"We're optimistic," Blake said. "It's great to be part of the national event as well as the All-Star race. It is the best cars in the country, so we need to step up and get this thing going real fast."

The Follow A Dream team will have two qualifying runs on Friday for the 16-car national event. It will have a third national event qualifying run on Saturday morning, which will also

serve as the first qualifying run for the Jegs All-Stars.

The next two runs of the Jegs All-Stars the same day will determine the event winner, which Blake is hoping will be the Follow A Dream team.

And final eliminations for the national event will be Sunday.

“No matter what you do in the All-Star race on Saturday, we’ll still be in the eliminations on Sunday for the national event,” Blake said.

Blake and his team have been looking forward to the JEGS All-Stars event for the last several months. Having failed to qualify for last year’s All-Stars race, the team is looking to make up for what it missed last year with a strong performance in this year’s event.

“It’s something we’re very proud of, to have made the Jegs All-Stars,” Blake said. “These are the best cars in the country and it shows how you stack up. It’s a good measuring stick.”

Strong performances in both the national and All-Star events would go a long way towards putting the Follow A Dream team back on track for the rest of the season.

While its early season struggles have been disappointing, there’s still plenty of time for the team to get the ship righted and be able to defend its Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series regional championship from last year, as well as make some significant gains in the NHRA national TA/FC point standings.

“Let’s get through Chicago and we’ll look at it,” Blake laughed. “I try not to get too far ahead of it. We have to go and make sure we run well in Chicago, and then after it, see where we’re at after we’re done.”

BLAKE’S UPCOMING SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS: Blake will have two major speaking engagements this week heading to Chicago.

First, on Tuesday, he’s speaking at Great American Insurance in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Then, on Wednesday, he’s speaking at Illinois Tool Works (ITW), parent company of primary sponsor Permatex, in Glenview, Illinois, a northern suburb of Chicago.

“It’s great, we always enjoy it very much,” Blake said in what has become an annual get-together with the ITW folks. “They’re great people and a lot of fun. We’re also excited about speaking at Great American on Tuesday.”

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