

Permatex/Follow A Dream TA/FC team reaches final round at Dodge NHRA Nationals

MARSTONS MILLS, Massachusetts (September 20, 2018)

Maple Grove Raceway is an extremely special place for Permatex/Follow A Dream owner Jay Blake. That is where he first decided to form Follow A Dream Racing in 1998, after an industrial accident left him totally blind. Jay has seen his dream come to fruition and Follow A Dream has gone on to become not only a successful TA/FC race team, but also an inspirational motivational speaking program.

Blake has another great memory to add to his recollections, Phil Burkart took the Permatex/Follow A Dream Chevrolet Camaro to a runner-up finish in this past weekend's Dodge NHRA Nationals.

Burkart lost to the always tough Sean Bellemeur in the final round. Although Blake wanted to clinch the win, he was thrilled with his team's performance. Especially considering how they bounced back from their first-round loss a week earlier in a Lucas Oil Drag Racing Series regional event at New England Dragway in Epping, New Hampshire (The team's home track).

"It was a great weekend," Blake said. "The car ran well, and the team was at their best. Sean Bellemeur is tough. His car is a rocket ship and he is a great driver."

Burkart qualified sixth in the 12-car Top Alcohol Funny Car field and defeated Marie Ferriolo in the first round, Andy Bohl in the second round and John Lombardo Jr.

in the third round.

In the final round matchup, Bellemeur, of Placentia, California, had a faster reaction time (0.025 to Burkhart's 0.048), a quicker elapsed time (5.489 seconds to 5.745) and a faster mph (268.28 to Burkart's 261.52).

Even though they are disappointed in the loss, Blake and the team took some consolation that their car made it to the finals. After the struggles in New Hampshire, Tuner Anthony Terenzio went looking for more power in the Camaro and he found it.

“We made some adjustments at the beginning of the weekend and they seemed to be good, positive adjustments,” Blake said. “The car responded well and we just kept building on that all weekend.”

Blake and the team are excited to get back down the track, but they'll have to wait for now. The Follow A Dream team has nearly a month off before it wraps up its 2018 racing season at the NHRA Carolina Nationals on Oct. 12-14. This will be the team's final race of the season.

“We're going to go service the car, head down to North Carolina and hopefully win,” Blake said. “As for this season, it's easy to look back and say we could have done things differently, but we didn't know then what we know now. This sport is all about learning and evolving, that's what we have done and what we will continue to do.”

Blake has two upcoming speaking engagements in September. First is at the Massachusetts Council of

Activity Professionals Convention on Cape Cod. Then he will be speaking at the Carroll Center for the Blind in Newton, Massachusetts.

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