

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**STEVE JOHNSON RETURNS TO THE WINNER'S CIRCLE AT ZMAX FINAL**  
*Covid-19 out and Suzuki to the front with big win and performance*



*Ervin "Jock" Allen and Steve Johnson, NGK NTK NHRA Four-Wide Nationals Pro Stock Motorcycle Winner*

BIRMINGHAM, AL. (May 28, 2021) - While posting the quickest elapsed time in history for a Suzuki Pro Stock Motorcycle, Steve Johnson and lead technician Ervin "Jock" Allen returned to the winners circle at the NGK NTK NHRA Four-Wide Nationals at zMAX Dragway on Sunday, May 16th.

While Johnson's 6.729-second pass that got him the win in the finals was the quickest for Suzuki it was also the third quickest elapsed time in NHRA Pro Stock Motorcycle history, a class that many say is one of the most prestigious and competitive in all of motorcycle drag racing.

"We have been working on this new 4-valve Suzuki engine nonstop for over a year," said Johnson from his facility in Birmingham and still very excited after his team won their seventh NHRA Wally (name of the trophy). "After putting the Monster aftermarket 4-valve head on our engine and the guys testing it on the dyno, we knew we had something special. It's incredible to have so much more low end power now. We were really challenged to get it off the start and through a very unique six speed Liberty gearbox."

Traditional drag racing is a two lane event, however, NHRA sets the stage for fans to get the chance to see their favorite riders race four-wide in the spring at zMAX Dragway, the Bellagio of drag racing facilities. The excitement is quadrupled as four Pro Stock motorcycles race at one time at zMAX.

"In qualifying we ran a 6.73 that was good enough for the number 2 position going into race day. The conditions changed on Sunday so we had to really lean on the EBC clutch pack and the 10 inch wide Mickey Thompson rear slick to manage and control the horsepower. Both held up as it turned out the quickest 60-foot, 330-foot and 1/8 mile time of the event. Our 1,000 foot ET was the quickest of the event, but much more to our sense of accomplishment was our 5.60-second ET to the 1,000 foot clock was the quickest of all time. The team of Jock, Chris, Glenn, Jeff and myself had a meeting before the final four would race and we all decided to throw everything we could at it to win. They did such a

great job and it all paid off. We really are feeling good... because we are the only Suzuki team to win this year and we feel like we won in dominating fashion.”

In the post-race press conference, Johnson was asked how winning this race was different from when his team won here at the inaugural zMAX race. “This is the most special race or event of any kind that I have ever been involved in,” said Johnson, while grabbing the trophy and staring into the face of the statue. “That also includes winning the U.S. Nationals (NHRA’s crown jewel the Daytona 500 of drag racing). Here are three reasons why, first of all when we started this year we were in a pandemic and we are so fortunate that the NHRA can put this race on. Second, Ervin “Jock” Allen (29) contracted Covid-19 from his mom who later died. Jock spent 24 days on a ventilator and because of UAB Hospital and the Special Care team Jock got weaned off the vent, strengthened his lungs, learned how to walk again and a year later has almost fully recovered. I closed up the shop and was in the ICU and in his Special Care room every day until his release. And thirdly we took on, the overwhelming commitment of doing our own engine program for the 2021 NHRA Camping World Series season. It’s been the biggest thing, even more so than finding sponsorship, that I have ever done to win an NHRA race.”

“Those three topics are why this win is my absolute most treasured win. But there is one more thing that is kind of corny but very special to me,” continued Johnson. ‘Passing knowledge onto Jock is really cool to me. I think he is the first African American lead technician to win at this level. I’m so happy and proud that the NHRA is so diverse and provides a platform for anyone with heart and work ethic to strive over here. Being from Birmingham we love our diversity, our hospitality and our home cooking... even if it is in our facility cooking up some more power for our next race Norwalk, Ohio.”

Johnson and his team will next head to the Summit Racing Equipment NHRA Nationals at Summit Racing Equipment Motorsports Park in June 24-27. Qualifying will begin with an evening pass at 7 p.m. on Friday and continue with two passes on Saturday at 12:15 and 4:30 p.m. Eliminations are slated to take place Sunday at noon.

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For more information:

Steve Johnson

[info@stevejohnsonracing.com](mailto:info@stevejohnsonracing.com)

205-956-4777

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