

**GEICO pro Stoffer wins
Denver, reclaims champion-
ship points lead**

DENVER (July 24) – After finishing runner-up three times this season, Karen Stoffer is finally Queen of the Mountain.

Stoffer and the GEICO Suzuki knocked out Shawn Gann, Gerald Savoie, Eddie Krawiec and Michael Phillips on the way to victory Sunday at the Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals at Bandimere Speedway.

"Hats off to the GEICO Powersports crew," Stoffer said. "We've been struggling with mechanical problems the last few races. This is a tough mountain to come to and race, and to get where with mechanical problems on top of it is very trying. They did a great job, diagnosed everything, and gave me such a phenomenal bike for Saturday and Sunday. Now here we are!"

It's her first win of the season in four Pro Stock Motorcycle final rounds and her first since the Atlanta race in 2007.

"I was hoping everybody would forget that count but it kept coming up over and over again," Stoffer said. "But you know what? Patience, fortitude. This is a tough sport. There are awesome teams out there. We knew we had a good team, we just had to work through a lot of issues. Patience, strength, tenacity – that's what the GEICO team's about.

"I was really not thinking about how long it's been. Our focus has been on consistency, not the numbers, not the points, not the win lights, but just being consistent. And you know what? We've been able to achieve that, and that's props to the team and the bike they give me."

She broke through in the money round against Phillips. Although at a slight disadvantage at the start, Stoffer's Suzuki had more than enough power to overcome Phillips' bike.

Stoffer crossed the line in 7.283 seconds at 182.58 mph, with Phillips more than a bike's length behind in 7.394 seconds at 182.01 mph.

"We came out this season with our main goal

being consistency and to go as many rounds as available in the race event," Stoffer said. "Normal goals are to turn on win lights and bring home Wallys and all that. But ours was to be consistent and go down the race track as many times as available. If you do that and you do it right, you're going to get the win lights and the Wallys."

The GEICO Suzuki had been suffering from a rash of mechanical breakages over the course of the last few races, and even into Friday's qualifying at Bandimere Speedway. However, crew chief Gary Stoffer and his team pulled together, got the GEICO Suzuki back to the quick, consistent form it showed for much of the first half of the year and qualified No. 2.

Stoffer started race day on fire, cutting a .012 second light in the first round against Gann and sailing on to a 7.244 at 184.27 mph pass. Gann could only muster a 7.391 at 180.50 mph.

Savoie was the next opponent for Stoffer, and he red lighted by -.003. Stoffer still made a 7.271-second lap at 182.01 mph to gain lane choice in the semis against Krawiec.

Opposite past champion Krawiec, Stoffer cut her best light of the day – a .002 – and finished in 7.271 seconds at 182.01 mph to reach the final. Krawiec went across at 7.325 at 180.98 mph after a .049 second reaction time.

"This was for all the GEICO people out there supporting us – and to all the fans here," Stoffer said. "They came by and said, 'What happened on Friday?' They were giving us so many supporting comments and so many high-fives to get it going on Saturday, and it really helped."

In the process of her victory, Stoffer recaptured the points lead. She is now ahead of Krawiec and can solidify her spot in the season ending Countdown to the Championship play-offs as early as next week.

"I get the double whammy here," she said. "We were able to take home the Wally and also get in front of the points again. And I think we're actually in control of our own destiny running Eddie Krawiec."

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