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## **Semifinal Finish for Pedregon Racing's Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat at Charlotte's NHRA Four-Wide Nationals**

- Veteran Funny Car driver Cruz Pedregon qualified No. 6 and was the top Mopar Dodge//SRT performer at the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Four-Wide Nationals with a semifinal finish at zMAX Dragway
- Reigning Funny Car world champion Matt Hagan battled from No.11 qualifying position to win first elimination round quad aboard his blue and white Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat
- DSR's Ron Capps earned No. 3 position on Funny Car eliminations ladder with solid Q1 and Q2 bonus points-earning qualifying runs aboard his chrome blue Pennzoil-schemed Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat
- Top Fuel pilot Leah Pruett qualified third with her DSR Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster but saw early opening run issues shorten her day

May 16, 2021, Concord, North Carolina -

After a two-year hiatus, the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World Drag Racing Series' Four-Wide Nationals returned to zMax Dragway with Funny Car driver Cruz Pedregon closing out the weekend as the top performer for Mopar and Dodge//SRT brands. The veteran driver wheeled his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to a semifinal finish from the No. 6 qualifying position he earned for Sunday's elimination rounds.

While the four-wide format hadn't been run at the Charlotte-area track since 2019, just a month had passed since the Las Vegas Four-Wide Nationals had yielded promising results for the Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) team with Matt Hagan's runner-up performance and Ron Capps semifinal finish. Pedregon, for his part was looking to build and capitalize on his team's steady improvement through the first three races of the 2021 season.

The No. 6 seed's best qualifying run of 3.957 seconds at 322.81 mph put Pedregon Racing in the company of fellow Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat drivers Capps and Hagan for a first round quad elimination along with No. 14 qualifier Cory Lee. Pedregon deep-staged his HEMI®-powered ride and cut a perfect 0.000-second light, and while he wasn't able to beat the round winner Hagan, his 4.032/323.74 run was enough to give him a holeshot finish to eliminate Capps and advance to the next round.

Pedregon once again crossed the stripe second, this time to No. 2 seed Alexis DeJoria, and defeated Hagan and No. 7 Bob Tasca III to find himself in a position to battle for the event win in the final against DeJoria, No. 2 seed J.R. Todd and No. 1 qualifier John Force. While this time he finished ahead of DeJoria, Pedregon ended the day as a satisfied semifinalist after he was unable to catch runner-up finisher J.R. Todd and event winner John Force.

Hagan and his crew had their work cut out for them heading into eliminations after struggles in qualifying had the blue and white Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat starting from the No. 11 position. Never one to be deterred by a challenge, the reigning Funny Car world champion, came out fighting with a stout 3.936-second elapsed time pass to win the first elimination quad. That set up a second round rematch with Pedregon and brought DeJoria and Tasca into the mix. While Hagan was quickest out of the gate, he saw his early lead erased by a mechanical setback and could only watch as Pedregon and DeJoria advanced past him and to the final quad.

For his part as the top qualified HEMI®-powered Dodge, Capps was looking to repeat his 2017 winning performance at this four-wide event from the No. 3 seeded position after earning that spot with the second quickest runs in both Saturday sessions and collecting four bonus points for his efforts. Aboard his chrome blue Pennzoil Synthetics NAPA

AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat, Capps drove a solid 3.991 seconds/273.88 mph run with a 0.067-second reaction time, but despite Pedregon's slower run, his opponent's perfect reaction time put Capps third across the finish and ended his day prematurely.

In Top Fuel action, Leah Pruett was feeling pretty confident about her chances to perform well in eliminations after taking her white and blue Mopar Dodge//SRT Top Fuel dragster to the No. 3 position in the opening qualifying session with a 3.718 second elapsed time run. That performance put her in the top half of the field for the 44th time in 50 opportunities, including the past seven events. In the opening Top Fuel quad against Antron Brown, Shawn Langdon, and Krista Baldwin, Pruett had a respectable start but was forced to abandon the run after issues surfaced early.

The NHRA's 70th anniversary season continues with the next event set to take place this coming weekend, May 21-23, near Houston, Texas, at the Mopar Express Lane Spring Nationals presented by Pennzoil, the first of five national events for which Mopar and Dodge//SRT share title sponsorship duties this season.

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES**

### **FUNNY CAR:**

#### **Matt Hagan, DSR Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat**

**(No. 11 Qualifier – 4.058 seconds at 260.71 mph)**

**Round 1:** (0.095-second reaction time, 3.936 seconds at 325.06 mph) wins round ahead of No. 6 Cruz Pedregon (0.000/4.032/323.74) and defeats No. 3 Ron Capps (0.067/3.991/273.88) and No. 14 Cory Lee (0.104/4.392/251.58)

**Round 2:** (0.055/4.036/307.51) defeats No. 7 Bob Tasca III but loses to No. 6 Cruz Pedregon (0.091/4.559/189.84) and round winner No. 2 Alexis DeJoria (0.090/3.929/320.13)

"There's a million things that can go wrong with a fuel Funny Car, and we had something bite us this weekend. My crew chief Dickie Venables and Mike Knudsen did a great job recovering after qualifying. We struggled in qualifying as far as getting a handle on the race track so we went into Sunday morning not really knowing what to expect, and they did an amazing job of reeling the clutch back in and not only getting the car to make a full pull down the race track, but we ran a really good 3.93. I felt like we were on pace to go back up there and do the same thing on that last lap but we had a parts failure and it cost us the run. Unfortunately, that's part of racing; that's what happens when you push things to the limit, it happens sometimes. That is the humble part of drag racing."

#### **Ron Capps, DSR Pennzoil NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat**

**(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.943 seconds at 325.30 mph – Four bonus points for second-quickest run in Q2 and Q3 sessions)**

**Round 1:** (0.067-second reaction time, 3.991 seconds at 273.88 mph) defeats No. 14 Cory Lee (0.104/4.392/251.58) but loses to No. 6 Cruz Pedregon (0.000/4.032/323.74) and round winner No. 11 Matt Hagan (0.095/3.936/325.06)

"NHRA drag racing is definitely a 'right place at the right time' kind of sport. We had such a great car on Saturday. It was quick and consistent. My crew chiefs 'Guido' (Dean Antonelli) and John Medlen, and this entire Pennzoil/NAPA AutoCare team put a great race car underneath me time and time again. The car was running really well today in round one; the incremental numbers were great and then it just put a couple of cylinders out and spun the tires downtrack, and it hadn't done that all weekend. You couple that with the fact that one of my opponents had a perfect light (0.0 reaction time) or what we call a 'bad red light,' and I've had some of those myself, and when you're on the good side of it, that's what happens, and today he was on the good side of it and beat us to the finish line. But, a win is coming soon. We're getting these 'close call' races out of the way early in the season. You can't call it bad luck because we're running really well. I'm excited about these next few races for sure, but we'll have to wait until next year to get another four-wide trophy."

#### **Cruz Pedregon, Pedregon Racing Snap-On Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat**

**(No. 6 Qualifier – 3.957 seconds at 322.81 mph)**

**Round 1:** (0.000-second reaction time, 4.032 seconds at 323.74 mph) finishes second to No. 11 Matt Hagan (0.095/3.936/325.06) and defeats No. 3 Ron Capps (0.067/3.991/273.88) and No. 14 Cory Lee (0.104/4.392/251.58)

**Round 2:** (0.094/3.971/319.52) finishes second to No. 2 Alexis DeJoria (0.090/3.929/320.13) and defeats No. 11 Matt

Hagan (0.055/4.036/307.51) and No. 7 Bob Tasca III (0.091/4.559/189.84)

**Round 3:** (0.121/3.934/326.87) defeats No. 2 Alexis DeJoria (0.064/4.057/309.49) but loses to runner-up No. 2 J.R. Todd (0.063/3.934/326.87) and event winner John Force (0.065/3.916/328.78)

"I'm very happy with our results today. A semifinal finish at the Four-Wide Nationals is great. What I am especially most proud of is the way that our Dodge Charger Hellcat ran in the finals. We ran right with the (event) winner John Force, and J.R. (Todd) has been running well and we outran him actually. So, to have those results after a little bit of a slow start, I think we're now getting to where we should be. I always said it was going to be four or five races before we would really start to come together and here we are at the fourth race, so I feel good about that. I feel good about Houston. I'm ready to go to the Mopar Express Lane Spring Nationals. I'm feeling good and I feel like I drove well and we'll now get ready for Houston."

#### **TOP FUEL:**

**Leah Pruett, DSR Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster**

**(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.718 seconds at 324.59 mph – One bonus point for third-quickest run of the session)**

**Round 1:** (0.095-second reaction time, 4.310 seconds at 193.32 mph) loses to No. 11 Shawn Langdon (0.059/3.947/245.67), No. 14 Krista Baldwin (0.117/3.855/319.52) and round winner No. 6 Antron Brown (0.063/3.804/315.56)

"We were definitely ready to have a very long Sunday, and it never ceases to amaze us the number of ways we can find to not have a dream day, and not win. It doesn't matter how many accumulated years of drag racing experience you have, there will always be something new to arise. For us, it was having a clutch disc that wore at the step, and that caused a whole chain reaction of events that ultimately led to the car being shut off. We've spent the entire day since then deciphering the set of circumstances that caused that to occur. But, the upside of it is we're always adapting and coming up with new ways to solve issues, and as you do that, you find new ways to become more consistent in those details. It's early in the season, our momentum is still carrying even though the win lights may not show it. We have a couple of days to turn this around. We'll be testing on Monday, picking away at what we found here and we'll get ready for an incredible Houston outing with our Pennzoil and Mopar family."

#### **NHRA Championship Points Standings:**

*Following the NGK NTK NHRA Four-Wide Nationals at zMAX Dragway*

#### **FUNNY CAR** (season wins in parentheses)

1. Bob Tasca III – 360 (2)
2. J.R. Todd – 343 (1)
3. John Force – 329 (1)
- 4. Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 259**
- 5. Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 235**
6. Alexis DeJoria – 228
7. Tim Wilkerson – 218
- 8. Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 216**
9. Robert Hight – 215
10. Blake Alexander – 150

#### **TOP FUEL** (season wins in parentheses)

1. Steve Torrance – 408 (2)
2. Antron Brown – 332 (1)
3. Brittany Force – 274
4. Shawn Langdon – 248
5. Josh Hart – 245 (1)
6. Billy Torrence – 215
7. Doug Kalitta – 197
8. Justin Ashley – 194
- 9. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 176**
10. Clay Millican – 164

## **Mopar**

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARts) offers exceptional service, parts and customer-care. Born in 1937 as the name of a line of antifreeze products, the Mopar brand has evolved over more than 80 years to represent both complete vehicle care and authentic performance for owners and enthusiasts worldwide.

Mopar made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era with performance parts to enhance speed and handling for both on-road and racing use. Later, the brand expanded to include technical service and customer support. Today, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Complete information on the Mopar brand is available at [www.mopar.com](http://www.mopar.com). Mopar is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider Stellantis. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit [www.stellantis.com](http://www.stellantis.com).

## **Dodge//SRT**

For more than 100 years, the Dodge brand has carried on the spirit of brothers John and Horace Dodge. Their influence continues today as Dodge shifts into high gear with muscle cars and SUVs that deliver unrivaled performance in each of the segments where they compete.

2021 marks the year that Dodge is distilled into a pure performance brand, offering Hellcat-powered, 700-plus-horsepower SRT versions of every model across the lineup. For the 2021 model year, Dodge delivers the drag-strip dominating 807-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Super Stock, the new 797-horsepower Dodge Charger SRT Redeye, the most powerful and fastest mass-produced sedan in the world, and the new 710-horsepower Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat, the most powerful SUV ever. Combined, these three muscle cars make Dodge the industry's most powerful brand, offering more horsepower than any other American brand across its entire lineup.

In 2020, Dodge was named the "#1 Brand in Initial Quality," making it the first domestic brand ever to rank No. 1 in the J.D. Power Initial Quality Study (IQS). The Dodge brand also ranked No. 1 in the J.D. Power APEAL Study (mass market). These results are historic because it marks the first time a domestic brand has earned top spots in both J.D. Power studies in the same year.

Dodge is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider Stellantis. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit [www.stellantis.com](http://www.stellantis.com).

## **DodgeGarage: Digital Hub for Drag Racing News**

Fans can follow all the NHRA's action this season at DodgeGarage, the one-stop portal for Dodge//SRT and Mopar drag-racing news. The site includes daily updates and access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads, and merchandise. For more information, visit [www.dodgegarage.com](http://www.dodgegarage.com).

## **@DodgeMoparMotorsports on Instagram**

The @DodgeMoparMotorsports Instagram channel continues to share content capturing Dodge//SRT Mopar drivers on the track. Fans can see action from the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series and NHRA Sportsman grassroots racers competing in classes such as Factory Stock Showdown, Stock and Super Stock, as well as additional motorsports series.

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