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Mopar Dodge//SRT HEMI®-powered Entries Qualify in Top-Half of Ladder at Mopar Express Lane NHRA SpringNationals in Houston

- Intermittent rain disrupted and shortened qualifying at Mopar Express Lane NHRA SpringNationals Presented by Pennzoil at Houston Raceway Park
- DSR's Leah Pruett qualifies No. 2 with her Pennzoil Top Fuel dragster and No. 10 behind the wheel of her new Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak as she goes for two wins
- Four-time Houston winner Ron Capps qualifies No. 3 aboard Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat
- Cruz Pedregon qualifies his Snap-On Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car No. 4 for Sunday's eliminations rounds
- Matt Hagan's DSR Pennzoil Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Funny Car was third quickest in Q1 but is seeded No. 6 after rain washed out a chance at a second pass

May 22, 2021, Baytown, Texas - While intermittent rain interrupted and then eventually shortened National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World Drag Racing Series qualifying sessions at the Mopar Express Lane SpringNationals Presented by Pennzoil on Saturday, it didn't put a damper on expectations for the Mopar Dodge//SRT contingent heading into the elimination rounds at Houston Raceway Park.

Due to forecasted rain, Friday sessions were cancelled and the NHRA moved up the Saturday schedule to begin earlier in the day in the hopes of getting in both qualifying sessions for all categories. While there were pauses in action due to sporadic sprinkles, they were able to complete the first qualifying sessions. Then the first few pairs of Funny Cars locked in times during the second session before the skies darkened and unrelenting rain eliminated the possibility of any more runs. The remaining Funny Car entries had their seeded positions determined by Q1 times, while Top Fuel and Factory Stock Showdown elimination ladders were set by their sole session.

That ended up being good news for the Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat entries of Ron Capps and Cruz Pedregon who were among the handful that were able to get in a second Funny Car pass; Both had issues with their initial outings, but each put in solid second runs to position themselves in the top half of the eliminations ladder.

Capps kept his streak of top-five qualifying positions alive this season with a 3.941 second pass at 315.42 mph aboard his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Funny Car to move up into the No. 3 spot on the eliminations ladder after hazing the tires in the first session. The four-time winner (2006, 2007, 2015 and 2017) and two-time runner-up (2012, 2020) at Houston will be looking to go rounds on Sunday by starting with lane choice over No. 14 Paul Lee.

The Pedregon Racing Snap-on® Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat was looking strong in its first run of the day as it crossed the finish line in 4.003 seconds at 319.98 mph, a time that was subsequently disqualified due to a brush with the wall just prior to crossing the stripe. Pedregon came back quickly with a solid second pass at 3.943 sec./ 323.12 mph to put himself in the No. 4 position on the ladder for race day. A three-time winner at Houston Raceway Park, including his very first career Funny Car event win in 1992, Pedregon is hoping to turn on win lights as he begins his day against No. 13 Terry Haddock.

DSR driver Matt Hagan, who also took home his first ever Funny Car Wally trophy from this event in 2010, earned his spot in the top half of the eliminations ladder with his only qualifying run at 3.961 sec./ 324.12 mph. That pass was third quickest of the Q1 session and rewarded him a bonus point. Hagan's Pennzoil Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

Redeye ended up No. 6 overall and paired with No. 11 Chad Green for the opening round.

While the Top Fuel class only got one session, DSR's Leah Pruett made sure that was all she needed. She drove her Pennzoil Top Fuel dragster to the No. 2 position with a 3.733-second elapsed time run at 312.86 MPH to collect two bonus points for second-quickest run of the session. She'll face off against No. 13 Justin Ashley in the first round of eliminations as she looks to repeat her 2017 winning performance.

Pruett will have two chances to drive to the winner's circle this weekend as she returns behind the wheel of her 2021 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak for the Factory Stock Showdown (FSS) in Sportsman category for the first time since the 2021 season opener. This is the first time FSS will run a full event at Houston as last year's runs were a carryover from the St. Louis finals that had been rained out.

Pruett took her DSR- prepared Mopar Drag Pak for a 7.959-second drive at 174.73 mph, putting her tenth on the timing sheets and in the lane next to No.7 Arthur Kohn.

Teammate Mark Pawuk qualified No. 13 with a 8.050 E.T. at 172.21 mph aboard his Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak to set up his first round match-up against No. 4 seed David Barton.

The Mopar Express Lane SpringNationals Presented by Pennzoil will be streamed online via NHRA.TV and television coverage will be broadcast on FS1 on Sunday, May 22 with a qualifying show from noon-1 p.m. ET and eliminations from 6-9 p.m. ET.

ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES

FUNNY CAR:

Matt Hagan, DSR Pennzoil Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye

(No. 6 Qualifier – 3.961 seconds at 324.12 mph) Bonus point for third quickest Q1 run

Qualifying 1: 3.961 sec./ 324.12 mph

Qualifying 2: (Did not run due to rain)

"We had a pretty good qualifying as we went out there and threw down a nice opening lap that put us third and then we were the next pair to go and the rain started dumping. It's unfortunate that we didn't get to make another run when others did, but that's racing and the weather, you can't change that. We're in the field and we have good data to work off of for Sunday. Let's go racing and put this car in the winner's circle for Pennzoil."

Ron Capps, DSR NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.941 seconds at 315.42 mph)

Qualifying 1: 7.844 sec./ 89.36 mph Hazed the tires and shut off

Qualifying 2: 3.941 sec./ 315.42 mph

"There are so many moving parts just to get up to the starting line for a run. Seth Angel, everyone at Houston Raceway Park, the NHRA, I feel so bad for them. They do so much for our sport, and then it rains all week. I feel terrible. Fantastic job by Josh (Peterson) and everyone at NHRA by moving the session up to get at least one full round in. We all tried to get the word out via social media to our fans and many at the track said they saw our posts on social media.

"The first run, the car shook pretty good, but not super hard. It shook for a long time and so I kind of let it go. With 16 cars on the property, there was no need to pedal it and risk something bad happening. (Crew chiefs) Guido (Dean Antonelli), John Medlen and I, we all got together and they made a great call to go back up there first pair out, and it just started to quiver like it did the run before, and just as I was thinking I might need to pedal, it cleared up and launched me to the back of that Charger. A great run by the NAPA guys, and we'll definitely sleep a lot better tonight after making a good run in Q2. Hopefully, we're in for a long day tomorrow."

Cruz Pedregon, Pedregon Racing Snap-on® Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.943 seconds at 323.12 mph)

Qualifying 1: Disqualified timed run due to contact with wall (4.003 sec./ 319.98 mph)

Qualifying 2: 3.943 sec. / 323.12 mph

“The second run was good and definitely reaffirmed that we are headed in the right direction. The track has character and is bumpy and I think that definitely affected our first run (resulting in brush with wall). I really love this track. It's where I had my first Funny Car national event win in 1992, so it'd be great to get back to the winner's circle here. It's been a good track for me and we're happy with that last qualifying run. It was still on the conservative side as JC (Crew Chief John Collins) likes to make sure he goes down the track and plays the consistency card which is fine by me. I'm sure there's a little left in it so we'll get after it tomorrow in our Snap-On Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat. We're ready.”

TOP FUEL:

Leah Pruett, DSR Pennzoil Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster

(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.733 seconds at 312.86 mph)

Qualifying 1: 3.733 seconds/ 312.86 mph – Two bonus points for second quickest run of Q1

“Our first hit out of the box was great. Instead of like before where we had so many gremlins attacking our Mopar/Dodge/Pennzoil team. It's been random mechanical errors and we focused on getting rid of those. We want great shiny fast ET slips and we got that. Was it perfect, no, perfect would have qualified us No. 1. We did have a cylinder go out and if we were to have gotten another run that's what we would have worked on. We're very happy with that No. 2 position and we're looking forward to a great race day. We can't thank the NHRA and Houston Raceway Park staff enough for providing us with a great track surface that was properly prepped and safe.”

FACTORY STOCK SHOOTOUT:

Leah Pruett, Mopar Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak –

(No. 10 Qualifier – 7.959 seconds at 174.73 mph)

Qualifying 1: 7.959 sec. / 174.73 mph

“I feel most comfortable and at home when I'm pulling double-duty and able to drive both of my Mopars on the same day. We did make a lot of changes from the last time the new Dodge Challenger Drag Pak competed at Gainesville. We weren't really able to tell how the car would react without that first run. We had a converter swap, some suspension changes and we wanted to go out there and be solidly in the field and pick away at it. We're currently No. 10 and we will adjust and we look forward to getting back on the track”

Mark Pawuk, Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak– Factory Stock Shootout

(No. 13 Qualifier – 8.050 seconds at 172.21 mph)

Qualifying 1: 8.050 sec./ 172.21 mph

“Seeing the forecast earlier in the week, I never would have thought we'd get even one qualifying session in this weekend, but we did. Unfortunately, we didn't perform as well as we had hoped, but we are qualified. We're glad we got one run in before more weather came in and eliminated the last qualifying session. Tomorrow brings a new day with new conditions, and a better looking forecast. Hopefully we can step it up on race day, and have a good showing in our Empaco Equipment Dodge Drag Pak.”

DodgeGarage: Digital Hub for Drag Racing News

Fans can follow all the NHRA 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.

@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.

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.

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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.

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