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Capps Drives Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to Runner-Up Finish at Mopar Express Lane NHRA SpringNationals Presented by Pennzoil

- Runner-up result for Ron Capps and the Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car at rain-delayed Mopar Express Lane NHRA SpringNationals Presented by Pennzoil on Monday
- Defending NHRA Funny Car world champ Matt Hagan takes his DSR Pennzoil HEMI-powered machine to quarterfinal appearance at Houston Raceway Park
- Pedregon Racing's Funny Car program continues to improve with quarterfinal appearance for Cruz Pedregon aboard his Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car
- Leah Pruett makes gains aboard the new 2021 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak with quarterfinal appearance in Factory Stock Showdown eliminations

May 24, 2021, Baytown, Texas - While weather delays put a damper on much of the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World Drag Racing Series weekend at Houston Raceway Park, a runner-up finish by Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Funny Car pilot Ron Capps provided a little ray of sunshine as the top finishing Mopar Dodge//SRT entry at the Mopar Express Lane Spring Nationals Presented by Pennzoil.

A rain-shortened qualifying and then the postponement of Sunday's elimination rounds to Monday didn't deter Capps from getting the most out of his HEMI®-powered Hellcat throughout the weekend; He was one of the few competitors to get in two qualifying passes on Saturday to put his Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat No. 3 on the eliminations ladder and then advanced through eliminations to his 127th career final round appearance.

The four-time winner (2006, 2007, 2015 and 2017) and two-time runner-up (2012, 2020) at Houston launched his day with a stout 3.894-second pass against Paul Lee before turning win-lights on against DSR teammate Matt Hagan. After defeating Tim Wilkerson, Capps advanced to face Robert Hight in his first final round of the season. Capps came out strong on the start but, with just a bit too much power for the track, hopes for his first win of the year went up in tire smoke as he could only watch as Hight continued down the track for the win. The runner-up result moves Capps up one spot into a shared fourth place standing with Hight in the Funny Car points tally after five races this season thus far.

Defending Funny Car world champion, Matt Hagan started the weekend off by taking his DSR Pennzoil Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to the third quickest run of the first qualifying session. Unfortunately, the Mopar driver didn't get a second shot at it after rain disrupted the second qualifying session and he had to settle for a No. 6 spot on the eliminations ladder. With an opening round win over Chad Green, Hagan advanced to the quarterfinals to face his stablemate Capps in a good drag race that saw him post a respectable 3.964-second effort against Capps's 3.929-second winning pass.

No. 4 qualifier Cruz Pedregon also took his Snap-On Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to the quarterfinals, following a win over No. 13 seed Terry Haddock, to face the eventual event winner Hight. While Pedregon would have liked to fight for a fourth Wally trophy at the event where he had also scored his first career win in 1992, he and his crew were pleased with their progression through the first five races of the season and the 3.991-second run they posted next to Hight's 3.913-second run.

Prior to Sunday's rain delay, No. 2 qualifier Leah Pruett and her DSR Pennzoil dragster did take to the track for the opening round of Top Fuel competition and rocketed off the start with an impressive 0.020-second reaction time against No. 13 seed Justin Ashley. Unfortunately, a mechanical glitch early in the run hampered her forward motion

and despite efforts to peddle her way down the track, Pruett was unable to advance.

Pruett did get to race on Monday, only this time it was in Factory Stock Showdown (FSS) aboard her 2021 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak where she posted another impressive 0.029-second reaction time against Arthur Kohn to power her way to a 7.893-second pass at 174.96 mph and win in the opening round. In the quarterfinals against David Janac, Pruett's Mopar Drag Pak had a good starting line advantage, but part way through the run Pruett felt a change in the car's mechanics and opted to coast to the finish in order to regroup and come back stronger for the next FSS outing at Norwalk in June.

Teammate Mark Pawuk, who had just one qualifying attempt on Saturday that put the Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak 13th on the timing sheets, was hoping for a stronger outing in his opening round against David Barton. While he had a good launch on the start, Pawuk also felt his racecar battling with gremlins, opting to take his foot off the power and let his opponent take the win so as to reset his focus on the next opportunity to make gains in FSS competition.

The NHRA's 70th anniversary season continues with the next event, the TascaParts.com NHRA New England Nationals, set to take place June 11-13 at the New England Dragway near Epping, New Hampshire.

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

Round 1: (0.082-second reaction time, 3.946-seconds at 312.78 mph) defeats No. 11 Chad Green (0.125/3.969/320.28)

Round 2: (0.077/3.964/317.87) loss to No. 3 Ron Capps (0.073/3.929/325.30)

"It was a wild weekend here at Houston. I've been here since Wednesday and we only got three runs in. I'm glad we were able to get the race in here at the Pennzoil Proving Grounds, but we'd have liked to gone more rounds for our friends at Pennzoil at their home track. It was a challenging weekend for us and all the teams. We're on the right track to turn on more win lights. These Funny Cars are a handful to run. We had a boomer in E1 and then it was a mad dash and a quick turnaround for E2. I was really happy with the guys and how they put everything together safely and properly, and we made the turnaround in 35-40 minutes. The guys are meshing really well and we're going to do big things in the future."

Ron Capps, DSR NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

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

Round 1: (0.093-second reaction time, 3.894-seconds at 327.51 mph) defeats No. 14 Paul Lee (0.086/3.956/322.88)

Round 2: (0.073/3.929/325.30) defeats No. 6 Matt Hagan (0.077/3.964/317.87)

Round 3: (0.080/3.915/326.24) defeats No. 7 Tim Wilkerson (0.066/3.999/322.04)

Round 4: (0.057/4.684/179.25) loss to No. 5 Robert Hight (0.046/3.916/327.19)

"I feel so bad for the Angel family and everyone who put the effort into putting this race on in the backyard of Pennzoil. We really wanted to show off and it was close. The car is much better than the results we've shown and it's just been weird stuff. I knew the momentum was coming. We have a great race car and we're going to have a lot of long days, and it's just really fun right now with the NAPA team. We lost lane choice in the finals but not by much. We had been in the left lane all day. Guido (Dean Antonelli) liked that left lane and we felt comfortable over there. It's a little bumpier in the right lane and we weren't sure we could push it. We knew Robert Hight's team would go up there and go 3.90 or .91, which is what they ended up running. Overall, a great weekend."

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

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

Round 1: (0.106-second reaction time, 3.971-seconds at 318.24 mph) defeats No. 13 Terry Haddock (0.142/6.045/120.13)

Round 2: (0.082/3.991/319.14) loss to No. 5 Robert Hight (0.059/3.913/327.43)

"We qualified fourth and we've started from top-half of the field at every event so far this year, so we're still rolling strong and that feels great. We want to win every race of course, but we're in every race and our Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat is consistent. We had a little hiccup there on the first run, but we recovered well and made a great 3.94 (seconds) at 323 (mph). I'm pleased that the team's working hard. We're going to keep chipping away. I talked to (Crew Chief) JC (John Collins) he found the potential for some ignition issues, and he was looking to run 91 or 92 there in that round, which would have put us right there. Overall I'm pleased. We're continuing to go rounds and we're moving up in the points. We're getting better and we're going to continue to work on getting better."

TOP FUEL:

Leah Pruett, DSR Pennzoil Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster

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

Round 1: (0.020-second reaction time, 12.703 seconds at 60.13 mph) loss to No. 13 Justin Ashley (0.039/3.770/317.79)

"Frustration is the word of the day. Unfortunately for us, we were not able to advance out of the first round. Our issues weren't caused by tune-up error, nor a driver error. We had a line and fitting that no longer wanted to be married to each other and they disconnected themselves, draining our CO2 bottle after the burnout. So, unfortunately, we did not have the proper pressure to set the clutch where it needed to be and when I hit the gas to leave, we had extra arms in play in the clutch that applied way more power than we had wanted. This is the ultimate proving grounds but I don't think anybody would be able to make it down the track when you apply all 12,000-horsepower at the same time at the hit. Silver lining in this for us is we still have so much confidence in this team – the driver, the crew chief, the car when it's not having a bad day. We're hoping to minimize these terrible days. Thankfully we are still early in the season. Are we impressed with where we sit in the standings? No, but we look forward to getting back after it in Epping. Our heads are not down low; we're holding them high."

FACTORY STOCK SHOOTOUT:

Leah Pruett, Mopar Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak

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

Round 1: (0.029-second reaction time, 7.893-seconds at 174.96 mph) defeats No. 7 Arthur Kohn (0.082/7.950/172.81)

Round 2: (0.047/8.042/163.77) loss to No. 15 David Janac (0.100/ 7.863/171.62)

"Overall I have to say the end result of this Factory Stock Showdown weekend here at Houston, given our limited amount of track time, is extremely impressive. We made a lot changes to this Drag Pak since Gainesville and we were unable to test on the track before Houston and for us to have only one qualifying session with a soft tune-up and get in the show and win a round shows we're heading in the right direction. We picked it a bit more for E1 and run a real solid .89 and we were on track to win in round two and we had a mechanical issues and I felt it and stuck with it as long as I could and so I decided to save on parts and ensure we can make a giant leap in Norwalk. Kevin (Helms) and Terry (Snyder) are doing a great job. We're on the right path and we'll keep accelerating it."

Mark Pawuk, Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak

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

Round 1: (0.076-second reaction, 8.708-seconds at 157.80 mph) loss to No. 4 David Barton (0.054/7.896/175.96)

"After three pretty long days of bad weather and rain unfortunately the Empaco Equipment Dodge Drag Pak for DSR didn't perform very well first round. We've got some sort of gremlin in the car and we'll find out. We're looking forward to getting to Nowalk, my home track, possibly with our new '21 Dodge Drag Pak and being more consistent and getting to the winner's circle soon."

NHRA Championship Points Standings:

Following the Mopar Express Lane Spring Nationals at Houston Raceway Park

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Bob Tasca III – 438 (2)

2. J.R. Todd – 396 (1)
3. John Force – 361
4. Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 331
4. Robert Hight – 331
6. **Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 314**
7. Tim Wilkerson – 291
8. Alexis DeJoria – 288
9. **Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 271**
10. Blake Alexander – 182

TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)

1. Steve Torrance – 529 (3)
2. Antron Brown – 389 (1)
3. Shawn Langdon – 321
4. Brittany Force – 308
5. Doug Kalitta – 229
6. Josh Hart – 278 (1)
7. Billy Torrence – 267
8. Justin Ashley – 245
9. Clay Millican – 238
10. **Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 215**

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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