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## Runner-Up Finishes for HEMI®-powered DSR pilots Hagan and Pruett at the NHRA Sonoma Nationals

- Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) pilot Matt Hagan drove No. 3 qualified Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Funny Car to a runner-up finish at the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Sonoma Nationals
- DSR's Top Fuel driver Leah Pruett raced her Okuma Dodge//SRT dragster from the sixth-seeded position on the eliminations ladder to the final round and narrowly missed turning on the win lights by just two-thousandths of a second
- No. 1 qualifier Ron Capps powered his DSR Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to semifinal appearance at NHRA Sonoma Nationals

July 25, 2021, Sonoma, California - Exciting final round showdowns for two Mopar Dodge//SRT Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) pilots, Matt Hagan in Funny Car and Leah Pruett in Top Fuel, at the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Sonoma Nationals resulted in runner-up finishes for both drivers with margins of victory in each race of just two-thousandths of a second.

Coming off his first event win of the 2021 NHRA Camping World series season last weekend at Denver's Dodge//SRT Mile-High Nationals Presented by Pennzoil, Hagan began his race day from the No. 3 position on the Funny Car eliminations ladder and battled through a competitive field to advance to his second consecutive Sonoma Nationals final round appearance. Hagan drove his Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye to wins against Jeff Diehl and Blake Alexander to advance to the semifinal round for a rematch of the Denver final versus Alexis DeJoria. Hagan powered his way to the win over DeJoria to send his Mopar machine to his second straight final round, a third this season and the 68th of his career.

The final round showcased a meeting between two three-time Funny Car NHRA world champions with Hagan going toe-to-toe with Robert Hight for the Sonoma trophy. Hagan stepped on the throttle first and held the lead to the halfway mark before Hight was able to overtake and turn on the win lights just 0.0026 seconds ahead of him. The runner-up finish, Hagan's second this season and 31st of his career, helped move him up to second place in the Funny Car points standings and within two round wins of reaching the current point leader.

DSR teammate Ron Capps, a four-time winner at Sonoma, began the day from the top rung of the Funny Car eliminations ladder for the 28th time in his career. Capps earned his third pole position in nine races with the quickest runs of Q1 and Q2, extending his streak of qualifying in the top-five at every event this season. For the opening round, the DSR Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat driver lined up against No. 16 qualifier and rookie Tony Jurado and drove to a 3.924-second win. In his quarterfinal matchup with Paul Lee, Capps grabbed an early lead and wheeled his way to a 3.965-second run and another round win to advance to a semifinal battle against No. 4 seed Hight.

While Capps hit the throttle first and gave it a good solid effort by posting a 3.979-second elapsed time run, it wasn't quite enough to catch Hight after he took over the lead by the 60-foot marker. With the result, Capps and his team's consistent performance has seen them advance to the semifinals or better at four out of the last five events, putting him fifth in the Funny Car standings.

For Cruz Pedregon, who is seeking a second win this season, his No. 15 qualifying position wasn't indicative of the progress he felt his team has been making this season or even through the weekend with the Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car. He just never got a nice clean run in before lining up against his first round opponent, No. 2 seed DeJoria. The Cruz Pedregon Racing machine had a good launch with its driver's 0.057-second reaction time to DeJoria's 0.115-second start but Pedregon's ride lost a cylinder early in the run, which hampered

any hopes on advancing further.

In Top Fuel action at the Sonoma dragstrip, Pruett qualified her DSR Okuma Dodge//SRT dragster sixth for an opening round pairing with No. 7 seed Justin Ashley. Pruett was quicker off the start and never looked back with a 3.739-second run at 327.51 mph run to defeat her opponent's 3.758/323.04 pass and move on to battle Brittany Force in the quarterfinals for their first match-up since 2018.

Force had a slight starting advantage for the quarterfinal battle but when mid-track traction issues affected them both, it was Pruett who pedaled it and recovered quickly to cross the finish line first and earn a bye-run. In that solo semifinal run the Dodge//SRT dragster recorded its best pass of the weekend with a 3.726 sec./325.53 mph to see Pruett advance to her 17th career Top Fuel final round appearance to face the category's points leader and five-time event winner this season, Steve Torrence.

The Sonoma raceway fans were treated to an exciting side-by-side final showdown that saw Pruett with the quicker start and a solid 3.768-second pass at 323.04 mph that was just two-thousands of a second (0.0027 seconds) behind Torrence's 3.757/327.98 at the finish line.

The runner-up finish is Pruett's first of the season and the ninth of her Top Fuel career. With the result, she moves into fifth place in the standings with four national events remaining before points reset for the NHRA's Countdown to the Championship, the seven-race playoff series that begins Sept. 9 at the Mopar Express Lane NHRA Nationals Presented By Pennzoil in Reading, Pennsylvania, and concludes with the NHRA finals in November in Pomona, California.

The NHRA now heads to Auto Club Raceway in Pomona, California, for the final event of the three-race western swing that will wrap up three consecutive weeks of racing next weekend.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES**

##### **FUNNY CAR:**

##### **Matt Hagan, DSR Pennzoil Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye**

*(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.909 seconds at 328.94 mph)*

**Round 1:** (0.081-second reaction time, 3.971 seconds at 327.19 mph) defeats No. 14 Jeff Diehl (0.126/6.085/116.47)

**Round 2:** (0.077/3.960/322.42) defeats Blake Alexander

**Round 3:** (0.076/3.967/324.36) defeats No. 2 Alexis DeJoria (0.135/4.001/309.70)

**Round 4:** (0.036/3.991/324.44) loss to No. 4 Robert Hight (0.054.3.971/322.50)

"Our guys are doing just a phenomenal job. This is really the most confident I've felt with a group of guys in a long time. They're killing it. They're making super quick turns in between rounds. We've got some really good juju going on. The group is clicking so well, (Crew Chief) Dickie (Venables) is making great calls out there. I see us clicking off a few more wins real soon. This Hellcat is running great. We're qualifying well and going to the finals. It's there. The confidence is there. The team is there. My lights are good. Everything we need to win races and a championship are right there with this package. I'm very excited and pumped up."

"I think that Pomona is going to be super hot and it could end up being a drivers race with pedaling the car. We have a great car and team and I'm driving well and it should be fun under the lights for qualifying. Pomona has been great to us. We've had some great memories at that track winning races and a championship. It has a special place in my heart and we're going to go out and finish the swing strong."

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

*(No. 1 Qualifier – 3.897 seconds at 328.78 mph)*

**Round 1:** (0.105-second reaction time, 3.924 seconds at 324.75 mph) defeats No. 16 Tony Jurado (0.138/4.362/217.74)

**Round 2:** (0.102/3.965/321.35) defeats No. 9 Paul Lee (0.108/4.043/309.20)

**Round 3:** (0.086/3.979/322.73) loss to No. 4 Robert Hight (0.090/3.943/323.35)

"Man, what a great weekend. Obviously, we wanted to leave with a Wally (trophy), but we qualified No. 1 again and

had a quick and competitive race car every single round and you really can't ask for more. In the semifinals there, we were on a good run but it just wore a little more clutch than it should have against (Robert) Hight and that was that, it was a close race.

"I've said this before but I'll say it again, we're a win waiting to happen and the Wallys are coming; I'm not worried about that. Close races all day. (Crew Chiefs) 'Guido' (Dean Antonelli) and John Medlen made fantastic calls. It was great to have all of our NAPA fans and have our big annual NAPA wine dinner Saturday night, it was just really an overall great weekend. I can't wait to get to Pomona after this fantastic weekend. We're headed southbound and down to Pomona and it should be fun."

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

*(No. 15 Qualifier – 4.139 seconds at 229.35 mph)*

**Round 1:** (0.057-second reaction time, 4.119 seconds at 303.37 mph) loss to No. 2 Alexis DeJoria (0.115/3.942/322.73)

"The race weekend was challenging. We had what was the beginning of two really spectacular runs in Q1 and Q2 with the Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat but unfortunately the track didn't cooperate and we spun the tires down the track in those two (qualifying) passes. We dropped a cylinder in the first round which was out of the blue. We had no warning that it was going to do that. We'll regroup. It's not the weekend we wanted but overall we're encouraged by the runs I was starting to make. Those runs were actually better than some of the runs that my team made last year which would have put us in the mid-3.80s (second passes), so the potential is there.

"We're going to go to Pomona now and it's going to be a home game for us. I love Pomona and always have but it's going to be unusual to race there in late July (as a result of rescheduling due to pandemic restrictions) with the heat but we'll be ready for it. Our setup, our guys, our team loves the hotter conditions so we're looking forward to that event. Once we get on a roll, we'll feel like we'll be a lot better and more consistent. We're still tweaking it a little bit and looking forward to it."

#### **TOP FUEL:**

##### **Leah Pruett, DSR Pennzoil Okuma Dodge/SRT Dragster**

*(No. 6 Qualifier – 3.749 seconds at 323.97 mph)*

**Round 1:** (0.069-second reaction time, 3.739 seconds at 327.51 mph) defeats No. 7 Justin Ashley (0.083/3.758/323.04)

**Round 2:** (0.101/3.958/288.64) defeats No. 1 Brittany Force (0.082/4.359/181.18)

**Round 3:** (0.092/3.726/325.53) wins on a BYE run

**Round 4:** (0.106/3.768/323.04) loss to No. 2 Steve Torrence (0.115/3.757/327.98)

"I think the most impressive thing about this weekend is our progression from last weekend at Denver. These Top Fuel cars don't necessarily have a full reset button but that's what we did as a team this weekend. We dug deep and found some issues and ultimately we had great progress this weekend. To have such a consistent car from qualifying into eliminations and to put down what we needed to in the semifinals to get lane choice was great to see. We have a very conversational car that listens to us right now. The team is thriving. We didn't have the start to the season we wanted but this is a marathon of a year and this is the momentum we've been searching for. For Don (Schumacher) to give us the patience and resources to do what we needed to get here has allowed us to open possibilities and that's what Okuma does. It's great to win rounds and get to the finals. It was a very close race."

"Pomona is going to be very challenging for all of us running the (rescheduled) Winternationals in July. I take it back to when I'd run the nostalgia series there and it was in the triple digits out and it will be similar to that this year. For us to have momentum rolling into Southern California is exactly what we need to finish up the western swing. We have new life with this team and to have another fun, new livery is perfect, and to see friends and family and former racers will be great."

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

*Following the NHRA Sonoma Nationals at Sonoma Raceway*

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

1. Bob Tasca III – 676 (2)
2. **Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 655 (1)**
3. Robert Hight – 636 (2)
4. John Force – 624 (2)
5. **Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 613**
6. J.R. Todd – 584 (1)
7. Alexis DeJoria – 577
8. Tim Wilkerson – 521
9. **Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 481 (1)**
10. Terry Haddock – 306

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

1. Steve Torrance – 978 (6)
2. Antron Brown – 629 (1)
3. Brittany Force – 564
4. Shawn Langdon – 460
5. **Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 457**
6. Billy Torrence – 448 (1)
7. Mike Salinas – 432
8. Doug Kalitta – 420
9. Justin Ashley – 370
10. Clay Millican – 351

**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](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.

**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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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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