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Championship Battle Persists Between DSR Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Cars in Qualifying at Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil

- Defending Funny Car world champion Matt Hagan retakes the championship lead after qualifying No. 4 for the Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil by driving his Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to the quickest run in the final qualifying session
- Ron Capps qualified his Pennzoil Synthetics/NAPA AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat in the top-half of the eliminations ladder and trails Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammate Hagan by two points heading into race day
- Cruz Pedregon qualified his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat No. 7 for eliminations at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway while he looks to improve on his current fifth place position in the Funny Car championship title fight
- Leah Pruett qualified both her Direct Connection dragster and Direct Connection Mopar Drag Pak for her final double-duty weekend racing in both Top Fuel and Factory Stock Showdown categories
- Special "Direct Connection" graphics on Hagan and Pruett's respective Dodge//SRT race cars provide a sneak-peek at one of two new performance initiatives set to be announced November 8 at Dodge.com.

October 30, 2021, Las Vegas, Nevada - Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car drivers Matt Hagan and Ron Capps continued to battle back and forth for the lead in the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) "Countdown to the Championship" through qualifying at the Dodge//SRT Nationals Presented by Pennzoil at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, the sixth of seven playoff events to determine who'll earn the coveted world championship title.

While Capps drove his HEMI®-powered Pennzoil Synthetics NAPA Auto Parts machine into the weekend leading his DSR teammate by one point and then added another two bonus points to his tally by posting the second quickest run in the second qualifying session, Hagan retook the championship points lead after qualifying No. 4 by driving his Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to a 3.905-seconds/ 321.65 mph pass to post the quickest run in the final qualifying session. The defending Funny Car champion will begin his elimination battle against No. 13-seed Chad Green as he works to take home a third consecutive Wally trophy from Dodge//SRT Nationals.

Cruz Pedregon earned the No. 7 spot on the Funny Car ladder with a solid final qualifying effort of 3.918 seconds at 325.69 mph aboard his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat, the fourth quickest pass of Q2, while looking to improve on his current fifth place position in the championship standings. The Cruz Pedregon Racing HEMI-powered machine will have lane choice over No. 10 seed Tony Jurado for his first round pairing.

Capps, a five-time winner at the Las Vegas venue, ended up with the eighth quickest qualifying run to secure his place on the eliminations ladder against No. 9 seed Tim Wilkerson for Sunday's opening round, while trailing Hagan in the Funny Car standings by just two points.

DSR pilot Leah Pruett qualified both her Direct Connection dragster and Direct Connection Mopar Drag Pak for eliminations in her final double-duty weekend racing in both Top Fuel and Factory Stock Showdown categories.

The special "Direct Connection" graphics on both Hagan and Pruett's respective Dodge//SRT race cars provide a sneak-peek at one of two new performance initiatives set to be announced November 8 at Dodge.com.

In Top Fuel action, Pruett will line up her Direct Connection Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster next to DSR teammate

Antron Brown for the opening round of eliminations after qualifying ninth with her final run of 3.769 seconds at 314.61 mph.

The final Constant Aviation Factory Stock Showdown (FSS) event of the season will have Pruet launch her 2021 Direct Connection Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak from the No. 4 position against No. 13-seed Ryan Priddy on the strength of her final qualifying run at 7.963 seconds/173.21 mph. After four years of competing in both categories, Sunday's Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals will be the 2018 Factory Stock Showdown champion's last opportunity to attempt to double-up on trophy hardware aboard DSR Dodge race cars.

Pruett's FSS teammate Mark Pawuk qualified his DSR-prepared 2021 Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak No. 5 with a 7.970-second run at 174.39 mph in the second session to start his race day against No. 12 John Cerbone.

David Davies II had his best run of 8.039 seconds at 172.47 mph in Q2 as well to put his 2021 D H Davies Racing Mopar Drag Pak in the No. 14 spot on the FSS eliminations ladder and pair him up with No. 3 qualifier Jason Dietsch for the opening round of the Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals.

Television coverage of Top Fuel and Funny Car eliminations at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, the sixth of seven "Countdown to the Championship" playoff events, including LIVE coverage of the final round of the Dodge//SRT Nationals Presented by Pennzoil, will air on FS1 on Sunday, Oct. 31, 5-8 p.m. (ET.)

ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES

FUNNY CAR:

Matt Hagan, DSR Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye

(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.905 seconds at 321.65 mph)

Qualifying 1: 3.931 seconds at 322.34 mph

Qualifying 2: 4.897 seconds at 160.10 mph

Qualifying 3: 3.905 seconds at 321.65 mph (3 bonus points for quickest run of Q3)

"Finished strong in qualifying with running low of Q3 and retaking the points lead. This Direct Connection Dodge is running great and we have a good opportunity to go some rounds tomorrow, and hopefully, put some more points between us and the rest of the field and pull down another trophy for DSR. This track is always good to us, We've been to the final the last four years in a row. I'm excited to be out here. The fans have been out in full force all weekend, and I'm glad we were able to put on a great show for them. Made a good run today and a good run yesterday, and we'll get ready for race day and see what we can do."

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

(No. 8 Qualifier – 3.926 seconds at 324.51 mph)

Qualifying 1: 3.973 seconds at 304.60 mph

Qualifying 2: 3.926 seconds at 324.51 mph (2 bonus points for second quickest run)

Qualifying 3: 5.957 seconds at 125.10 mph (hazed the tires)

"That last session surely mixed things up. You never want to race a Tim Wilkerson and early is really tough. We were going up there to try and improve and go after that No. 1 spot and you can't be upset about that. That's what I love about Guido (Dean Antonelli) and (John) Medlen and this Pennzoil Synthetics NAPA AutoCare team. We were going to try and take those three points. It is what it is and everybody in that field has a chance of winning tomorrow. We'll do the same thing we've really done all season long and that's just race with that NAPA Know How. It will be warmer racing during the day and it will be interesting. It should be a fun day. This is exciting with the Pennzoil blue chrome car for the last time this season."

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

(No. 7 Qualifier –3.918 seconds at 325.69 mph)

Qualifying 1: 8.401 seconds at 87.07 mph

Qualifying 2: 3.959 seconds at 321.65 mph

Qualifying 3: 3.918 seconds at 325.69 mph

"We stumbled right off the trailer when we dropped a cylinder right out of the blocks. (Crew Chief) John Collins and the Snap-on Tools team did a good job of making some good adjustments in the heat of the day and we went 3.95-seconds, which was fourth in that session.

Then we came back and improved with a 3.91 second run at 325 mph, so a lot of the good progress was made. It was cooler and a really good conditions, but we'll take it. That's a good spot, and we'll just continue to take one round at a time and keep chipping away at it and see how we come out."

TOP FUEL:

Leah Pruett, DSR Direct Connection Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster

(No. 9 Qualifier – 3.769 seconds at 314.61 mph)

Qualifying 1: 3.843 seconds at 310.55 mph

Qualifying 2: 4.050 seconds at 228.34 mph

Qualifying 3: 3.769 seconds at 314.61 mph

"In Top Fuel we are connected to our DSR teammate, Antron Brown, and that will be a fierce match-up. We had a couple issues of our own and we had our strongest pass in our final qualifying attempt with that 3.76. We have eight cylinders in that HEMI engine and each round it's picked one it's not happy with. Tomorrow is part two. We're through qualifying and now we have race day. Just like the two parts to Direct Connection to our November 8 announcement. We're focused on scaring everyone with the potential this team has. You don't win very often on Halloween, so I'd really like to take this one home. This is one of my hometown races and we're ready to go some rounds."

FACTORY STOCK SHOOTOUT:

Leah Pruett, 2021 Direct Connection Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak

(No. 4 Qualifier – 7.963 seconds at 173.21 mph)

Qualifying 1: 8.026 seconds at 168.53 mph

Qualifying 2: 9.531 seconds at 165.84 mph

Qualifying 3: 7.963 seconds at 173.21 mph

"It's been a treacherous, spooky weekend in the Factory Stock Showdown in our Direct Connection Mopar Drag Pak. We had another phantom cylinder bit us yesterday on Q1 and we put up a smoke show on Q2 with minimal problems. We had a transmission issue that was minor, but it caused quite a bit of smoke. We are picking away at this Drag Pak tune-up and then, boom, our 7.96 in Q3 lands us in the No. 3 spot and all our tricks are right so we can get the treats tomorrow with an early win light with E1 at 8:30 Sunday morning."

Mark Pawuk, Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak

(No. 5 Qualifier – 7.970 seconds at 174.39 mph)

Qualifying 1: 8.028 seconds at 173.23 mph

Qualifying 2: 7.970 seconds at 174.39 mph

Qualifying 3: 8.010 seconds at 176.40 mph

"We made some nice progress in the last couple races. We ran really good this morning on the Q2 hit. I think we didn't realize how good the track was for Q3, but we made consistent runs all weekend and the last few races. I'm very pleased with the performance of the car. We've got it figured out. I'm looking forward to a great day for the Empaco Equipment Dodge Challenger for DSR. We'll see what happens, but the Cowboy has to do his job."

David Davies, D H Davies Racing Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak

(No. 14 Qualifier – 8.039 seconds at 172.47 mph)

Qualifying 1: No Time (Foul)

Qualifying 2: 8.039 seconds at 172.47 mph

Qualifying 3: 8.071 seconds at 173.18 mph

"I feel good about tomorrow. We overcame a little driver/technical malfunction early and made a couple of clean qualifying passes. We didn't quite have the horsepower we needed to pull through, but now that we've got some data, we're going to put the screws to it at the last event of the season, and we're looking to go some rounds

tomorrow. We've got the car and the team to do it, and the team once again proved why they're the best at what they do when they hustled to get Leah (Pruett's) and my Drag Paks turned around quickly with engine swaps on both cars."

NHRA Championship Points Standings:

Following qualifying at the Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

- 1. Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,527 (3/1-Tommy Johnson Jr.)**
- 2. Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,525 (2)**
3. J.R. Todd – 2,447 (1)
4. John Force – 2,430 (3)
- 5. Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,422 (1)**
6. Bob Tasca III – 2,377 (2)
7. Robert Hight – 2,372 (2)
8. Alexis DeJoria – 2,360 (1)
9. Tim Wilkerson – 2,282 (1)
10. Blake Alexander – 2,184

TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)

1. Steve Torrance – 2,614 (9)
2. Brittany Force – 2,549 (1)
3. Justin Ashley – 2,466 (2)
4. Mike Salinas – 2,462 (1)
5. Billy Torrence – 2,391 (2)
- 6. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 2,323 (1)**
7. Clay Millican – 2,302
8. Antron Brown – 2,285 (1)
9. Shawn Langdon – 2,260
10. Doug Kalitta – 2,211

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.

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.

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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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