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Three Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Cars to Battle for World Championship Title at NHRA Season Finale

- National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) "Countdown to the Championship" playoff series concludes this weekend with three Dodge Charger SRT Hellcats headed for a dramatic final showdown to determine the winner of the Funny Car World Championship at Auto Club Raceway in Pomona, California
- With a second world championship title within sight, Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) pilot Ron Capps drives his HEMI®-powered machine into the Auto Club NHRA Finals with a two- and three-round advantage, respectively, over teammate Matt Hagan and fellow Dodge Funny Car driver Cruz Pedregon
- With his Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat second in points heading into the finale, Hagan relishes the challenge and opportunity to battle for a fourth Funny Car world championship in his final event with the DSR team
- Fresh off his second win of the season that put him back in the championship mix, Pedregon ranks third in the Funny Car standings, with 187 points available in the racing weekend
- DSR driver Leah Pruett is focused on repeating her drive to the winner's circle at Pomona aboard the Direct Connection Top Fuel dragster; her aim is to secure a top-five finish and close out the 2021 NHRA season on a positive note

November 12, 2021, Pomona, California - The dramatic final showdown of the 2021 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World Drag Racing Series season lines up this weekend at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona, with the spotlight shining on three Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Cars battling for the World Championship crown.

Fresh off his runner-up finish at the Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals in Las Vegas, Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) pilot Ron Capps, a 27-year veteran seeking his second World Championship, drives his HEMI®-powered Funny Car into the Auto Club NHRA Finals with the class lead over teammate Matt Hagan (58 points) and fellow Dodge Funny Car driver Cruz Pedregon (83 points).

Capps first parked his NAPA AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat atop the leaderboard in August at the rescheduled Pomona Winternationals event with one of his two victories this season in the ultra-competitive class that has seen 10 different event winners. Capps wheeled his way to the semifinals or beyond at 11 of 19 events this season. Bolstered by three runner-up performances, four No. 1-qualifier honors and 35 round wins, the veteran racer jostled with Hagan for the lead in the last six of seven playoff events. When the final win light turns on Sunday, Capps will assuredly be in the top five for a 15th season.

"We've qualified well throughout the year and have been consistently strong all season and now here we are, running for a championship," says Capps, who takes nothing for granted following four runner-up season finishes in 1998, 2000, 2005 and 2012 before securing his first championship in 2016. "(Crew chiefs Dean) 'Guido' (Antonelli) and (John) Medlen and our NAPA AutoCare team, we came together quickly like a duck to water at the beginning of the season and it just felt like a natural fit. They've gotten to know me and our last race in Vegas was a perfect example of how well we all work together because as much pressure as there was on race day, especially with all of the other top Countdown cars going out early, they really knew how to loosen me up and keep me in the right frame of mind. They've certainly helped me and my driving throughout the year. The big key for us this weekend is just to continue what we've been doing."

The season finale features a unique format that increases the points payout to 1.5, with a maximum of 187 points up for grabs for the event. While there are myriad of scenarios, with 30 points awarded for each round win, Hagan needs

to go at least two rounds further than Capps to have a chance at the season title while Pedregon needs to win three rounds more than Capps to claim the big trophy.

Three-time and reigning World Champion Hagan stages his Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat for the final "Countdown to the Championship" playoff event ready for the battle to retain his crown after his team earned four wins, three runner-up finishes, three top-qualifier awards and 32 round wins this year.

"We're heading into Pomona fighting for a championship and I've been on both sides of this battle," says Hagan, who has vied for the Funny Car crown as either leader or challenger heading into the season finale seven times, winning three (2011, 2014 and 2020). "My first championship I just had to show up and go two rounds to be crowned a champion, similar to what Ron (Capps) has to do this year. Last year we were going into the last race two rounds ahead and this year we're going in two rounds behind so it's nothing new for us. I think we have to be super aggressive rolling into qualifying and get some valuable points. The game plan is just really run hard, run smart and be aggressive. We've got nothing to lose. This is Ron's to lose, honestly, and ours to win."

Hagan relishes being in contention for his fourth Funny Car title, particularly after missing two events (recovering from illness) and a pair of uncharacteristic consecutive first-round exits at the last two playoff events. Hagan and his Mopar Dodge//SRT crew are motivated by the opportunity to rebound from those challenges and make an aggressive final sprint for the Wally and championship trophies in his final event with DSR.

"We've had two bad races in a row in the Countdown and that's been a big hit," says Hagan. "It's unfortunate but we've just got to bounce back. We want to show what we can do here. I'm going in there with the attitude that we're going to kick everybody's teeth in and put in our mouthpiece and get back in the fight. I want to win. I'm very passionate about what I do. I want to leave DSR with a fourth championship. We're all competitors. I'm very aggressive about it. (Crew Chief) Dickie (Venables) is going to be aggressive. I'm coming in there full steam ahead. I'm pumped up. I'm ready to go and fired up about it. I want to go race and that's what we're going to do."

Pedregon, the final contender in the three-way Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat battle for the 2021 Funny Car title, is driving into the season finale straight from the winner's circle at the Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals in Las Vegas. The Cruz Pedregon Racing owner and driver found himself back in the title fight after the team earned their second Wally trophy and fourth final round appearance of the season, in addition to a No. 1-qualifier position and 30 round wins.

"To be in this position is really great but I really try not to get caught up in the points possibilities because I want to enjoy this," says Pedregon, who is vying for a third world title (1992 and 2008) and looking to finish among the top three for a ninth time in three decades of Funny Car racing. "With points-and-a-half in play, we're not even guaranteed to finish in the top three. It's pretty open-ended but after winning (the Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals in Las Vegas) we're back in it. We're going to come out swinging at Pomona and see who is the last man standing. Just to be in the conversation for a change really is a victory for me."

Competing among the top contenders in the Top Fuel category all season long, DSR pilot Pruett may have fallen out of the title hunt recently but that won't stop her from pursuing a second win at Pomona's Fairplex facility this year and closing out the season with her fifth consecutive top-five finish in the standings.

"For those not inside the nucleus of the championship hunt, this final race really reveals what kind of warrior you are -- you're either one that gives up in the last bit of the marathon or the one that charges to the end with surprising spirit," says Pruett, who aims to take her Direct Connection themed dragster out on a positive note. "I know this is a fighting team that is pushing and striking every which way we can to the final round of the final season of our final race with DSR. That is who we are and how we will finish out this season in the Direct Connection Top Fuel Dragster.

"There are some years I think we deserved to finish higher and just fell short at the end," adds Pruett. "This weekend, having our eyes on the No. 5 finisher spot would be a direct reflection of our performance overall. There is no blaming the Countdown or made-up excuses. We have not been the highest performing team this season but we have been the most relentless. A top-5 finish for the fifth consecutive year would be a good ending to an intensely grateful run with DSR."

The Auto Club NHRA Finals will air on FS1 on Sunday, Nov. 14, with qualifying coverage scheduled from 2-4 p.m. ET, then immediately followed by the eliminations telecast featuring live coverage of the final rounds from 4-7 p.m. ET

to close out the 2021 NHRA Camping World Series season.

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.

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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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