

Capps Puts Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car on Top Again with Impressive String at NHRA Summernationals

- Ron Capps earns second-consecutive No. 1 for first time in career with NHRA Summernationals qualifying performance, 20th of career
- Tally now at 12 consecutive sub-4 second passes for Dodge Charger pilot Capps
- Capps' pole at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park is eighth No. 1 for Mopar in first 10 events of season
- Matt Hagan No. 2 qualifier for second race in a row in Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T
- Mopar Performance Dodge Dart pilot Erica Enders and Mopar-powered Dodge Dart Pro Stock driver Allen Johnson qualify in best positions since Houston event earlier this season
- Enders to square off with Mopar/Elite Motorsports teammate Jeg Coughlin Jr. and his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" JEGS.com Dodge Dart in first round
- Mopar Makes Presence Felt at EnglishtownHistoric Englishtown Mopar Note

June 11, 2016, Englishtown, New Jersey - Qualifying is complete and the field is set for final eliminations at the 47th Annual NHRA Summernationals, and as was the case last week in Epping, Ron Capps and his Mopar Dodge Charger R/T are at the top of the pack. Capps, competing under the Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) umbrella that campaigns four hard-charging Mopar-powered Funny Cars, ran a best time of 3.870 seconds and will race John Hale in the first round of eliminations.

"You have to be careful when you get a little too confident, but this has been great," said Capps, who has now made 12 straight passes in the 3-second zone – a record for the Funny Car class. "I love the horse I get to ride right now. (Crew Chief Rahn) Tobler's done a great job. He's so focused and he's having such a good time."

In all, a whopping 10 Mopar-powered racecars made the NHRA Summernationals field, including all four of the DSR Mopar Dodge Chargers, Dodge Funny Car campaigners Blake Alexander and Hale, and four Mopar Dodge Dart Pro Stockers.

Notably, in the first 10 events of the 2016 season of NHRA's Mello Yello Drag Racing Series, a Mopar Funny Car has been the top performer in qualifying eight times.

The first round of qualifying was where Capps made his best move so far this weekend at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park. Tobler tuned the powerful HEMI® to that 3.870-second pass at 318.62 mph – the sixth quickest elapsed time in 50 years of NHRA Funny Car history. The team followed up with a consistent 3.878/321.04 in the second round on Friday and finished qualifying with a 3.943/316.08. In all, Capps collected a total of eight bonus points as one of the top three quickest Funny Cars in each session.

"That last pass was our 26th run in a row down the track under power. So the consistency I always talk about, that's proof in the pudding right there," said Capps. "That will turn on a crew chief more than anything, having the consistency and going down the track run after run."

"The first lap we made on Friday was an eye-opener – not just for everybody else, but for me as a driver – 'cause it set me back in the trunk again. We tried to get ready for race day today, and it did slow down a bit, but it was hot. It's funny, they were disgusted in my pit area with those two runs today because they weren't the quickest of each session. And I love that right now."

Capps' meeting with Hale will be a repeat of the first round in Gainesville earlier this year. The DSR Mopar Dodge wheeled by 47-time national event winner Capps advanced to the final round that day.

Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T driver Matt Hagan was again very quick in the field, qualifying his HEMI-powered steed in the No. 2 spot for the second consecutive race. Two-time Funny Car world champion Hagan has been either No. 1 or No. 2 in five of the first 10 events of the 2016 season of NHRA's Mello Yello Drag Racing Series.

Hagan's Englishtown journey included picking up two bonus points in the second session with a blistering 3.901 at 326.71 mph that was his quickest in qualifying. He also recorded passes of 3.978/302.69 and 3.981/314.83, with his only run outside of the 3-second zone recorded as a 4.022/310.34. Hagan will race Jim Campbell in round one on Sunday, a driver he has yet to go toe-to-toe with this season.

"Anytime you get qualified in the top half of the field and get lane choice, you're setting yourself up for a good race day," said Hagan. "But to have the success we've had over the last few races in qualifying, that just shows what we're capable of. We're looking forward to a good race day."

No. 5 seed Tommy Johnson Jr. drove the DSR Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger to a clean 3.932 at 322.88 mph in the second session that would stand as his best pass in qualifying and bring in a bonus point. In the first session, Johnson Jr. struck the tires and slowed, but for the third round he was 4.083/257.58 and went on to end qualifying on a strong 3.949/318.02. The 12-time Funny Car winner will set up for a first-round meeting with Cruz Pedregon. Johnson Jr. last raced Pedregon in the first round in Topeka, where he advanced on his challenger.

DSR driver Beckman was a little more challenged in qualifying on the Englishtown racetrack than his teammates as his crew worked hard to find the right tune-up for their Mopar-fueled Infinite Hero Dodge. The car that Beckman is driving in Englishtown was pulled from the trailer for the first time just a week ago in Epping following a damaging explosion that sent their more familiar chassis back to the fabricator's shop for repair.

Beckman qualified No. 10 but was no slouch in qualifying at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park. His first pass was a sturdy 3.981/318.17 that would, ultimately, decide his position. Beckman and Alexis DeJoria will be matched for Sunday, and the two have raced once prior this season – in Phoenix, where Beckman got the nod in the first round.

Alexander, who is making his season debut at the NHRA Summernationals, qualified his Paul Smith-tuned Dodge Charger in the No. 13 spot on a best time of 4.098 to earn a first-round meeting with Del Worsham.

Mopar Dodge Darts in NHRA Pro Stock

The first round of Pro Stock will feature a marquee matchup as five-time Pro Stock season champion Jeg Coughlin Jr. and the "Magneti Marelli Offered By Mopar" JEGS.com Dodge Dart will race reigning and two-time world champ Erica Enders and her Mopar Performance Dodge Dart.

Enders, making her best start since Houston, will start from the top half of the field. She claimed the No. 8 spot with a best time of 6.617/209.20. Opponent and Elite Motorsports teammate Coughlin is seeded ninth based on his best time of 6.622 at 209.85.

Enders has the Englishtown track record for speed set in 2014, and the 215.55 still holds as the national record. Since the new rules in NHRA Pro Stock mandating electronic fuel injection and a 10,500 rpm rev limiter were set at the beginning of 2016, the only speed to come close was a 212.93 mph pass set by a fellow competitor in Raceway Park qualifying this weekend.

"We picked up our qualifying a little bit but we have to race Jeg, so that's not how we would have drawn it up if we had the chance," Enders said. "I guess the good news is, like Jeg told me, at least one of us is sure to move on to the quarterfinals."

Coughlin's most recent Pro Stock win came at this event two years ago. He has won in Englishtown four times as a Pro Stock driver (1998, 2000, 2009, and 2014).

"Certainly we want to perform better across the board," Coughlin said. "If there's one thing I've learned over the years is that it takes time to get a program clicking perfectly. We've been fortunate enough to win five world championships in the past, and of course Elite won the last two titles with Erica's car, so we have the know-how in this pit.

"The best thing to do is keep your head down and stay after it. This team is very professional and we'll get it figured out together. That will make the rewards of the future so much more enjoyable."

Allen Johnson's Mopar-powered Marathon Petroleum J&J Racing Dodge Dart will be starting from the No. 5 position following his best qualifying time of 6.565/212.06 that came with a bonus point in the second session. Johnson recorded the efficient pass in the second qualifier after stalling out due to a troubled fuel pump in the first round.

"Friday was a testament to our team and the experience we have," said Johnson. "We had really bad luck that first session, but my team came back and adjusted for the second run, and we made a really good run for the conditions."

Saturday was warm and the air was thick with water granules that slowed the naturally aspirated hot rods, and conditions for Sunday eliminations are projected to be more of the same. Johnson is unconcerned.

"With similar conditions expected for tomorrow, if we set it up correctly, we'll be in the running to win this race," said Johnson, who faces young gun Alex Laughlin in round one.

Veteran Pro Stock driver V. Gaines drove his Kendall Oil Dodge Dart to a 6.791/205.29, and he will be paired with Vincent Nobile in the first round.

Mopar Makes Presence Felt at Englishtown

The Northeast has long been a hot bed for passionate Mopar fans, but the 47th Annual NHRA Summernationals has taken it up a notch. The brand hosted a group of nearly 200 Mopar customers and dealership representatives from the region during a special appreciation event on Wednesday night at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park.

The event featured refreshments, vendors, giveaways and the chance for some to battle one another on the quarter-mile in Dodge Challenger R/T vehicles. The quickest customer was awarded a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity: the chance to square off in a Challenger against two-time NHRA Funny Car champ Hagan. Customers have also been treated to VIP seats in a Mopar-themed suite perched just above the race action.

"It was a great experience for me, but you could tell that this was also a great experience for those great Mopar customers," said Hagan. "Mopar went out of their way to bring these Dodge Challengers in for us to drive at this event, and these were streetcars, but you could see how much performance they have on the racetrack. It was a lot of fun.

"For me, it was really neat to get out there and mix it up with all those folks. Most of the time when I'm at a racetrack, it's a high-pressure environment where you have to win, you have to cut a light, you have to keep it in the groove and try to run as fast as you can every single time. To be able to go out there and relax with these people, kind of cut-up a little bit, and then to get in a Mopar and run down to the quarter-mile was really fun for me. The Mopar customers were definitely into it, and they had a great time. I sure did, too."

The right lane of the drag strip has been officially re-christened as the "Mopar Lane," and Mopar billboards have prime space on the grandstands and tower. An additional giant Mopar banner in the staging lanes also served as a backdrop for a photo featuring the race machines of Hagan, Enders and Coughlin.

Historic Note

DSR and Mopar enjoy a rich history in Englishtown, including four Summernationals victories shared between the currently competing Mopar Funny Car campaigners. In addition, DSR team owner Don Schumacher himself earned the third NHRA Funny Car trophy of his career at this very event in 1972, and he did it behind the wheel of a '72 HEMI-powered Cuda.

NHRA on FOX Sports 1

Two hours of qualifying highlights from the 47th Annual NHRA Summernationals will air on FOX Sports 1 (FS1) on

Sunday morning, June 12, beginning at 9 a.m. ET. Three hours of eliminations coverage will air on FS1 that same day, beginning at 4:30 p.m. ET.

About Mopar Motorsports

The Mopar brand's commitment to professional motorsports competition was established in the 1950s when a partnership ignited with drag racing pioneer Don Garlits, resulting in the breaking of numerous speed and performance barriers in HEMI®-powered vehicles over the next several decades. In 2016, Mopar will look to once again vie for a NHRA World Championship title in both Pro Stock and Funny Car categories. While Mopar remains involved in a various professional motorsports series, it continues to honor its roots by being a proud supporter of Sportsman racing within the NHRA with its sponsorship of the HEMI Challenge and Mopar's Tom Hoover Sportsman Challenge.

Mopar

Mopar is the global name for Stellantis genuine parts and authentic accessories.

A simple combination of the words MOTO and PARTS, Mopar offers exceptional service, parts and customer-care. Born in 1937 as the name of a line of antifreeze products, Mopar has evolved over more than 85 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, Mopar expanded to include technical service and customer support, and today integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

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