

Mopar Funny Car Driver Ron Capps Wins First NHRA Funny Car Championship

- Mopar Dodge Charger R/T driver Ron Capps scores long-awaited first NHRA Funny Car championship at NHRA Finals in Pomona
- Capps' championship is sixth overall in six seasons in NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series for Mopar
- Mopar claims fourth Funny Car championship in six seasons
- Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Capps claims five trophies in 10 final rounds en route to championship title
- DSR Mopar Dodge Charger pilot Jack Beckman earns Funny Car pole at final race of 2016 season
- Beckman's track record-setting run in final session is second-quickest pass in history of NHRA Funny Car
- Beckman's pole is his sixth of the season, 16th of year for Mopar

November 12, 2016, Pomona, California - Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car driver Ron Capps has finally done it. At this weekend's 52nd annual Auto Club NHRA Finals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona, four-time No. 2 man Capps shucked the "always a bridesmaid, never a bride" moniker and became the NHRA Funny Car world champion after a remarkable season that brought home five trophies in 10 final rounds and four low qualifier awards. Capps secured the championship in qualifying and will be looking to end the season with one more win on Sunday at the series-closer.

Don Schumacher Racing driver Capps' season victory is the sixth championship in six seasons for Mopar, including Funny Car trophies for Team Mopar in 2011 (Matt Hagan), 2012 (Jack Beckman), and 2014 (Hagan), plus world titles for Allen Johnson and Jeg Coughlin Jr. in Dodge Avenger Pro Stock cars in 2012 and 2013, respectively.

"On behalf of everyone at Mopar, congratulations to Ron Capps and the Don Schumacher Racing team on achieving the ultimate goal in NHRA drag racing," said Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar), FCA – Global. "This has truly been a tremendous season, and we extend our gratitude to everyone involved in the achievement of bringing another NHRA championship to Mopar. We are very proud of the entire team's extraordinary accomplishments throughout the season and the collective effort at Don Schumacher Racing that made this a very memorable year for all of us."

Capps has been a top contender for the championship for much of his decorated 22-year career, and he has come achingly close to securing the season title four times, finishing No. 2 in the nation in 1998, 2000, 2005, and 2012. This season, though, positive results came fast and early.

The driver of the streaking blue and yellow Dodge Charger powered his HEMI® to the winner's circle at the very first race of the season, the NHRA Winternationals in Pomona, after flying to the No. 2 qualifying position. At the very next event, he nabbed the pole and effectively protected his position as the Funny Car points leader. Although he forfeited the points lead for seven races, Capps snatched it back mid-season with back-to-back poles and wins in Epping and Englishtown, and he held the top spot for the remainder of the year, adding Norwalk and Seattle trophies to the mantel.

"We got to the countdown with a big lead and I thought, okay, now we really have a shot at it," said Capps, who launched his nitro career in Phoenix in 1995 in a Top Fuel dragster. "This year it is the toughest year of Funny Car ever, but we kept digging and digging, and [crew chief Rahn] Tobler had that eye. I can't tell you how focused he was all year. What a great season, and it's epic to do this here at Pomona, where I sat in the grandstands growing up and watched all of the greats.

"Yeah, it was tough to get that close to the championship so many times before. I hadn't given up; I just gave up trying so hard and really worrying about winning a championship. But we were really in contention for the championship every year, and I don't think there is a Funny Car driver out there who can say that they've been in contention every year of their career like I have. It really came together this season, but man, what a fight. To be a Mello Yello Series champion and take the crown from Del Worsham – who I thought represented NHRA as well as anyone could – I'm really proud to take this and carry it on. I'll tell you what, this trophy should be broken into a trillion pieces and given to all of our fans. They are the best, and this is definitely for all of them."

Beckman Shatters Track Record, Secures 16th Pole of 2016 for Mopar

The 2016 season of the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series has been one of power and performance for Team Mopar, and Jack Beckman and his Infinite Hero Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car drove that point home during qualifying for the NHRA Finals. DSR driver Beckman earned the 21st pole of his career and 16th of the season for Mopar with a stellar, track record-breaking 3.825-second pass at 332.10 mph in the final qualifying session.

Don Schumacher Racing driver Beckman contributed his fair share to a terrific season of qualifying for the Mopar Dodge Charger Funny Cars, earning six poles of the 24 up for grabs. DSR teammate Matt Hagan, driver of the Mopar Express Lane Dodge, earned five; newly-crowned Funny Car world champion Ron Capps scored four, and Tommy Johnson Jr. claimed one.

"It's amazing how excited people can get over a number, but it's really something when you see the reaction of the crowd," said Beckman, referring to the pass that reset the Auto Club Raceway track record. "What made it really special was when we pulled back into the pits, the fans were six-deep and cheering for us. But I was just 1/11th of a team that did something really special."

Pole-sitter Beckman will race John Bojec in the first round of eliminations on Sunday. As for his fellow DSR Mopar Dodge Charger campaigners, it will be No. 3 Tommy Johnson Jr. vs. Dave Richards, No. 5 Capps vs. Chad Head, and No. 7 Hagan vs. Jeff Arend. DSR's Leah Pritchett and her Mopar Top Fuel dragster qualified No. 5 and will race Terry McMillen, and Tony Schumacher and the HEMI®-powered U.S. Army Top Fuel dragster are No. 7 and set for a first round meeting with Clay Millican. In Pro Stock, Dodge Dart drivers Allen Johnson (No. 10) will race Drew Skillman, Erica Enders (No. 12) will race Alex Laughlin, and Jeg Coughlin Jr. (No. 13) will race Vincent Nobile.

Championship eliminations for the 52nd annual NHRA Finals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona are scheduled to begin at 11am PT Sunday.

About Mopar

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 MOTOtor 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.

Complete information on Mopar is available at www.mopar.com and the Mopar blog at www.blog.mopar.com. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit www.stellantis.com.

Follow Mopar and company news and video on:

Company blog: blog.stellantisnorthamerica.com

Media website: media.stellantisnorthamerica.com

Mopar brand: www.mopar.com/

Mopar blog: blog.mopar.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mopar

Instagram: www.instagram.com/officialmopar

Twitter: twitter.com/OfficialMOPAR

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/mopar or www.youtube.com/StellantisNA

-###-

Additional information and news from Stellantis are available at: <https://media.stellantisnorthamerica.com>