

Capps Wins All-Mopar Funny Car Final in Dodge Charger R/T at NHRA Route 66 Nationals

- Ron Capps wins 20th annual NHRA Route 66 Nationals at Route 66 Raceway in Joliet, Illinois, over Mopar teammate Tommy Johnson Jr.
- Win is 55th of Capps' Funny Car career
- A Mopar HEMI[®]-powered Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car from Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) wins 10th race in a row and for 12th time in 13 events to date this season
- Mopar teammates compete in Funny Car final for sixth time in 2017
- Three Mopar Dodge Funny Cars advance to semifinals, five appear in second round
- Leah Pritchett advances to second round in Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil Top Fuel dragster
- Mopar holds top three spots in Funny Car point standings, second and fourth positions in Top Fuel
- Justin Picillo goes to final round of Stock Eliminator, Dan Zrust drives to Super Stock semis
- Picillo and Zrust win Dodge Top Finisher award in respective categories

July 9, 2017, Joliet, Ill. - Mopar driver Ron Capps continued his dream season during the NHRA Route 66 Nationals this weekend, picking up his sixth win of 2017 in his Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car as the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series schedule kicked off its second half.

Funny Cars featuring Mopar HEMI[®] power from Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) have now won an amazing 12 of 13 events this year and 10 in a row.

Mopar has also now claimed wins in 14 consecutive events across the Funny Car or Top Fuel categories, dating back to last year's NHRA Finals at Pomona. In addition, John Force is the only non-Mopar driver to have won an NHRA Funny Car event since last September's U.S. Nationals.

Yet despite the team's success, it was an emotional weekend for DSR and the entire NHRA community at Route 66 Raceway as it mourned the loss of Terry Chandler. Chandler funded both DSR Mopar driver Tommy Johnson Jr.'s and teammate Jack Beckman's teams, but put charities Make-A-Wish and the Infinite Hero Foundation on their cars as a way to give back.

The beloved sponsor succumbed to brain cancer after a valiant fight earlier in the week.

During Sunday's final round at Route 66 Raceway, Capps bested his motivated teammate Johnson from the left lane with a pass of 4.026 seconds at 319.67 mph after a .059-second reaction time. Johnson made a lap of 4.047 at 319.90, but was just late on the Christmas Tree with a reaction time of .155.

The win was the 55th of Capps' career. The defending Funny Car champion has now won six of the last nine races this year, while having advanced to a total of eight final rounds on the season. He also extended his already large points lead on Sunday after improving to a staggering 35-7 record.

Capps began his day by knocking out Jonnie Lindberg in round one, and then took on fellow Dodge driver Jim Campbell, who had bested No. 1 qualifier Robert Hight. Capps turned in a come-from-behind, second-round win against Campbell, getting away first but with a cylinder out at the hit of the throttle. He lost ground but came back to defeat his opponent when Campbell lost traction at half-track. Capps then beat teammate Matt Hagan on a clean, side-by-side run to reach the final round against Johnson.

Tommy Johnson Jr. and the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T team first dispatched of John Force on a clean pass as the 16-time champion smoked his tires and lost traction. Johnson then improved his record to 3-0 against J.R. Todd with a solid lap to set up a semifinal matchup with Tim Wilkerson, where Johnson advanced to the final on another textbook run as Wilkerson immediately went up in smoke.

Three DSR Funny Cars reached the semis, with Matt Hagan ending up the odd man out. Hagan drove his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T past Del Worsham despite losing cylinders to kick off his day, then took out a strong Alexis DeJoria in the second round when her car had mechanical issues. Hagan's day came to an end, however, against teammate Capps in a close semifinal round.

The final member of the DSR contingent, Jack Beckman, qualified best among his teammates with a No. 2 effort and pushed his Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T past fellow Dodge driver Bob Bode on a solid pass in the first round when Bode crossed the center line. Beckman next took on Wilkerson but had to pedal and lost cylinders, putting an end to his bid for two consecutive wins in 2017 and his second in a row at Route 66 Raceway.

Both of the Mopar-powered Top Fuel cars from DSR meanwhile had their days ended early.

No. 2 qualifier Leah Pritchett drove her Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil dragster past Troy Coughlin Jr. in round one when Coughlin suffered an explosion. Pritchett then struck the tires early against Antron Brown in round two, ending her day.

Chicago-area native Tony Schumacher and the Mopar-powered U.S. Army Top Fuel team were upset by Blake Alexander in round one on a holeshot.

The elimination rounds of the 20th annual NHRA Route 66 Nationals featured a hot, slick track leading to a number of early-round upsets.

Mopar/Dodge Notes & Quotes

Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar) FCA – Global

"It's been a thrill to watch our Mopar drivers rack up coveted Wally trophies at each race thus far in the 2017 season. Congratulations to Ron Capps and his Dodge Charger R/T team on their win in the NHRA Route 66 Nationals. As the Countdown to the Championship playoffs get closer, we're confident Mopar HEMI power has many more victories in store."

Ron Capps, NAPA Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 9 Qualifier – 3.942 seconds at 292.08 mph)

Rd. 1: (.068-second reaction time, 4.005 seconds at 320.89 mph) defeated No. 8 Jonnie Lindberg (.075/4.072/321.19)

Rd. 2: (.079/4.119/309.98) defeated No. 16 Jim Campbell (.106/4.432/204.60)

Semis: (.075/4.038/318.84) defeated No. 4 Matt Hagan (.067/4.088/313.58)

Final: (.059/4.026/319.67) defeated No. 6 Tommy Johnson Jr. (.155/4.047/319.90)

"It's been a season you can't even dream about. It may have looked on the outside like maybe we were struggling (this weekend) and I'm sure some of our opponents may have thought the same. But as every Sunday goes with (crew chief) Rahn Tobler, he wakes up in the morning and he is a big-picture guy. It's so fun to race with him and he's taught me a lot. I get up to drive that car and make him proud.

"This weekend on top of everything else with Terry (Chandler), the fans were just crazy. You already knew how much she was loved, but people that had never met her before were wanting to give their respects. Then to be lined up with one of her cars (in the final), I saw her standing outside my car because I guess you just get so used to it and I had to shake my head for a second. You're not used to her not being here. So it was a very emotional weekend. Bittersweet but at the same time it's a DSR car and I'm glad we can give Don (Schumacher) the trophy to do what he's going to do with her family."

Matt Hagan, Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.895 seconds at 332.10 mph)

Rd. 1: (.066-second reaction time, 4.162 seconds at 251.95 mph) defeated No. 13 Del Worsham (.102/5.718/133.68)
Rd. 2: (.099/4.006/319.60) defeated No. 5 Alexis DeJoria (.119/4.399/210.67)
Semis: (.067/4.088/313.58) lost to No. 9 Ron Capps (.075/4.038/318.84)

"We would do things a little different than what we did in the semis, but we still went to the semis. Obviously we're trying to catch (Ron) Capps and he's just kind of pulling away. But that's why they have the Countdown nowadays. So we're just going to keep working on it. I wouldn't trade (crew chief) Dickie Venables or (assistant) Mike Knudsen for anybody out here. I know when things cool down a little bit nobody can touch our race car so I'm really looking forward to the Countdown and the last six races."

Leah Pritchett, Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil Top Fuel Dragster
(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.723 seconds at 326.56 mph)

Rd. 1: (.054-second reaction time, 3.858 seconds at 294.18 mph) defeated No. 15 Troy Coughlin Jr. (.108/3.968/279.50)
Rd. 2: (.089/5.247/139.10) lost to No. 7 Antron Brown (.072/3.853/305.29)

"It's never a good thing when you race Antron Brown in the second round; you want to meet him in a final. Our issue in the second round was our clutch regulator had hung open and we smoked the tires. We hadn't smoked the tires all weekend. But more than anything we're proud of the nine points we picked up in qualifying, which almost equals out to a round win. But man, every little bit counts between (Steve) Torrence and Antron.

"From a high note, going out there Antron and I were pretty much side-by-side. I go up in smoke, I pedal it one time and then I see he's on a clean run and there's no way I'm getting to the finish line now before him even if he chucks the belt. That's doing two things at once. You're racing, you're trying to make it, but you're also being smart about your moves because we have a big swing coming up that's going to require a lot of parts and pieces."

Tommy Johnson Jr., Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car
(No. 6 Qualifier – 3.913 seconds at 326.00 mph)

Rd. 1: (.082-second reaction time, 4.026 seconds at 319.07 mph) defeated No. 11 John Force (.061/4.982/157.39)
Rd. 2: (.068/4.026/317.72) defeated No. 14 J.R. Todd (.069/4.260/248.75)
Semis: (.077/4.015/317.87) defeated No. 10 Tim Wilkerson (.061/7.734/117.15)
Final: (.155/4.047/319.90) lost to No. 9 Ron Capps (.059/4.026/319.67)

"It was a tough weekend for everybody with the loss of Terry (Chandler). I'm proud of the guys for sticking together and wanting to go out here and win this thing for Terry. To have to put the stickers on the car in memory of her was tough and we wanted nothing more than to win this race for her. No matter what I know she was proud of us. But we wanted to win this one awful bad for her."

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car
(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.856 seconds at 330.23 mph)

Rd. 1: (.073-second reaction time, 4.020 seconds at 320.28 mph) defeated No. 15 Bob Bode (DQ – crossed center line)
Rd. 2: (.094/5.061/172.65) lost to No. 10 Tim Wilkerson (.087/4.107/314.61)

"Normally I leave here with a philosophical approach and a silver-lining type of thing. We really we just had one goal this weekend. Terry (Chandler) was just laid to rest and we wanted to put her car in the winner's circle. We didn't get it done. So that's a little bit heartbreaking. To put it in context though, we get a chance at another race. We can still do some great things for her and for Infinite Hero the rest of the year. We'll have a week to look at data and think about it. It's been a tough weekend. I thought today would be a little bit easier for me to flip that switch and go into race mode. Once the car started it was okay, but when it's not it's a tough day. It's just a lot to deal with having lost somebody that did so much for us."

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.758 seconds at 325.37 mph)

Rd. 1: (.114-second reaction time, 3.883 seconds at 306.26 mph) lost to No. 12 Blake Alexander (.020/3.940/301.54 – holeshot win)

“That was a terrible way to end a weekend at home. The game has always been a timing thing and you can push blame off and make excuses. I had a terrible light. I thought he redlighted, but I still should have had a much better light. The bottom line is that I need to get better. I need to do a better job and the car needs to run faster. As a team, we just have to be better and I have all the confidence that we will get it together. I am surrounded by an incredible group of people and this U.S. Army will be ready when we show up on the mountain in a couple weeks.”

Mopar/Dodge NHRA Sportsman Spotlight

Sportsman racers took center stage throughout the weekend during the NHRA Route 66 Nationals, with Mopar power advancing deep into the elimination rounds in both the Stock Eliminator and Super Stock categories.

Justin Picillo, a native of Warwick, Rhode Island, and two-time defending Division One champion, went all the way to the final round of Stock Eliminator in an FS/D 2010 Dodge Challenger Drag Pak belonging to Jeg Coughlin Jr. In the final, Picillo made a lap of 10.010 seconds at 126.93 mph after a 10.02 dial-in, meaning he broke out by just .010 and had to settle for a runner-up finish to multiple-time world champion Brad Burton. Picillo’s reaction time was .041.

Dan Zrust was the top Mopar performer in Super Stock, driving his GT/AA 1968 Plymouth Barracuda featuring a 426 HEMI engine to the semifinals. Zrust, who hails from Maple Grove, Minnesota, bowed out after going red at the start in the semifinal round. However, he still turned in a solid pass of 9.253 seconds on a 9.08 dial-in. He reached a speed of 125.10 mph.

Thanks to their efforts in the Stock and Super Stock categories, Picillo and Zrust were named the recipients of the Dodge Top Finisher award. The program awards \$500 to the driver in each category who advances the farthest in a Dodge or Plymouth vehicle at all 24 national events in 2017.

In addition, this weekend’s events featured the special JEGS Allstars program in which top Sportsman drivers competed for individual and team honors. Two Mopar-powered drivers competed in the eight-car Stock Eliminator category, with Picillo advancing to the semifinals, while Burleson, Texas’ Austin Williams went out in round one in his F/SA ’72 Plymouth Duster.

Next Event

The yearly Western Swing is up next on the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series schedule, kicking off in two weeks with the 38th annual Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals at Bandimere Speedway in Morrison, Colorado, near Denver. Last year Mopar Top Fuel driver Tony Schumacher took the event win in the category, his third at the track. Jack Beckman leads all current Mopar Funny Car drivers with three wins at the facility, while Ron Capps has one.

Mopar Pro Stock driver Allen Johnson has claimed seven “King of the Mountain” titles to lead all current competitors, including a win at Bandimere last summer.

Mopar will host a number of special events throughout the week, including a block party in downtown Golden, Colorado, on the evening of Thursday, July 20.

The Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals will take place from July 21 – 23, with qualifying coverage provided by FOX Sports 1. The FOX Network will broadcast eliminations LIVE on Sunday, July 23 at 3 p.m. ET.

For more information on Mopar and Dodge in NHRA, check out the Mopar brand’s official blog, <http://blog.mopar.com>.

2017 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 13 of 24

(Season Wins in Parentheses)

NHRA Funny Car

1. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T (6) – 1,208

2. **Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T (3) – 1,022**
3. **Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger R/T (2) – 914**
4. Robert Hight – 853
5. **Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T (1) – 833**
6. Courtney Force – 749
7. John Force (1) – 718
8. Tim Wilkerson – 599
9. J.R. Todd – 559
10. Cruz Pedregon – 463

NHRA Top Fuel

1. Steve Torrence (5) – 1,188
2. **Leah Pritchett, Mopar HEMI (3) – 1,087**
3. Antron Brown (2) – 1,085
4. **Tony Schumacher, Mopar HEMI (1) – 894**
5. Doug Kalitta – 813
6. Brittany Force (1) – 795
7. Clay Millican (1) – 773
8. Terry McMillen – 509
9. Scott Palmer – 496
10. Troy Coughlin Jr. – 480

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, thanks to Don Schumacher Racing driver Ron Capps, Mopar captured its fourth NHRA Funny Car World Championship in the last six years. As Mopar celebrates 80 years as a brand in 2017, it will focus its NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series efforts on NHRA Funny Car and, with rising star Leah Pritchett, NHRA Top Fuel Dragster. Mopar will also bolster its commitment to NHRA Sportsman racing with new contingency rewards, factory support and at-track technical advice and guidance.

Mopar-First Features

During the brand's 80 years, Mopar has introduced numerous industry-first features including:

- Vehicle-information apps: first to introduce smartphone vehicle-information applications, a new channel of communication with consumers
- wiADVISOR: first to incorporate a tablet-based service lane tool
- Electronic Vehicle Tracking System (EVTS): first to market with a new interactive vehicle tracking device that sends owner a text when vehicle is driven too fast or too far based on pre-set parameters
- Wi-Fi: first to offer customers the ability to make their vehicle a wireless hot spot
- Electronic owner manuals: first to introduce traditional owner manuals on a smartphone app

Mopar

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

A simple combination of the words MOrtor 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.

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