

Beckman Powers Mopar and Dodge//SRT to Funny Car Pole at NHRA Gatornationals

- Jack Beckman captures third No. 1 spot in three events for a Mopar Dodge//SRT driver
- Pole is the 24th of Beckman's career and second at Gainesville Raceway
- Five Mopar-powered Dodge Charger R/T drivers make Funny Car field at NHRA Gatornationals
- Mopar-powered Top Fuel drivers Tony Schumacher and Leah Pritchett to start from No. 4 and No. 6 spots, respectively
- Pritchett puts Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak in second day of Factory Stock Showdown eliminations, keeps quest alive for two Wally trophies

March 17, 2018, Gainesville, Florida - Jack Beckman collected the third No. 1 spot in three events for a Mopar Dodge//SRT driver this season, claiming the pole in his Mopar-powered Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car before a sellout crowd at the 49th annual NHRA Gatornationals in Gainesville, Florida.

The top spot is the 24th of Beckman's career and second at the iconic Gatornationals race. He'll be joined by Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammates and fellow Mopar Dodge pilots Tommy Johnson Jr., Matt Hagan and Ron Capps in elimination rounds tomorrow at Gainesville Raceway, as well as by Jim Dunn Racing and Dodge driver Jim Campbell.

Beckman was on fire on Friday's first day of qualifying, earning six bonus points and going low in both rounds with a pass of 3.958 seconds at 325.61 mph and a Q2 run of 3.911/332.18, which ultimately earned him the pole. The 2012 Funny Car World Champion added two respectable runs during the third and fourth qualifying rounds on Saturday to earn an extra bonus point.

Johnson, driving the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T, secured a top-five starting position on the strength of a 3.933 run in Friday's second session. Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T driver Hagan's best effort also came in Q2, a 3.941 that placed him sixth entering Sunday. Following close behind was Mopar-powered Dodge teammate Capps, whose quickest time on the clock was a 3.944-second elapsed time in Saturday's first qualifying session.

Tony Schumacher led the way with Mopar power in the Top Fuel ranks, qualifying No. 4 thanks to a 3.785-second mark in his very first qualifying attempt. The same was true for Papa John's/Mopar Dodge Top Fuel driver Leah Pritchett, who recorded a 3.811 right out of the gate in Q1 to grab the No. 6 position.

Pritchett will have an opportunity to capture two Wally trophies on Sunday at Gainesville Raceway after driving her Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak into the second day of Factory Stock Showdown elimination rounds. In qualifying, Pritchett locked down the No. 7 spot with a best run of 8.109/168.22 in the second session on Friday, in addition to a Q1 run on Friday of 8.194/168.16 and a final attempt of 8.257/165.40 on Saturday.

She lined up her 354 supercharged Mopar Dodge Drag Pak against Daniel Condon in round one of Factory Stock. Pritchett left first with a .051 reaction time and never trailed, posting a 8.183/166.50 mark to the Camaro driver's losing 8.204/165.52 effort. The DSR star will square off with Randy Taylor in the Factory Stock quarterfinals on Sunday.

Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak Factory Stock Showdown racer Geoff Turk made history last weekend at the NMCA Bradenton event, becoming the first driver to break into the seven-second range in a Factory Stock car. Turk was quick at Gainesville, qualifying No. 5 with a 8.099-second elapsed time, but was unable to make the call in eliminations due to mechanical issues.

Pro Stock World Champion and longtime Mopar Dodge driver Allen Johnson will look to rebound at the next event after failing to qualify in his Factory Stock debut. Johnson's best run was a 10.948/144.92, with a transmission issue scuttling his final attempt to the crack the competitive Factory Stock field.

Mopar Dodge/SRT Notes & Quotes

(best elapsed time in bold)

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

Qualified No. 1, will face No. 16 Jim Campbell

Friday: (3.958 seconds at 325.61 mph – Q1); (**3.911**/332.18 – Q2)

Saturday: (4.025/316.15 – Q3); (4.007/322.04 – Q4)

"I love the fact that we did everything pretty darn good for four runs over the course of the two days here. I think it gives us a leg up going into tomorrow. We'll have lane choice and we'll get to pick when we're going to run. We could make a poor decision, but I like that it's our decision to make.

"I think by and large, you make your own luck. The team services the car perfectly, the crew chiefs put their heads together, go over data from past runs with similar conditions and make an educated tune-up there, and then you try and outdrive the person in the other lane. You race the race track. We have to do everything a little bit better than they do, but in our lane."

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

Qualified No. 6, will face No. 11 Tim Wilkerson

Friday: (4.142 seconds at 251.77 mph – Q1); (**3.941**/328.22 – Q2)

Saturday: (5.064/149.51 – Q3); (5.775/123.06 – Q4)

"Gainesville, I mean, I just can't get it to show me any love. It's one of those places that no matter how great your combo is, this place steps on my toes all the time. We're trying to work through it. We've got a good car. Obviously, Dickie (Venables, Hagan's crew chief) has the skills and the know-how to navigate a hot racetrack. We just have to get it dialed in tomorrow.

"(Tim) Wilkerson (Hagan's first round opponent) has had some issues, having to bring out a new car. And I wanted to say my respects to him on his dad passing away this weekend, obviously he's got that on his mind, and we'll be thinking about him.

"We've got to figure out what we've got going on, and lay it down. We've had four shots at it, and hopefully we have four shots at it tomorrow."

Leah Pritchett, Papa John's/Mopar Dodge Top Fuel Dragster

Qualified No. 6, will face No. 11 Terry Haddock

Friday: (**3.811** seconds at 325.77 mph – Q1); (No Time – Q2)

Saturday: (10.137/72.12 – Q3); (3.864/313.95 – Q4)

"We've been going wide open. I've got to say, there's so much on the line: the world championship, charity for our veterans and of course in Factory Stock, with bolt-on parts that you can put on your Mopar Dodge/SRT Drag Pak.

"I'm wide open all the time, but thanks for all the patience from DSR and all the fans, it means a lot. I've got the opportunity of a lifetime, and I'm trying to win it all."

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

Qualified No. 7, will face No. 10 Bob Tasca

Friday: (4.700 seconds at 174.96 mph – Q1); (3.972/322.73 – Q2)

Saturday: (**3.944**/325.06 – Q3); (3.967/324.20 – Q4)

"It's a new six-disc for us so we're learning but [Rahn Tobler, Capps's crew chief] was very happy. Friday night when we got done, he said we're going to use tomorrow for Sunday. It's going to be the same conditions. It's so nice to see Tobler with a smile on his face. This is a tricky track and on Sunday, you're going to have to really earn it."

Tommy Johnson Jr., Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

Qualified No. 5, will face No. 12 Cruz Pedregon

Friday: (10.788 seconds at 78.82 mph – Q1); (3.933/327.27 – Q2)

Saturday: (5.494/127.07 – Q3); (10.082/7.997 – Q4)

“We’re struggling with the changes. The six-disc clutch is still new to us. This is the first hot track conditions we’ve seen with it so we’re making ground. We made a nice run in the best conditions of the weekend so tomorrow will be more like we’ve seen today. So we have to learn from what we did during these two runs and put that together to make a nice solid day.”

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster

Qualified No. 4, will face No. 13 Brittany Force

Friday: (3.785 seconds at 329.67 mph – Q1); (7.873/84.21 – Q2)

Saturday: (4.841/146.59 – Q3); (5.463/122.95 – Q4)

“I love this race. It’s top three for me without a doubt. We just do so well here and that gives us a ton of confidence. The place was sold out today and fans jammed in here to see us do battle. There’s just something about racing here. We’ve won this race more than anyone else (in Top Fuel) and I’m excited to have another chance Sunday.”

Dodge Garage: New Digital Hub for Drag Racing News

Fans now have a new one-stop destination for Mopar and Dodge drag racing news.

Dodge Garage (<http://www.dodgegarage.com>) is a digital content hub and premier destination for drag racing and muscle car enthusiasts.

Fans can view daily updates and get access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads and merchandise. For information on Mopar on and off the track, check out the Mopar brand’s official blog, <http://blog.mopar.com>.

Tune-in Info

FOX Sports 1 will broadcast three hours of eliminations coverage of the 49th annual NHRA Gatornationals starting at 7:00 p.m. ET on Sunday, March 18.

About Dodge//SRT

Dodge//SRT offers a complete lineup of performance vehicles that stand out in their own segments. Dodge is FCA North America’s mainstream performance brand, and SRT is positioned as the ultimate performance halo of the Dodge brand, together creating a complete and balanced performance brand with one vision and one voice.

For more than 100 years, the Dodge brand has carried on the spirit of brothers John and Horace Dodge, who founded the company in 1914. Their influence continues today. New for 2018, the 840-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, the fastest quarter-mile production car in the world and most powerful muscle car ever, is taking the world by storm, along with the new 2018 Dodge Durango SRT, America’s fastest, most powerful and most capable three-row SUV, and the 707-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat Widebody. These new SRT ultimate performance models join a brand lineup that includes the Durango, Grand Caravan, Journey, Charger and Challenger, including the 707-horsepower Challenger SRT Hellcat and the Charger SRT Hellcat, the quickest, fastest and most powerful sedan in the world.

Mopar

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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

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