

Beckman Races Dodge//SRT Mopar-powered Funny Car to Finals in Season-opening NHRA Winternationals

- Jack Beckman becomes 28th driver in NHRA history to reach 400-round win milestone, en route to 57th career finals appearance
- Tommy Johnson, Jr. reaches semifinals; leaves Pomona third in the standings and with keys to 2019 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat
- Ron Capps opens 25th NHRA season by advancing to the second round
- All six Mopar-powered Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car drivers in top ten after NHRA Winternationals
- Leah Pritchett advances to quarterfinals in her Mopar Dodge/Sparkling Ice Top Fuel dragster

February 11, 2019, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Mopar-powered Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car driver "Fast Jack" Beckman was seeking a lot of firsts on a picture-perfect afternoon during the rain-delayed 59th annual NHRA Winternationals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona.

First winner in 2019. First winner in a Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat body. First career win at his home track. The 2012 NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series Funny Car champion and his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) team came out swinging in the season opener with three round wins in the Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat, but were just four feet short of checking all those boxes late Monday afternoon.

While Beckman stormed to his 57th career finals appearance, the rest of the DSR Dodge Mopar contingent had mixed results on Monday. Tommy Johnson Jr. continued his Pomona magic aboard the DSR Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat turning on a pair of win lights after reaching the final to close out 2018 at the Fairplex. Ron Capps, a three-time Winternationals champion, raced the NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat into the second round while two-time reigning Winternationals champion Matt Hagan was upset in the first round. Leah Pritchett scored an upset win in her HEMI-powered Sparkling Ice/Mopar Top Fuel Dragster before coming up short in the second round.

Beckman was set up for success in eliminations thanks to a stout qualifying run of 3.900 Saturday afternoon. After a workman like triumph over Phil Burkart in the first round with a run of 4.102 ET, the Norco, California, native posted his best lap of the weekend (3.875 ET) to defeat Cruz Pedregon in his Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat and set up and all-DSR semifinal versus Johnson. The Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat left first, but a clean run by Beckman put him position to finally secure a Pomona victory. It was the 41st meeting between Beckman and Robert Hight, 11th in the finals. Hight left first, but Beckman was right there through the run ultimately losing by .0073 seconds.

Johnson carried momentum from last November's run to the final, qualifying third and taking down formidable foes Tim Wilkerson in round one and Shawn Langdon in the second round to set up an all-DSR semifinal. Johnson took the starting line advantage, but couldn't maintain traction and was finished for the weekend.

Ron Capps completed the top-five in qualifying driving the NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat and looked strong in racing past Gary Densham in round one of eliminations. He battled John Force to the wire in round two, but his pass of 4.092 ET wasn't enough to take down Force. Matt Hagan, who qualified the Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat No. 4, had any early advantage on Force in the opening round, but slowed to a lap of 4.140 and couldn't advance when Force put up a session-best run of 3.890 ET.

Johnson Takes Keys for 2019 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

Tommy Johnson Jr. will be spending much of 2019 behind the wheel of a Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat — both on the street and at the drag strip after being presented the keys to a brand-new 2019 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat, the quickest, fastest and most powerful sedan in the world, on Sunday at the NHRA Winternationals.

Johnson will hit the streets in the 707-horsepower four-door muscle car for one year in recognition of recording the best finish of any Dodge Funny Car driver last year by claiming a top-three spot in the final overall 2018 NHRA standings.

“It’s a very cool deal to be able to drive a street-version of the Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat for one year, while also competing in the Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car body on the drag strip, as well,” said Johnson. “A big thank you to Dodge//SRT for this opportunity. It’s a great reward for our team’s 2018 performance. Dodge can rest assured that the Charger SRT Hellcat will have a great home and get a lot of use by me over the next year.”

A Charger SRT Hellcat will again be on the line for 2019. Six Mopar-powered Dodge Funny Car drivers will battle to lock down the highest top-five finish in the final 2019 NHRA overall standings and a chance to take the keys to the 707-horsepower sedan for an entire year.

Mopar Dodge//SRT NHRA Sportsman Spotlight

In Stock Eliminator, Jim Durham from Stonyford, California, drove his 1972 E/SA Plymouth Duster 340 to the quarterfinals at the NHRA Winternationals. In a tight matchup, Durham lost by a mere 0.040 seconds to his opponent in round four. For advancing the furthest in competition, Durham collected the Dodge Top Finisher in Stock Eliminator.

Mike Cotten from Cave Creek, Arizona, drove his SS/IA 1970 Plymouth ‘Cuda to a round three finish in Super Stock at the NHRA Winternationals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona. Powered by a Mopar 383 cubic-inch big-block V8, Cotton had qualified number seven with a run of 9.77 seconds and was looking consistent during eliminations until a redlight start ended his day. Cotten took home the Dodge Top Finisher award in Super Stock.

The Dodge Top Finisher award, now in its third year, awards \$500 to Stock Eliminator and Super Stock drivers who advance the furthest behind the wheel of a Mopar-powered Dodge, Chrysler, or Plymouth race car at all 24 NHRA national events.

Up Next: NHRA Arizona Nationals

Dodge//SRT and Mopar competitors will head next to the NHRA Arizona Nationals, scheduled for February 22-24 at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park in Chandler, Arizona. Beckman and Capps are three-time Phoenix winners while Pritchett and Hagan have each scored a pair of victories in the desert. Johnson won the 2006 event.

Dodge//SRT Mopar NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series: Notes & Quotes

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.900 ET)

Rd.1: (.082-second reaction time, 4.102 seconds at 237.96 mph) beat No. 15 Phil Burkart (No Time)

Rd.2: (.079/3.875/331.94) beat No. 7 Cruz Pedregon (.098/3.962/328.46)

Rd.3: (.084/3.898/327.59) beat No. 3 Tommy Johnson, Jr. (.056/5.216/144.83)

Rd.4: (.062/3.880/329.42) lost to No. 1 Robert Height (.054/3.881/329.75)

“As a driver, the last thing you want is to look at that time slip and see that you got beat on a holeshot. Final rounds are a little different because drivers will roll it in a little bit because we don’t care about lane choice.

“I am so proud of everybody here. We didn’t test. We were struggling until the last qualifying run and then laid down a lap that put us second, but I don’t think that painted the full picture. We had made wholesale changes – five out of our six clutch discs are different than when we left here in November, and for the guys to zero-in on it that quick without the benefit of pre-season testing and take this car to the final round and run it as quick as anybody right now, I can’t wait for Phoenix.”

Tommy Johnson Jr., Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.904 ET)

Rd.1: (.076-second reaction time, 4.193 seconds at 288.33 mph) beat No. 14 Tim Wilkerson (.097/5.822/121.03)

Rd.2: (.076/3.876/326.87) beat No. 6 Shawn Langdon (.057/3.982/324.05)

Rd.3: (.056/5.216/144.83) lost to No.2 Jack Beckman (.084/3.898/327.59)

“It’s been a really good start to the season; our best start as a team. To leave here third in points and make some really nice runs, I’m really happy with the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat. We finished last year with it and put it away. We brought it out and it picked right up where it left off. I’m really excited and think we have a really competitive team for the rest of the year.”

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.915 ET)

Rd.1: (.079-second reaction time, 3.933 seconds at 323.04 mph) beat No.12 Gary Densham (.152/12.020/83.20)

Rd.2: (.076/4.092/248.07) lost No. 13 John Force (.081/3.900/323.19)

“We are still looking at the data, but that session got really fast We just went up there and tried to run a mid-80 and Jimmy Prock ran a 3.85 and the car certainly felt comfortable. The run before that was my first full run in the car. The car drives so much better, so much nicer and I have to have way less steering input, which is a good thing, more downforce on the front end, which is a good thing. And in that run, we just went after it. I love when we go up there and try to go low ET. It just came loose. You hate to lose a race like that. The only thing that helps is it’s the first race of the season. I’m excited about running these new Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat bodies. I think it’s going to be a fun year.”

Matt Hagan, Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.909 ET)

Rd.1: (.070-second reaction time, 3.932 seconds at 322.12 mph) lost to No. 13 John Force (.082/3.890/333.74)

“Obviously not the Winternationals we were hoping for. We won this race the past two years in a row and were hoping to make it three. I think if maybe we struggle at the beginning of the season than we’ll do well at the end because the last couple of years we’ve done well at the beginning and then stumbled at the end. At least that’s how I’m trying to look at it right now. Our MOPAR Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat is going down the race track, but it was just one of those things. We hit the bump out there and the clutch came at it really hard and pulled the tires loose. No excuses, on to the next race but I think with the way we qualified and the way the cars been running, I’m happy with it.”

Leah Pritchett, Mopar Dodge/Sparkling Ice Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 14 Qualifier – 3.963 ET)

Rd.1: (.050-second reaction time, 3.707 seconds at 325.61 mph) beat No. 3 Antron Brown (.047/3.733/329.26)

Rd.2: (.078/4.622/147.12) lost to No. 9 Terry McMillen (.054/3.696/329.91)

“What a turn of events here on Monday. The guys did a great job making the car faster, leaner and meaner. The competition is super stiff. Unfortunately, the challenges we faced during Saturday’s qualifying session showed up again today. We had a small window to push really hard through. We have some parts that aren’t exactly agreeing with the way that we are running this car. We are continuing to learn. This was not the way we wanted to start the season, but it’s good to be back out here. I think we put on a good show for the fans. I’m surround by great people here at Don Schumacher Racing and this Mopar team will be ready fight in Phoenix with a little different strategy”

2019 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 1 of 24

(Season Wins in Parentheses)

NHRA Funny Car

1. Robert Hight - 121
- 2. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat - 100**
- 3. Tommy Johnson, Jr., Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat - 81**
4. John Force - 71
5. Shawn Langdon - 58
- 6. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat - 57**
7. Bob Tasca III - 55
- 8. Cruz Pedregon, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat - 54**
- 9. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat - 37**
- 10. Jim Campbell, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat - 32**

NHRA Top Fuel

1. Doug Kalitta - 117
2. Steve Torrence - 106
3. Terry McMillen - 72
4. Mike Salinas - 70
5. Billy Torrence - 56
- 6t.. Leah Pritchett, Mopar Dodge HEMI - 52**
- 6t. Austin Prock - 52
8. Antron Brown - 37
- 9t. Richie Crampton - 35
- 9t. Scott Palmer - 35

About Dodge

Dodge//SRT offers a complete lineup of performance vehicles that stand out in their own segments. Dodge is 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 brand in 1914. Their influence continues today. New for 2019, the Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat Redeye is possessed by the Demon. Its 797-horsepower supercharged HEMI® high-output engine makes it the most powerful, quickest and fastest muscle car reaching 0-60 miles per hour (mph) in 3.4 seconds and the fastest GT production car with a ¼-mile elapsed time (ET) of 10.8 seconds at 131 mph. It also reaches a new top speed of 203 mph. Joining the Challenger SRT Hellcat Redeye is the 2019 Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat with its more powerful 717-horsepower engine, the Challenger R/T Scat Pack Widebody, which features fender flares from the SRT Hellcat Widebody and adds 3.5 inches of width to Scat Pack's footprint, as well as and the new Challenger R/T Scat Pack 1320. Infused with exclusive drag strip technology from the iconic Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, the Challenger R/T Scat Pack 1320 is a drag-oriented, street-legal muscle car and a blank canvas for the serious grassroots drag racer. The 2019 Dodge Durango SRT, America's fastest, most powerful and most capable three-row SUV with a best-in-class tow rating of 8,700 lbs. fills out the brands' performance lineup. These visceral performance models join a 2019 brand lineup that includes the Durango, Grand Caravan, Journey, Charger and Challenger — a showroom that offers performance at every price point.

Mopar

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

A simple combination of the words MOfor 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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