

Contact: Dan Reid

Tom Blattler

## **New Dodge HEMI® Challenge Champion Crowned at the 2020 NHRA U.S. Nationals**

- No. 1 qualifier Stephen Yantus crowned as first new winner of Dodge HEMI® Challenge in five years at 2020 NHRA U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis
- 15 Super Stock 1968 Dodge Darts and Plymouth Barracudas battled head-to-head for an iconic custom-made Dodge HEMI Challenge trophy and \$15,000 winner's prize
- Previous four-time winner Jimmy Daniel sees his consecutive round win-streak end in the first round of eliminations
- Legendary Mopar racer Herb "Mr. 4 Speed" McCandless led the parade of participating HEMI-powered muscle cars as guest of honor aboard his original 1968 Super Stock HEMI Dart

September 4, 2020, Brownsburg, Ind. - The 2020 edition of the Dodge HEMI® Challenge has crowned a new king at the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis. The ever-popular dedicated Super Stock/A-HEMI (SS/AH) annual competition featuring 1968-model Dodge Dart and Plymouth Barracuda factory stock race cars, saw No.1 qualifier Stephen Yantus battle to become the first new winner in five years.

Yantus, who earned the No. 1 qualifier position aboard his '68 HEMI-powered Plymouth Barracuda with an 8.477 second, 158.50 mph pass, put together a string of quick and consistent elapsed time laps at 8.412, 8.452 and 8.413 seconds through eliminations with a solo run and wins over Russ Campbell and past winner Bucky Hess (2001). He advanced to his first Dodge HEMI Challenge final round showdown to face Steve Comella who had qualified 15th but made his way to his first final as well with wins over Jim Pancake, Gary Wolkwitz, and Steve Kent.

In the all-Cuda final round, Yantus beat Comella off the start with a 0.030 to 0.062-second reaction time and led the way to his quickest run of the weekend; an 8.410 second pass at 158.28 mph. With the win, Yantus earned his first coveted 42.6 lbs. Dodge HEMI Challenge trophy uniquely-crafted with a 426 HEMI cylinder head along with a \$15,000 award.

"We kept on plugging away, kept on chugging, and my whole team, my owner of the car, Anthony Rhodes, (engine builder and past winner) Charlie Westcott and Militia Racing Products built me the baddest bullet on the face of the planet," said an emotional Yantus of the collaborative effort it took to get to the winner's circle. "I mean that thing went 40s all day and we were the only car in the 40s. I owe everything to my whole crew and all of them. I was at driver and I got the call with this bad car. I'm just grateful just the we got down through here. You know, we're all drag racers and they say sometimes you got to get lucky rather than be good. I got a lot of luck but the car hung itself out every time and we never slacked off. We had it on kill all day. It went .049 (seconds), 45, and back-to-back 41s. I can't thank (engine builder) Charlie Westcott enough for what he does for us and this crew. It's just a dream come true. We've been chasing this for a long time along with our families. It's really emotional and I just I can't thank everybody enough for making this happen."

The victory by Yantus ended the four-year reign of Jimmy Daniel who had qualified No.2 in his 1968 Dodge Dart amongst the 15-car field of contenders. Daniel suffered his first-ever defeat since taking the wheel from his father Jim Daniel Sr. in 2016 against Jim Teuton in the first round of eliminations with an 8.60 sec. to 8.58 loss.

Prior to the final round, guest of honor and legendary Mopar racer, Herb "Mr. 4 Speed" McCandless, led the parade of Darts and Barracudas that participated in this year's Dodge HEMI Challenge down Indy's fabled return road aboard his own original 1968 Super Stock HEMI Dart in celebration of the classic muscle cars that contributed to Mopar and Dodge brands' legendary reputation and success at the drag strip.

Highlights of the final elimination round of the Dodge HEMI Challenge, as well as the parade of participating Darts and 'Cudas, will be shown during coverage of 66th annual NHRA U.S. Nationals on Sunday, September 6 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. (EDT) on FS1 and then on the FOX national broadcast network from 1-4 p.m. (EDT).

#### **DodgeGarage: Digital Hub for Drag Racing News**

Fans can follow all the NHRA's action this season at DodgeGarage, the one-stop portal for Dodge//SRT and Mopar drag-racing news. The site includes daily updates and access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads, and merchandise. For more information, visit [www.dodgegarage.com](http://www.dodgegarage.com).

#### **@DodgeMoparMotorsports on Instagram**

The [@DodgeMoparMotorsports](https://www.instagram.com/dodgegarage) Instagram channel continues to share content capturing Dodge//SRT Mopar drivers on the track. Fans can see action from the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series and NHRA Sportsman grassroots racers competing in classes such as Factory Stock Showdown, Stock and Super Stock, as well as additional motorsports series.

#### **Official Driving School of Dodge//SRT**

Dodge is the official sponsor of the Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Chandler, Arizona, where guests get behind the wheels of the fastest street-legal cars in the world with professional instruction and time on the track. Customers who buy a new SRT model receive one full-day session as part of the Dodge//SRT Package and have the opportunity to learn how to get the optimum performance from their new vehicles in a controlled environment. For more information, visit [dodgegarage.com/track-experience](http://dodgegarage.com/track-experience).

#### **Mopar**

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARTs) is the service, parts and customer-care brand for FCA vehicles around the globe. Born in 1937 as the name of a line of antifreeze products, the Mopar brand has evolved over more than 80 years to represent both complete care and authentic performance for owners and enthusiasts worldwide.

Mopar made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era, with Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use, and expanded to include technical service and customer support. Today, the Mopar brand's global reach distributes more than 500,000 parts and accessories in more than 150 markets. With more than 50 parts distribution centers and 25 customer-contact centers globally, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Complete information on the Mopar brand is available at [www.mopar.com](http://www.mopar.com). Mopar is part of the portfolio of brands offered by global automaker Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. For more information regarding FCA (NYSE: FCAU/ MTA: FCA), please visit [www.fcagroup.com](http://www.fcagroup.com).

#### **Dodge//SRT**

For more than 100 years, the Dodge brand has carried on the spirit of brothers John and Horace Dodge. Their influence continues today as Dodge shifts into high gear with muscle cars and SUVs that deliver unrivaled performance in each of the segments where they compete.

2021 marks the year that Dodge is distilled into a pure performance brand, offering Hellcat-powered, 700+ horsepower SRT versions of every model across the lineup. For the 2021 model year, Dodge delivers the drag-strip dominating 807-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Super Stock, the new 797-horsepower Dodge Charger SRT Redeye, the most powerful and fastest mass-produced sedan in the world, and the new 710-horsepower Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat, the most powerful SUV ever. Combined, these three muscle cars make Dodge the industry's most powerful brand, offering more horsepower than any other American brand across its entire lineup.

In June 2020, Dodge was named the "#1 Brand in Initial Quality," making it the first domestic brand ever to rank No. 1 in the J.D. Power Initial Quality Study (IQS). Dodge is part of the portfolio of brands offered by global automaker Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. For more information regarding

FCA (NYSE: FCAU/ MTA: FCA), please visit [www.fcagroup.com](http://www.fcagroup.com).

**Follow Dodge, SRT and FCA news and video on:**

Company blog: <http://blog.fcanorthamerica.com>

Media website: <http://media.fcanorthamerica.com>

Dodge brand: [www.dodge.com](http://www.dodge.com)

Dodge Garage: [www.dodgegarage.com](http://www.dodgegarage.com)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/dodge](http://www.facebook.com/dodge) or <https://www.facebook.com/FiatChrysler.NorthAmerica/>

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/dodgeofficial](http://www.instagram.com/dodgeofficial) or [www.instagram.com/FiatChrysler\\_NA](http://www.instagram.com/FiatChrysler_NA)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/dodge](http://www.twitter.com/dodge) or [www.twitter.com/FiatChrysler\\_NA](http://www.twitter.com/FiatChrysler_NA)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/dodge](http://www.youtube.com/dodge) or [www.youtube.com/fcanorthamerica](http://www.youtube.com/fcanorthamerica)

-###-

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