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Three-Second Run Earns Hagan's Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye No. 1 Qualifier Position at NHRA Gatornationals

- Matt Hagan earns No.1 spot in Funny Car qualifying at the 51st annual Amalie Motor Oil National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Gatornationals at historic Gainesville Raceway
- Hagan drives Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye to the only sub-four second run in Funny Car qualifying and earns five bonus points and a first-round bye
- Don Schumacher Racing's (DSR) quartet of Funny Car drivers look to extend their streak of nine-consecutive event wins at the Gatornationals
- DSR Top Fuel driver Leah Pruett will start her Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye dragster from the eighth spot on the elimination ladder at the Gatornationals
- Mopar Drag Paks of Mark Pawuk and Leah Pruett qualify tenth and 12th respectively for Sunday's elimination rounds of Factory Stock Showdown

September 26, 2020, Gainesville, Fla. - Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) pilot Matt Hagan drove his red-hot "Demon-possessed" Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye to a three-second pass, the only one in Funny Car qualifying amid hot and muggy conditions, to garner the No. 1 qualifier position for Sunday's elimination rounds at the 51st annual Amalie Motor Oil National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Gatornationals at historic Gainesville Raceway.

Hagan's final qualifying run at 3.975 seconds and 321.35 mph to earn the top spot on the eliminations ladder was an improvement on an already strong 4.006 sec./ 315.64 mph initial run that had him second on the timing sheets. With this his third career No.1 qualifier position at the Gatornationals (2010-11), his third of the season and the 39th of his career, Hagan benefits from a first-round bye and five extra bonus points for his efforts. He is also looking to hoist a third Wally trophy this season and his first at the Gatornationals.

While the Florida sun elevated track temperatures to over 120 degrees making qualifying and the drag strip a lot trickier, the Funny Car championship battle also heated up as Hagan (525 points) heads into race day at Gainesville second in the standings, sandwiched between points leader Jack Beckman (549) and Tommy Johnson Jr. (492) with Ron Capps (411) rounding out the top-five. With just five race days remaining in the 2020 NHRA season and a tight points race between the DSR teammates, every round win and bonus point is especially valuable.

While they battle through rounds and jostle for position atop the championship standings, the Mopar Dodge//SRT Funny Car foursome are also looking to extend their team's current streak of nine-consecutive event wins.

Three-time Gatornationals winner Ron Capps is seeded fourth for Sunday's first elimination round after posting a stout 4.025 sec./ 309.27 mph qualifying pass in his HEMI-powered Dodge//SRT machine and will have John Smith as his first opponent of the day.

Qualifying didn't quite go as planned for Beckman who won at the historic Gainesville track in 2018. He will start his Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat from the ninth rung on the eliminations ladder after a 4.123 sec./ 254.18 mph qualifying effort and will see Paul Lee in the next lane for his first match-up.

Tommy Johnson Jr., who has had three No. 1 qualifier positions this season and is seeking a second win this year with what would be his first Gatornationals win, didn't fare as well as usual in qualifying posting a 4.129 sec./ 249.44 mph run for the tenth quickest pass of the day in his MD Anderson Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat. He'll be paired-up with J.R. Todd for the opening round.

DSR Top Fuel driver Leah Pruett is not only looking to score her first Gatornats event win, but also hoping to make some big gains in the standings as she sits in second place just 51 points behind leader Doug Kalitta going into race day. Pruett took her red, black and chrome Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye dragster for a 3.922 sec./315.64 mph run on her final qualifying attempt to give her lane choice against Clay Millican.

In NHRA Factory Stock Showdown (FSS) qualifying, the Mopar Drag Pak duo of Mark Pawuk and Leah Pruett will go into eliminations seeded tenth and 12th respectively after the heat slowed their forward momentum both on track and in qualifying. In the first session held on Friday, Pruett was seventh on the speed charts after taking her Mopar Dodge Challenger for an initial pass at 8.297-second and 168.01 mph. Her second run on Saturday at 8.160 sec / 169.25 mph put her 12th overall to pair her up with Arthur Kohn for the opening round.

Pawuk fared a slightly better moving up a spot to a tenth place on the eliminations ladder with his second pass at 8.105 sec./ 171.99 mph. Pawuk came to Gainesville Raceway second in points with four race days left to catch current leader and No. 1 qualifier Aaron Stanfield. Pawuk will line-up his Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak next to David Kramer in the first round.

Television coverage of the NHRA elimination rounds, including LIVE finals at Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals, will air on Sunday, September 27, on FS1 beginning at 2 p.m. ET.

ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES:

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Foundation Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 9 Qualifier – 4.123 seconds at 254.18 mph)

Qualifying 1: 4.123 sec./ 254.18 mph

Qualifying 2: 4.340 sec./ 211.53 mph

“I think that the Infinite Hero team is living proof that you do not have to qualify in the top half to win the race on Sunday. We’ve kind of been living out of the bottom half this year and a lot of that has to do with just getting two qualifying runs. I thought we had backed it up enough on the second run and we’re still too aggressive. I had mentioned that we had changed two discs in our clutch package two races ago and this is the hottest track we’ve been on and it’s still throwing us a bit of a curveball. We’ll have an early start tomorrow. It’ll be different conditions that will give us one more run. We’ll pick away at it and hopefully we make three more after that.”

Matt Hagan, Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Funny Car

(No. 1 Qualifier – 3.975 seconds at 321.35 mph)

Qualifying 1: 4.006 sec./ 315.64 mph (2 bonus point for second quickest run of session)

Qualifying 2: 3.975 sec./ 321.35 mph (3 bonus points for quickest run of session)

“Our race car is running great. This Dodge Hellcat Redeye Funny Car is running strong. It runs like a Hellcat, but drives like a (Chrysler) 300C. Dickie (Venables) is doing such a great job putting a tune-up in this car. What a great race car I have underneath me. It’s one of the more fun seasons I’ve had. The car is just so smooth. It shows the caliber of guys we have to take so much time off and all the adversity with Covid19 and to come back out here and put together a great race car. We’ve been No. 1 qualifier several times and won a few times also. We have a real car that can compete for the next five races and do big things. I’m extremely excited. I think this might be the first time I’ve ever had a bye run and I just can’t say enough about this team who makes it all happen.”

Tommy Johnson Jr., MD Anderson Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 10 Qualifier – 4.129 seconds at 249.44 mph)

Qualifying 1: 4.129 sec./ 249.44 mph

Qualifying 2: 4.969 sec. /152.35 mph

“That is not our normal qualifying position, our average took a hit here this weekend. Come race day I think we can overcome that. It’s just a tricky track for everybody. It’s hotter than what we’ve seen most of the year and a surface we haven’t raced on in over a year. With two shots at qualifying, it’s been hard to hit it quickly. Hopefully we have enough data for tomorrow and we can make the right changes and maybe the weather will be cooler, but we have to wait and see. It should be an interesting race and may fall in the driver’s hands and it may be a pedal fest, but we’ll be ready. They’re all big rounds now. We control our own destiny and have to fend them all off.”

Ron Capps, NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 4 Qualifier –seconds at mph)

Qualifying 1: 4.025 sec./ 309.27 mph

Qualifying 2: 7.827 sec./ 8.589 mph

“Man, what a difficult day. Hot weather, humidity all the things that make you dig down deep. The NAPA guys did great Q1 and put us No. 4. I actually shut the car off around 900 feet, so it was possible that we could have gotten a few more spots in that session. We had a couple of issues on Q2 and Tobler and the guys are looking at it right now. There was something with the air system and it didn’t function properly and caused us to smoke the tires. We went up there to go low ET knowing there weren’t 16 cars here. That bye run is pretty important. Fortunately, we’re in the show. It’s going to be a tough day tomorrow and we need to make some ground up and get back in the top four.”

Leah Pruett, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 8 Qualifier – 3.922 seconds at 315.64 mph)

Qualifying 1: 4.347 sec./ 187.63 mph

Qualifying 2: 3.922 sec./315.64 mph

“It was very tricky to maneuver from the tuning calls to expecting the thing to maybe wash out a little bit, and we had to reposition the car for things we didn’t have to do at the Indy races given how hot it was here today. We smoked the tires Q1, but really far out there. I was thinking it was going to make it. And oddly enough for us to go second to last pair in Q2 put us in a good spot to be able to see where the track was at during that time, which could be similar to the final round tomorrow. I’m feeling good about eliminations for Sunday. We’re carrying momentum from the U.S. Nationals picking up where we left off and we’re itching for a solid race day with an early 10 a.m. start. We’ll get some good sleep and be ready to tame some nitro dragons tomorrow.”

Mark Pawuk, Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak– Factory Stock Shootout

(No. 10 Qualifier – 8.105 seconds at 171.99 mph)

Qualifying 1: 8.583 sec./ 168.51 mph

Qualifying 2: 8.105 sec./ 171.99 mph

“It looks like the Florida heat really got to our Dodge Drag Paks this weekend. We didn’t have the same performance that we had at Indy, but tomorrow is a new day and we’d love to go some rounds and stay up in the points. Our competition is looking awfully fast, but we’re never down until it’s over. (Crew chief) Kevin Helms and the crew, Terry (Snyder) and Kyle (Pawuk), are going to get it done to make these cars quicker tomorrow for race day.”

Leah Pruett, Mopar Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak – Factory Stock Shootout

(No. 12 Qualifier – 8.160 seconds at 169.25 mph)

Qualifying 1: 8.297 sec. / 168.01 mph

Qualifying 2: 8.160 sec / 169.25 mph

“Things are a little different this weekend with one run on Friday, one on Saturday and all four rounds of racing on Sunday. We go into race day from the No. 12 position and had two good runs down the track. The strategy is to get down the track and creep up on it instead of overpowering the track and then trying to back it down. I’m very confident that we can keep finding more power with this Mopar horsepower we create and we’re going to need that tomorrow morning for the first round. We look forward to a long day of racing and carrying the Mopar banner for the Dodge fans. We’re excited to be back in Gainesville and hope to go some rounds deep into Sunday for these fans.”

NHRA Championship Points Standings:

Following qualifying at Amalie Motor Oil NHRA Gatornationals

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Jack Beckman (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 549 (2)

2. Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 525 (2)

3. Tommy Johnson Jr. (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 492 (1)

4. J.R. Todd – 420

5. Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 411 (1)

6. Bob Tasca III – 394

7. Tim Wilkerson – 388

8. Alexis DeJoria – 276

9. Cruz Pedregon – 266

10. Paul Lee – 258

TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)

1. Doug Kalitta – 526 (1)

2. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 475

3. Steve Torrance – 468 (2)

4. Justin Ashley – 402 (1)

5. Billy Torrance – 373 (1)

6. Shawn Langdon – 363 (1)

7. Antron Brown – 353

8. Terry McMillen – 337

9. Clay Millican – 317

10. Doug Foley – 196

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.

@DodgeMoparMotorsports on Instagram

The [@DodgeMoparMotorsports](https://www.instagram.com/dodge_mopar_motorsports/) 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.

Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOrtor 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. 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.

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.

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