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Pruett Powers 2021 Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak to Second Consecutive Runner-Up Finish in Factory Stock Showdown at Topeka

- Don Schumacher Racing's (DSR) Leah Pruett earned her second consecutive runner-up finish aboard her 2021 Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak in the Constant Aviation Factory Stock Showdown competition at the Menards National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Nationals in Topeka, Kansas
- Cruz Pedregon powered his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to a semifinal appearance at Heartland Motorsports Park
- Ron Capps and his DSR Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat remain second in Funny Car championship standings and clinch a berth in 2021 NHRA "Countdown to the Championship" after a close quarterfinal battle
- No. 4 qualifier Matt Hagan drove his DSR Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye Funny Car to the quarterfinal appearance, set low elapsed time of the day and stays in the top-five in Funny Car points with two events remaining before the playoffs begin

August 15, 2021, Topeka, Kansas - Don Schumacher Racing's (DSR) Leah Pruett powered her 2021 Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak to her second consecutive runner-up finish in Constant Aviation Factory Stock Showdown (FSS) competition this weekend at the 32nd annual Menards National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Nationals Presented by PetArmor in Topeka, Kansas.

Following up her FSS runner-up performance at the Dodge//SRT Mile-High Nationals in Denver last month, Pruett began her charge from the tenth place on the eliminations ladder at Heartland Motorsports Park against No. 7 seed Doug Hamp, immediately moving on to the quarterfinals due to her opponent's red-light start. Her Mopar Drag Pak then turned on the win lights against No. 15 seed Daniel Condon with a 7.987-second run at 174.35 mph to beat his 7.993 sec./172.85 mph pass to advance to the semifinals.

Once again, Pruett was ready to challenge for a round win and hit the throttle with a 0.011-second reaction time, clocking a 7.929 sec./174.77 mph run to earn a solid holeshot victory over No. 3 seed David Barton's 0.069-second start and 7.883 sec./175.66 mph pass to move on to her second final round battle of the year.

The final showdown pitted her against No. 1 qualifier John Cerbone but this time, even after posting another quick reaction time, an immediate loss of traction derailed the run and gave her opponent the lead and eventual win. Despite the loss, Pruett's runner-up finish moved her up in the FSS championship battle into third place with three events remaining.

Also in FSS action, Pruett's FSS teammate Mark Pawuk qualified 13th aboard his 2015 Empaco Equipment Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag to pair him with the points leader, defending FSS champion and No. 4 qualifier Aaron Stanfield for his opening round match-up. Wheeling his Mopar Drag Pak to its best run of the weekend with an 8.020-second pass wasn't quite enough to catch Stanfield, who posted a 7.974 elapsed time run to move on.

Pruett and Pawuk were joined this weekend by a third DSR-prepared FSS entry with the addition of David Davies and his 2021 Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak. Davies, whose company Constant Aviation signed on to sponsor the FSS series in May, made his NHRA debut with the new generation Mopar Drag Pak at the Norwalk national event in June before joining the DSR roster. While Davies did not qualify for this weekend's elimination rounds, he will return with the DSR team at the next FSS event next month at the Dodge//SRT U.S. Nationals.

In Funny Car action, hard work by the Cruz Pedregon Racing team throughout the weekend at Heartland Motorsports Park gave driver Cruz Pedregon the opportunity to go rounds on Sunday aboard his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger

SRT Hellcat. They overcame the challenge presented by a top-end incident in the second qualifying session when lane mate Tim Wilkerson's race car crossed the center line and collided with Pedregon's before both hit the wall. While both drivers emerged unhurt, both teams took out their back up vehicles for the balance of the weekend.

Despite the setback, Pedregon, a four-time winner at the Kansas event, was able to qualify seventh and was once again paired with No. 13 qualifier Wilkerson for the opening round. Pedregon earned the first round win by posting a 4.014-second run at 316.01 mph to beat his opponent's 4.044 sec./286.68 mph pass and advance to a quarterfinal battle against No. 2 qualifier Alexis DeJoria. Pedregon's HEMI[®]-powered machine sped to a holeshot win thanks to his 0.091-second reaction time and an identical 4.006-second run to beat DeJoria's 0.111-second start and send him into the next round to face No. 6 seed John Force. The semifinal battle was close and hard fought with Pedregon's Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat clocking another solid 4.063 sec./303.91 mph run in a losing effort to Force's 4.005/321.35 winning pass. With the result, Pedregon moves up a spot into eighth place in the Funny Car championship standings.

Coming into Topeka as the Funny Car points leader, Ron Capps was looking to continue his season-long string of qualifying his DSR Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat in the top-five and perhaps extend his No. 1 qualifier streak to three, while making every effort to once again advance to the semifinals or beyond like he had at four previous events. While things didn't go quite as planned in qualifying with a seventh place seeding, Capps advanced to the quarterfinals with his best pass of the weekend, a 3.955-second run and round win over Chad Green. The DSR veteran driver lined up against J.R. Todd, against whom he laid down another respectable 3.994-second lap. Unfortunately, Todd's quicker start gave him the edge at the stripe despite running a slower 3.996-second lap to take the holeshot win and bring an end to Capps' run through the eliminations. However, with the result, Capps becomes the first Funny Car driver to clinch a berth into the 2021 "Countdown to the Championship" playoffs and he heads to the next event second in points.

Defending Funny Car champ Matt Hagan qualified fourth and got right down to business in the opening round by taking his DSR Performance Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat for a quickest elapsed time lap of the day at 3.920 seconds at 323.89 mph and turn the win lights on against No. 13 seed Jack Wyatt.

Hagan, who won this event in 2016, had a more eventful run in the quarterfinals against fifth seed Blake Alexander. Hagan was once again quickest on the start but both drivers had to pedal their way out of trouble en route to the finish line. Hagan hung on to cross the stripe with a 4.193-second lap but it wasn't quite enough to catch Alexander's 4.126-second run. While it brought his day to a premature end, Hagan remains in the top-five, tied for fifth (with Robert Hight) in the points standings with two events left before the points reset for the playoffs.

Top Fuel pilot Leah Pruett brought her DSR Cookie and Candy Pop Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster into Topeka riding the momentum of two consecutive final round appearances in California. Her runner-up finish at Sonoma and the Wally Trophy in Pomona also moved her up from an eighth place position in the championship standings to the fourth spot behind points leader Steve Torrance.

In Top Fuel action on Sunday, Pruett found herself matched up with No. 4 qualifier Torrence for the opening round of eliminations after qualifying 11th with a 3.897 sec./314.31 mph run set on a hot track on Saturday, after not getting in a good lap on a cooler track in the prior evening's session. Pruett's HEMI-powered dragster made the first move and posted a 3.776-second elapsed time run at 319.75 mph in a good, close race that saw Torrence edge her at the line with a 3.736 sec./325.61 mph pass. While that brought a quick end to her day and any opportunity to pack a few more points, Pruett remains fourth in the Top Fuel standings

Mopar and Dodge supported entries will be back on track next weekend in Brainerd, Minnesota, for the Lucas Oil NHRA Nationals at Brainerd International Raceway, the 12th of 20 NHRA national events this season.

ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES

FUNNY CAR:

Matt Hagan, DSR Performance Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye

(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.911 seconds at 325.14 mph)

Round 1: (0.071-second reaction time, 3.920 seconds at 323.89 mph) defeats to No. 13 Jack Wyatt (0.203/4.263/243.28)

Round 2: (0.081/4.193/276.13) loss to No. 5 Blake Alexander (0.096/4.126/252.95)

"It's the middle of the summer, it's hot and tricky out here and the race tracks are changing. We had a really good qualifying session and had a great last run and we had a lot of confidence but it gets hotter and hotter out there and the track is more marginal when you try to apply all that power that we make with these DSR performance parts and this Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye. It bit us today but we're back in less than a week at Brainerd (Minn.) with the Mopar colors and we'll put on a show and get back to winning rounds."

Ron Capps, DSR NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

(No. 9 Qualifier – 3.968 seconds at 324.36 mph)

Round 1: (0.071-second reaction time, 3.955 seconds at 325.92 mph) defeats No. 8 Chad Green (No time)

Round 2: (0.076/3.994/317.49) loss to No. 1 J.R. Todd (0.059/3.996/318.99)

"You wait until all the hurt goes away and my team and the whole DSR organization we put so much into what we do and winning races. It's tough to lose those close ones. As good as our car and this NAPA team is, that's tough to go up there with a .76 light and run a great lap and lose but we're going to see a lot of that going into the playoffs with teams as good as J.R.'s (Todd). Like I always brag about with 'Guido' (Dean Antonelli) and John Medlen and their NAPA Know How, again we went down the race track at a very good pace. When you do as well as we have this season and rank high in the standings, it puts a bullseye on your back because the teams know they have to show up and perform and give it their best and we'll continue to see more of that as this season continues. It hurts a little bit right now but it didn't hurt us too badly in the Camping World points. We're going to another great track at Brainerd that will have great conditions with great people and a great bunch from NAPA and it's one we enjoy so much. It's nice to have back-to-back races before we get to Indy and the U.S. Nationals and then the Countdown."

Cruz Pedregon, Cruz Pedregon Racing Snap-on® Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

(No. 7 Qualifier – 3.962 seconds at 322.19 mph)

Round 1: (0.089-second reaction time, 4.014 seconds at 316.01 mph) defeats No. 13 Tim Wilkerson (0.091/4.044/286.68)

Round 2: (0.091/4.006/311.20) defeats No. 2 Alexis DeJoria (0.111/4.006/319.52)

Round 3: (0.063/4.063/303.91) loss to No. 6 John Force (0.059/4.005/321.35)

"Let me just say this about Topeka; There was great fan engagement and a lot of fans here. Topeka was a good race for us. We qualified seventh and went to the semifinals by beating some really good cars which was a good result for us. We had the lead against John Force in the semifinals but had a clutch issue that was completely on us as we didn't execute the adjustments properly but overall it was a really good event for us. It was a key race for us in terms of points and taking our Snap-On Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat for round wins over Tim Wilkerson and Alexis DeJoria. Obviously we had the issue in qualifying with Tim (Wilkerson) on Saturday but you know, it was one of those racing things that happens and luckily neither one of us were hurt. Brainerd is up next and we're going to go back to the shop to regroup, get some things replaced that we damaged body-wise and get everything ironed out before we head up on Wednesday."

TOP FUEL:

Leah Pruett, DSR Cookie and Candy Pop Dodge//SRT Dragster

(No. 11 Qualifier – 3.897 seconds at 314.31 mph)

Round 1: (0.067-second reaction time, 3.776 seconds at 319.75 mph) loss to No. 4 Steve Torrence (0.074/3.736/325.61)

"Man, what a drag race that was. Not the result we wanted with this Candy and Cookie Pop car. We really felt like we had a race car to go rounds today and we did. We would've beaten many other cars if you look at the ladder, except for Steve Torrence. There's a reason that team is leading the points and he is a three-time champion. We overcame our challenges in qualifying and this isn't going to get us down. We ran a great .77 and the team did their job. We left first and made a clean lap. It's a great, friendly rivalry but we were on the wrong end of that drag race. Brainerd is just around the corner and we found that we were down on power a little bit this week. We just need to give it a little more going into Brainerd next weekend. We'll put all the nitro to it."

FACTORY STOCK SHOOTOUT:

Leah Pruett, 2021 Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak

(No. 10 Qualifier – 8.011 seconds at 175.64 mph)

Round 1: (0.057-second reaction time, 8.986 seconds at 113.00 mph) defeats No. 7 Doug Hamp (-0.056/8.093/172.19)

Round 2: (0.056/7.987/174.35) defeats No. 15 Daniel Condon (0.052/7.993/172.85)

Round 3: (0.011/7.929/174.77) defeats No. 3 David Barton (0.069/7.883/175.66)

Round 4: (0.052/8.808/169.76) loss to No. 1 John Cerbone (0.016/7.912/174.32)

“What an outstanding performance by this Dodge Factory Stock Drag Pak team all day long here at Topeka, adapting to challenging track conditions, being aggressive as the day got longer and hotter and working on our performance window of this Mopar Drag Pak. I’m so proud of Kevin (Helms), A.J. (Berge), Mark Pawuk and this entire team here at DSR for sticking together. For me, it’s the fourth final in two different classes in the last four races and two straight Factory Stock finals. We’re building momentum and we have plans to test and get better before the Indy U.S. Nationals. We’re back in the hunt and No. 3 in the points and it’s very reminiscent of our 2018 season where we came on strong in the last half of the season and that was by no accident then or now. There’s been a lot of hard work by this DSR team and crew. I’ve had a smile on my face all day. I’m having a lot of fun driving this Drag Pak and we’re so looking forward to Indy.”

Mark Pawuk, Empaco Equipment 2015 Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak

(No. 13 Qualifier – 8.102 seconds at 173.07 mph)

Round 1: (0.054-second reaction time, 8.020 seconds at 172.78 mph) loss to No. 4 Aaron Stanfield (0.043/7.974/171.34)

“Certainly not the weekend we were hoping for here at Topeka with this Empaco Equipment Dodge Drag Pak. Unfortunately, we didn’t qualify as well as we’d hoped and we got stuck running Aaron Stanfield again and it seems like we get him at every race. He’s about 40 years younger than me and a very tough competitor doing very well in two classes, Factory Stock and Pro Stock. We’re going to keep working on this Dodge. We did make some headway last night and this morning and we’re really looking forward to bringing our new 2021 Drag Pak out at Indy in a few weeks. It’s going to be busy testing and getting ready for the U.S. Nationals.”

David Davies, D H Davies Racing 2021 Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak

(Did Not Qualify – 10.492 seconds at 139.60 mph)

“It was very exciting to have our first event with DSR this weekend at Topeka. The crew did a fantastic job. We learned a lot and made progress on every hit. I’m looking forward to going to Indy in a few weeks and making more progress with the new 2021 Mopar Drag Pak and getting this thing dialed-in so that it’s faster and faster.”

NHRA Championship Points Standings:

Following the Menards NHRA Nationals Presented by PetArmor at Heartland Motorsports Park

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. John Force – 816 (3)
2. **Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 787 (1)**
3. J.R. Todd – 778 (1)
4. Bob Tasca III – 766 (2)
5. **Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 748 (1)**
5. Robert Hight – 748 (2)
7. Alexis DeJoria – 691
8. **Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 610 (1)**
9. Tim Wilkerson – 584
10. Blake Alexander – 417

TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)

1. Steve Torrance – 1090 (6)
2. Brittany Force – 748 (1)
3. Antron Brown – 736 (1)

4. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 611 (1)

5. Shawn Langdon – 587
6. Mike Salinas – 571
7. Justin Ashley – 523
8. Billy Torrence – 510 (1)
9. Clay Millican – 482
10. Doug Kalitta – 471

Constant Aviation Factory Stock Showdown Series:

1. Aaron Stanfield – 420
2. David Barton – 359

3. Leah Pruett (Mopar Drag Pak)– 280

4. John Cerbone – 270
5. Stephen Bell – 255
6. David Janac – 243
7. Jesse Alexandra – 236
8. Doug Hamp – 200
9. Arthur Kohn – 200

10. Mark Pawuk (Mopar Drag Pak) – 197

DodgeGarage: Digital Hub for Drag Racing News

Fans can follow all the NHRA 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 Instagram channel continues to share content capturing Dodge//SRT Mopar drivers on the track. Fans can see action from the NHRA Camping World 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.

Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARTs) offers exceptional service, parts and customer care. 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 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, the brand expanded to include technical service and customer support. Today, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Mopar is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider Stellantis. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit www.stellantis.com.

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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-plus-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 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). The Dodge brand also [ranked No. 1](#) in the J.D. Power APEAL Study (mass market). These results are historic because it marks the first time a domestic brand has earned top spots in both J.D. Power studies in the same year.

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