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## **Pedregon Wins All-Dodge Funny Car Final at Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil**

- Cruz Pedregon wins all-Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat final against Funny Car championship points leader Ron Capps at Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway
- The Cruz Pedregon Racing Snap-on Tools HEMI-powered machine scored its second win of the year and moved into third place in the hunt for the 2021 Funny Car world championship crown with one event remaining
- Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) pilot Ron Capps leads the Funny Car championship battle by 58 points with a runner-up finish aboard the Pennzoil Synthetics/NAPA AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat
- Despite an early exit, defending Funny Car world champion Matt Hagan and his Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat maintain their second place standing in the NHRA "Countdown to the Championship" less than two rounds behind his DSR teammate Capps
- Leah Pruett wheeled her Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak and its Direct Connection livery from the No. 4 qualifying position to a runner-up finish in the eighth and final Constant Aviation Factory Stock Showdown (FSS) of the season to finish third in the series championship

October 31, 2021, Las Vegas, Nevada - The Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals featured an all-Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat final elimination round at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway where Cruz Pedregon earned his second Wally trophy of the year with a victory over Funny Car championship points leader Ron Capps. The win moved the event winner into third place in the battle for the crown with one event remaining on the 2021 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World series schedule to determine who'll earn the coveted Funny Car world championship title.

"Congratulations to Cruz Pedregon on his fourth career win at the Dodge//SRT Nationals," said Tim Kuniskis, Dodge Brand Chief Executive Officer - Stellantis. "It's been great to watch Cruz and his team demonstrate what Dodge//SRT performance looks like by taking their Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to the winner's circle."

Pedregon's drive began from the No. 7 starting position from which he was able to wheel his Snap-on Tools HEMI®-powered machine past Tony Jurado and Chris Morel to a semifinal match-up with No. 6 seed Bob Tasca. The Cruz Pedregon Racing team saw their driver hit the throttle with a 0.004-second reaction time against Tasca, and turn on win lights with a 3.924-second pass at 325.92 mph to advance to their fourth final round appearance of the year.

As Pedregon and his team prepared for the Dodge//SRT Nationals final showdown against Capps, they found themselves solidly back in the hunt of the Funny Car crown after fellow top-five contenders Matt Hagan, J.R. Todd and John Force were all upset in the opening round.

With both Pedregon and Capps looking to make valuable gains in "Countdown to the Championship", their crew chiefs both elected to push the performance of their Dodge racecars to the limit. The result was a good launch by both competitors with the slight starting advantage going to Pedregon, but just as Capps began to move past him, too much horsepower resulted in an explosion. Pedregon got a little bit further down the track before also losing power, but was able to coast his machine to the finish for the victory, marking the first time since 2013 that he has recorded multiple wins in a season.

"We had a couple of good breaks with three of the top-five contenders dropped out in the first round but to be in this position (to be battling for a championship with one event remaining) is great," said Pedregon who moves into third

place behind the Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Cars of Capps and Hagan. "Coming into the race I think (our championship chances) were pretty dim because I just didn't feel like the breaks were coming our way. We were just losing some close races. And I thought, 'Man, well, if we could just finish in the top five, I felt that was good. But after winning today, yeah, hey, we're, back in it."

Capps, who is seeking a second Funny Car world championship after earning the 2016 title, arrived at the Dodge//SRT Nationals with a single point advantage over teammate Hagan. From his eighth place starting position, Capps collected round wins over Tim Wilkerson, Alexis DeJoria and Robert Hight on his way to the runner-up finish; a result that extended his lead over No. 2 ranked Hagan by 58 points.

Hagan, who was looking to take over the lead and defend his back-to-back 2019 and 2020 win at the Las Vegas dragstrip, qualified his Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat fourth on the eliminations ladder for a first round meeting with No. 13-seed Chad Green. While Hagan had the quicker start, a dropped cylinder right at the hit of the throttle resulted in a 4.087 second pass at 316.15 mph that wasn't quite enough to beat Green's 4.009 sec./321.12 mph winning run and meant a disappointing early exit for the championship contender for a second consecutive event.

Despite the setback, and thanks to other contenders failing to advance, Hagan maintained his second place standing with less than two rounds separating him from Capps heading into the Auto Club NHRA Finals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona in two weeks for the conclusion of the NHRA "Countdown to the Championship".

In Top fuel action, after qualifying her Direct Connection dragster ninth Leah Pruett began eliminations with a starting line advantage over No. 8 seed DSR teammate Antron Brown and went on to record her quickest and fastest pass of the weekend with a 3.752 seconds at 318.32 mph run for a first round win. Pruett was fired up for her next meeting against No. 1 qualifier Brittany Force and hoping to take her new Direct Connection livery through a few more rounds, but her anticipation got the best of her as she hit the throttle too early and the red light foul ended her race before it had even begun.

While her nitro run was done for the day, Pruett still had some work to do; After four years of competing in both Top Fuel and Constant Aviation Factory Stock Showdown (FSS), Pruett continued her final "double-duty" race day with the 2021 Direct Connection Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak. From the No. 4 spot on the eliminations ladder and working to close-out the FSS season with a Wally, the 2018 FSS champion began her final day of competition aboard her DSR-prepared Drag Pak with a first round win over No. 13-seed Ryan Priddy.

In the quarterfinals against No. 5 seed Mark Pawuk and his Empaco Equipment Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, Pruett had a quick start and recorded a 7.981-second run at 173.94 mph to beat her DSR teammate's 7.998 sec./177.44 mph pass. Pawuk quarterfinal finish brought his 2021 FSS campaign to an end with an eight place ranking in the final standings.

Pruett continued on to a semifinal battle against No. 8 qualifier Stephen Bell where she put in another stout effort at 7.934 sec./174.53 mph to turn on win lights and advance to her third final round appearance in eight FSS events this year.

Pruett readied herself for the final showdown against the No. 2 qualifier and 2021 FSS Champion Aaron Stanfield in the opposite lane, and used another quick launch (0.036 seconds to 0.045 seconds) to give the Direct Connection Drag Pak an early lead. Despite a solid performance at 7.944 seconds at 174.30 mph, her hard-charging opponent made the pass at halftrack and edged her at the finish with a 7.903 sec./173.49 pass. With the runner-up result, Pruett closes out her FSS career with a third place finish in the category.

The NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series now heads west to crown their world champions at the Auto Club NHRA Finals which will feature a unique points-and-a-half format, setting the stage for an exciting conclusion to the 2021 season at Auto Club Raceway November 11-14 in Pomona, California.

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES**

##### **FUNNY CAR:**

**Matt Hagan, DSR Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye**

**(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.905 seconds at 321.65 mph)**

**Round 1: (0.068-second reaction time, 4.087 seconds at 316.15 mph) loss to No. 13 Chad Green (0.107/4.009/321.12)**

“I don’t know how you put a positive spin on that. I haven’t put a hole out at the step in I don’t know how long. But, that’s the cards we were dealt here in Vegas. We wanted to perform well in front of our sponsors and fans, and keep things going in this championship chase, so, it’s incredibly disappointing. That’s going to be a tough one to get over. We’re not used to first round losses like that but congrats to Chad Green and his team. They kept us honest and did a good job. It’s a major blow to us right now, but we’ll get over it and get back after it in Pomona.”

**Ron Capps, DSR Pennzoil Synthetics NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat**

**(No. 8 Qualifier – 3.926 seconds at 324.51 mph)**

**Round 1: (0.068-second reaction time, 3.915 seconds at 323.74 mph) defeats No. 9 Tim Wilkerson (0.055/3.947/330.72)**

**Round 2: (0.078/3.884/332.10) defeats No. 1 Alexis DeJoria (0.122/3.998/315.05)**

**Round 3: (0.066/3.904/326.87) defeats No. 5 Robert Hight (0.077/5.520/130.85)**

**Round 4: (0.049/6.854/80.86) loss to No. 7 Cruz Pedregon (0.022/4.257/225.03)**

“Being the Dodge Nationals, we were motivated to put this Pennzoil Dodge SRT Hellcat into the final round and winner’s circle. You look at qualifying and look around and we didn’t qualify as well as we’d liked. It was one of our worst positions all season and we still had lane choice. That tells you how good this NAPA team has been all season. Then you have Tim Wilkerson first round. And we’re the last pair of Funny Cars, the 16th pair of nitro cars and we’re sitting there waiting and listening to so many of the other contenders fighting for a championship, (Matt) Hagan, J.R. (Todd), (John) Force, go out. It’s Halloween, but you think how strange of a day. And we had to wait and wait for our first round match-up with Tim. He beat us in the final at Indy and that’s such a tough car and team. We got by a close one there in that first round and that was huge. Then we had Alexis (DeJoria), the No. 1 qualifier, then Robert Hight, a three-time world champion, and Cruz Pedregon, another champion. That’s a murderers row on race day. We had to fight every round and this Pennzoil/NAPA car was just to fun to drive.

“We’ll take any amount of points and Pomona is a such an outlier with the points-and-a-half deal. There’s so many points up for grabs. I’m not even thinking about winning this thing. We’ll keep doing what we’ve been doing and it was misfortunate in the final round, but it was two Dodges battling it out and that makes our friends in Auburn Hills (Mich.) proud and I can’t wait for Pomona. Two weeks cannot come soon enough.”

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

**(No. 7 Qualifier –3.918 seconds at 325.69 mph)**

**Round 1: (0.072–second reaction time, 3.947 seconds at 295.08 mph) defeats No. 10 Tony Jurado (0.105/4.032/317.19)**

**Round 2: (0.073/3.903/324.20) defeats No. 15 Chris Morel (0.093/4.193/281.19)**

**Round 3: (0.004/3.924/325.92) defeats No. 6 Bob Tasca (0.066/10.961/81.12)**

**Round 4: (0.022/4.257/225.03) defeats No. 8 Ron Capps (0.049/6.854/80.86)**

“Coming into the race I think (our championship chances) were pretty dim because I just didn’t feel like the breaks were coming our way. We were just losing some close races. And I thought, ‘Man, well, if we could just finish in the top five, I felt that was good. But after winning today, yeah, hey, we’re, back in it.

“We had a couple of good breaks with three of the top-five contenders dropped out in the first round but to be in this position (to be battling for a championship with one event remaining) is great. We got it together midway through the season and started clicking as a team. I do want to thank Don Schumacher Racing for selling us quality parts and bending over backwards for me personally and did a lot to help us along the way. We’re a single car team and we’ve been going it alone for a lot of years and it really means a lot to mix it up with these big teams. We’re going to come out swinging at Pomona and see who the last man standing is. Just to be in the conversation for a change really is a victory for me.”

“Putting the right people and right equipment into place this season has really challenged me as a driver. And seeing

everything come together has refocused this winning mindset for the team and me. I owe a lot of gratitude to this team. (Crew Chief) JC (John Collins) means a lot to me not only as a crew chief but as a friend. He knows how to talk to me and keep me motivated. Man, this really means a lot, we're so grateful for all our great NHRA fans and loyal sponsors who are as proud of these wins as we are...and there's one more win to go this season."

#### **TOP FUEL:**

##### **Leah Pruett, DSR Direct Connection Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster**

**(No. 9 Qualifier – 3.769 seconds at 314.61 mph)**

**Round 1: (0.044-second reaction time, 3.752 at 318.32 mph) defeats No. 8 Antron Brown (0.056/4.967/155.11)**

**Round 2: (-0.210/8.087/82.88) loss to No. 1 Brittany Force (-0.069/3.745/330.39)**

"We had quite the Direct Connection facing Antron Brown, our teammate, this morning. We had a .044 light and I've been doing everything by the book that you should do as a driver from sleep schedule to eating right to preparing right to nutrition. You name it, I've been trying to refine it. We had a solid first round pass with that 3.75 to get the win.

"I felt in a good head space and we went up to repeat what we had just done the round before. I thought had seen yellow and slapped the pedal and there was that bright red light right in my face. I'm sure the fans could probably hear the cuss words in the stands coming out of my mouth at the moment. It used to eat me and bog me down, but comparing it to other lights in that lane at that time of the day it shows me what I need to work on to really be at tip-top condition as a driver."

#### **FACTORY STOCK SHOOTOUT:**

##### **Leah Pruett, 2021 Direct Connection Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak**

**(No. 4 Qualifier – 7.963 seconds at 173.21 mph)**

**Round 1:** (0.036-second reaction time, 7.932 seconds at 174.77 mph) defeats No. 13 Ryan Priddy (0.060/10.179/92.86)

**Round 2:** (0.022/7.981/173.94) defeats No. 5 Mark Pawuk (0.063/7.998/177.44)

**Round 3:** (0.067/7.934/174.53) defeats No. 8 Stephen Bell (0.044/8.147/172.12)

**Round 4:** (0.036/7.944/174.30) loss to No. 2 Aaron Stanfield (0.045/7.903/173.49)

"We got a win in Factory Stock to start our day, and then we had our teammate, Mark Pawuk in round two. We really threw it down from burnout to turnout and was able to advance to the final. Man, nothing would have been sweeter than winning in my last race in this Drag Pak with Direct Connection on the sides for Dodge and SRT, but we came up a little short against the current champion, Aaron Stanfield. Overall, what a roller coaster of a day. I'm disappointed in myself for the second round performance against Brittany Force in Top Fuel, but I'm not disappointed by the progress this Drag Pak team has made this year."

##### **Mark Pawuk, Empaco Equipment Mopar Drag Pak**

**(No. 5 Qualifier – 7.970 seconds at 174.39 mph)**

**Round 1:** (-0.098 second reaction time, 7.944 seconds at 175.00 mph) defeats No. 12 John Cerbone (-0.205/8.436/169.64)

**Round 2:** (0.063/7.998/177.44) loss to No. 4 Leah Pruett (0.022/7.981/173.94)

"Unfortunately, the Cowboy wasn't on his game today on the tree. I gotta give my teammate credit, Leah (Pruett) is driving great in that Direct Connection Drag Pak. It's great to see these Drag Pak's running so well with Leah getting back to another final round. We'll regroup over the winter and hopefully have a strong season in '22. Overall, it was a good weekend at (Las) Vegas. We continue to improve and make progress and make consistent runs. We need to go just a little faster. We've made a lot of gains with the new car since its debut this summer and next year should be fun."

##### **David Davies, D H Davies Racing Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak**

**(No. 14 Qualifier – 8.039 seconds at 172.47 mph)**

**Round 1:** (0.024 second reaction time, 8.015 seconds at 174.39 mph) loss to No. 3 Jason Dietsch (0.041/7.913/176.81)

"We had a great first season with the new car and crew. The crew hustled their butts off this weekend with some issues Leah (Pruett) and I had with some cars. I'm not happy with the early exit. I'm not happy with the way I performed or the car performed. We had great momentum coming in. We've had some great progression, but you're bound to hit some bumps in the road. The last Constant Aviation Factory Stock Showdown event in '21 and we stumbled a little bit, but we'll get into some off season testing. We learned quite a bit and I expect us to come out and hit it hard next year. We did absolutely have fun racing this year."

### **NHRA Championship Points Standings:**

*Following qualifying at the Dodge//SRT NHRA Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway*

#### **FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)**

- 1. Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,585 (2)**
- 2. Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,527 (3/1-Tommy Johnson Jr.)**
- 3. Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,502 (2)**
4. J.R. Todd – 2,447 (1)
5. John Force – 2,430 (3)
6. Bob Tasca III – 2,417 (2)
7. Robert Hight – 2,412 (2)
8. Alexis DeJoria – 2,380 (1)
9. Tim Wilkerson – 2,282 (1)
10. Blake Alexander – 2,184

#### **TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)**

1. Steve Torrance – 2694 (10)
2. Brittany Force – 2,589 (1)
3. Mike Salinas – 2,522 (1)
4. Justin Ashley – 2,506 (2)
5. Billy Torrence – 2,411 (2)
- 6. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 2,343 (1)**
7. Clay Millican – 2,302
8. Antron Brown – 2,285 (1)
9. Shawn Langdon – 2,260
10. Doug Kalitta – 2,211

#### **Constant Aviation Factory Stock Showdown**

1. Aaron Stanfield – 768
2. David Barton – 484
- 3. Leah Pruett (Mopar Drag Pak) – 461**
4. Jesse Alexandra – 456
5. John Cerbone – 441
6. Stephen Bell – 412
7. David Janac – 377
- 8. Mark Pawuk (Mopar Drag Pak) – 358**
9. Leonard Lottig – 315
10. Doug Hamp – 312

#### **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](http://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 MOTO 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](http://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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