

Hard Work With Hagan's Rebuilt Dodge Funny Car Just Misses In Tricky Conditions at Gerber Route 66 Nationals Sunday

- Matt Hagan's rebuilt Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Direct Connection Dodge/SRT Hellcat Funny Car returned to action this weekend at the NHRA Gerber Route 66 Nationals in Joliet, Illinois, and qualified fourth in the 16-car lineup
- However, after three tough weeks of rebuilding the car for this weekend, Hagan's machine lost traction in the first round and was eliminated from competition
- Despite the first round loss, Hagan continues to lead the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Funny Car point standings heading to Epping, New Hampshire, in two weeks
- Leah Pruett, who ranked fourth in NHRA Top Fuel points with Direct Connection Top Fuel dragster, advanced to the second round Sunday after a strong win over four-time NHRA Top Fuel champion Steve Torrance
- Pruett remains in the top-five in the current NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series Top Fuel point standings
- Cruz Pedregon qualified second at the Route 66 Nationals in the Funny Car division with a 3.889 run with his Snap-On Dodge// SRT Hellcat

May 21, 2023, Auburn Hills, Mich. -

It was a tough three weeks for the Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) team with the rebuilding of Matt Hagan's Direct Connection Dodge//SRT Hellcat Funny Car after the Charlotte incident into the catch netting.

Having the first eight feet of the Funny Car chassis replaced at a local Brownsburg, Indiana repair shop, Hagan, the winner of three 2023 NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series national events, tested well before this weekend's NHRA Gerber Route 66 Nationals and the Dickie Venables-led crew was prepared for the return to the Illinois drag strip south of Chicago.

Unfortunately, after qualifying fourth in the 16-car field, Hagan's Funny Car lost traction in the first round of eliminations Sunday in tricky track conditions.

Despite the first-round loss, Hagan maintains the top position in the current NHRA Funny Car point standings as the tour moves to the NHRA New England Nationals in Epping, New Hampshire, on June 2-4.

"We've had two tough races in a row with first-round losses (Charlotte and Joliet)," said Hagan. "It is not a representation of what I feel like this team is or the level we're at. It didn't help that I put the car in the sand in Charlotte and we had to put a new front half of the car. At the end of the day, I know what we are capable of and isn't a reflection of what happened today.

"We didn't have a good showing on our end this weekend for Dodge and Direct Connection. Epping is where we've won four races. This weekend was tough because my guys have put in a lot of work the last couple weeks with the new front half of the car. We'll hit the reset button and go from there."

Hagan's TSR teammate, Leah Pruett, advanced her Direct Connection Top Fuel dragster to the second round at the Route 66 Nationals with a first-round win over four-time NHRA series champion Steve Torrance. However, Pruett's machine lost traction at half-track in round two and lost the race to local driver T.J. Zizzo in the first NHRA national event at the Route 66 Raceway since 2018.

Despite the second-round loss, Pruett maintained her top-five spot in the NHRA Top Fuel standings as the Arizona

driver heads to New Hampshire in two weeks.

"If there was one word to describe this Dodge Direct Connection team and our experience at Route 66 Raceway, it's adaptability," said Pruett. "Coming into this race, it's a lot different having 21 hard-hitting cars on a new racetrack with new conditions. By qualifying ninth, on the other side of the field for the first time this season, it disrupted our qualifying average (in top-five).

"We committed to a new tune-up program going into Charlotte last race. We have very few runs with it and are continuing to learn in these various conditions. It's very science and math-based developed by our crew chiefs. Leaving here strong in points has everything to do with being consistent and making it down the racetrack when other cars have not. We're prepared now with Epping around the corner."

Cruz Pedregon qualified second with his Snap-On Tools Dodge// SRT Hellcat at 3.8889, trailing only Robert Hight's pole time of 3.831. Pedregon reached the second round in Funny Car eliminations Sunday.

@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.

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 a lineup that delivers unrivaled performance in each of the segments where they compete.

Dodge drives forward as a pure performance brand, offering SRT Hellcat versions of the Dodge Challenger, Dodge Charger and Dodge Durango, as well as an R/T plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) version of the all-new 2023 Dodge Hornet, representing the brand's first-ever electrified performance vehicle. Dodge delivers the drag-strip dominating 807-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Super Stock; the 797-horsepower Dodge Charger SRT Redeye, the most powerful and fastest mass-produced sedan in the world; and the 710-horsepower Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat, the most powerful SUV ever; and best-in-class standard performance in the compact utility vehicle segment with the Dodge Hornet. Combined, these four muscle vehicles make Dodge the industry's most powerful brand, offering more horsepower than any other American brand across its entire lineup.

In 2022, the Dodge brand ranked No. 1 in the [J.D. Power APEAL Study](#) (mass market), making it the only domestic brand ever to do so three years in a row. 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).

Fans can follow all the NHRA action this season at [DodgeGarage](#), the one-stop portal for Dodge//SRT and Mopar drag-racing news, including daily updates and access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads and merchandise. Dodge is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider [Stellantis](#) (NYSE: STLA).

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A simple combination of the words MOrtor 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.

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