

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 Mission 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 110 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 in which the brand competes while moving forward to a future that includes electrified muscle in the form of the next-generation, all-new Dodge Charger.

The next-generation Dodge Charger electrifies a legend, with the Charger retaining its title as the world's quickest and most powerful muscle car led by the all-new, all-electric 2024 Dodge Charger Daytona Scat Pack. The all-new Dodge Charger will also offer performance choices via multi-energy powertrain options including the 550-horsepower Dodge Charger SIXPACK H.O., powered by the 3.0L Twin Turbo Hurricane High Output engine.

Dodge also keeps its foot on the gas as a pure performance brand with 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.

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.

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