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Hagan, Pruett Go to Carolina Nationals Semifinals, Both in Top 4 in NHRA Countdown Title Points

- Matt Hagan, a four-time 2023 NHRA Camping World Funny Car event winner, put in another strong performance this weekend with his Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Johnson Horsepower Garage Dodge//SRT Hellcat with runs of 3.825, 3.828, 3.841 and 3.868 at the NHRA Carolina Nationals
- Hagan, the three-time NHRA World Champion, set low elapsed time in the opening round with a 3.868 over John Smith and defeated Tim Wilkerson in round two
- For the second straight week, Hagan lost by inches (0.006 seconds) in the semifinals despite a posting a stellar 0.54 starting reaction time against eventual race winner Bob Tasca III
- With the semifinal finish, Hagan moved to third in the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series Funny Car Countdown points as the series heads to Madison, Ill. on Sept. 29-Oct. 1
- Leah Pruett, Hagan's TSR teammate, also advanced to the semifinals Sunday in her Rinnai/Dodge//SRT Top Fuel dragster with wins over title contenders Justin Ashley and Antron Brown
- Pruett lost in another tight race against Carolina Nationals Top Fuel race winner Doug Kalitta
- Pruett moved to the No. 4 position in the current NHRA Top Fuel points standings
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September 24, 2023, Concord, N.C. - Drag racing is the fastest motorsport in the world with 335-mph speeds, but it is also one of the closest with victories by inches.

For the second consecutive week in the NHRA Camping World drag racing series, Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) drivers Matt Hagan and Leah Pruett looked to be on the path to victory lane Sunday in the NHRA Carolina Nationals at zMax Dragway. But, for the second consecutive week, both racers were on the wrong end of the battles by inches.

Hagan, who posted a track record Friday in qualifying with a 3.825, drove his Johnson Horsepower Garage Dodge//SRT Hellcat to sensational times throughout the weekend, including a 3.828, 3.841 and 3.868 in the opening round victory against John Smith. He defeated Tim Wilkerson in the second round before taking on Bob Tasca III in the semifinal.

In that matchup, Hagan cut a tremendous 0.054 starting line light and held the advantage in the first 800 feet before losing by inches (0.006 seconds) at the finish line with a 3.953 to Tasca's 3.935. Despite the loss, Hagan advanced to the No. 3 position in the NHRA Championship Countdown Funny Car points standings with the next event set for Sept. 29-Oct. 1 in NHRA Midwest Nationals in Madison, Illinois.

"The Countdown is tough, and everyone is bringing all that they have all the time," said Hagan. "In the last two races, we haven't even lost by a hundredth of a second, it's been a thousandth of a second. That's tight drag racing, but we have to be on the other side of it. We are running against a lot of good cars, so there are no gimme's. We're still there and we're better than what we're showing. We have four races left to go out and fight and dig. We'll be just fine."

Pruett, driving the TSR Rinnai/Dodge//SRT Top Fuel dragster, put in a strong performance in eliminations with her second straight semifinals finish, taking out Top Fuel points contenders Justin Ashley and Antron Brown with runs of 3.708 and 3.829, respectively, in hot track conditions.

In the semifinals, Pruett had to face eventual race winner Doug Kalitta, who nipped Leah last week in the semis at Maple Grove, Pennsylvania. This contest was another thriller with Kalitta winning with a 3.745 to Pruett's 3.778. With her semifinals finish, Pruett moved to fourth in the current NHRA Countdown Top Fuel points standings.

"This was a performance-enhanced weekend overall for the Rinnai/Dodge//SRT team with a stellar completion rate on Sunday," said Pruett. "We went for low (elapsed time) on Saturday in qualifying after the rain and it didn't stick (in the charts). What did stick was the rate of adjustments Neal (Strausbaugh – crew chief) and Mike (Domagala – co-crew chief) made given last-minute lane swap situations. Appropriating our power to the racetrack in stages has been key. Eliminating Justin Ashley first round was pivotal. Everyone is always focused on points. There is nothing like being, staying and moving up when it counts. My guys have been stellar throughout, and I am excited to excel at St. Louis."

The NHRA Midwest Nationals event schedule includes one nitro qualifying session on Friday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m. CDT and two nitro qualifying rounds on Saturday, Sept. 30 at 2:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. CDT. The final eliminations will get underway on Sunday, Oct. 1 at 11 a.m. CDT.

The Fox Sports 1 telecasts for the NHRA Midwest Nationals will take place Friday, Sept. 29 at 7 p.m. EDT with qualifying round 1 and qualifying round 2 on Sunday, Oct. 1 at 2 p.m. EDT. The final eliminations will be televised on Fox Sports 1 on Sunday, Oct. 1 at 3 p.m. EDT.

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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, America's performance brand, 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 2025 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 gas engine 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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integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

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