

TSR Dodge//SRT NHRA Funny Car Driver Hagan Advances to Vegas Semifinals, Maintains Points Lead; Teammate Pruett Third in Top Fuel Points After Close First-round Exit

- Matt Hagan, a six-time 2023 NHRA national event winner, missed by inches (.009 seconds) advancing to his third consecutive Funny Car final Sunday in the NHRA Nevada Nationals with his Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Direct Connection Dodge//SRT Hellcat Funny Car
- Despite the semifinals loss, the three-time NHRA Camping World Funny Car World Champion, who was seeking his third straight win, maintains the 2023 points lead entering the season finale, the NHRA In-N-Out Burger Finals, scheduled for Nov. 10-12 in Pomona, California
- Hagan, who qualified third in the 16-car field at 3.871, made consistent runs Sunday with round victories at 3.889 and 3.902 before being nipped by Bob Tasca III, 3.886 to 3.901 in the semifinals despite recording a sensational 0.049 starting line light
- Hagan now leads Tasca by 15 points and Robert Hight by 17 markers in a three-driver battle for the coveted NHRA World Championship
- Leah Pruett, Hagan's TSR teammate, also lost by inches (.002 seconds) in the first round Sunday in her sublime TSR Dodge//SRT Direct Connection Top Fuel dragster
- Pruett, who entered the NHRA Nevada Nationals as the Top Fuel points leader, recorded a 3.699 to Josh Hart's 3.740
- Pruett, a 2023 national event winner at Norwalk and Dallas, now ranks third in the NHRA Top Fuel points standings, just 34 points behind leader Steve Torrence entering the final event
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October 29, 2023, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Three-time NHRA World Champion Matt Hagan missed advancing to his third straight Funny Car final by inches (.009 seconds) in his Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Direct Connection Dodge//SRT Hellcat at the NHRA Nevada Nationals on Sunday. Despite the semifinals exit, Hagan continues to lead the NHRA Camping World Funny Car points standings entering the final race of the 21-event national tour at the NHRA In-N-Out Burger Finals on Nov. 10 -12 in Pomona, California.

Hagan, seeking his third consecutive NHRA national win, won two rounds of competition in very cold 50-60 degree temperatures and windy conditions Sunday at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway before losing to Bob Tasca III in the semifinals with a 3.901 to Tasca's 3.886. Hagan's brilliant 0.049 starting line light held the lead over Tasca for most of the 1,000-foot track before being nipped at the finish line. Hagan holds a 15-point margin over Tasca in the standings and 17 markers over the third-place Robert Hight .

Hagan, who qualified third at a 3.871 on Friday with support from his Dickie Venables-led TSR crew, entered Sunday's eliminations with two straight NHRA victories at St. Louis and Dallas and had also captured wins at the last two Las Vegas events, last October in the Nevada Nationals and last April in the Four-Wide Nationals. Hagan's Sunday runs produced very consistent times with a 3.889 over Terry Haddock and 3.892 over Paul Lee.

"We struggled a little bit in qualifying," said Hagan. "Dickie always regroups and puts a great race car underneath me on Sunday. We have a good TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT Hellcat car, but we were just on the backside of a good drag race. At the end of the day, this is a team sport, and we are surrounded by the best people. We all try to do the best job we can, and I'm super proud of my guys. We have a big road ahead of us to try and win this championship in Pomona. That close loss is a tough one to swallow. We will get back to work this week, and I'll keep working on my lights. We are still holding the points lead headed to Pomona."

Hagan's TSR teammate, Leah Pruett, came to Las Vegas as the NHRA Top Fuel points leader following her impressive victory at Dallas two weeks ago. The win gave Pruett a four-point advantage over Doug Kalitta with just two races remaining, Las Vegas and Pomona.

After qualifying fifth at 3.704 with her TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT dragster, Pruett ran a stellar 3.699 in the opening round eliminations but also lost by inches (.002 seconds) to Josh Hart.

Pruett, the Norwalk and Dallas Top Fuel winner in 2023, now ranks third in the NHRA Top Fuel points standings, just 34 points behind leader Steve Torrence entering the final event.

"My Dodge//SRT Direct Connection team posted our quickest run of the weekend today with a 3.699 and was quicker than our opponent (Hart)," said Pruett. "However, he was quicker off the line and was able to nudge us out by two thousandths of a second. Coming into this race, we knew that anything could change, but the focus was on expanding our points lead, and we couldn't do that with a first-round elimination. We are still very much in the mix, in the top and in the hunt coming down to the final race with points and a half.

"As a driver coming off of a win in Dallas and a 'hole-shot' victory final round, I had confidence coming into battle this weekend, but it's difficult to do when the best light of the round is in the other lane. My team has my back in a way where I'm going to be able to not only bounce back, but thrive. We win as a team, and we lose as a team. We have a very consistent and well-performing car that's very capable of gathering qualifying points and winning the final race of the season. Ultimately, that's what we plan to do."

The event schedule for the NHRA In-N-Out Burger Finals will have two nitro qualifying sessions on Friday, Nov. 10, at 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. PST and two nitro qualifying rounds on Saturday, Nov. 11, at 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. PST. The final eliminations will begin on Sunday, Nov. 12, at 11 a.m. PST.

The Fox Sports 1 telecasts for the NHRA In-N-Out Burger Finals will air qualifying rounds on Sunday, Nov. 12, at 2 p.m. EST. The final eliminations will be televised on Fox Sports 1 on Sunday, Oct. 29, at 5 p.m. EST.

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Dodge//SRT

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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.

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