

Contact: Tom Blattler  
Darren Jacobs

## **Stewart and Hagan Take TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT Cars to Semifinals, Fight Wild Weather Conditions at NHRA Virginia Nationals**

- Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) and the NHRA Mission Drag Racing Series returned to Virginia Motorsports Park this weekend, and drivers and crews were fighting the elements
- An East Coast heat weather “dome” caused havoc on the racing surface at the PlayNHRA Virginia Nationals with air temperatures close to 100 degrees and track surfaces near 150
- With the TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT crews making constant car adjustments, Tony Stewart (Top Fuel) and Matt Hagan (Funny Car) drove to the semifinals in Sunday’s eliminations
- Stewart, the NASCAR Hall of Famer, qualified his NHRA Top Fuel class best with a third position in the 15-car field with a 3.885 run in the TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT dragster
- Stewart posted low elapsed time in both rounds one and two in defeating Clay Millican and Brittany Force with times of 3.874 and 3.907 in advancing to the semifinals for the third time
- Despite recording a sensational starting line light (0.047), Stewart lost traction against eventual race winner Doug Kalitta in the semifinals after a long rain delay changed track conditions
- Hagan, the defending NHRA World Funny Car Champion, also drove to the semifinals in his TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT Hellcat with wins over J.R. Todd and Mike Smith
- Like Stewart in his semifinal, Hagan was quick off the starting line, but lost traction to eventual race champion Austin Prock
- The semifinal finish moved Hagan into the third spot in the current NHRA Mission Drag Racing Series Funny Car points heading to this week’s Summit Racing Nationals in Ohio on June 28-30
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June 24, 2024, Auburn Hills, Mich. - The wildest weather conditions in the past several years on the NHRA Mission Drag Racing Series hit the PlayNHRA Virginia Nationals this weekend, but the two Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Dodge nitro teams were able to negotiate near 150-degree track temperatures and place in the semifinals with drivers Tony Stewart (Top Fuel) and Matt Hagan (Funny Car).

With air temperatures near 100 degrees as well due to an East Coast hot weather “dome,” the TSR crews fought incredible odds with the hot and humid conditions and a slippery track. Stewart and Hagan both showed strong starting line reactions in Sunday’s elimination rounds to gain important points as the NHRA tour heads next to the Summit Racing Nationals at Norwalk, Ohio, on June 28-30.

Stewart, the NASCAR Hall of Fame driver and NHRA Top Fuel rookie, enjoyed one of his best NHRA Top Fuel races at Virginia Motorsports Park by qualifying a season-best third in the TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT dragster at 3.885 and set low elapsed time in the first two rounds of the Sunday competition.

Led by crew chiefs Neal Strausbaugh and Mike Domagala, Stewart’s Top Fueler clocked a 3.874 in defeating Clay Millican in the first round and a 3.907 against former NHRA World Champion Brittany Force in round two. It marked the third time this year that Stewart advanced to the semifinals in a Top Fuel machine, and he took on defending World Top Fuel champion Doug Kalitta. However, a rainstorm halted action for over three hours and track conditions changed.

With a chance to get to his first final round, Stewart made a sensational reaction time (0.047) against Kalitta. But

Stewart's mount lost traction at midtrack, and Kalitta recorded the win and also captured the event title against Shawn Langdon.

"I'm really proud of our weekend coming off a disappointing Bristol race," said Stewart. "Nobody likes to lose and, ultimately, there's only one person that wins the whole thing. We had one day to make three runs in qualifying with very hot track conditions. We made a great run to qualify our best so far with third. With the way the bracket works, the No. 3 qualifier runs the No. 14 qualifier, who was Clay Millican, and that is no easy feat racing him. He is a great competitor with a great team.

"I then went up against Brittany (Force) in the second round. It was a tough day for her family. John (Force) had a big crash with the Funny Car, and we're thinking the best for him. You feel for Brittany, Austin (Prock) and the whole Force family. This is where the team really shined today because our car outperformed her car. We lined up against our buddy Doug Kalitta in the semis. We've raced each other for years in sprint cars and midgets. I was happy with my reaction time as it was the best of the weekend. Unfortunately, it just shook the tires. It's disappointing to lose in the semifinals, but I'm proud of this team. The conditions were hot, and the track was challenging. I call it a win at the end of the day."

Hagan, the defending NHRA Mission World Funny Car Champion, had a similar road as Stewart in the tough Funny Car division despite a difficult result in qualifying. The popular Virginia racer defeated J.R. Todd and Mike Smith in the opening two sessions of Sunday's eliminations.

Going up against Funny Car point leader Austin Prock in the semifinals, Hagan jumped to the lead with a spectacular starting light over the John Force Racing driver, but Hagan's machine just missed the win with a 4.031 to Prock's 3.96. Prock went on to win the event.

"A lot of teams were having problems, and we were having problems as well trying to keep eight cylinders lit in these conditions," said Hagan. "We didn't qualify great, but we always seem to race great. We'll turn things around and win some more races soon. I have trust in my guys and I'm so proud of them. When you're sitting in the car and can see beads of sweat dripping down their faces and arms, it makes you proud to have a team like that. It was a very challenging weekend.

"Obviously, we're also thinking about and praying for John (Force). He's had some licks over the years and he's one of the toughest guys we've ever seen. That's why he's still in the race car. We hope he's okay and wish him the best. He's the G.O.A.T. (Greatest of All Time) for a reason. If anyone can bounce back from something like that, it is John."

The popular NHRA Summit Racing Nationals are next on the NHRA Mission Drag Racing Series schedule with qualifying rounds beginning on Friday, June 28, at 6 p.m. EDT and 8:30 p.m. EDT. Saturday's qualifying session will take place at 2:30 p.m. EDT and 5 p.m. EDT. Sunday's final eliminations are scheduled for 11 a.m. EDT. Fox Sports 1 will televise Sunday's eliminations at 4 p.m. EDT on Sunday, June 30, with the later elimination rounds set for 5 p.m. on the FOX network.

#### **@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 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 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.

Dodge is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider [Stellantis](#) (NYSE: STLA).

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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, Mopar expanded to include technical service and customer support, and today integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Complete information on Mopar is available at [www.mopar.com](http://www.mopar.com) and the newly redesigned Mopar blog at [www.blog.mopar.com](http://www.blog.mopar.com).

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