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Dodge//SRT Drivers Stewart, Hagan Exit Early at NHRA Midwest Nationals

- Tony Stewart and Matt Hagan, teammates for the Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Dodge//SRT team, suffered short days in NHRA Midwest Nationals eliminations with first-round exits
- Stewart, the NASCAR Hall of Famer, missed advancing to round two by inches in his TSR Rush Truck Services Dodge//SRT Top Fuel dragster in one of the closest races of the year
- The man known as “Smoke” lost at the finish line by ten thousandths of a second (0.0001) against Shawn Reed in the first round of Top Fuel action
- Stewart recorded a quicker 3.755 to Reed's 3.773 but was edged by just three inches in a wild photo-finish race at the World Wide Technology Raceway drag strip near St. Louis
- Stewart now ranks ninth in the current NHRA Mission Top Fuel points standings as the NHRA national tour now heads to Dallas for the Oct. 10-13 NHRA Texas Fall Nationals
- Four-time NHRA Funny Car champion Hagan had an early departure Sunday in St. Louis with a first-round loss to Bob Tasca III in his TSR Dodge//SRT Hellcat
- Hagan, winner of two 2024 NHRA national events at Charlotte and Chicago, qualified ninth and had a tough matchup with rival Tasca, clocking a 3.976 to Tasca's 3.913
- Despite the early defeat, Hagan remains in the top five in the current NHRA Mission Funny Car points as the reigning World Champion moves to Dallas for an event he won in 2023
- Top Fueler Ida Zetterström continued her rookie campaign in the JCM Racing//Dodge//SRT Top Fuel dragster, falling in round one to Steve Torrence
- Veteran Mark Pawuk drove his Dodge Challenger Mopar® Drag Pak to victory in the highly competitive Flexjet Factory Stock Showdown division over Jonathan Allegrucci in the final
- Pawuk captured his first Flexjet Factory Stock Showdown series title with Sunday's win
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September 30, 2024, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Tony Stewart missed advancing by inches on Sunday in his Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Dodge//SRT Top Fuel dragster in one of the closest finishes of the season at the NHRA Midwest Nationals near St. Louis on Sept. 29, while teammate Matt Hagan also had a short day in final Funny Car eliminations.

Stewart, the NASCAR Hall of Fame owner and driver, went up against veteran Shawn Reed in the first round of eliminations and his 11,000-horsepower racecar was nipped by ten thousandths of a second (0.0001) at the finish line in losing by just three inches. The Indiana driver recorded a 3.755 to Reed's 3.773, but it took a holeshot by his opponent off the starting line to score the win.

Due to heavy rain in the St. Louis area from Hurricane Helene, Friday's qualifying sessions were canceled and only two Saturday rounds set the starting fields for Sunday's eliminations where Stewart secured the eleventh spot to Reed's sixth position.

Despite the first-round loss, Stewart currently ranks ninth in the NHRA Mission Drag Racing Series “Countdown”

playoffs as the national tour heads to Texas on Oct. 10-13 for the NHRA Texas Fall Nationals, the 18th round of the 20-event campaign.

"This weekend was tough for TSR," said Stewart. "We knew we had to stay in the throttle during the first qualifying session Saturday, since we only got two runs. We weren't able to improve in the second session, so we ended up No. 11 in the field. Shawn Reed is a great competitor and we're close to their family. At the end of the day, we were on the bad side of a good drag race. I really wanted to get a win for Rusty Rush, Rush Truck Centers and the rest of our sponsors. We'll look ahead to Dallas and try to put the Top Fuel car in the winner's circle. Leah (Pruett, Stewart's wife) won there last year."

Stewart's TSR teammate Hagan, the defending NHRA Midwest Nationals Funny Car champion, came into the event after a strong performance at Charlotte, where he claimed the No. 1 qualifying slot and a runner-up finish. But Hagan's Dodge//SRT Hellcat had an early exit in the first round in a tight race with longtime rival Bob Tasca III.

Hagan, who qualified ninth in Funny Car, matched up with Tasca in a close race with his 3.976 to Tasca's 3.913. Even with the first-round setback, Hagan remains in the top five in the NHRA Mission Funny Car points standings now heading to Texas on Oct. 10-13.

"We just missed it out here today," said Hagan. "We didn't have it together for the weekend and it didn't help only getting two rounds of qualifying. At the end of the day, you have to tip your cap to Tasca's team. I think we need to sit down and evaluate some things. We won the championship last year and we have a great group of guys. They work so hard. I'm so proud of all of them. You want nothing more than to be able to give them race wins. We'll come out ready to go at Dallas. We won there last year."

Ida Zetterström continues to record impressive outings, including in the NHRA Midwest Nationals in her fifth NHRA professional Top Fuel event with her JCM Racing/Dodge Top Fuel dragster. The Sweden native took on the four-time World Champion Steve Torrence in the first round Sunda but lost a tight race with a 3.764 to race runner-up Torrence's 3.726.

"Obviously, we were planning on running a little quicker on that (first round) pass," Zetterström said. "We did find some valuable info on why that run didn't go as planned. The good thing, though, is we've learned something from each one of the recent races. Right now, this was a big thing for us to learn, so I feel very good about that moving on to the next race. We qualified well. This was the best qualifying spot we've had so far this year, then we had tough luck on race day."

In the highly competitive Flexjet Factory Stock Showdown class, longtime Dodge//SRT competitor Mark Pawuk of Akron, Ohio, piloted his Empaco Equipment Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak to the national event title with a final round win over Jonathan Allegrucci with a 7.792 over Allegrucci's 7.833. Pawuk also set low elapsed time of the event at 7.765.

The victory for Pawuk clinched the Flexjet Factory Stock Showdown series championship for the 2024 NHRA national series.

"This was my dream," said Pawuk. "My whole racing career. I started racing in the '70s, I won a Super Gas championship in 1981 when it was called Pro Gas. To be able to win a championship in the NHRA is something I always dreamt of. I wasn't sure I could ever get it done. I attribute the championship to Don Schumacher and my dad being with me this season, and I prayed to them both this morning. It gave me the strength to get here today."

Nitro action at the NHRA Texas Fall Nationals gets underway with qualifying rounds on Friday, Oct. 11, at 5:15 p.m. CDT and 8 p.m. CDT. Two additional qualifying sessions are scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 12, at 1 p.m. CDT and 4 p.m. CDT. Final eliminations at the Texas Motorplex begin on Sunday, Oct. 13, at 12 p.m. CDT.

Fox Sports 1 television coverage for the NHRA Texas Fall Nationals will take place on Sunday, Oct. 13, with the final eliminations being shown at 4 p.m. EDT.

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The [@DodgeMoparMotorsports](https://www.instagram.com/dodge_mopar_motorsports) 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.

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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](https://www.dodgegarage.com), 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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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.

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