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## **Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Driver Hagan Breaks Through with NHRA Southern Nationals Win**

- Matt Hagan heats up with victory in all-Mopar Dodge NHRA Funny Car final round showdown against teammate Jack Beckman
- Hagan races Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T to first win of season and 19th of his career
- Victory is second for a Mopar-powered Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car in 2016
- Three Mopar Dodge Funny Cars advance to semifinals at Atlanta Dragway
- Dodge Dart NHRA Pro Stock driver Allen Johnson advances to second consecutive semifinal
- Jeg Coughlin Jr. scores round win in his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart
- Tough luck snatches opening-round victory from Mopar Performance Dodge Dart driver Erica Enders

May 15, 2016, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Matt Hagan claimed victory on Sunday at the 36th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Southern Nationals, scoring his first win of the season and 19th of his career in his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car. Hagan defeated teammate and fellow Dodge Charger R/T driver Jack Beckman in the all-Mopar NHRA Funny Car final round to claim his first win in 19 races.

It was a dominant weekend for the Mopar-powered Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car squad, with Hagan, Beckman and Tommy Johnson Jr. combining to put three Mopar Dodge machines in the semifinals at Atlanta Dragway. Beckman claimed the pole on Saturday and all four DSR Dodge drivers qualified in the top half of the field. Hagan also reset both ends of the track record on Sunday after Beckman accomplished the feat during Friday qualifying.

"Congratulations to Matt Hagan for his first win of the year in the Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T," said Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar), FCA - Global. "Everyone at Mopar is proud to see the DSR team's hard work and perseverance payoff with a national title at Atlanta."

The No. 2 qualifier, Hagan began eliminations by blasting to a track-record run of 3.906 seconds at 329.02 mph in a defeat of Chad Head. Hagan was also quickest of the round in the quarterfinals, posting a 3.926/327.19 in a win over Del Worsham. In the semifinals Hagan used a 3.939/325.06 (once again quickest of the session) to beat points leader Courtney Force to the stripe and set up a HEMI vs. HEMI duel with Beckman.

The No. 1 qualifier, Beckman took out Jim Campbell and then DSR Dodge teammates Ron Capps and Tommy Johnson Jr. on his road to the money round. Beckman paid a visit to the sand trap after besting Campbell, but his Infinite Hero team was able to fix his Dodge and defeat Capps (who sent home John Force in round one) with a 3.989/323.81 to his stablemate's 3.992/320.81. The 2012 Funny Car champ outraced Johnson's Make-A-Wish Dodge to the finish in the semis with a winning 3.967/323.58 to TJ's 3.992/317.79.

In the final round, Hagan's 3.965/314.90 was more than enough as Beckman smoked the tires and tried in vain to recover, slowing to a 8.073/79.59. Hagan moved to ninth in the points, with Beckman jumping from sixth to the second spot.

"We went back to what we know," said Hagan, who won Funny Car world championships in 2011 and 2014. "Setting low ET of every round today, I would say that (crew chief) Dickie (Venables) has a pretty good handle on it. We all knew it was just a matter of time before we figured it all out."

In NHRA Pro Stock, Allen Johnson raced his HEMI-powered Marathon Petroleum Dodge Dart to a second consecutive semifinal round appearance. Starting from the sixth seed as the top Mopar qualifier on the charts, Johnson used his quickest pass of the weekend, a 6.600 run at 209.79 mph, to knock out first-round foe and former teammate Vincent Nobile.

In the quarterfinals Johnson was again first off the line, never trailing as he ended Alex Laughlin's day with a winning 6.680/209.33. AJ's run would end in the semifinals, where his 6.656/208.20 effort couldn't match up with event winner Jason Line's quicker and faster 6.603/210.24 pass.

"I feel really good," said Johnson, who closed to within a point of the fifth spot in the spot standings. "We're just on the cusp on something I think. Just gotta keep going down this path and doing what we're doing. We need to be the top four or fifth car each race, maintain lane choice and hopefully that'll be the way we get to the winner circle."

Jeg Coughlin Jr., racing from the No. 8 position, posted his quickest pass of the weekend in his "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Jegs.com Dodge Dart to advance past the higher seeded Drew Skillman in the opening round. Coughlin was first off the line and first to the finish, recording a winning 6.648/208.17. In a second-round showdown of former Pro Stock champs, Coughlin again launched first but his 6.669/208.36 couldn't overcome Line's numbers, a 6.585/211.03 effort.

"We felt like we had a car that could get down the race track with all the air changes and track changes that we saw today," said Coughlin, who moved to seventh in the standings. "It feels good. I was surprised we were the only one of our Elite Motorsports drivers to advance. We just had a little misstep second round. We look forward to the week to come. Hopefully, the team can take away some positive results to bring to our program going in to Topeka."

No. 10 qualifier Erica Enders seemed bound for a first-round win, but a challenging track obstacle tripped up the defending NHRA Pro Stock world champion. Enders was first out of the gate with a stout .021 reaction time to opponent Chris McGaha's .033 launch, but a large bump in her lane caused Enders' Mopar Performance Dodge Dart to veer towards the centerline. Encountering tire spin, she slowed to a 6.644/207.91 after hitting the bump, with McGaha earning the win by just .008 seconds with a 6.624/208.33 pass.

"That was the best run we made all weekend with this car," Enders said. "My driving was on and the guys gave me a great tune-up. We should've won that race. It really upsets me we lost a race because of something out of our control."

V. Gaines, racing from the 14th spot, posted his quickest pass of the weekend (6.685/207.82) in round one but was unable to race his Western Motorsports Kendall Dodge Dart past event runner-up Greg Anderson (6.584/211.06).

Mopar-powered drivers and teams will travel next to the NHRA Kansas Nationals at Heartland Park Topeka in Topeka, Kansas, scheduled for May 20-22. Television coverage of the event will be available on FS1 with a two hour qualifying show on Saturday, May 21 starting at 11 p.m. (ET) and another two hour final qualifying recap on Sunday, May 22 beginning at 8 a.m. (ET). A three hour live eliminations broadcast is scheduled for Sunday starting at 2 p.m. (ET).

## **2016 NHRA Championship Points Standings**

(Following the NHRA Southern Nationals Race Final)

### **PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)**

1. Jason Line – 812 (4)
2. Greg Anderson – 716 (3)
3. Bo Butner – 553
4. Drew Skillman – 432
5. Chris McGaha – 393
6. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 392**
7. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 308**
8. Vincent Nobile – 294

9. **Erica Enders – Dodge Dart – 289**
10. Alex Laughlin – 272
12. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 217**

**FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)**

1. Courtney Force - 522 (1)
2. **Jack Beckman – (Dodge Charger R/T) – 482**
3. Tim Wilkerson – 476 (2)
4. **Ron Capps – (Dodge Charger R/T) – 471 (1)**
5. Robert Hight – 458 (1)
6. Del Worsham – 429
7. John Force – 416
8. Alexis DeJoria – 394 (1)
9. **Matt Hagan – (Dodge Charger R/T) – 390 (1)**
10. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – (2015 Dodge Charger R/T) – 351**

**About Mopar Motorsports**

The Mopar brand's commitment to professional motorsports competition was established in the 1950s when a partnership ignited with drag racing pioneer Don Garlits, resulting in the breaking of numerous speed and performance barriers in HEMI®-powered vehicles over the next several decades. In 2016, Mopar will look to once again vie for a NHRA World Championship title in both Pro Stock and Funny Car categories. While Mopar remains involved in a various professional motorsports series, it continues to honor its roots by being a proud supporter of Sportsman racing within the NHRA with its sponsorship of the HEMI Challenge and Mopar's Tom Hoover Sportsman Challenge.

**Mopar**

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