

Capps Drives Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to the Top, Mopar-powered Dodge Entries Qualify 1-2-3 at NHRA Epping

- Ron Capps makes second-quickest pass in Funny Car history to claim pole at NHRA New England Nationals
- New England Dragway pole is Mopar Dodge Charger R/T pilot Capps' second of season and 19th of his career
- Capps' Mopar Dodge Don Schumacher Racing teammates Matt Hagan and Tommy Johnson Jr. No. 2 and No. 3, respectively
- No. 6 Jack Beckman walks away from massive explosion, will race new Mopar Dodge on Sunday
- Mopar-powered Dodge Dart driver Allen Johnson steps up to No. 6 in NHRA Pro Stock qualifying
- Jeg Coughlin Jr. to start No. 7 in "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" JEGS.com Dodge Dart, best position since Gainesville
- Mopar Performance Dodge Dart driver Erica Enders No. 10 in Epping

June 4, 2016, Auburn Hills, Mich. - NHRA Funny Car driver Ron Capps threw down a massive number in the first round of qualifying that would carry his swift Mopar Dodge Charger R/T to the pole at the Fourth Annual NHRA New England Nationals. The Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver raced to a brilliant 3.865-second pass at 325.92 mph that was the second-quickest run in the history of the class, behind only DSR teammate Matt Hagan and his world record 3.862/335.57 set two weeks ago in the Mopar Express Lane/Rocky Boots Dodge Charger R/T at Topeka.

The low qualifier award is the second of the year for Capps and the 19th of his career. The 46-time national event winner made a stellar impression on Friday evening at New England Dragway, and crew chief Rahn Tobler made all the right calls to take full advantage of the 75 degree Fahrenheit air temperature and welcoming, 99 degree racing surface.

"That was a handful," said a breathless Capps, soon after making the thrilling pass to launch hard and fast into the weekend. "It started to wash out early, and I was fighting to keep it straight. Then it started to wash out again and lifted the front end up. To be honest, I almost shut it off because I thought I was in trouble. I'm glad I didn't."

"I was just hanging on for dear life. It was like a World of Outlaws sprint car. It was out of control, but fun. It was one of the most fun rides I've had in a long time."

In the same session on Friday, DSR teammate Tommy Johnson Jr. reset his own career best elapsed time in the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T and earned the No. 3 qualifying position – his best start of the season – on a strong 3.885/326.95, while Jack Beckman flew to a 3.895 at a then-track record 329.99 in the DSR Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T to settle into the No. 6 spot.

Hagan sent Team Mopar home on a high note on the first day of the event after wheeling his Mopar Dodge Funny Car to the quickest pass in the second session, a 3.868/329.75 that would lock him into the No. 2 position. By the conclusion of qualifying, Hagan and the Mopar Express Lane team owned three of the four quickest passes in Funny Car history.

Saturday's warmer conditions put a halt to forward progress and big numbers on the scoreboard, but Beckman put on one heck of a show in the opening session in front of a sold-out crowd at New England Dragway and on live television on FOX Sports 1 (FS1). The 2012 Funny Car world champion left the starting line in good form, but halfway down the

racetrack, his smooth run soon went south. An enormous, fiery explosion destroyed the carbon fiber body of his Dodge Charger R/T and caused further damage inside what was left of the cockpit, but Beckman walked away uninjured. The team opted to sit out the final qualifying session to prepare a new Dodge Charger for Sunday eliminations.

"This racetrack can be exciting for a driver because the groove can get tight," said Beckman. "I pulled [the throttle] back some, and it just started to spin the tires. That's one of those ones where you wish you had a tenth of a second earlier to get off the throttle. It was a big explosion, one of the biggest ever."

Capps, who claimed a whopping 10 of the 12 available qualifying bonus points, will race Funny Car newcomer Dave Richards in round one of eliminations, Hagan will square off with fourth-year competitor John Hale, Johnson will face Southern California-based Jeff Diehl, and Beckman will go toe-to-toe with Funny Car veteran Cruz Pedregon.

Allen Johnson had the quickest Mopar Dodge Dart on the property in NHRA Pro Stock qualifying at the New England Nationals, and he qualified in the No. 6 position on a strong 6.593 at 209.20 mph to earn a first-round meeting with Chris McGaha.

"We made some good runs in qualifying, but we're still leaving two- or three-thousandths on the table," said Johnson. "My Marathon Petroleum team always pulls through on race day with the tune-up, though, so we're going to race our lane and hope to turn on four win lights on Sunday."

Johnson, the 2012 Pro Stock world champion, has qualified his Mopar Dodge Dart in the top half of the field at all but three national events this season, with father and engine builder Roy Johnson navigating the J&J Racing ship through uncharted territory of electronic fuel injection and a 10,500 rpm limiter – major rule changes brand new this season for the naturally aspirated factory hot rods.

For five-time Pro Stock champ Jeg Coughlin Jr., driver of the "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" JEGS.com Dodge Dart, patience and persistence have been key towards the mastery of the new rules. The team's strategy resulted in a strong qualifying performance in Epping, where Coughlin made his quickest pass of the season with a steady 6.599 to qualify in the No. 7 position – his highest starting spot since he was No. 6 in Gainesville.

"I was encouraged by some of the findings in the off-week between Topeka and here," said Coughlin, who races under the Elite Motorsports umbrella alongside fellow Mopar Dodge Dart driver Erica Enders. "We came in here pretty optimistic, and it looks like we've shown improvement across the board with all of our cars. We have very talented crew chiefs and engineers, but when you've got 20-30 more horsepower, it certainly affects the way the car accelerates and plants itself to the ground. I'm looking forward to game day tomorrow. We've got a tough road ahead of us, but we've got a little bit of momentum going. Tomorrow can't get here soon enough. Let's go."

Reigning and back-to-back Pro Stock champion Enders, starting from the No. 10 position, will race Alex Laughlin in the first round on Sunday. Her best qualifying pass in New England Dragway qualifying was a 6.631 at 209.56 mph behind the wheel of the Mopar Performance Dodge Dart.

"Our teammates made strides in the right direction in qualifying, and we're not going to be far behind them," said Enders. "We hope for some better results Sunday, but either way, this weekend has already given our entire Elite Motorsports team a breath of fresh air and shown that their hard work is starting to pay off. We'll keep working hard at it and continue to move in the right direction."

Veteran Mopar campaigner V. Gaines continued to show improvement as well in his Dodge Dart, clocking a best qualifying time of 6.671/207.72. He will start 11th and race Greg Anderson in the first round of eliminations.

One hour of qualifying highlights from the Fourth Annual NHRA New England Nationals will air on FOX Sports 1 (FS1) on Saturday night, June 4, beginning at Midnight ET. Three hours of eliminations coverage will air on FS1 on Sunday, June 5, beginning at 4 p.m. ET.

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

Mopar is the global name for Stellantis genuine parts and authentic accessories.

A simple combination of the words MOrtor and PARts, Mopar offers exceptional service, parts and customer-care. Born in 1937 as the name of a line of antifreeze products, Mopar has evolved over more than 85 years to represent both complete vehicle care and authentic performance for owners and enthusiasts worldwide.

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 and the Mopar blog at www.blog.mopar.com. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit www.stellantis.com.

Follow Mopar and company news and video on:

Company blog: blog.stellantisnorthamerica.com

Media website: media.stellantisnorthamerica.com

Mopar brand: www.mopar.com/

Mopar blog: blog.mopar.com/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mopar

Instagram: www.instagram.com/officialmopar

Twitter: twitter.com/OfficialMOPAR

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/mopar or www.youtube.com/StellantisNA

-###-

Additional information and news from Stellantis are available at: <https://media.stellantisnorthamerica.com>