

Capps Provisional No. 1 Qualifier in Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car at NHRA Summernationals

- Ron Capps makes the sixth-quickest pass in Funny Car history to claim the provisional pole at NHRA Summernationals in Englishtown, New Jersey
- If it holds, No. 1 will be 20th for Mopar Dodge Charger R/T pilot Capps and third of season
- Capps' Mopar Dodge Don Schumacher Racing teammate Matt Hagan ends first day of event at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park as No. 2 seed
- No. 5 Allen Johnson leads Mopar-powered Dodge Dart drivers in NHRA Pro Stock qualifying

June 10, 2016, Englishtown, New Jersey - Just one week ago, Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Ron Capps wheeled his Mopar Dodge Charger R/T to the top of the pack at the NHRA New England Nationals in Epping to earn his second pole of the season. In Friday qualifying at this weekend's 47th running of the esteemed NHRA Summernationals in Englishtown, New Jersey, Capps looked to be on track to do it again and nabbed the provisional pole with a pair of back-to-back 3.87-second passes.

Capps started the weekend's festivities on a high note, demolishing the Old Bridge Township Raceway Park track record as he rocketed down the Mopar-branded lane to an extraordinary 3.870-second pass at 318.62 mph – the sixth quickest Funny Car elapsed time in NHRA history. He was right back to it in round two and journeyed down the receptive racing surface to a crisp 3.878/321.04 in his Rahn Tobler-tuned Mopar. If it holds, the No. 1 spot will be the second of Capps' career in Englishtown, repeating the feat he accomplished in 2012, his third in NHRA's 2016 Mello Yello Drag Racing Series season, and his 20th overall pole.

"First round today was hot," said Capps. "The track was upwards of 120 degrees at one point, and so that first run of 3.87 was stout for those conditions. We thought we could improve on that, but the track was so good. The crew chiefs would say that it 'ate up on the tune-up;' it just gobbled up the advantage that they gave to the car to move quicker earlier. It just soaked it up, but it ran almost the same numbers as the first run. Then it got down – there are a couple of little bumps in each lane that give this track characteristic, like a lot of tracks – and it just spun a little bit more and knocked a little bit of e.t. [elapsed time] off. But, it's pretty bad when I get out to do the interview at the top end and I'm bummed out because it slowed down from an .87 to an .87. That just tells you what kind of car we have right now."

Conditions are expected to be warmer and possibly a bit damp on Saturday in Englishtown, but Capps isn't willing to assume that the pole is already decided. He is not, however, shrinking from any challenge.

"We run late in the day tomorrow afternoon, so you don't know that second session," said Capps. "We run after dragsters. We've seen it come in and be almost good enough that you can outrun the conditions we saw Friday. I hope that happens. It would be nice to have another green hat, but that's what's great about having a crew chief that can race on Sunday when the conditions aren't what they were Friday night. We had our engineers from Dodge and they really worked on this Charger this year, and that's helped a bunch with our downforce and less drag, and really the way the car drives down the track. It's proven with the .87 and then to turn around and run .87 again. That's pretty consistent."

Capps' DSR Mopar Dodge teammate Matt Hagan launched into the first day of qualifying with a 3.978/302.69 that preceded a huge leap forward. The Mopar Express Lane/Rocky Boots Dodge Charger R/T pilot, who commanded his HEMI®-powered Funny Car to Englishtown wins in both 2013 and 2015, blasted to a 3.901/326.71 to land the No. 2 spot for the day.

Struggles early in the day for Tommy Johnson Jr. were eradicated as he took his Make-A-Wish-branded Dodge Charger to a speedy 3.932/322.88 in the later session to grab the No. 5 position. Jack Beckman, in the Infinite Hero Dodge Charger, came out strong with a 3.981/318.17 but struck the tires in the later round and had to shut off. He will hold at No. 10.

At the end of the day, Allen Johnson had the quickest and fastest Mopar-powered Dodge Dart on the grounds in Englishtown – a rejuvenating experience after his Pro Stocker stumbled before reaching the starting line in the first session when the fuel pump quit. A disheartened Johnson did not make the first run but saw redemption in the later round as he rode Mopar power to a cool 6.565 at a big speed of 212.06 mph. Johnson is No. 5 in the lineup heading into the second day of the event.

Mopar Performance Dodge Dart pilot Erica Enders was also on the road to recovery in the second session. Under the setting sun and in cooling air and track conditions, the reigning and two-time Pro Stock world champion put up a much-improved 6.617/209.20 after a bout of tire-shake shut her down early in her first attempt (7.263/150.53). Enders moved into the top half of the field and stands in the No. 8 position.

The champ's Elite Motorsports teammate, Jeg Coughlin Jr., wasn't far behind in the "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" JEGS.com Dodge Dart. He first recorded a 6.649/209.10 and then picked up a good amount with a solid 6.622, 209.85 in the final round of the day. Coughlin is No. 9 for now in Englishtown.

V. Gaines and the Kendall Oil Dodge Dart first clicked off a 6.711/208.97 and improved to a 6.696/209.56. He was 13th quickest overall, but only the top 12 times will hold over to Day Two of the Summernationals. Gaines will start with a fresh slate on Saturday.

In 2015, two Mopar Dodge entries powered to the final round: Hagan in his Mopar Express Lane Mopar Dodge Charger R/T won the Funny Car title at last season's event, and Pro Stock campaigner Johnson came up just a touch short, narrowly missing the trophy in his Mopar-powered Dodge Dart. The collective group of HEMI® campaigners will be pushing for both the trophies on Sunday at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park, but first, they will participate in two Saturday qualifying sessions to set the field for Sunday eliminations.

Two hours of qualifying highlights from the 47th Annual NHRA Summernationals will air on FOX Sports 1 (FS1) on Sunday morning, June 12, beginning at 9 a.m. ET. Three hours of eliminations coverage will air on FS1 that same day, beginning at 4:30 p.m. ET.

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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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