

## **Seventh Win of Season for Mopar as Capps Drives Dodge Charger Funny Car to Historic Norwalk Victory**

- Points leader Ron Capps takes Mopar Dodge Charger R/T to fourth win in fifth final round at Norwalk event
- Norwalk NHRA race marks eighth final round of 12 this season in which a Mopar Dodge Charger has raced for the trophy
- With latest win, Mopar holds seven of 12 event titles in 2016
- Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Capps ties legendary NHRA nitro competitor Don "The Snake" Prudhomme at 49 on all-time win list
- En route to Norwalk final, Capps becomes sixth NHRA driver to compete in 1,000 elimination rounds
- Capps retains Funny Car points lead
- Last week's Bristol winner Tommy Johnson Jr. takes Mopar Dodge Charger to Norwalk semifinals, moves up to No. 6 in standings
- Reigning Pro Stock champion and Mopar Performance Dodge Dart pilot Erica Enders claims round win
- Jeg Coughlin Jr. looks for increased winnings ahead in "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" JEGS.com Dodge Dart

June 26, 2016, Norwalk, Ohio - The 10th annual NHRA Nationals in Norwalk, Ohio, closed out what will likely be the toughest stretch of races the Mello Yello Drag Racing Series drivers will tackle this summer. The fourth consecutive weekend of competition concluded with Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car pilot Ron Capps proving that the HEMI® under the hood was up for any challenge as he beat the heat and padded his points lead with a final-round defeat of Courtney Force.

"Ron Capps is on an impressive streak in his Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car," said Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar), FCA – Global. "On behalf of Mopar, congratulations to the team, and we look forward to their continued success as the season unfolds."

"Courtney is always on her game, and I get [amped] up for racing anybody over there in that camp. We knew they'd be tough," said Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Capps, who was racing in the 95th final round of a nitro career that has included turns in both Funny Car and Top Fuel dragster. "We lost to her the last time we raced here, so today was good."

At last season's event, Capps was ousted in the first round by second-generation Funny Car driver Force. In their final-round meeting this time, Force got a jump at the starting line with a .044-second reaction time to Capps' .094, but the Mopar Dodge Charger was making up ground at each timer on the racetrack. Capps nipped ahead just at the finish line stripe, winning by a mere .004-second. The final times were 3.956-second at 317.49 mph to 4.010/314.17.

Capps has now wheeled HEMI power to four wins in five final rounds in the 2016 season. Three of his wins came in the past four weeks as he won Epping and Englishtown on back-to-back weekends, recorded a semifinals finish in Bristol the following week, and came to Norwalk just a few days later to snatch more hardware.

His road to the Norwalk final began with a 3.966/317.87 first-round triumph over a traction-troubled Jeff Diehl, and another win light came on for Capps in the second round as he rocketed to a 3.990/305.36 in his speedy Dodge to defeat Cruz Pedregon's slowing 4.654/184.47. Another sub 4-second pass was on tap as Capps utilized a 3.963/316.60 to easily defeat Robert Hight's oddly tardy .803-second reaction time and 4.018/275.79 in the third

round of the day. That semifinal match was historic for Capps, who became just the sixth NHRA driver to compete in 1,000 elimination rounds.

Coming into raceday, no one on the property in Norwalk could question the capabilities of Capps' trusty Mopar-powered Dodge Charger. The veteran driver recorded four 3-second passes to qualify as the No. 2 seed, narrowly missing the top spot that he had occupied at the three most recent previous events.

"This weekend was all about great teamwork. Sometimes, I'm there as a driver and can save us – but more often than not, it's having a great car," said Capps. "Every run we made in our Dodge Charger was a 3-second run this weekend, and to have this thing make 3-second runs in this heat is as good as it gets. It was close down there at the finish line that last round, but we did it. This was one of the few tracks where I haven't won in my career, so I can tell you that there is relief and happiness to get this win."

With the Norwalk victory, Capps ties legendary Funny Car driver Don "The Snake" Prudhomme on the all-time win list with 49 of NHRA's coveted Wally trophies earned.

"That's crazy," admitted Capps, who drove for Prudhomme early in his career. "He was my mentor for nine years, and growing up, he was my hero. There were definitely pinch-me moments when I was driving for him, where I would look over and realize, 'Wow, I'm driving for Don Prudhomme.' Now I get to drive for Don Schumacher, a guy with the biggest heart who helps more people out here than you can imagine. Don gives everything he can to the sport of drag racing, and I'm so glad to get this win for him."

The hot racing surface in Norwalk peaked at 128 degrees Fahrenheit on Sunday, and the air was choked with water grains, giving the tuners a real challenge. In the first round of eliminations, two of the four Mopar Dodge Charger race cars were able to get the power to the ground, but Matt Hagan and the Rocky Boots/Mopar Express Lane Dodge and Jack Beckman in his Infinite Hero-branded Charger were sent home after they each came out on the wrong end of tire-smoking battles.

Like Capps, Bristol winner Tommy Johnson Jr. and the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger recorded a sub 4-second pass to emerge from round one. Johnson was a cool .058 at the tree to opponent Tim Wilkerson's .071, and he kept the edge for a 3.984/317.72 win over a 3.991/322.34. Johnson saw another win light with a solid 3.958/320.58 to shut out 2015 Funny Car champ Del Worsham in the quarterfinals, but Force earned her final-round berth with a 4.042/306.19 when Johnson was on and off the throttle in the semis, slowing to a 5.283/153.37.

"It was a really good weekend here in Norwalk," said Johnson, who moved up to No. 5 in the Funny Car standings. "Coming off the win in Bristol, we definitely wanted to continue that – but we're still happy with the result. Well, happy but disappointed at the same time. The car is really running well, and I'm just really happy with the whole weekend and our nice string of solid runs. We'll learn from that and adjust for the rest of the summer."

### **Mopar Pro Stock Report**

No. 9 qualifier Jeg Coughlin Jr., driver of the "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" JECS.com Dodge Dart, was a semifinalist last weekend in Bristol, and he had hoped to take it a couple steps further this weekend in Norwalk. On Sunday, he entered the first round of eliminations without lane choice, and that set the five-time Pro Stock champion at a disadvantage from the start. He reacted to the Christmas tree, NHRA's well-recognized starting device located between the lanes on the starting line, in a very quick .026-second, but he slowed to a 6.736-second pass at 205.91 mph on the hot racing surface. Opponent Alex Laughlin turned on the win light with his 6.697/206.23.

"We're making little gains on these things, and that's great," said 58-time Pro Stock winner Coughlin. "But I expect we're going to see some bigger steps forward in the coming weeks."

The first three races in the stretch of four-in-a-row dealt a tough hand to reigning and back-to-back Pro Stock champion Erica Enders and her Mopar Performance Dodge Dart, but she recovered from the early exits with an improved outing and a trip to the quarterfinals in Norwalk. In the first round, Enders came up against Chris McGaha with fire in her belly. She threw down a challenge with her impressive .013-second reaction time and kept the edge for a 6.728/205.76 victory over her opponent's 6.734/209.23.

Enders was on her game again in the quarterfinals as she dished out a .034 light to take a big .051-second advantage over points leader Jason Line. At the top end, it was Line with the win, 6.662/209.04 to 6.737/205.57, but Enders kept him honest; he won by just half a car length.

"Those KB Racing cars have been on it this year, and I knew I needed a big start to give us a chance," said Enders, a 21-time winner on tour. "I hit the tree really well and didn't see him for a while, but his hood started creeping into my peripheral vision. I was pushing the gas pedal through the floorboard, but he got us in the end.

"Four races in a row is tough on everyone. Having a weekend off finally will give the guys a chance to get back home, maybe recover for a day or two, and then get back to work. I'm sure the dyno will get a severe workout between now and Chicago, and I would expect Rick and Rickie [Jones, father/son Elite Motorsports crew chiefs] will want to test more as well. We'll be busy."

Mopar-powered Marathon Petroleum/J&J Racing Dodge Dart driver Allen Johnson won his first-round meeting with Bo Butner before he was narrowly defeated in the second round by eventual finalist Greg Anderson. V. Gaines, driving the Kendall Oil Dodge Dart, ran into trouble on the racetrack and fell to Drew Skillman in the first round.

### **NHRA's Mello Yello Drag Racing Series Continues**

The Mopar drivers will have a week off before action continues July 7-10 at Route 66 Raceway for race 13 of 24 in the Mello Yello Drag Racing Series, the Route 66 NHRA Nationals in Joliet, Illinois.

### **2016 NHRA Championship Points Standings (Following the NHRA Norwalk Event)**

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

1. Jason Line (7) – 1,389
2. Greg Anderson (5) – 1,274
3. Bo Butner – 796
4. **Allen Johnson (Dodge Dart) – 719**
5. Drew Skillman – 683
6. Vincent Nobile – 613
7. Chris McGaha – 557
8. Shane Gray – 532
9. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. (Dodge Dart) – 528**
10. Alex Laughlin – 498
11. **Erica Enders (Dodge Dart) – 490**
12. **V. Gaines (Dodge Dart) – 374**

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

1. **Ron Capps (Dodge Charger R/T) (4) – 966**
2. Courtney Force (1) – 836
3. **Jack Beckman (Dodge Charger R/T) – 823**
4. Del Worsham – 762
5. **Tommy Johnson Jr. (Dodge Charger R/T) (1) – 750**
6. **Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger R/T) (2) – 747**
7. Tim Wilkerson (2) – 723
8. Robert Hight (1) – 722
9. John Force – 668
10. Alexis DeJoria (1) – 640

### **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 MOtor 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](http://www.mopar.com) and the Mopar blog at [www.blog.mopar.com](http://www.blog.mopar.com). For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit [www.stellantis.com](http://www.stellantis.com).

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