

Hagan leads Mopar Dodge Charger Funny Cars, sets track record in Sonoma qualifying

- Matt Hagan takes Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T to No. 4 position in final Sonoma NHRA Nationals qualifying
- Hagan resets Sonoma Raceway track record for speed
- Hagan and Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Funny Car teammates each qualify with sub 4-second passes
- DSR Top Fuel driver Leah Pritchett climbing, just misses top-half qualifying position in Mopar/Pennzoil® dragster
- Mopar Performance Dodge Dart Pro Stock driver Erica Enders to start No. 10 in quest for first Sonoma title
- Two-time Sonoma winner Jeg Coughlin Jr. eager to power Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar Dodge Dart Pro Stocker to another title
- Recent Mopar history at Sonoma Raceway

July 30, 2016, Sonoma, California - Sea level conditions, a receptive racing surface, and a quad of very speedy Dodge Charger R/T Funny Cars had the Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Mopar drivers flying during qualifying for the 29th annual NHRA Sonoma Nationals. Each of the four nitro Funny Car pilots recorded runs in the 3-second zone, and Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T driver Matt Hagan was the quickest of the lot. Hagan wheeled his strong HEMI®-powered racecar to the No. 4 position with a best time of 3.875-seconds at a big speed of 330.15 mph that reset the track record he set there one year ago.

Hagan made four consecutive 3-second passes to the finish line in testament to the consistency of his Dodge Charger, and he intends to turn that consistency into a win on Sunday. Hagan has yet to claim a trophy for Mopar at Sonoma Raceway, though he came up just one win light short in 2012. So far this season, Hagan has picked up two victories for Team Mopar in three final rounds.

"This Mopar Express Lane/Rocky Boots Dodge is really running great," said Hagan, the 2009 and 2013 low qualifier in Sonoma. "It has been down the racetrack every time. Coming back down to sea level, this racecar has been running very consistent. We ran two different very good laps today in the heat of the day. It's going down the racetrack and that's huge. That's not an easy thing to do [in the heat], so that's very, very positive.

"I think we have a lot to look forward to tomorrow on raceday. We have a lot of data to build off of, a lot of momentum rolling, and hopefully we can just roll it into four win lights tomorrow to go with our four good runs in qualifying. This is just one of those races we haven't won yet, so we might as well go on and win it."

Each of the four DSR Mopar Funny Car drivers made good use of HEMI-power and blasted down the racetrack with impressive runs throughout qualifying at the 15th race of 24 in the 2016 Mello Yello Drag Racing Series season, and each earned their starting position with a very efficient sub 4-second pass.

Funny Car points leader Ron Capps piloted his Dodge Charger R/T to a 3.877/326.71 and is the No. 5 seed. He will race Cruz Pedregon in the first round on Sunday. It will be the fourth time this season in which Capps has raced Cruz on Sunday in a side-by-side affair, and in each of their first three meetings, Capps has triggered the win light in his trusty Dodge.

A hearty 3.903/322.88 vaulted Tommy Johnson Jr. and the Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T to the top half of the field for the 10th time this season. Johnson, last season's runner-up in Sonoma, is the No. 8 seed and will race DSR teammate and defending event champ Jack Beckman in round one in a rematch of the 2015 final. Beckman, currently

No. 3 in the Funny Car standings, qualified ninth on a 3.920/323.27 in his Infinite Hero Dodge.

Mopar in Top Fuel

Team Mopar's Leah Pritchett, driving the Mopar/Pennzoil® Top Fuel dragster which she debuted last weekend at the Mopar Mile-High Nationals in Denver, made a statement when she picked up a bonus qualifying point in the third session of Sonoma qualifying with a 3.751/327.19 that was third-best of the round. With the run, Pritchett stepped up to the No. 9 position, one spot higher than she qualified last week as she gets comfortable in her new Mopar-branded ride.

"That was our quickest and fastest since this team was put together at DSR," said Pritchett, who has competed in five events under the DSR umbrella. "We've said all along that we are making progress, and that shows right there we are. We've had so much help from the other DSR crew chiefs, and that let us see what we knew we were capable of. That run gave us real confidence going into raceday."

Pritchett will race DSR teammate Tony Schumacher, the No. 8 seed in Sonoma and driver of the Mopar-powered U.S. Army Top Fuel dragster, in the first round of eliminations.

Mopar Dodge Dart Pro Stock Qualifying

Still glowing – and still fast – after winning the Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals last weekend in Denver, Mopar-powered Allen Johnson qualified his Marathon Petroleum Dodge Dart in the No. 6 spot in Sonoma on a 6.588/209.95. Johnson, who has qualified sixth or better at eight events so far this season, will square off with Pro Stock newcomer Aaron Strong in the first round. Johnson last met Strong in the first round in Topeka, where he handily disposed of his challenger and moved ahead to the semifinals. Notably, Johnson won Sonoma in 2012 and has been propelled to the No. 1 spot by a powerful J&J Racing-built HEMI three times and in quick succession: 2010, 2011, and 2012, his championship season.

Reigning and back-to-back Pro Stock champion Erica Enders clocked out of qualifying with a best time of 6.612/209.26 in her Mopar Performance Dodge Dart. She will start from the No. 10 position and race Vincent Nobile in the first round of eliminations. Enders, who has 21 wins on her scorecard, is in pursuit of her first Sonoma trophy after qualifying a season-high No. 2 last weekend in Denver.

Team Mopar's Jeg Coughlin Jr., driver of the Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar Dodge Dart, will be seeking his third Sonoma Raceway Pro Stock victory on Sunday at the esteemed facility. Coughlin, who scored the Sonoma win in both 2003 and 2010 in the ultra-competitive Pro Stock category, put up a best time of 6.632/ 208.62 during qualifying for the main event. He will start from the No. 13 position and race Chris McGaha in the first round.

Championship eliminations at the 37th annual Mopar Mile-High NHRA Nationals will begin at 11 a.m. MT on Sunday, July 23, 2016.

Mopar's Recent History at Sonoma Raceway

A Mopar-powered Funny Car has walked away with the trophy in five of the last six NHRA national events held at Sonoma Raceway. Capps holds the most victories of all the currently-competing Mopar drivers in Sonoma and is a four-time winner there. His most recent win at the facility came in 2013, and his previous triumphs were earned there in 1997, 2010, and 2011. Johnny Gray, who formerly piloted the DSR Dodge Charger now wheeled by Johnson Jr., won the race in 2012, and Beckman was the victor in 2015. Mopar-powered Schumacher took his U.S. Army dragster to wins in 2007 and 2008.

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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A simple combination of the words MOfor 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.

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