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Mopar to Highlight Sportsman Racing, Pro Drivers Positioning for Playoff Berths at NHRA U.S. Nationals

- Erica Enders to take wheel of Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak in Factory Stock Showdown at Indy
- NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series Mopar-powered professional racers jockey for spots in Countdown playoffs
- 16th Annual Mopar HEMI® Challenge set for September 1-2 at Lucas Oil Raceway
- Mopar Sportsman Appreciation Night to recognize grassroots racers
- Final Mopar 'Top Eliminator' winner to be chosen at U.S. Nationals

August 29, 2016, Auburn Hills, Mich. - The Mopar brand is fueled and ready to hit the ignition switch on a jam-packed slate of drag racing and special events at the 62nd Annual NHRA U.S. Nationals, scheduled to take place August 31-September 5 near Indianapolis.

The tradition-rich Labor Day weekend event will feature a Pro Stock champion performing double duty in a Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, Mopar-powered professional racers battling to earn berths in the six-event NHRA Countdown to the Championship playoffs, a clash of classic Mopar HEMI® engine-powered competitors and much more on tap at Lucas Oil Raceway.

Enders to Race Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak in Factory Stock Showdown at U.S. Nationals

Downtime will be rare for defending NHRA Pro Stock series champ Erica Enders at the U.S. Nationals. In addition to steering her Mopar Performance Dodge Dart Pro Stocker, Enders will also compete in a Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak vehicle in the School of Automotive Machinists & Technology Factory Stock Showdown at Indy. She'll take the wheel of a supercharged 354-cubic-inch Gen III HEMI engine-powered Mopar Dodge Drag Pak prepped by the Joe Welch Racing organization and outfitted in official Dodge and Mopar graphics.

"We are thrilled to have an NHRA champion like Erica Enders carry the Mopar and Dodge colors into competition not only in Pro Stock, but also in the Factory Stock Showdown," said Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar), FCA – Global. "The U.S. Nationals event provides a great opportunity to put Erica in the seat of a supercharged Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak and reach a wider audience of fans at one of the most prestigious events on the NHRA circuit."

"Dodge already has the most powerful muscle cars on the street with the 707-horsepower Dodge Challenger and Charger SRT Hellcats and now America's performance brand brings even more muscle to the track with the supercharged Drag Pak," said Tim Kuniskis, Head of Passenger Cars – Dodge, SRT, Chrysler and FIAT, FCA – North America. "The 'Domestic. Not Domesticated.' Dodge spirit will be at full throttle for racing fans to see at the NHRA U.S. Nationals."

"I'm pretty excited," said Enders. "It's definitely a cool deal that Mopar and Dodge asked me to drive the Dodge Challenger Drag Pak at Indy. It will be something interesting. I have never competed in that before, and being that it's at the U.S. Nationals, it's obviously very prestigious, so we will go out there and see what happens."

"I already have a license in Stock, so it wasn't a big deal. I'm licensed in almost every class except for Funny Car and Top Fuel, so that wasn't an issue. I did, however, go up to Detroit and get fitted for the car, and we tested for one day. I was able to do some burnouts and take the Tree a couple of times. I haven't foot-brake raced since Jr. Dragsters, so that's 20-something years ago. To go up there and not have a pro Tree and not leave with a clutch or a transbrake button, it's definitely a different procedure. It was fun and exciting. It's a blower car, so that will be cool."

Pro Stock qualifying for Enders doesn't begin until Friday night, but she'll be in the lanes at Lucas Oil Raceway starting on Wednesday, along with nearly 200 fellow Sportsman competitors hitting the strip.

Team Mopar NHRA Pro Drivers Fight for Countdown Spots

The prestigious NHRA U.S. Nationals also represents the final race in the 18-event NHRA regular season, and the last chance for drivers to crack the top 10 in the standings in order to qualify for the six-event Countdown to the Championship playoffs, which begin September 16-18 in Charlotte.

In NHRA Funny Car, all four Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) drivers have steered their Mopar Dodge Charger R/T machines to Countdown playoff spots. Ron Capps has locked up the No. 1 seed, with DSR teammates Jack Beckman (No. 4), Mopar Express Lane Dodge pilot Matt Hagan (No. 5) and Tommy Johnson Jr. (No. 8) looking to improve their position in the standings before championship points are reset following the Indy race.

The playoffs fight is especially tight in Pro Stock, where a semifinals run at the NHRA Brainerd race jumped Mopar Performance Dodge Dart driver and two-time series champ Enders to ninth in the standings, one spot ahead of her Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar Dodge Dart teammate Jeg Coughlin Jr. The pair will look to nail down their Pro Stock playoff positions at Indy. Mopar-powered Marathon Dodge Dart racer Allen Johnson, currently fourth in the standings, has already punched his ticket into the Countdown.

It's also coming down to the wire for Leah Pritchett and her Mopar Top Fuel dragster team. Pritchett is tied for 10th in the standings and locked in a neck-and-neck playoff spot duel with Terry McMillen. Mopar-fueled U.S. Army driver and eight-time NHRA Top Fuel champ Tony Schumacher has already clinched his berth and will battle for his ninth crown.

Mopar HEMI® Challenge Back for 16th Year

Mopar-powered Super Stock/Automatic-HEMI (SS/AH) Sportsman class competitors will go head-to-head on the quarter-mile in the 16th Annual Mopar HEMI Challenge at Lucas Oil Raceway. More than 20 1968 HEMI-powered Dodge Dart and Plymouth Barracuda machines — considered the classic Mopar package cars — are currently entered in the event. Qualifying will take place Thursday, September 1, with eliminations on Friday, September 2.

The event champion will earn the \$15,000 winner's prize and a unique HEMI Challenge trophy weighing 42.6 lbs. All entrants will receive special Mopar HEMI Challenge decals, hats and posters, as well as a numbered print by artist John Jodauga.

The Mopar HEMI Challenge made its debut in 2001 at the U.S. Nationals, featuring the classic muscle cars that contributed to the brand's legendary reputation and success at the drag strip. The 1968 Dodge Dart and Plymouth Barracuda "package cars," factory-built for the strip, were precursors to the Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak vehicles that compete today in the NHRA Stock and Super Stock classes.

Mopar Recognizes Sportsman Racers

Mopar will recognize its passionate grassroots racers at the brand's annual Mopar Sportsman Appreciation Night on Thursday, September 1, from 7 to 9 p.m. NHRA's Joe Castello will serve as emcee for the event.

In addition to free food and drinks, Mopar Sportsman racers can participate in tech seminars and Q&A sessions with Mopar and FCA US engineers, and meet drag racing legends Herb McCandless and Tom Coddington. Racers in attendance can also enter to win multiple Mopar drawings throughout the night, with prizes including a set of Gen II HEMI engine aluminum cylinder heads, a set of Mopar 6.4L heads and many more Mopar giveaways.

Final 2016 Mopar "Top Eliminator" Winner Chosen

The 10th year of the Mopar "Top Eliminator" program will wrap up with the third award-winning owner and vehicle chosen from among the many Mopar Sportsman entries at the U.S. Nationals.

The long-running Mopar "Top Eliminator" program represents the "best of the best" in Mopar-modified creations and was created in 2007 to recognize enthusiasts who display excellence in modifying, enhancing or preserving a Mopar-powered ride.

An outstanding Mopar-powered drag race vehicle and owner will be chosen as the final 2016 Mopar “Top Eliminator” winner during Labor Day weekend at Lucas Oil Raceway. Winners were also chosen in June at the Midwest Mopars in the Park car show in Farmington, Minnesota, and in July at the Carlisle Chrysler Nationals in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

About Dodge Brand

The Dodge brand is America’s mainstream performance brand. With the purification of the brand and consolidation with SRT, Dodge is getting back to its performance roots with every single model it offers. The Dodge and SRT brands offer a complete lineup of performance vehicles that stand out within their own segments. Dodge is the “mainstream performance” brand and SRT is positioned as the “ultimate performance” halo of the Dodge brand, together creating a complete and balanced performance brand with one vision and one voice.

From muscle cars to compact cars, minivans, crossovers and full-size SUVs, the Dodge brand’s full lineup of 2016 models deliver best-in-class horsepower, class-exclusive technology, unmatched capability and a slew of cool features, such as LED headlamps, Dodge signature racetrack tail lamps, dual exhaust, 8.4-inch touchscreen infotainment centers and 7-inch thin-film transistor (TFT) customizable gauge clusters, to name a few. For the 2016 model year, customers will be able to drive the new 2016 Dodge Charger and Challenger, as well as the Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat and Charger SRT Hellcat. The Dodge brand lineup also includes the Dodge Dart, Durango, Grand Caravan and Journey, including the Crossroad model, and its flagship, the Dodge Viper.

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 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 MOTO 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.

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