

Mopar and Dodge Drivers Hagan and Pritchett Start Season with Dual No. 1 Qualifying Efforts at NHRA Winternationals

- Matt Hagan claims pole in Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T, ties own time and national speed record
- Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil driver and Southern California native Leah Pritchett takes second career pole at hometown track
- Seven Dodge Charger R/T machines qualify for Funny Car eliminations

February 11, 2017, Pomona, California - The first qualifying rounds of the 2017 NHRA schedule are in the books, and Mopar is two-for-two in Nitro qualifying on the young season. Don Schumacher Racing's Matt Hagan led the contingent of seven Mopar-powered Funny Cars in a field of 18 to win the pole during the 57th NHRA Winternationals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona, tying two of his own records along the way. Mopar-powered Top Fuel driver Leah Pritchett also collected her second career top qualifying spot to give Mopar the first two Nitro No. 1 qualifying positions of 2017.

Friday's first session kicked off with Hagan claiming the top spot in Funny Car in his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T. He never relinquished that position and the native of Christiansburg, Virginia, matched his national records of 3.822 seconds and 335.57 mph (both set in 2016) in Q4 on Saturday afternoon to claim the 27th No. 1 qualifier position of his career. Both elapsed time and speed were also track records at Pomona.

Meanwhile in Top Fuel, 15 cars made qualifying runs. Qualifying was based on just three sessions, with Mother Nature winning round two on Friday afternoon. Southern California native Leah Pritchett recovered from a mechanical issue on Friday to qualify first in the Papa John's Pizza/ Mopar Pennzoil Top Fuel Dragster at her hometown track. Pritchett is originally from Redlands, California. She turned in a career-best run in Q4 with a pass of 3.672 seconds at 327.90 mph to take her second career pole, and second in the last five events.

In the Pro Stock ranks, Allen Johnson qualified 13th in his Dodge Dart in Pro Stock and will face off against No. 4 qualifier Shane Gray in the first round on Sunday. Two other Dodge Darts made the show, including Deric Kramer in the 10th position.

MOPAR/DODGE NOTES & QUOTES

Matt Hagan, Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T

Qualified No. 1, will face No. 16 Jeff Diehl

Friday: (3.840 seconds/330.15 mph – Q1); (Cancelled – Q2)

Saturday: (3.878/304.87 – Q3); **(3.822/335.57 – Q4)**

"That run ties both my personal bests and I was just thinking I wish we could have gone just a little bit faster but we'll take what we can get. We want to be humble and not be too greedy to start off with. To go out there the first race [of the year], and first weekend of qualifying and to be right there where our national record is at is huge. That takes us a lot of time and a lot of cars the middle towards the end of the year to run down in the national records."

(On Mopar)

"I think it's been pretty amazing the last seven years ... I've been able to carry the banner for Mopar and I don't know how many national records I've set, but we've laid down a lot of cool runs like that and put on a great show for fans that have paid their hard-earned money to come out here. You know they're going to go back and that leaves an impression on them, and we're carrying a Mopar banner. We're gaining fans every weekend and hopefully

they're all Mopar fans. It's just neat to carry the banner for Mopar but it's also neat to have a race car that performs the way it does.

"We were able to win the manufacturing award last year because of drag racing, our teammates and everything else we did. I think it has been about 42 years or something since that happened so it really goes to show how much emphasis these fans and everyone else who is voting puts into drag racing. To come out here and perform and kick the season off right is pretty cool."

Leah Pritchett, Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil Top Fuel Dragster

Qualified No. 1, 1st Rd. Bye

Friday: (8.835/67.47 – Q1); (Cancelled– Q2);

Saturday: (3.702/324.83 – Q3); **(3.672/327.90 – Q4)**

"I have envisioned this moment before when I was standing right there in the restricted area pass section when I didn't have a restricted pass and watching these guys at exactly this time, freezing in the corner, hoping and praying that I would get to be here. I envisioned it. You can't have a goal and chase after something like qualifying number one at Pomona, or winning the U.S. Nationals, or maybe being world champion someday, you can't do those things without envisioning them. Is it a pipe dream? For sure it was back then. Am I closer to it now? Absolutely. But for it to happen, you can hear it in my voice, the only thing that gets better is if we wear the yellow (winner) hat."

(About Mopar power)

"We wouldn't have the powerplant that we have or the technology without Mopar working with Schumacher throughout the season and throughout the offseason. We create the most power in the world and put it to the ground. Mopar helps us do that efficiently. It's been a fantastic relationship and we definitely wouldn't be at the number one spot if it wasn't for them and their consistent support and their influence in the drag racing scene, whether it's with the [Mopar Dodge Challenger] Drag Paks or with our car specifically. Mopar has a very big part in this and when we win, they win."

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T

Qualified No. 4, will face No. 13 Bob Bode

Friday: (4.158/325.14 – Q1); (8.363/79.98– Q2)

Saturday: **(3.859/325.85 – Q3)**; (Pulled Off – Steering – Q4)

"We're happy where it is right now, and it feels like it was actually an extra day of testing, believe it or not. Even though it was at the race, we learned a ton, more what not to do than what to do, and a lot of times that's a better benefit than actually learning something in the other direction."

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T

Qualified No. 8, will face No. 9 Cruz Pedregon

Friday: (4.153/295.14 – Q1); (Cancelled – Q2)

Saturday: (5.937/123.42 – Q3); **(3.894/333.99 – Q4)**

"That 3.89 was far from a perfect run. The speed showed some potential. We actually softened (the tune-up) up but it was a little weak on ET (elapsed time). We tested well a week ago; we had a lot of good time slips from that. But they don't count. They're not for points, they're not for a trophy, they're not during a race."

Tommy Johnson Jr., Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T

Qualified No. 10, will face No. 7 Alex DeJoria

Friday: (4.723/183.97 – Q1); (Cancelled – Q2)

Saturday: (3.942/320.58 – Q3); **(3.933/323.97 – Q4)**

"Every run is getting better. Hopefully by race day, we will have enough data in the book and the guys will make the right calls. We have a lot of good data from the Finals in November when we won the title so I'm still confident going into race day."

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster

Qualified No. 5, will face No. 12 Scott Palmer

Friday: (3.729/325.06 – Q1); (Cancelled – Q2)

Saturday: (3.716/314.24 – Q3); (3.864/247.47 – Q4)

"I know there are cars running just a little bit quicker than us right now, but to be honest we're not getting all the way to the finish line. When we finally make it, we'll be running similar numbers. Good car, but we've got to keep it from blowing up because we're hurting parts and we've got to figure that part, first because this sport is all about safety."

Allen Johnson, Marathon Dodge Dart

Qualified No. 13, will face No. 4 Shane Gray

Friday: (6.636/207.94 – Q1); (6.663/207.66 – Q2)

Saturday: (6.621/208.33 – Q3); (6.622/208.52 – Q4)

"We spent the whole winter on the dyno and elected not to go testing in hopes of getting a better combination for our Dart. We're learning we should've tested before coming to this race and we'll go home before Phoenix and fix the problem. Outdriving these guys tomorrow is going to be real important and that's what I plan on doing in my Marathon Petroleum Co. Dodge Dart on raceday."

TUNE-IN INFO

Final eliminations for the 57th NHRA Winternationals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona will be televised LIVE on FOX at 4 p.m. ET on Sunday, February 12.

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, thanks to Don Schumacher Racing driver Ron Capps, Mopar captured its fourth NHRA Funny Car World Championship in the last six years. As Mopar celebrates 80 years as a brand in 2017, it will focus its NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series efforts on NHRA Funny Car and, with rising star Leah Pritchett, NHRA Top Fuel Dragster. Mopar will also bolster its commitment to NHRA Sportsman racing with new contingency rewards, factory support and at-track technical advice and guidance.

Mopar-First Features

During the brand's 80 years, Mopar has introduced numerous industry-first features including:

- Vehicle-information apps: first to introduce smartphone vehicle-information applications, a new channel of communication with consumers
- wiADVISOR: first to incorporate a tablet-based service lane tool
- Electronic Vehicle Tracking System (EVTS): first to market with a new interactive vehicle tracking device that sends owner a text when vehicle is driven too fast or too far based on pre-set parameters
- Wi-Fi: first to offer customers the ability to make their vehicle a wireless hot spot
- Electronic owner manuals: first to introduce traditional owner manuals in a DVD and brief user-guide format

80 Years of Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARts) was born on August 1, 1937, as the name of a line of antifreeze products. Mopar has since evolved over 80 years to serve as the total service, parts and customer-care brand of all FCA vehicles around the globe.

Mopar made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era, with Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use, and expanded to include technical service and customer support. Today, the Mopar brand's global reach distributes more than 500,000 parts and accessories in over 150 markets around the world. With more than 50 parts distribution centers and 25 customer contact centers globally, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

For 80 years, Mopar has been the source for genuine parts and accessories for all FCA brands. Mopar parts are engineered together with the same teams that create factory-authorized specifications for FCA vehicles, offering a direct connection that no other aftermarket parts company can provide. Complete information on the Mopar brand is available at www.mopar.com.

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