

Hagan Wins NHRA New England Nationals in Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

- Matt Hagan wins fifth annual NHRA New England Nationals at New England Dragway
- Victory is 25th of Hagan's career and third of 2017
- Three Mopar HEMI®-powered Dodge Funny Cars from Don Schumacher Racing advance to semis
- Leah Pritchett drives Dodge Challenger SRT Demon Top Fuel dragster to semifinal round
- Mopar drivers Ron Capps and Hagan sit in first and second positions in Funny Car point standings, Pritchett remains No. 1 in Top Fuel
- Thomas Auger goes to final in Stock Eliminator with 1963 Dodge 330
- Auger and Mike Cotten win Dodge Top Finisher award in Stock Eliminator and Super Stock

June 4, 2017, Epping, N.H. - Mopar HEMI® power just keeps winning Funny Car races on the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series in 2017. Matt Hagan put his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T in the winner's circle for the third time this year at the New England Nationals on Sunday, besting Courtney Force in the Funny Car final round at New England Dragway.

Hagan made a pass of 3.897 seconds at 332.59 mph after a .058-second reaction time in the right lane. It was enough to beat Force's lap of 3.927 at 332.34 after she got off the starting line with a .078 reaction time. The pairing was a rematch of the final round during the season-opening NHRA Winternationals at Pomona, also won by Hagan.

The win, the 25th of Hagan's career, extended Mopar's streak of winning at least one Nitro category to ten consecutive events, dating back to Pomona in November last year. Mopar Funny Cars have also claimed wins in eight of the nine events so far in 2017.

Hagan kicked off the day by finding himself in an unfavorable matchup against 16-time champion John Force in the first round, thanks to Force's uncharacteristic poor qualifying effort. Hagan was able to turn on the win light, however, making a clean pass as Force smoked his tires. It was Hagan's first defeat of Force in the last five matchups between the two champion drivers. Hagan then went on to defeat Del Worsham to create a showdown with his Mopar and Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammate Tommy Johnson Jr. Hagan pulled away from Johnson's Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T near the finish line to go to the final round against Courtney Force.

Hagan earned lane choice throughout the first three rounds and chose to stay in the left lane for each, but was forced to the right for the final.

Johnson meanwhile first took on Funny Car rookie J.R. Todd. After struggling to get the car fired, Johnson ultimately defeated his opponent in a close race as Todd was forced to slow near the finish line after nearing the wall. Johnson next made a clean pass to defeat upset-minded Mike Smith, who had defeated No. 1 qualifier Robert Hight in round one. Johnson's day was ultimately ended by teammate Hagan, but Johnson's team seemed to have righted the ship after a string of four consecutive first-round exits since winning at Las Vegas. Johnson had advanced to the last two final rounds at New England Dragway.

Ron Capps represented the third Mopar Funny Car semifinalist. Last year's Funny Car winner in New England, the 2016 champion and winner of the last four events in 2017, Capps began his day with a win over Jeff Diehl. Capps ran into trouble on his pass with his Dodge Charger R/T, but Diehl drove into instant smoke, giving Capps a lucky break. Capps next knocked out Bob Tasca III in round two to set up a matchup with Courtney Force. Although Force ended

Capps' bid to win his fifth consecutive Funny Car event, he maintained the series point lead and improved his win-loss record on the season to an incredible 23-5. He also won 17 rounds over five events before finally bowing out.

The only Mopar Funny Car from DSR not to make at least the second round was Jack Beckman's Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T. Beckman got sideways near the 330-foot mark in the first round, forcing him to give up the win to Worsham.

In Top Fuel, Leah Pritchett started her day with a first-round bye in her specially branded Dodge Challenger SRT Demon dragster thanks to her No. 1 qualifying effort on Saturday. She then matched up against rival Steve Torrence. Pritchett's car shut off down track and she was forced to coast to the finish line, but Torrence immediately smoked the tires, giving the win to Pritchett. She went on to face Antron Brown in the semis and turned in a solid run, but was bested by Brown in a side-by-side race.

Pritchett's Top Fuel teammate Tony Schumacher lost traction and was forced to pedal his car down track in his Mopar-powered U.S. Army dragster in round one. He was upset by independent campaigner Smax Smith despite getting a massive advantage off the starting line.

Historic New England Dragway is a favorite among competitors on the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series for its old-school persona. During the New England Nationals cool temperatures on Friday and Saturday aided teams in making some very quick and fast runs, although the action was slowed multiple times by rain. A constantly changing track on Sunday also led to a number of early-round upsets. A sellout crowd was on hand during both weekend days.

Mopar/Dodge Notes & Quotes

Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar) FCA – Global

"All of us at Mopar send big congratulations to Matt Hagan on the win in his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T at the New England Nationals. The Mopar motorsports program has been an incredible success story for our historic brand throughout the first half of 2017. We couldn't be more excited to see what comes next for HEMI power in NHRA as we celebrate Mopar's 80th anniversary."

Matt Hagan, Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car **(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.874 seconds at 330.00 mph)**

Rd. 1: (.053-second reaction time, 3.954 seconds at 330.80 mph), defeated No. 13 John Force (.056/5.117/152.90)

Rd. 2: (.075/3.946/333.00) defeated No. 12 Del Worsham (.095/4.078/318.32)

Semis: (.050/3.965/332.02) defeated No. 9 Tommy Johnson Jr. (.044/4.093/301.74)

Final: (.058/3.897/332.59) defeated No. 2 Courtney Force (.078/3.927/332.34)

"This Mopar/Pennzoil/Sandvik car had been on a string all day long and it just ran down the racetrack, I didn't hardly have to drive it. Just everything went the way it should've today. My lights were good, I felt like I was killing the tree the way we need to be and everything just fell into place. We kept lane choice all the way up to the final, which I thought was pretty big because we really liked that left lane a lot better than the right. I think the right gave a lot of people some trouble today. So to be able to stay over there most of the day was big. But (crew chief) Dickie (Venables) went down the right lane and won it in the right lane. So it was pretty cool. Hats off to him and all my guys. I know my wife's pretty pumped back home. I'm just very blessed to be able to win. Blessed to be able to put a mouthpiece in and pull on a helmet."

Leah Pritchett, Dodge Challenger SRT Demon Top Fuel Dragster **(No. 1 Qualifier – 3.673 seconds at 328.86 mph)**

Rd. 1: (.102-second reaction time, 5.232 seconds at 127.94 mph); Bye

Rd. 2: (.036/4.332/187.50) defeated No. 8 Steve Torrence (.046/7.071/95.09)

Semis: (.055/3.735/326.40) lost to No. 4 Antron Brown (.049/3.707/331.28)

"We feel pretty solid. I mean our goal was to put the Demon head on the pole and we did, but it wasn't necessarily an easy task. We chased after it back and forth. We feel good about starting the swing off like this. We're happy. We're happy with our performance. We're happy with ourselves. We see where we need to improve, but right now

we're pushing our HEMI-powered Mopar, powered by Pennzoil, to the limit and this Demon has some more head to show."

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

(No. 9 Qualifier – 3.900 seconds at 324.75 mph)

Rd.1: (.075-second reaction time, 4.016 seconds at 315.86 mph) defeated No. 8 J.R. Todd (.079/4.032/269.73)

Rd. 2: (.110/4.003/320.81) defeated No. 16 Mike Smith (.113/4.780/184.09)

Semis: (.044/4.093/301.74) lost to No. 3 Matt Hagan (.050/3.965/332.02)

"Certainly I would have liked to get to the final again for three years in a row, but it wasn't meant to be. But I'm really happy with just going to the semis and kind of getting our stride back. The guys haven't had to service for a while after the first round so we're just getting confidence and building that momentum. I talked about four in a row before this race and you can obviously get on a roll and this is a good way to start it."

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.863 seconds at 328.30 mph)

Rd. 1: (.134-second reaction time, 5.726 seconds at 151.14 mph) defeated No. 14 Jeff Diehl (.109/13.414/63.19)

Rd. 2: (.074/3.959/326.63) defeated No. 6 Bob Tasca III (.088/4.416/204.54)

Semis: (.069/3.939/327.11) lost to No. 2 Courtney Force (.077/3.895/331.77)

"We still feel great. It's a bummer the streak is over, but with the competition the way it is in Funny Car, winning 17 rounds like that in a row is pretty amazing. So it points back to what (crew chief Rahn) Tobler and all the guys have done on the car. We didn't beat ourselves that round, we just got outrun a little bit and we knew Courtney and that team were going to be tough. We really feel like we can get right back on top and keep rolling these points. They're important right now. We obviously want to win the regular season, but just to take these rounds early in the year has been a lot of fun."

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.878 seconds at 330.23 mph)

Rd. 1: (.089-second reaction time, 4.761 seconds at 169.04 mph) lost to No. 12 Del Worsham (.093/4.060/321.04)

"It's frustrating. There are some weekends you put a silver lining on. We lost in the final at Charlotte but we did a great job making adjustments to get to that point. We left there with our heads held high even though we didn't win the race. Here it's a little different story. We unloaded with a nice run and got qualifying bonus points and then never made it to the finish line under power after that. It's very uncharacteristic of us and there's not a smoking gun. There's not one thing that caused our issues. In fact, that's what's frustrating to us, is we were chasing so many little gremlins."

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.703 seconds at 327.03 mph)

Rd. 1: (.108-second reaction time, 4.740 seconds at 270.86 mph) lost to No. 14 Smax Smith (.359/4.200/285.17)

"Smax (Smith) was so excited. You hate losing, but there is some silver lining seeing how they were reacting after the race. It put a smile on my face watching him do the winner's interview at the top end. That's the first round win he ever had and it seems like everyone's first is against me. That's racing and things happen so quickly. The car kind of gave me a quick quiver. It just stuck in and then went up in smoke. I thought, 'I got this' and I hit it again. It pulled me over to the left and I stopped and let it calm down and then I squeezed it again. He went around me after I stopped and I saw him way out there. When I got back into it, I just couldn't catch him."

Mopar/Dodge NHRA Sportsman Spotlight

A wide variety of both classic and late-model Mopar Sportsman vehicles took part in the NHRA New England Nationals, representing both the East and West Coast and Canada.

Two competitors in the Stock Eliminator category went into Sunday's quarterfinal rounds, with Thomas Auger of Wales, Maine, advancing to the final in his H/SA '63 Dodge 330 powered by a 383 cubic-inch engine. He redlighted in his final-round matchup, but turned in a pass of 11.249 seconds at 116.57 mph on an 11.30-second dial-in. Auger raced in the early 1970s, but took a 38-year break before returning to the track.

In Super Stock, Mike Cotten of Cave Creek, Arizona, took his GT/JA 1970 Plymouth Barracuda to the third round where he made a pass of 9.905 at 128.13 on a 9.90 dial-in. His reaction time was .036, but his opponent, eventual event winner Byron Worner, was nearly perfect off the line. Cotten still was the best performing Mopar driver in the category throughout the weekend.

Auger and Cotten each were awarded the Dodge Top Finisher of the New England Nationals. The program, in place at all 24 NHRA national events, provides \$500 to the driver who advances the farthest in a Dodge or Plymouth vehicle in both Stock and Super Stock.

Next Event

The NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series remains in the Northeast next weekend for the 48th annual NHRA Summernationals at Old Bridge Township Raceway Park in Englishtown, New Jersey. For decades the Englishtown event has been one of the most prestigious on the NHRA schedule.

In 2016, Ron Capps put his Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car in the Englishtown winner's circle, defeating Mopar teammate Jack Beckman. Capps also set a track elapsed-time record during the weekend with a pass of 3.870 seconds. His Mopar teammate, Matt Hagan, holds the track speed record, reaching 326.71 mph during last June's event.

Capps and Hagan each have two Englishtown wins in Funny Car, while Tommy Johnson Jr. has one. Tony Schumacher also has one Top Fuel Wally from the Englishtown track.

The NHRA Summernationals will take place on June 8 – 11. The event will be broadcast throughout the weekend on FOX Sports 1, with Sunday's opening elimination rounds airing LIVE at 11 a.m. ET on Sunday, June 11. The conclusion of the program is slated for broadcast on the network at 6:00 p.m. ET that evening.

For more information on Mopar and Dodge in NHRA, check out the Mopar brand's official blog, <http://blog.mopar.com>.

2017 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 9 of 24

(Season Wins in Parentheses)

NHRA Funny Car

- 1. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T (4) – 827**
- 2. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T (3) – 748**
- Courtney Force – 564
- Robert Hight – 561
- John Force (1) – 555
- 6. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger R/T – 537**
- 7. Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T (1) – 533**
- J.R. Todd – 413
- Tim Wilkerson – 393
- Del Worsham – 341

NHRA Top Fuel

- 1. Leah Pritchett, Mopar HEMI (3) – 809**
- Antron Brown (2) – 775
- Steve Torrence (2) – 746
- 4. Tony Schumacher, Mopar HEMI (1) – 712**
- Doug Kalitta – 571
- Brittany Force (1) – 528

7. Clay Millican – 466
8. Troy Coughlin Jr. – 379
9. Terry McMillen – 369
10. Scott Palmer – 328

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 on a smartphone app

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