

## Beckman Advances to Semifinals in Mopar Dodge Funny Car at NHRA Sonoma Nationals

- Jack Beckman advances Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to semifinals of 30th annual NHRA Sonoma Nationals at Sonoma Raceway
- Two Mopar Dodge Funny Cars appear in second round
- Leah Pritchett puts HEMI®-powered Top Fuel dragster in round two
- Mopar claims top three points positions in Funny Car, holds third and fourth in Top Fuel standings
- Dwayne Scheitlin takes '71 Dodge Challenger to Stock Eliminator final
- Scheitlin named Dodge Top Finisher in Stock, Jerry Jenkins takes Super Stock award

July 30, 2017, Sonoma, Calif. - Jack Beckman set the pace for Mopar this weekend, turning in a valiant effort in his Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car with a semifinal appearance during the NHRA Sonoma Nationals at Sonoma Raceway.

Yet despite Beckman's best attempt, the Sonoma event ended a streak of 11 consecutive final-round appearances by Mopar Dodge Funny Cars in 2017. It was also the first time this year that neither a HEMI®-powered Funny Car or Top Fuel dragster from Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) appeared in at least one category final.

However, Mopar Funny Cars still have claimed 12 of 15 event wins on the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series schedule this season, while Mopar Top Fuel machines have four wins to their credit.

At Sonoma, Beckman first drove his Mopar Dodge from DSR past Jonnie Lindberg on a clean pass in the first round when the young Swedish driver had issues at the hit of the throttle. Beckman next took down Del Worsham in round two, despite an explosion as the car crossed the finish line. Beckman gave up lane choice to J.R. Todd in the semis, but still looked like he had the race won when Todd smoked the tires at the starting line. Beckman's car slowed as he worked his way down the track though, allowing eventual event winner Todd to make a come-from-behind pass for the win and end Beckman's march.

Also in Funny Car, Tommy Johnson Jr. and his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T team from DSR began their day by defeating teammate Ron Capps in the first round for the second week in a row. Johnson next matched up against Courtney Force in round two, where each driver struggled to find traction at the starting line. Both pedaled but Force ultimately turned on the win light.

Matt Hagan meanwhile went out in the first round after smoking the tires in his Mopar 80th/Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car. He fell to Del Worsham even as Worsham also struggled to get down track.

In the Top Fuel ranks, Leah Pritchett set a track record during qualifying to earn No. 1 honors. She defeated Terry Haddock in her Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil dragster from DSR during round one, but dropped cylinders forced her to bow out in the second round to Terry McMillen.

Pritchett's Mopar-powered Top Fuel teammate, eight-time champion Tony Schumacher, smoked the tires in his U.S. Army car when the light turned green in the first round. He tried to pedal but eventually was forced to give up and was upset by Scott Palmer. Even with the team's recent struggles, Schumacher still secured a spot in the NHRA Countdown to the Championship playoffs during the weekend.

The 30th annual NHRA Sonoma Nationals were contested in near-perfect weather conditions throughout the weekend, resulting in both track and national records. However, the track was also difficult for many teams to get a

handle on and a number of oil downs and other issues required track prep on more occasions than usual.

### **Mopar/Dodge Notes & Quotes**

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

**(No. 1 Qualifier – 3.669 seconds at 304.80 mph)**

Rd. 1: (.077-second reaction time, 3.749 seconds at 326.95 mph) defeated No. 16 Terry Haddock (.098/3.910/303.91)

Rd. 2: (.071/3.897/314.09) lost to No. 9 Terry McMillen (.100/3.783/322.50)

"You go into every race day with a good, confident feeling. I feel like this Sunday we had the most confidence because everything was jelling. Everyone was so on top of their game, with the track record and we were low three out of four qualifiers. This morning if someone asked, 'What's it going to take to win this race?' I would've said, 'no mistakes.' We all just do our jobs, no mistakes; that's what it's going to take. We were proven wrong. You can make no mistakes and still lose. We had a clutch lever malfunction. It broke, we dropped a hole (cylinder), and Terry McMillen beat us to the finish line first. Broken parts can break hearts but it can't break our spirit when we go to Seattle."

#### **Matt Hagan, Mopar 80th/Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car**

**(No. 6 Qualifier – 3.904 seconds at 330.39 mph)**

Rd. 1: (.091-second reaction time, 10.951 seconds at 62.37 mph) lost to No. 11 Del Worsham (.105/5.142/210.87)

"These guys are going to spend a couple days here at the racetrack going through this car. Unfortunately we smoked the tires four out of the five times that we were up there on the starting line and that's just not common. We're going through everything, we're going to tear the car apart from front to back and just make sure there's nothing wrong in this race car that we're missing. So at least we're roll into Seattle knowing that everything's in tip-top shape and kind of go from there."

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

**(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.854 seconds at 328.70 mph)**

Rd. 1: (.099-second reaction time, 3.919 seconds at 329.02 mph) defeated No. 14 Jonnie Lindberg (.101/10.747/101.94)

Rd. 2: (.106/4.009/277.43) defeated No. 11 Del Worsham (.095/4.800/184.67)

Semis: (.059/5.920/118.43) lost to No. 10 J.R. Todd (.081/5.741/283.73)

"It's always disappointing to lose. The car in the other lane, J.R. (Todd), had massive problems. They smoked the tires instantly; they gave us a huge window to go through. We couldn't do it. Our car just quit running at 200 feet. I was dead in the water and we were coasting, and it's a helpless feeling to know that that car's coming up on you at 150 miles an hour faster than you're going. You're hoping you're going to get to the finish line first and we weren't able to do it."

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

**(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.896 seconds at 325.85 mph)**

Rd. 1: (.060-second reaction time, 3.905 seconds at 332.02 mph) defeated No. 12 Ron Capps (.059/3.941/328.86)

Rd. 2: (.065/7.044/135.02) lost to No. 4 Courtney Force (.097/6.038/219.54)

"The track was extremely tricky all weekend long and a lot of people were struggling with it, but I was surprised in the second round to come loose. We ran so well in the first round, changed everything we thought would calm (the car) down for the second round with the hotter conditions, but it just didn't hardly move at all. We made a huge recovery from what happened in the first run on Friday (contacted wall) to come back and make two strong runs in qualifying and a nice first round and kind of keep going rounds. Even though it's the second round we're still getting some round wins and we'll see if we can build on that in Seattle."

#### **Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car**

**(No. 12 Qualifier – 4.000 seconds at 321.96 mph)**

Rd. 1: (.059-second reaction time, 3.941 seconds at 328.86 mph) lost to No. 5 Tommy Johnson Jr. (.060/3.905/332.02)

"The first thing (crew chief Rahn) Tobler will tell you is we've got to qualify better and there was nothing fancy, we weren't trying anything special. We had a couple of runs where we had dropped cylinders, and I brag about how good Tobler is at catching these small things that might trouble a team two or three races. It only took (Tobler) two or three runs. That was a great run first round. I actually clicked it off a little early when Tommy crossed the finish line so it would've run a tiny bit better E.T.-wise. But we can't qualify like that and race a good car like our teammate's in the first round. The good thing is we've earned the fact that we've got this points lead and we can afford to give up a round or two here."

**Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster**

**(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.709 seconds at 328.30 mph)**

Rd. 1: (.069-second reaction time, 8.417 seconds at 79.45 mph) lost to No. 12 Scott Palmer (.095/3.871/312.57)

"Something is definitely wrong. That's not a simple adjustment thing. But they'll fix it. Every time we go through that, we change something and it goes down the racetrack. Something just isn't right. I can't even guess at it because right now the crew chiefs can't even guess at it. It's something they'll ponder over the next day or so and make changes and we'll go to Seattle and go down the racetrack. That's why we have great people on this U.S. Army team. They can look at stuff and evaluate it and make decisions."

**Mopar/Dodge NHRA Sportsman Spotlight**

Close to 20 vehicles featuring Mopar power competed in the Stock Eliminator category during the 30th annual NHRA Sonoma Nationals, while Mopar was under the hood of nearly a dozen machines in the Super Stock ranks.

Two Mopar-powered cars appeared in the semifinals of the Stock category, with Brighton, Colorado's Dwayne Scheitlin going to the final round in his A/SA 1971 Dodge Challenger featuring a 440 cubic-inch engine. Scheitlin made a lap of 10.116 seconds at 129.27 mph on a 10.11 dial-in after leaving with a .045-second reaction time. It was Scheitlin's first appearance in a national event final round, but he came up just short despite nearly running his dial-in time.

Jerry Jenkins of Ripon, California, turned in the best performance among Mopar drivers in Super Stock, driving to the third round in his SS/AH '68 Plymouth Barracuda. There he turned in a pass of 8.673 at 138.88 on an 8.61 dial-in. He left the starting line with a reaction time of just .004.

Scheitlin and Jenkins each earned the Dodge Top Finisher award at the event. The program provides \$500 to the Stock and Super Stock driver advancing the farthest in a Dodge or Plymouth vehicle and is in place at all 24 NHRA national events this year.

**Next Event**

The three-race Western Swing for the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series concludes next week with the 30th annual NHRA Northwest Nationals at Pacific Raceways in Kent, Washington, outside of Seattle.

Mopar Funny Car driver Ron Capps won the 2016 edition of the event, while his teammate Jack Beckman set the track speed record, reaching 334.15 mph. Capps, Beckman, Matt Hagan and Tommy Johnson Jr. have each won the Northwest Nationals one time in Funny Car, while Mopar Top Fuel driver Tony Schumacher has collected four wins at the event. Capps also picked up his only career Top Fuel win at the track, while Johnson scored one of his two Top Fuel wins there.

The 30th annual NHRA Northwest Nationals are scheduled for August 4 – 6, with qualifying coverage provided by FOX Sports 1. The national FOX Network will air the elimination rounds LIVE at 4 p.m. ET on Sunday, August 6.

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 15 of 24**

(Season Wins in Parentheses)

### **NHRA Funny Car**

- 1. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T (6) – 1,276**
- 2. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T (3) – 1,093**
- 3. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger R/T (2) – 1,049**
3. Robert Hight (1) – 1,035
- 5. Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T (1) – 982**
6. Courtney Force – 874
7. John Force (1) – 821
8. Tim Wilkerson – 727
9. J.R. Todd (1) – 724
10. Cruz Pedregon – 570

### **NHRA Top Fuel**

1. Steve Torrence (6) – 1,369
2. Antron Brown (3) – 1,294
- 3. Leah Pritchett, Mopar HEMI (3) – 1,250**
- 4. Tony Schumacher, Mopar HEMI (1) – 1,008**
5. Brittany Force (1) – 935
6. Doug Kalitta – 933
7. Clay Millican (1) – 861
8. Terry McMillen – 598
9. Scott Palmer – 575
10. Troy Coughlin Jr. – 528

### **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

### **Mopar**

Mopar is the global name for Stellantis genuine parts and authentic accessories.

A simple combination of the words MOrtor 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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