

Mopar-powered Schumacher Runs to Semis at Rain-delayed NHRA Heartland Nationals

- Tony Schumacher advances to semifinals in U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster at Topeka
- Mopar Dodge Top Fuel driver Leah Pritchett exits in all-Mopar matchup against Schumacher
- Schumacher sits third in Top Fuel points, Pritchett fifth
- Trio of Mopar Dodge Funny Car drivers advance to quarterfinals at Topeka
- Mopar Dodge Funny Car drivers Beckman and Hagan listed second and third, respectively, in standings
- Mike Cotten takes two Dodge Top Finisher awards in Topeka
- More info on Mopar in NHRA available at <http://blog.mopar.com>
- New Dodge Garage (<http://www.dodgegarage.com/>), a digital content hub for muscle car and race enthusiasts launches; will include highlights from NHRA season

May 21, 2018, Auburn Hills, Mich. - U.S. Army Top Fuel driver Tony Schumacher wrapped up the rain-delayed NHRA Heartland Nationals with a semifinals finish for Mopar and Dodge//SRT on Monday, May 21, at Heartland Motorsports Park in Topeka, Kansas.

Mopar Dodge//SRT racers finished the one-third mark of the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series season with two drivers near the top of the ranks in Funny Car — Jack Beckman (second) and Matt Hagan (third). In Top Fuel, two drivers are also listed in the top five, with Schumacher in third and Leah Pritchett fifth.

Just following the conclusion of opening ceremonies on Sunday morning, a sprinkle of rain popped up and soon turned into persistent showers, leading to an extended eight-hour delay. Once racing finally began at 7 p.m. CT, Schumacher had his chance to exact revenge against Bill Litton, who knocked out the eight-time Top Fuel World Champion in the first-round at the previous event in Atlanta. “The Sarge” sent Litton home with a straight-down-the-groove 3.781-second elapsed time (ET) at 326.24 mph.

Next up was an all-Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Mopar-powered battle against Schumacher Electric/Mopar Dodge teammate Pritchett, who was hot off the starting tree with .016-second reaction time. However, No. 4 qualifier Schumacher’s 3.931 ET easily earned the win after Pritchett smoked the tires shortly after takeoff due to a computer malfunction.

Changing weather conditions forced the remaining racing action to be postponed until Monday, with Schumacher lining up against Clay Millican. Schumacher led slightly off the start but smoked the tires by the 330-foot spot on the drag strip as Millican sped away for the victory.

For Pritchett, winner at the previous NHRA stop in Atlanta, her day began paired up against another DSR stablemate, Antron Brown. The No. 5 qualifier used her driving skills to advance to round two. Pritchett and Brown were basically dead even at the start and both encountered traction troubles soon after launch. Forced to go on and off the throttle of her Mopar Dodge dragster, Pritchett found enough traction to pedal her machine to the round win with a 4.060/304.39 run to Brown’s losing 4.254/301.07.

In the Funny Car class, Hagan qualified his DSR Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T in the top half of the field at No. 8 and drew Tim Wilkerson in his opening-round battle. Both drivers recorded solid runs, but only Hagan dipped into the three-second range with a winning 3.942/326.79 pass.

The 2017 runner-up and 2016 winner at Topeka had lane choice over No. 1 qualifier Courtney Force in the

quarterfinals. In the end, just a tick over 12 feet separated Hagan from the round win in a nail biter of a finish. His 3.936 ET was edged out at the stripe by Force's 3.934.

Tommy Johnson Jr. paced all Mopar Dodge Funny Car drivers by earning the sixth spot in qualifying behind the wheel of his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T, and first faced off with John Force. The Ottumwa, Iowa, native overcame a starting line advantage by his foe with a 3.950/325.06 run, and for the second race in a row a DSR Mopar Dodge eliminated the 16-time champion in the first round. In the quarterfinals, lane choice and a solid 3.986/327.98 pass by Johnson Jr. weren't enough to best another driver from the Force camp, Robert Hight.

A three-time finalist and two-time winner at Topeka, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T pilot and No. 12 qualifier Beckman scored a round-one win over Bob Tasca III. Tasca's car encountered problems early, while Beckman deftly pedaled his Mopar Dodge Funny Car down the track to advance. In the quarterfinals, Beckman moved first off of the line with a .072-second reaction to opponent J.R. Todd's slower .086 mark, but Todd caught up by the 330-ft. cone and quickly passed the DSR driver and 2012 Funny Car World Champion for the win.

Ron Capps opened eliminations hoping to defend his 2017 event crown at Topeka and add to his four career wins at Heartland Motorsports Park, along with two runner-up finishes. Starting from the No. 7 spot in his Mopar-powered NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car, Capps shook the tires and trailed early against Shawn Langdon and was unable to make up ground with his 4.322/315.64 second pass. Next up for the 2016 Funny Car World Champion is the Route 66 NHRA Nationals, where Capps was also victorious in the 2017 campaign and will have another chance to repeat.

Mopar Dodge/SRT NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series: Notes & Quotes

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.771 ET)

Rd.1: (.074-second reaction time, 3.781 seconds at 326.24 mph) beat No. 13 Bill Litton (.081/3.950/270.48)

Rd.2: (.084/3.931/231.71) beat No. 5 Leah Pritchett (.016/9.302/87.02)

Rd.3: (.072/5.198/139.31) lost to No. 1 Clay Millican (.074/3.676/331.20)

"We made a few subtle changes coming into the weekend to fix some problems we've been having, lately. So, I'm not sure we could've run the number to beat what Millican did anyway, but, it would've gone down the track if we had run at the scheduled time. It is what it is. He made a fantastic run. We could complain that we set up a car to run at 10 o'clock but we ended up running at 11. Yeah, it's the same for both of us, but it seemed to play right into their hands. We're still more consistent than we've been in recent years, and we're still learning and getting better each week. We just need to go out and keep racing. And I will say that I plan on winning this championship. This U.S. Army team has all the right guys to get it done"

Leah Pritchett, Schumacher Electric/Mopar Dodge Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.776 ET)

Rd.1: (.047-second reaction time, 4.060 seconds at 304.39 mph) beat No. 12 Antron Brown (.048/4.254/301.07)

Rd.2: (.016/9.302/87.02) lost to No. 4 Tony Schumacher (.084/3.931/231.71)

"We had an injector issue on the burnout and it revved really high. When that happened, I looked down and watched the dash go blank. The high revs caused me to go on a super-long burnout. I stopped the car and then it wouldn't go into reverse. Finally got it to go back, but then, because it was revving so high, I had a hard time getting it into a forward gear to stage. Eventually we (were able to) get staged. Anything can happen once the yellow light comes on. Well, because of the unusually high revs, we smoked the tires at the hit and it was over.

"It turns out, our entire computer system died, and that was what was causing the problems we had there, so we're going to be searching for a solution for that over the next week and a half. We're going to do whatever it takes to put it behind us, which means fine-tooth-combing this racecar. I must say, during all this, it is the coolest thing in the world for me as a driver to be running at night like we were. It really puts a smile on my face."

Matt Hagan, Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 8 Qualifier – 4.028 ET)

Rd.1: (.065-second reaction time, 3.942 seconds at 326.79 mph) beat No. 9 Tim Wilkerson (.061/4.024/314.31)

Rd.2: (.074/3.936/328.94) lost to No. 1 Courtney Force (.052/3.934/328.54)

"I want to say that I'm just really proud of my guys. They did a great job today. We had a 55-minute turn and they did a great job making the turn with three guys in new positions just really thrashing hard and trying to get things done. All in all, pretty good race day, even though we only went to the second round. It just one of those things where you put it in perspective. Courtney Force and those guys have had a tenth on the field and we just went nose-to-nose and basically ran an identical run with them. When you put that in perspective it really shows how much we've stepped it up right now within just a round or two to be able to throw down with those guys when everybody else is still kind of running 4.0's out there."

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

(No. 12 Qualifier – 4.086 ET)

Rd.1: (.054-second reaction time, 4.776 seconds at 186.77 mph) beat No. 5 Bob Tasca III (.082/20.363/No Speed)

Rd.2: (.072/4.058/310.20) lost to No. 4 J.R. Todd (.086/3.949/323.12)

"The silver lining for us is as much as we had struggled in qualifying, we still felt like we had a good car. Then the huge rains came and round one was basically a one-lane race track, especially for the Funny Cars. We were one of the only, if not the only, Funny Car to win out of the less desired lane. Then we just got outrun in the second round. We will pack up, and we will go back to Brownsburg (Indiana), restock everything and get ready for four in a row. This is really going to be the point in the season where you need to find your tune up. There's no question in my mind that we will be a Countdown (playoffs) car."

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

(No. 6 Qualifier – 4.008 ET)

Rd.1: (.083-second reaction time, 3.950 seconds at 325.06 mph) beat No. 11 John Force (.068/4.391/284.03)

Rd.2: (.082/3.986/327.98) lost to No. 14 Robert Hight (.057/3.924/330.23)

"It was just strange conditions; a long wait all day. The car ran great, just tricky to know what to do out there. I knew we'd have to push on that (second) one and (we) just came up short. Joliet is up next and that's one of those tracks where you show up and you always seem to do well, so you look forward to going to those. I can't wait to get there and see if we can't get that momentum going."

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 7 Qualifier – 4.021 ET)

Rd.1: (.092-second reaction time, 4.322 seconds at 315.64 mph) lost to No. 10 Shawn Langdon (.068/4.021/322.19)

"We really felt good coming into this race with the changes that (crew chief Rahn) Tobler made on the race car. We felt like whatever the conditions were going to be, we were going to be better off. Unfortunately, as soon as I stepped on the gas, the car started shaking the tires. I gave it a quick pedal and it hooked up, but our opponent ran a 4.02 and we were done for the day."

Mopar Dodge/SRT NHRA Sportsman Spotlight

Mike Cotten of Cave Creek, Arizona, made the most of the extended racing at Topeka, sweeping the Dodge Top Finisher Awards in Stock and Super Stock at the NHRA Heartland Nationals. It was his fourth award of the year, including Dodge Top Finisher honors in Super Stock at the NHRA Phoenix and Vegas events.

Cotton opened eliminations with a victory over Marlene Nelson. After the remaining Stock rounds were postponed

until Monday due to the extended rain delay, Cotten drove his 1973 Duster to victories over Keith Hildahl, No. 1 Stock qualifier and 2010 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak driver Chris Kemmerer and Randy Mans to advance the semifinals. A red light foul against Tyler Wudarczyk ended Cotten's extra day in Topeka.

In Super Stock, Cotten qualified No. 19 in his Mopar 383 Big Block-powered 1970 Plymouth 'Cuda with a 9.962 ET that was .738 under index. He posted an almost identical 9.963 run at 130.72 mph in the first round of eliminations, but opponent Vic Penrod claimed the win with the help of a near perfect .001-second reaction time.

The Dodge Top Finisher award, now in its second year, awards \$500 to the Stock Eliminator and Super Stock drivers who advance the furthest behind the wheel of a Mopar-powered Dodge, Chrysler, or Plymouth race car. The honor is awarded in both Sportsman categories at all 24 NHRA national events.

Dodge Garage: New Digital Hub for Drag Racing News

Fans now have a new one-stop destination for Mopar and Dodge drag racing news.

Dodge Garage (<http://www.dodgegarage.com>) is a digital content hub and premier destination for drag racing and muscle car enthusiasts.

Fans can view daily updates and get access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads and merchandise. Dodge Garage features include exclusive content, such as a three-part video series "Chasing the Title," that offers fans a unique, behind-the-scenes glimpse at Pritchett and her DSR team in action.

For information on Mopar on and off the track, check out the Mopar brand's official blog, <http://blog.mopar.com>.

Up Next: Route 66 NHRA Nationals

In less than two weeks, Mopar Dodge//SRT drivers will head to Route 66 Raceway near Chicago for the Route 66 NHRA Nationals. In last year's visit just outside the Windy City, Ron Capps triumphed in an all-Mopar Dodge Funny Car matchup against DSR teammate Tommy Johnson Jr.

2018 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 8 of 24 (Season Wins in Parentheses)

NHRA Top Fuel

1. Steve Torrence (3) — 664
2. Clay Millican (1) — 569
3. **Tony Schumacher, Mopar HEMI — 539**
4. Doug Kalitta (1) — 497
5. **Leah Pritchett, Mopar Dodge HEMI (1) — 489**
6. Terry McMillen — 432
7. Brittany Force (1) — 428
8. Antron Brown — 423
9. Richie Crampton (1) — 312
10. Mike Salinas — 308

NHRA Funny Car

1. Courtney Force (3) — 670
2. **Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger R/T (1) — 590**
3. **Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T (1) — 540**
4. Robert Hight — 512
5. J.R. Todd (2) — 504
6. **Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T — 490**
7. **Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T — 440**
8. Cruz Pedregon (1) — 399
9. Shawn Langdon — 373
10. Jonnie Lindberg — 351

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Dodge//SRT offers a complete lineup of performance vehicles that stand out in their own segments. Dodge is FCA North America's 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.

For more than 100 years, the Dodge brand has carried on the spirit of brothers John and Horace Dodge, who founded the company in 1914. Their influence continues today. New for 2018, the 840-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, the fastest quarter-mile production car in the world and most powerful muscle car ever, is taking the world by storm, along with the new 2018 Dodge Durango SRT, America's fastest, most powerful and most capable three-row SUV, and the 707-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat Widebody. These new SRT ultimate performance models join a brand lineup that includes the Durango, Grand Caravan, Journey, Charger and Challenger, including the 707-horsepower Challenger SRT Hellcat and the Charger SRT Hellcat, the quickest, fastest and most powerful sedan in the world.

Mopar

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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.

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