

Mopar Dodge Drivers Hagan, Pritchett Post Runner-up Finishes at Vegas

- Pennzoil Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat NHRA Funny Car driver Matt Hagan races to seventh final round of season at NHRA Nationals
- Final round is 54th of Hagan's career, all in a Mopar Dodge Funny Car
- Leah Pritchett also puts Pennzoil Mopar Dodge Top Fuel dragster in final round at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway
- Final-round appearance is fifth of season and 13th career for Pritchett
- Dwight Machael and Mike Cotten claim Dodge Top Finisher NHRA Sportsman awards at Vegas
- Dodge Garage (<http://www.dodgegarage.com/>), a digital content hub for muscle car and race enthusiasts, features highlights from NHRA season

October 28, 2018, Las Vegas - Mopar Dodge//SRT drivers Matt Hagan and Leah Pritchett raced to runner-up finishes in Funny Car and Top Fuel, respectively, in elimination rounds at the NHRA Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway on October 28, 2018.

Defending event champ Hagan opened race day with a first-round win over Tim Wilkerson. He clocked a 3.908-second elapsed time (ET) in his Pennzoil Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car, the quickest of the round. Next up for the No. 9 qualifier was Mopar Dodge Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammate Tommy Johnson Jr., and Hagan once again paced the field with a winning 3.919 ET.

In the semifinals, Hagan trailed early but was able to reel in Bob Tasca III with a 3.928/323.89 run, edging out his foe at the stripe in a close race to advance to his seventh final round of the year and 54th of his career. The two-time Funny Car World Champion left first in the final round with a .037 reaction time to J.R. Todd's slower .058 mark and briefly maintained the lead before a dropped cylinder slowed Hagan's momentum and ended his drive for a fourth win on the season.

Pritchett qualified No. 4 in her chromed-out Pennzoil Mopar Dodge Top Fuel machine and started her Sunday by outrunning part-time racer Troy Buff. Next up against Blake Alexander, Pritchett laid down a winning 3.740 ET to Alexander's 3.968 pass. She drew teammate Tony Schumacher in the semifinals and had no trouble getting past him as she powered to her best run of the weekend (3.730 ET) versus Schumacher's instant tire smoker.

Pritchett lined up against newly crowned series champion Steve Torrence in the final. Eager to stop Torrence's streak of round wins, Pritchett was slightly overzealous on the line and double-stepped the throttle, immediately giving way to tire smoke as her opponent sped down the track for the round win.

Tony Schumacher qualified No. 9 and drove his Mopar HEMI-powered U.S. Army Top Fuel dragster to a round-one victory over Scott Palmer. In the quarterfinals, "The Sarge" led from start to finish against Countdown contender Clay Millican, setting up an all-Mopar DSR battle against Pritchett. Schumacher was quicker in reaction time but smoked the tires shortly after launch and it was all Leah after that, ending the four-time Vegas winner's day.

Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car veteran Jack Beckman qualified strong in the third position and began race day with a 3.935 ET to outrun the Dodge Charger of Jim Campbell. In round two Beckman trailed early against Courtney Force but rebounded to take the victory by about four feet with a 3.951/320.51 pass. Beckman moved on to a semifinals battle with major playoff implications against new points leader J.R. Todd. "Fast Jack's" 3.937/327.90 effort was solid but not strong enough to best Todd's quicker 3.906 ET.

Ron Capps qualified No. 12 in his Mopar-fueled NAPA Dodge Funny Car and was able to overcome lack of lane choice and a slight starting line deficit to take down John Force in a fight between the most successful Funny Car drivers in NHRA history. In round two, Capps was foiled by Countdown spoiler Tasca III. Both drivers had identical reaction times, but Tasca eventually pulled ahead for the lead and Capps was unable to chase down his opponent.

After securing his third Funny Car No. 1 qualifier in a row, Tommy Johnson Jr. kicked off race day by driving to his career 400th round win with a defeat of Jeff Arend. Johnson faced stout competition in round two against teammate Hagan. Johnson was a bit too quick on the throttle in his Make-A-Wish Dodge, turning on the red light and giving Hagan the round win.

Mopar Dodge//SRT NHRA Sportsman Spotlight

Dwight Machael of Las Vegas, Nevada, raced his 1962 B/SA Plymouth Sport Fury to a semifinal finish in Stock Eliminator at the NHRA Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. With the iconic 413 Max Wedge under the hood, Machael was looking strong all weekend until a redlight ended his chances of advancing into the final round. Machael earned the Dodge Top Finisher award in Stock Eliminator.

In Super Stock, repeat Dodge Top Finisher winner Mike Cotten drove his 383 powered 1970 SS/JA Plymouth 'Cuda to a round-four finish at Vegas. Cotten's 'Cuda was consistent on race day and was looking to go some rounds until a slightly tardy reaction time caused him to come up short against his opponent.

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

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

Matt Hagan, Pennzoil Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car **(No. 9 Qualifier – 3.949 ET)**

Rd.1: (.071-second reaction time, 3.908 seconds at 326.08 mph) beat No.8 Tim Wilkerson (-.091/5.608/124.44)
Rd.2: (.084/3.919/326.08) beat No. 1 Tommy Johnson Jr. (-.027/5.395/133.38)
Rd.3: (.075/3.928/323.89) beat No. 4 Bob Tasca III (.053/3.952/319.29)
Rd.4: (.037/4.087/263.62) lost to No. 2 J.R. Todd (.058/3.921/318.39)

"It's unfortunate that we couldn't get that win light in the final round. We had such amazing sponsorship support with the folks from Pennzoil, Shell and Mopar and had so many key clients rooting us on here in Las Vegas. We have the SEMA Show this week here in (Las) Vegas and we wanted nothing more than to take the Wally trophy to the Mopar booth to show off with our Chrome Pennzoil Funny Car. At the end of the day, we went to the final round and it was a good day. That's just drag racing and sometimes we lose. It wasn't our day, but we'll go to Pomona with a strong race car. I'm proud of our guys. They did great all weekend and we were just pressing hard trying to run in the high (3).80s and the track just wouldn't hold it."

Leah Pritchett, Pennzoil Mopar Dodge Top Fuel Dragster **(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.731 ET)**

Rd.1: (.089-second reaction time, 3.735 seconds at 327.43 mph) beat No. 13 Troy Buff (.053/3.808/319.67)
Rd.2: (.088/3.740/322.42) beat No. 12 Blake Alexander (.059/3.968/276.29)
Rd.3: (.071/3.730/328.46) beat No. 9 Tony Schumacher (.055/6.004/93.72)
Rd.4: (.019/5.317/148.85) lost to No. 2 Steve Torrence (.047/3.751/326.32)

"We have a really incredible racecar – the tune-up for Vegas, a solid effort and chance at a runner-up finish in the championship. To put a silver lining on it, we made it to the final with seven solid passes. The buck stopped at me and I take full responsibility for that, wanting so badly not just to put a stop to Torrence's reign in this Countdown, but more than anything the win for this team is what I wanted most for them. Seven just incredible runs, finally the issues we've been having with our superchargers and chassis, I think we've conquered those. So, if anything, a solid run

for a good spot in the championship and a really good head start into 2019. The guys have really stepped up and this entire team has been really impressive to me.”

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 9 Qualifier – 3.772 ET)

Rd.1: (.065-second reaction time, 3.818 seconds at 315.86 mph) beat No. 8 Scott Palmer (.060/3.850/304.94)

Rd.2: (.046/3.754/328.70) beat No. 1 Clay Millican (.106/4.025/242.15)

Rd.3: (.055/6.004/93.72) lost to No. 4 Leah Pritchett (.071/3.730/328.46)

“I wish I could tell you what happened – they’re still trying to figure it out. It spun the tires real high and real fast and then it came down and sheared the clutch off of it. That was awful because we had a good car. We were just slow in the first round, and then, in the second round, we went great. We got the blower back up, the power was made and we went fast. That last round, everything was fine but it literally sheared the clutch completely out of it – one clean cut. We’ll figure everything out and come back for a strong finish to the season in Pomona. We’ve got a good chance to salvage a second-place finish in the Countdown if all goes well for us. Congratulations to Steve Torrence on the championship. Welcome to the fraternity of Top Fuel world champions.”

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.922 ET)

Rd.1: (.053-second reaction time, 3.935 seconds at 326.24 mph) beat No. 14 Jim Campbell (.270/4.035/300.33)

Rd.2: (.074/3.951/320.51) beat No. 6 Courtney Force (.063/3.969/320.66)

Rd.3: (.074/3.937/327.90) lost to No. 2 J.R. Todd (.060/3.906/327.11)

“I think people knew that the Funny Car championship was down to a few cars, but there’s still trophies and a top five spot. We have a really solid running race car. I have to take my hat off to the entire DHL team. They are just getting it done. They’re not getting any gimmees. They’re making big runs and J.R. (Todd) is driving fantastic and that’s a tough combination to beat. Our plan is to get our car back in that area where it’s predictable and quick and driving the thing is a pleasure and we’re getting close.”

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

(No. 1 Qualifier – 3.879 ET)

Rd.1: (.078-second reaction time, 3.938 seconds at 326.08 mph) beat No. 16 Jeff Arend (.072/7.197/92.39)

Rd.2: (-.027/5.395/133.38) lost to No. 9 Matt Hagan (.084/3.919/326.08)

“It’s just frustrating and one of these days we’ll get it all put together on a Sunday. (Matt) Hagan ran really well first round and we know what he’s capable of and I knew I had to push and pushed a little too hard. We’ll regroup and go to Pomona for the Finals where we’ve had great success winning the last two years and try to finish this thing off with a win.”

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 12 Qualifier – 3.971 ET)

Rd.1: (.060-second reaction time, 3.954 seconds at 325.22 mph) beat No. 5 John Force (.045/3.972/330.31)

Rd.2: (.066/3.963/322.81) lost to No. 4 Bob Tasca III (.066/3.943/322.11)

“This weekend at Vegas, coming off of the win at Charlotte, we didn’t qualify where we wanted to and it’s what makes this sport so heartbreaking and rewarding. It’s a constant fight. (Crew chief Rahn) Tobler found the issue between Q3 and Q4 and we did exactly what we needed to do to make a good run Q4.

“Typical Tobler, we went up there in the left lane without lane choice and beat John Force in the first round today. And that setup a match with our old assistant crew chief Eric (Lane) and Tasca’s car. We have a lot of respect for that team and they just outran us. We made a big adjustment and got after it, but just lost a close race. I didn’t see

him until the finish line.”

Up Next: NHRA Finals

The 2018 finale of the NHRA Mello Yello Countdown to the Championship will be held November 8-11 at the Auto Club Raceway in Pomona, Calif. Last year, Tommy Johnson Jr. took home the Wally at the NHRA Finals at Pomona.

2018 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 23 of 24

(Season Wins in Parentheses)

NHRA Funny Car

1. J.R. Todd — 2553
2. Robert Hight — 2479
- 3. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T (3) — 2388**
4. Tim Wilkerson — 2367
- 5. Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T — 2362**
6. Courtney Force — 2324
- 7. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat (3) — 2321**
- 8. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat (2) — 2283**
9. John Force — 2277
10. Shawn Langdon — 2204

NHRA Top Fuel

1. Steve Torrence — 2718
2. Clay Millican — 2487
- 3. Tony Schumacher, Mopar Dodge HEMI (1) — 2454**
- 4. Leah Pritchett, Mopar Dodge HEMI (2) — 2394**
5. Brittany Force — 2302
6. Antron Brown — 2291
- 7t. Mike Salinas — 2259
- 7t. Doug Kalitta — 2259
9. Terry McMillen — 2253
10. Scott Palmer — 2182

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Dodge//SRT offers a complete lineup of performance vehicles that stand out in their own segments. Dodge is 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 brand in 1914. Their influence continues today. New for 2019, the Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat Redeye is possessed by the Demon. Its 797-horsepower supercharged HEMI® high-output engine makes it the most powerful, quickest and fastest muscle car reaching 0-60 miles per hour (mph) in 3.4 seconds and the fastest GT production car with a ¼-mile elapsed time (ET) of 10.8 seconds at 131 mph. It also reaches a new top speed of 203 mph. Joining the Challenger SRT Hellcat Redeye is the 2019 Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat with its more powerful 717-horsepower engine, the Challenger R/T Scat Pack Widebody, which features fender flares from the SRT Hellcat Widebody and adds 3.5 inches of width to Scat Pack’s footprint, as well as and the new Challenger R/T Scat Pack 1320. Infused with exclusive drag strip technology from the iconic Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, the Challenger R/T Scat Pack 1320 is a drag-oriented, street-legal muscle car and a blank canvas for the serious grassroots drag racer. The 2019 Dodge Durango SRT, America’s fastest, most powerful and most capable three-row SUV with a best-in-class tow rating of 8,700 lbs. fills out the brands’ performance lineup. These visceral performance models join a 2019 brand lineup that includes the Durango, Grand Caravan, Journey, Charger and Challenger — a showroom that offers performance at every price point.

Mopar

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A simple combination of the words MOtor 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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