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Capps Wins All-Dodge Final at Texas NHRA FallNationals; Three HEMI®-powered Championship Contenders Battle Atop Funny Car Standings

- Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Ron Capps battled teammate Matt Hagan in an all-Dodge final at the Texas NHRA FallNationals to earn a hard fought victory and further intensify the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World Series "Countdown to the Championship" with just three playoff races remaining
- No. 2 qualifier Capps used two holeshot round wins to power his Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to a second career win at Texas Motorplex and 68th career Funny Car Wally trophy to narrow the gap between him and Funny Car championship leader Hagan to 33 points
- Defending Funny Car world champion Hagan drove his DSR Western Technical College Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat from the No. 4 position on the eliminations ladder to his second consecutive final round showdown in "Countdown to the Championship."
- No. 3 qualifier Cruz Pedregon earned bonus points in every qualifying session then took his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to a semifinal appearance and moved into third place atop the Funny Car standings

October 10, 2021, Ennis, Texas - An all-Dodge final round showdown at Texas Motorplex saw Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) veteran driver Ron Capps defeat his teammate and current National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Funny Car championship points leader Matt Hagan to earn the coveted champions' black cowboy hat given to winners of the Texas FallNationals. the fourth of seven "Countdown to the Championship" playoff events. Capps' 68th career Funny Car victory was his second of the 2021 season and helped narrow the gap between him and Hagan atop the standings while fellow Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat driver Cruz Pedregon moved into the top-three with a semifinal round appearance at the Dallas-area venue.

Capps arrived in Texas ranked second in the playoff standings, within 59 points of the category leader Hagan, and promptly put his NAPA AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat in a good position for the elimination rounds with a solid qualifying performance which allowed him to collect four bonus points and secure the No. 2 spot on the ladder. He disposed of competitors Jack Wyatt and Paul Lee in the early rounds to move on to a semifinal match against fellow HEMI-powered driver, Cruz Pedregon. A holeshot win over Pedregon provided Capps the opportunity to advance to his fourth final round of the season and meet up with DSR teammate Hagan.

Capps used a 0.046-second reaction time coupled with a solid 3.930-second elapsed timed run at 326.87-mph for another holeshot win, this time beating his stablemate's quicker 3.919 sec./328.78 pass, to make his way to the winner's circle for the first time in more than 20 years since his only other victory at the Dallas-area venue in Spring of 1998.

With Sunday's victory, Capps, who finished runner-up in the championship four times before finally capturing the Funny Car crown in 2016, tightened up this year's battle heading into the final three race weekends of the season and now sits just 33 markers, or less than two rounds, behind Hagan.

Defending NHRA Funny Car world champion and points leader heading into Texas FallNationals, Hagan powered his DSR Western Technical College Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat from the No. 4 qualifier position to his second consecutive final round showdown in the "Countdown to the Championship" with a series consistent 3.9-second runs.

Coming off his win at the previous event in St. Louis, Hagan recorded a 3.897-second elapsed time qualifying run at

332.34 mph in Q2 on Friday evening to secure the fourth place spot. He began his Sunday drive with a starting line advantage and a first round win against No. 13 seed Dale Creasy Jr. to advance to a quarterfinals match against No. 5 seed Bob Tasca III. While his opponent was slightly quicker on the draw, the DSR HEMI-powered machine overtook him in the first few feet and posted a 3.918 second/325.53 mph run to turn the win light on against Tasca's 3.955 sec./331.61 mph pass. The semifinal pairing brought No. 8 seed J.R. Todd to the line against Hagan who posted a 0.081-second reaction time and 3.904 sec./331.04 mph lap after his opponent had a 0.007-second start, but double-stepped and lost traction at the hit of the throttle.

Hagan advanced to his 71st career final round showdown, his sixth final round appearance of the season (and his team's seventh with Tommy Johnson Jr.'s win while subbing for Hagan at Reading), and one with championship implications as it was against No. 2 contender and teammate Capps. While a holeshot and 0.0121-second margin of victory by Capps was a bitter pill to swallow, the runner-up finish kept him in the points lead.

Also vying for the Funny Car crown, Cruz Pedregon, a four-time winner at Texas Motorplex (1992, 1994, 2011, and 2013), earned the No. 3 qualifier position for Sunday's elimination rounds after driving his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to be among the top-three quickest laps in all four qualifying sessions and collect a total of five precious bonus points. The Cruz Pedregon Racing team owner and driver put himself third on the ladder with his quickest qualifying pass from Friday evening in Q2, a 3.892-second run at 325.14 mph, marking the sixth consecutive event he has qualified in the top-five.

Pedregon's opening round had him paired with No. 14 seed Terry Haddock against whom he got an early lead and never looked back en route to a winning 3.898-second run at 329.18 mph to advance to an important quarterfinal showdown against No. 11 seed John Force.

While Pedregon sat fourth behind Force in the Funny Car championship standings heading into their meeting, that was no longer the case after he took his HEMI-powered Snap-on Tools "Socket to Breast Cancer" machine for a 3.925 sec./329.10 mph drive to overtake Force on track by beating his 4.299/225.07 lap and move past him in the standings. By advancing to the semifinals, Pedregon moved up a spot into third place as he chases his third Funny Car championship title. Unfortunately, that semifinal was against eventual event winner Capps, who used a holeshot victory to put Pedregon 80 points behind him.

Top Fuel pilot Leah Pruett took her DSR Performance Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster for a solid 3.773 second elapsed time qualifying run at 323.12 mph in the third session of the weekend to earn a bonus point for setting the third-quickest pass. That effort put her 11th on the Top Fuel eliminations ladder and set up a first round meeting with No. 6 seed Josh Hart. Pruett was quicker on the throttle with a 0.048-second reaction time giving her HEMI-powered dragster the starting line advantage and the lead through to the halfway mark. Unfortunately, soon thereafter, her ride shut off and allowed her opponent to get past. Pruett crossed the line with a 4.230 sec./192.63 mph posted time and speed behind Hart's 3.755 sec./305.56 mph winning pass to eliminate her from the rest of Sunday's competition. Pruett and her Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster come away from the Texas Fall Nationals sixth in Top Fuel championship standings.

Just three "Countdown to the Championship" playoff events remain in the 2021 Camping World Series season with the next race, NHRA Thunder Valley Nationals, scheduled for Oct 15-17 at Bristol Dragway, near Bristol, Tennessee.

ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES

FUNNY CAR:

Matt Hagan, DSR Western Technical College Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.897 seconds at 332.34 mph)

Round 1: (0.064-second reaction time, 3.910 seconds at 330.15 mph) defeats No. 13 Dale Creasy Jr. (0.076/4.032/297.29)

Round 2: (0.057/ 3.918/325.53) defeats No. 5 Bob Tasca (0.048/3.955/331.61)

Round 3: (0.081/3.904/331.04) defeats No. 8 J.R. Todd (0.007/7.983/71.40)

Round 4: (0.065/3.919/328.78) loss to No. 2 Ron Capps (0.042/3.930/326.87)

"There's a backside of a good drag race, and obviously it fell on my shoulders. Capps won on two holeshots today

and obviously he was on it. We've got a great team and that would have been a big swing in the point direction for us (with a win) but I it's always coming down to the last deals. We've just got to keep digging and working hard. We've got a great Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat, it's responding well and it's going to be a dog fight. It always is."

Ron Capps, DSR NAPA AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.882 seconds at 329.34 mph)

Round 1: (0.085-second reaction time, 3.898 seconds at 324.75) defeats No. 15 Jack Wyatt (0.0.161/4.795/168.72)

Round 2: (0.087/3.928/323.58) defeats No. 10 Paul Lee (0.094/3.943/326.95)

Round 3: (0.056/3.924/326.56) defeats No. 4 Cruz Pedregon (0.105/3.906/327.59)

Round 4: (0.042/3.930/326.87) defeats No. 4 Matt Hagan (0.065/3.919/328.78)

"I can't tell you how many times I've made the mistake over the years of counting out, first of all, John Force, at anything. Everyone's been bit by that. He always seems to find a way to climb his way back in. We have Force, J.R. (Todd) and Cruz (Pedregon) breathing down our necks. Tim Wilkerson, Robert Hight and I were talking, and we've been through this championship fight many times, but it's never been this tight top-to-bottom. Anybody can win on any given Sunday, so it was good to gain a little bit on Hagan this weekend.

"(Matt) Hagan, and (crew chief) Dickie (Venables), those are my teammates and you don't wish ill on anyone out here but I'm certain when I was leading the points a few times this year, they were hoping I would smoke the tires or we would lose early because you want to gain ground. So, I was hoping (Bob) Tasca would do the dirty work second round when they had Hagan, and then I thought J.R. had a good chance because they had a good running car, but Hagan and Dickie, they just kept surviving."

"I'm very fortunate to now be able to work with (Crew Chiefs) Guido (Dean Antonelli) and (John) Medlen. I've known them for many, many years, and it's been really fun. We have a really great race car, so I'm just trying not to be the weak link. It raises my intensity every time to not be second leaving the starting line, and to not do anything wrong, and just make sure that I do the best I can every time."

"It's rare to beat (Hagan) on a holeshot but I just am so focused for my team. There was a lot of emotion going into that round. It's good to get a little bit of ground from third place and gain a little bit on Hagan and those guys, and it's nice to go right to Bristol."

Cruz Pedregon, Cruz Pedregon Racing Snap-on® Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat

(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.892 seconds at 325.14 mph)

Round 1: (0.120-second reaction time, 3.898 seconds at 329.18 mph) defeats No. 14 Terry Haddock (0.182/4.026/307.93)

Round 2: (0.072/3.925/329.10) defeats No. 11 John Force (0.033/4.299/225.07)

Round 3: (0.105/3.906/327.59) loss to No. 2 Ron Capps (0.056/3.924/326.56)

"After qualifying the Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat into the No. 3 spot with a great 3.89 elapsed time at over 326 mph, we advanced to the semifinals where we lost a close race to Ron Capps with a 3.90 to a 3.92, but overall it was really a good points race for us. We did move up from fourth to third in the championship points with three races to go. Obviously it was a heartbreaker to lose to Capps because we did run a little quicker, but I just missed the tree there. I just didn't deliver the goods there so that's on me one hundred percent. The team did a great job in preparing me and giving me a good car. Qualifying was awesome as well.

We racked up points in every qualifying session which gave us a total extra bonus of five points, which might be a career first for me to actually score in each of the qualifying rounds. They try to reward the good running cars and we definitely took advantage of that. Hats off to (Crew Chief) JC (John Collins) and (assistant Crew Chief) Rip (Reynolds) and the team. They were just on their game and we'll shake this off and move on to a Bristol."

TOP FUEL:

Leah Pruett, DSR Okuma Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster

(No. 11 Qualifier – 3.773 seconds at 323.12 mph)

Round 1: (0.048-second reaction time, 4.230 seconds at 192.63 mph) loss No. 6 Josh Hart (0.080/3.755/305.56)

"We definitely had some big expectations for the Stampede of Speed. Everything is bigger in Texas, but the one thing that wasn't bigger here was our boost. Five pounds down at the step turned into a hole out and pitching the belt on a round that we were winning from the get-go. One thing I can say about this DSR Performance team, is that we will be fighting until the bitter end. We may be out of reach of the actual championship, but what we can do is continue to be the giant killer, and give it absolutely everything we've got for the last three races. We're working together and keeping our heads up because that's the only way that we'll continue to be able to get the success we're after for the rest of the season."

NHRA Championship Points Standings:

Following the Texas NHRA Fall Nationals at Texas Motorplex

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

- 1. Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,449 (3/1-TJ Johnson Jr.)**
- 2. Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,416 (2)**
- 3. Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,336 (1)**
4. John Force – 2,334 (3)
5. J.R. Todd – 2,315 (1)
6. Bob Tasca III – 2,291 (2)
7. Robert Hight – 2,261 (2)
8. Tim Wilkerson – 2,211 (1)
9. Alexis DeJoria – 2,197
10. Blake Alexander – 2,153

TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)

1. Steve Torrance – 2,473 (9)
2. Brittany Force – 2,421 (1)
3. Justin Ashley – 2,352 (2)
4. Mike Salinas – 2,305
5. Billy Torrence – 2,301 (2)
- 6. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 2,255 (1)**
7. Antron Brown – 2,221 (1)
8. Clay Millican – 2,212
9. Shawn Langdon – 2,196
10. Doug Kalitta – 2,148

DodgeGarage: Digital Hub for Drag Racing News

Fans can follow all the NHRA action this season at DodgeGarage, the one-stop portal for Dodge//SRT and Mopar drag-racing news. The site includes daily updates and access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads and merchandise. For more information, visit www.dodgegarage.com.

@DodgeMoparMotorsports on Instagram

The @DodgeMoparMotorsports Instagram channel continues to share content capturing Dodge//SRT Mopar drivers on the track. Fans can see action from the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series and NHRA Sportsman grassroots racers, competing in classes such as Factory Stock Showdown, Stock and Super Stock, as well as additional motorsports series.

Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARTs) offers exceptional service, parts and customer care. Born in 1937 as the name of a line of antifreeze products, the Mopar brand has evolved over more than 80 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, the brand expanded to include technical service and customer support. Today, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Mopar is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider Stellantis. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit www.stellantis.com.

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Dodge//SRT

For more than 100 years, the Dodge brand has carried on the spirit of brothers John and Horace Dodge. Their influence continues today as Dodge shifts into high gear with muscle cars and SUVs that deliver unrivaled performance in each of the segments where they compete.

2021 marks the year that Dodge is distilled into a pure performance brand, offering Hellcat-powered, 700-plus-horsepower SRT versions of every model across the lineup. For the 2021 model year, Dodge delivers the drag-strip dominating 807-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Super Stock, the new 797-horsepower Dodge Charger SRT Redeye, the most powerful and fastest mass-produced sedan in the world, and the new 710-horsepower Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat, the most powerful SUV ever. Combined, these three muscle cars make Dodge the industry's most powerful brand, offering more horsepower than any other American brand across its entire lineup.

In 2020, Dodge was named the "[#1 Brand in Initial Quality](#)," making it the first domestic brand ever to rank No. 1 in the J.D. Power Initial Quality Study (IQS). The Dodge brand also [ranked No. 1](#) in the J.D. Power APEAL Study (mass market). These results are historic because it marks the first time a domestic brand has earned top spots in both J.D. Power studies in the same year.

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