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## **Capps and Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Earn 2021 NHRA Funny Car World Championship**

- Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat driver Ron Capps and his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) team earned the 2021 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Funny Car World Championship, the second of his 27-year career, at the Auto Club Finals
- Three Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Cars entered the final race day of the season with a chance to win the world championship title
- DSR driver Matt Hagan drove his Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to the semifinals at Auto Club Raceway and closed out the 2021 NHRA season as runner-up in the Funny Car championship to teammate Capps
- Cruz Pedregon Racing and the Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat remained in the hunt for the Funny Car Crown throughout the "Countdown to the Championship," finishing fourth in the standings, driver Cruz Pedregon's best season performance since 2013
- DSR Top Fuel pilot Leah Pruett closed out the season by qualifying the Direct Connection Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster No. 3 for eliminations and finishing in the Top 10 for a sixth consecutive season

November 14, 2021, Pomona, California - Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat driver Ron Capps and Don Schumacher Racing earned the 2021 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Funny Car World Championship in an exciting season finale at the Auto Club Raceway at Pomona, California. It is the veteran driver's second Funny Car title of his 27-year career, following his first championship win in 2016, and the seventh of the 19-year partnership between DSR and the Mopar and Dodge//SRT brands.

"On behalf of Dodge//SRT, congratulations to Ron Capps for his HEMI®-powered world championship performance," said Tim Kuniskis, Dodge Brand Chief Executive Officer – Stellantis. "We're thrilled to have Ron and the Don Schumacher Racing team demonstrate what Dodge//SRT performance looks like by earning their second NHRA Funny Car World Championship."

"Congratulations to Ron Capps from all of us at Mopar on this hard-earned second career Funny Car world championship," said Mark Bosanac, Head of Mopar Service, Parts and Customer Care for FCA – North America. "We appreciate the outstanding efforts during this championship season and thank them for proudly showcasing Mopar performance on the track."

"What a crazy day and crazy season," said Capps. "The fact that the Countdown came down to the Pomona Finals and was a real fight between the Dodge Charger SRT Hellcats of Cruz Pedregon, Matt Hagan and I was really neat. And to see that as a manufacturer Dodge had the competition covered, all three of us were pretty proud of that."

Capps claimed his second NHRA World Championship after powering his NAPA AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to two event wins, three runner-up finishes and advancing to the semifinals or better on 11 occasions. Capps and his crew collected a category-best 36 round wins and four No. 1 qualifier awards while taking the points lead five different times over the course of the 20-event season.

"The Dodge Charger SRT body has been crazy fun to drive this year," added Capps. "We came out with a new chassis and new body and this year this body has made me a whole new driver. It's been fun to have more vision and to be able to see better and when you are going 330 mph that's what you need."

Three Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Cars entered the final race day of the season with a chance to take home

the championship Wally but once both No. 2 qualifier Capps and DSR teammate Hagan in the No. 7 position turned on win lights in the first round of eliminations, Pedregon was no longer in contention for the crown.

With a pending head-to-head showdown between Capps and Hagan in the quarterfinals, the 67-point difference, or the equivalent of a three rounds, between the two contenders added to drama. If Capps beat Hagan, he would immediately be crowned Funny Car Champion.

Instead, the two Dodge Charger SRT Hellcats put on a show with a side-by-side battle that saw Hagan emerge the winner following a 0.074-second reaction time and 3.948-second elapsed time run at 322.34 mph to edge Capps at the stripe despite a solid 0.043-second reaction time and 3.995-second drive at 319.45 mph.

"I knew it was going to come down to the wire but we really had to worry about Matt (Hagan)," said Capps, who watched from the sidelines as the possibility that Hagan could successfully defend his Funny Car crown hinged on him taking the Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to the winner's circle. "We qualified well but still ended up racing him in the second round. It was a close race but then I had to stand behind his car and wait to see how it played out. Really proud of the job (Crew Chiefs) 'Guido' (Dean Antonelli) and John Medlen and the whole team has done this year."

Hagan needed to get his Mopar machine past Alexis DeJoria in the semifinals to have a shot at retaining his crown. The three-time NHRA champ was quicker on the start but by half-track his opponent slipped past for the round win, ending Hagan's drive and reign as Funny Car champion.

"We've got a great team, a great car and at the end of the day there were three Dodge Charger SRT Hellcats in the running for this championship, with (Ron) Capps, me and Cruz (Pedregon)," said Hagan. "Dodge is just doing an amazing job out there and I'm glad to be a part of it. Today didn't go the way we wanted it to but to be in the championship hunt and be able to have a shot at it year after year is a testament to the performance equipment we have and the hard work this team has put in."

With a category-best four wins this season, Hagan and his Mopar Dodge//SRT team's runner-up finish in the championship was their 11th time closing out a season with a Top-10 result.

The third contender in the Funny Car title chase heading into the final race day was Pedregon, who arrived at Auto Club Raceway fresh off his victory at the Dodge//SRT Nationals in Las Vegas and put his Snap-On Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat No. 6 on the ladder with consistent qualifying runs. With a 91-point deficit prior to the opening round, any championship hopes for the Cruz Pedregon Racing team were contingent on Capps exiting in the first round.

While that didn't happen, Pedregon lined up for the first round match against No. 11 seed Tim Wilkerson feeling positive about the consistency and progress his team made this season. Pedregon's HEMI-powered machine had a good launch and was on the move when tire smoke early in the run brought to a close his team's best season performance since 2013. The team finishes fourth in the points standings with two wins, a pair of runner-up finishes and a No. 1 qualifier award. Their Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat turned on win lights 30 times in eliminations this season, only the third time in 20 years that Pedregon has won 30 or more rounds.

In Top Fuel action, DSR pilot Leah Pruett's solid qualifying performance put the Direct Connection Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster No. 3 on the eliminations ladder with a 3.706-second pass at 327.59 mph in the final session. That afforded the HEMI-powered machine lane choice over No. 14 seed Cameron Ferre for the opening round of the final national event of the season.

After a quick start, Pruett was chasing down her opponent when a loss of traction prior to half-track hampered her efforts and brought her race day to an early end. She closes out her season seventh in the Top Fuel standings, her sixth consecutive top-10 finish since joining Don Schumacher Racing in 2016, with an event title at the Pomona Winternationals and runner-up finish at Sonoma.

The NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series will return to the dragstrip in February with a 22-event season

schedule that will again include five national events with Mopar Express Lane and Dodge//SRT title sponsorship.

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES**

### **FUNNY CAR:**

#### **Matt Hagan, DSR Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye**

(No. 7 Qualifier – 3.956 seconds at 319.75 mph)

**Round 1:** (0.081-second reaction time, 3.935 seconds at 323.04 mph) defeats No. 10 Tony Jurado (0.091/3.973/322.34)

**Round 2:** (0.074/3.948/322.34) defeats No. 2 Ron Capps (0.043/3.995/319.45)

**Round 3:** (0.054/3.975/317.79) loss to No. 3 Alexis DeJoria (0.081/3.940/321.04)

"Congratulations to Ron Capps. He's a true legend of the sport. He's been out here probably more than twice as long as I've been racing. Those guys just outworked and outperformed us this year. At the end of the day, we get to come back out here and fight them again next year. At the end of the day and a long year, I just want to say I'm proud of (Crew Chief) Dickie Venables and my entire crew. We battled back after a couple of bad race days at Bristol and (Las) Vegas. I'm happy for Ron and sad for us. The sun will rise tomorrow and it's time for us to work hard this off season and come back out here and do it again in a few months here at Pomona. Great job to Capps and the NAPA team."

#### **Ron Capps, DSR NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat**

(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.908 seconds at 329.83 mph)

**Round 1:** (0.093-second reaction time, 3.908 seconds at 325.06 mph) defeats No. 15 Terry Haddock (0.159/4.708/178.07)

**Round 2:** (0.043/3.995/319.45) loss to No. 7 Matt Hagan (0.074/3.948/322.34)

"I can't even believe that just happened. You don't want to go up there and wish someone bad luck. That entire Hagan team with (crew chief) Dickie Venables is incredible. I expected them to go win the race. I don't know what to say. I'm just shaking right now. I stood and watched from that same Pomona Raceway grandstand as a kid and watched guys like (Joe) Amato and Gary (Ormsby) line up in the final round here years ago and to be doing this myself and to now have a second championship, I can't say enough."

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

(No. 6 Qualifier – 3.939 seconds at 321.96 mph)

**Round 1:** (0.070-second reaction time, 4.808 seconds at 170.58 mph) loss to No. 11 seed Tim Wilkerson (0.053/3.922/325.30)

"I hate it for the team more than anything to end such a great year with tire smoke but Tim (Wilkerson) was a tough opponent. We had a lot at stake today but we accomplished a lot this year, we were in the championship conversation until the end with three Hellcat drivers. I respect and admire both those drivers. Really proud that we had 30 round wins. That's a stat that shows how important consistency is. I'm excited about keeping that consistency through next year with this same group of people. We'll look at what we can improve on but I look at this season as a huge success. I'm not a fan of the points-and-half format for the last race because that doesn't reward what we have done over a stretch of time. Where we ended up is not indicative of the effort we put in and what our Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat accomplished this year. We were a solid third place car. It was a good season for us. We had good support and for three Mopar Dodge Hellcats to be there at the finish is indicative of how good these cars are."

### **TOP FUEL:**

#### **Leah Pruett, DSR Direct Connection Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster**

(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.706 seconds at 327.59 mph)

**Round 1:** (0.070-second reaction time, 5.053 seconds at 189.71 mph) loss to No. 14 Cameron Ferre (0.059/3.796/319.75)

"The level of confidence heading into the final race here at Pomona was extremely high – higher than it's been in some time. The attitudes were positive. The takeaway from the first round loss is a straight mechanical malfunction.

The clutch did not move. It wasn't a tuning or personnel issue. Therefore, we had no power. It mixed up cylinders immediately. A couple pedal jobs and a weird sensation in the car when you're not going anywhere, but also not smoking the tires. Sometimes it's just necessary for a very hard reset. This entire team has a heart of gold. We represent the 'never lift' campaign for Dodge and we are a testament for that and sometimes when you never lift, a part does. We're looking forward to next season. We couldn't be more thankful to DSR, Dodge, Mopar, Pennzoil, all of our great partners at Don Schumacher Racing, and everyone at DSR for some amazing seasons."

#### **NHRA Championship Final Points Standings:**

Following the Auto Club NHRA Finals at Pomona

#### **FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)**

- 1. Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,676 (2)**
- 2. Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,639 (3/1-Tommy Johnson Jr.)**
3. Bob Tasca III – 2,586 (3)
- 4. Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,555 (2)**
5. John Force – 2,543 (3)
6. Alexis DeJoria – 2,526 (1)
7. J.R. Todd – 2,498 (1)
8. Robert Hight – 2,478 (2)
9. Tim Wilkerson – 2,361 (1)
10. Jim Campbell – 2,238

#### **TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)**

1. Steve Torrance – 2,873 (11)
2. Brittany Force – 2,637 (1)
3. Mike Salinas – 2,614 (1)
4. Justin Ashley – 2,556 (2)
5. Billy Torrence – 2,498 (2)
6. Antron Brown – 2,427 (1)
- 7. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 2,401 (1)**
8. Clay Millican – 2,384
9. Shawn Langdon – 2,310
10. Doug Kalitta – 2,290

#### **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](http://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](http://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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