

Pruett Takes TSR Dodge SRT Top Fueler to Runner-up in Circle K NHRA Four-Wide Nationals at Charlotte

- Leah Pruett continued her strong 2023 NHRA national event performances Sunday in the Circle K NHRA Four-Wide Nationals at zMAX Dragway in Charlotte with a runner-up finish in the final round in the Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Rush Truck Services/Dodge SRT Top Fuel dragster
- Pruett, who qualified third with a season-best 3.678 seconds, advanced to her first final round of the 2023 NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series, losing to race winner Austin Prock, with a 3.708 to Prock's 3.684
- The final round showing moved Pruett into the third position in the current NHRA Top Fuel standings with the next national event stop at Route 66 Raceway in Elwood, Illinois, on May 19-21
- Current NHRA Funny Car point leader Matt Hagan suffered through a tough weekend at Charlotte despite a strong qualifying run of 3.866, with a trip into the track's catch net in the opening run
- The parachute failure caused Hagan to drive in the track's sand trap and hit the netting, which damaged the TSR team's latest Operation Healing Forces Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car
- The TSR crew, led by Dickie Venables, brought out the 2022 Direct Direction-bodied Dodge SRT Charger Hellcat machine and Hagan qualified fourth for Sunday's eliminations, but Hagan's mount lost traction at mid-track and failed to advance from the first-round competition
- Despite the first-round loss at Charlotte, Hagan continues to hold the NHRA Funny Car point lead as he heads to Route 66 Raceway with a 58-point lead over Alexis DeJoria, 433-375
- Cruz Pedregon just missed a third consecutive 2023 No. 1 Funny Car qualifying position Saturday with his Snap-On Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat with a time of 3.859 for the No. 2 starting spot

April 30, 2023, Concord, N.C. - Leah Pruett of Lake Havasu, Arizona, drove her Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Rush Truck Services/Dodge SRT Top Fuel dragster to the runner-up spot Sunday in the Circle K NHRA Four-Wide Nationals final eliminations at the zMAX Dragway, the fourth round of the 21-race NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series. Sunday's eliminations were hampered by several rain stoppages, which delayed the action throughout the day.

Pruett, who qualified with a season best of 3.678 and third in the 16-car Top Fuel field, kept her stellar consistency record intact in the fourth straight event this season with impressive round times of 3.702, 3.753 and 3.708 in the final round. In the four-car final, Austin Prock was the winner with a 3.684 followed by Pruett's 3.708 and 329.99 miles per hour pass.

The runner-up performance, along with two semi-final showings this year, has vaulted Pruett into third in the current NHRA Top Fuel point standings as the tour heads to Route 66 Raceway in Elwood, Illinois, on May 19-21 for the Gerber Collision and Glass Route 66 NHRA Nationals.

"I would consider this year's Charlotte Four-Wide Nationals one of the most extreme from pending weather knocking on the door to delays," said Pruett. "The racing was a rush. We were extreme in the decisions we were making to a particular path that had shown promise. It showed the results in qualifying. Coming into race day, getting that first round in before the rain came was huge. It makes you feel like there are two race days in one. There are less rounds in the Four-Wide, but it doesn't take any of the intensity away from it.

"I'm very proud of my team. The parts have been put together well, and my crew chiefs are making fantastic calls. It's paying off and I've been driving my butt off. We're continuing to work on our combination. I'm very proud of our

performance."

Current NHRA Camping World Funny Car point leader Matt Hagan experienced a wild weekend with his TSR Operation Healing Forces Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat machine when a parachute failure forced Hagan's car into the track's sand trap and protective netting in the first round of qualifications Friday. Hagan walked away unhurt, but his three-race winning mount was finished for the weekend.

The TSR crew, led by Dickie Venables, made the decision to pull out the 2022 Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat for the remainder of the NHRA competition at Charlotte, and the car performed well in qualifying with a 3.866 run. That Saturday time was fourth in the 16-car lineup.

Prior to Hagan's opening round Sunday, a rainstorm hit the race facility and halted action for more than three hours, which left Hagan and his three competitors to face an all-new racing surface. Hagan left the starting line strong in that first round, but the car suffered tire shake. It was Hagan's first opening round loss of the 2023 NHRA national event series.

Despite the first-round loss, Hagan remains the NHRA Camping World Funny Car point leader with a 58-point advantage over second-place Alexis DeJoria, 433-375.

"We had a real, rough weekend," said Hagan. "Putting it in the sand trap kind of set the tone for how our weekend went and we had to pull out the spare car. We had one body for Operation Healing Forces and Johnson's Horsepowered Garage, so it was tough to trash it. Sometimes things happen that are outside your control, as much as you try to prevent it.

"We had some good runs in our spare car, and I was feeling good about it for race day. The track was a little better than we thought it was and missed the setup a little bit. The tires shook and we pedaled the car, and it just wasn't enough. This was an off weekend for our team, but we have to overcome adversity and that's what we do."

Cruz Pedregon just missed a third straight 2023 No. 1 Funny Car qualifying position at Charlotte with his Snap-On Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat at 3.859, trailing Bob Tasca's pole position of 3.852. Pedregon reached the second round in Funny Car eliminations Sunday.

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