

## Johnson Thunders to First-ever Denver Victory at Dodge Mile-High NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil

- Dodge//SRT Mopar racer Tommy Johnson Jr. runs to Funny Car victory at Bandimere Speedway in Morrison, Colorado, near Denver
- Win is second consecutive for a Dodge driver at the brand's headline event, second of year for Johnson and sixth of season by a Dodge//SRT Mopar Funny Car racer
- Johnson climbs to No. 2 spot in Funny Car standings, leads three Mopar-powered Dodge//SRT drivers in top five
- Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat driver Johnson cheered on by Honorary Starter and Wish Kid Porter Johnson of Arvada, Colorado
- Defending event champion Leah Pritchett races "Angry Bee" Mopar Dodge 1320 Top Fuel dragster to quarterfinals showing at Dodge Mile-High NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil
- Matt Hagan exits in first round carrying new 2020 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody graphics package
- Denver race kicks off opening week of Dodge Dragstrip Showdown
- David Bogner and Austin Williams race to Dodge Top Finisher honors at Denver
- [Dodge Garage](#), a digital content hub for muscle car and race enthusiasts, offers exclusive photo journals with behind-the-scenes action from Dodge Mile-High NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil
- New @DodgeMoparMotorsports Instagram channel features Dodge//SRT Mopar drivers in NHRA action on "Thunder Mountain"

July 21, 2019, Morrison, Colorado - Tommy Johnson Jr. ended his 35-year quest for a victory in Denver, driving his Mopar-powered Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to the win at the Dodge Mile-High NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil on July 21, 2019, at Bandimere Speedway in Morrison, Colorado.

Johnson's win on Sunday, his 19th career NHRA victory and second of 2019, was also the sixth triumph by a Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat pilot in 2019, and fifth in the last eight events for a Mopar-powered competitor. It's also the second consecutive win by a Dodge driver at the brand's headline event, following Leah Pritchett's 2018 Top Fuel win.

The run to victory in the event sponsored by Dodge and presented by Pennzoil, both partners of Johnson's car owner Don Schumacher Racing (DSR), came in his 51st career final. His first final appearance came at Bandimere back in 1984, when at age 15 he raced to a runner-up finish while competing in Super Gas. Two years ago, Johnson lost in the Funny Car final, but Sunday he was not going to be denied.

Johnson, cheered on by event Honorary Starter and four-year-old Wish Kid Porter Johnson (no relation) from the local chapter of the Make-A-Wish Foundation, started Sunday by driving his Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to an opening round win over Jeff Diehl to setup a quarterfinal matchup with fellow DSR and Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car driver Jack Beckman. A starting-line advantage was the difference in pushing Johnson past Beckman into his seventh semifinal of the season. Next in his way was Cruz Pedregon, another Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat foe, and Johnson raced to another consistent lap in the John Collins'-tuned Hellcat to advance to his third final of 2019.

Johnson was undefeated in seven previous meetings with Bob Tasca III and made it eight straight, and first in a final, by storming down the track with a final round pass of 4.102 seconds at 308.50 to capture his first Bandimere triumph.

Leah Pritchett returned to Thunder Mountain on a mission to become the fifth driver in Top Fuel to score back-to-back

wins over the course of the 31-year title rights sponsorship by FCA US at Bandimere Speedway, and the first since Joe Amato accomplished it in 1999 and 2000.

After dominating last year's Dodge Mile-High NHRA Nationals by qualifying No. 1 and powering to a Sunday triumph, Pritchett looked to make it two straight triumphs in the DSR "Angry Bee" Mopar Dodge 1320 Top Fuel dragster after qualifying second in the field. She opened her defense with a solid opening-round victory with her lap of 3.877 seconds at 310.98 mph to eliminate Terry Totten and advanced to the second round facing Clay Millican for the 18th time in her career. Millican got the jump at the starting line and Pritchett struggled to overtake him after losing a cylinder early in her run, ending her day prematurely.

Cruz Pedregon admitted Friday after leading the Funny Car field in qualifying after two sessions that Bandimere Speedway has always been good to the driver of the Snap-On Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat. The two-time NHRA Funny Car world champion and two-time Denver winner chased his first triumph of 2019 from the third position on the ladder. He defeated Terry Haddock in the opening round and followed that by eliminating John Force in the quarterfinal to reach his first semifinal of 2019. Pedregon grabbed the starting-line advantage, but lost traction early in the run and could not recover in time to track down Johnson.

Three-time Dodge Mile-High NHRA Nationals Funny Car champion Jack Beckman had this weekend's event circled on his calendar for quite some time. His DSR Infinite Hero Foundation Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat has been one of the fastest cars in the competitive NHRA Funny Car class over the course of the last eight events, and the 2012 world champion has been itching to score his first Wally of 2019.

Beckman began Sunday with an all-DSR/all-Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car matchup with the series' most recent winner, Matt Hagan. Despite trailing Hagan off the starting line, Beckman raced his way around him to meet Johnson in the second round. The two met most recently in the semifinals at Norwalk, with Beckman prevailing, but on Sunday in Denver, it was Johnson that turned on the win light on the strength of his starting line advantage. Beckman continues to hold the fifth position in the championship standings.

Two-time Funny Car world champion Hagan was looking to carry the new 2020 Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody graphics package with a flared-out feel on the DSR machine to his first career triumph at the Thunder Mountain venue on Sunday.

Hagan was quickest off the starting line in his fifth first round match up versus a DSR teammate in 2019, but his machine began to slow three quarters of the way through the race and came up short of advancing with his run of 4.177 seconds at 239.27 mph. The two-time 2019 Funny Car winner ranks eighth in the championship standings with four races remaining before points are reset for the "Countdown to the Championship."

Capps, the 2009 Denver Funny Car champion, was looking for another productive Sunday in Denver and began his race day with a first-round matchup versus Todd Simpson. The two-time 2019 winner powered the NAPA Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat down the track in 4.078 seconds at 309.91-mph to dispatch Simpson and advance to round two. Against Bob Tasca III in the quarterfinals, Capps controlled the lead early, but a mechanical malfunction caused his machine to slow, enabling Tasca to drive around for the win to halt Capps' run for a second consecutive run to the finals at Bandimere.

Cattleman's Cut Dodge driver Jim Campbell had his sponsor's spokesperson and event Grand Marshal, Carmen Electra, on hand to lend support, but was dealt a first-round loss by Tasca.

### **Dodge Dragstrip Showdown Debuts in Denver**

Fans at Bandimere Speedway had the chance to go head-to-head behind the wheel of Dodge Challenger SRT Demon simulators in the debut of the second year of the Dragstrip Showdown.

Hosted all weekend in the Dodge//SRT display on Manufacturers Midway, the Dragstrip Showdown allows participants to test their skills and compete for bragging rights, with top run times listed on the DodgeGarage website. Winners will be announced after the NHRA Finals in Pomona in November, with top racers with the best ETs earning prizes including Dodge Challenger SRT Demon remote control cars and gift cards for Dodge swag.

For complete information on the Dragstrip Showdown, including a list of events that will be featuring the Demon simulators and how to get in on the action and win prizes even for those unable to compete in person, visit [www.DodgeGarage.com](http://www.DodgeGarage.com).

#### **@DodgeMoparMotorsports on Instagram**

Hagan's Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody Funny Car carried the @DodgeMoparMotorsports logo on its hood as part of the channel's formal launch during race weekend. The @DodgeMoparMotorsports Instagram channel will share content capturing Dodge//SRT Mopar drivers in action in the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series, NHRA Sportsman grassroots racers competing in classes such as Factory Stock Showdown, Stock and Super Stock, as well as additional motorsports series such as the Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody Concept's recent run in the Pikes Peak International Hill Climb.

#### **Mopar Dodge//SRT NHRA Sportsman Spotlight**

David Bogner and Austin Williams collected Dodge Top Finisher honors in the Super Stock and Stock classes, respectively, at the Dodge Mile-High NHRA Nationals Presented by Pennzoil.

Bogner qualified No. 15 in his Mopar-fueled 1992 Dodge Daytona and battled his way through to the quarterfinals in Super Stock before a mechanical malfunction prevented him from making the call for the semifinals. Bogner was still able to join his father, Marlin, who also competed in Denver, as a member of the Dodge Top Finisher club.

Waxahachie, Texas, resident and decorated NHRA Sportsman racer Williams qualified tenth in his 1972 Plymouth Duster 340 and advanced to round two in Stock Eliminator, adding to his collection of Dodge Top Finisher trophies.

The Dodge Top Finisher award, now in its third 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.

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

##### **Tommy Johnson Jr., Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car**

##### **(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.978 ET)**

Rd.1: (.097-second reaction time, 4.156 seconds at 268.54 mph) beat No. 15 Jeff Diehl (.150/8.776/97.67)

Rd.2: (.076/4.059/316.01) beat No. 10 Jack Beckman (.087/4.092/316.30)

Rd.3: (.079/4.056/311.49) beat No. 3 Cruz Pedregon (.080/4.099/166.72)

Rd. 4: (.092/4.102/308.50) beat No. 5 Bob Tasca III (.059/4.158/302.14)

"Winning races is great, but winning the Dodge Mile-High Nationals, to me today, is my biggest victory ever. Thirty-five years ago in 1984 when I was a kid I got runner-up. I got runner-up three more times in three different categories. I wanted to win this race so bad, and I did it in my Dodge Charger Hellcat today. I knew we had a great race car and if we could control it on the track with the sun being out, we'd be good. The team did a great job. We're so much of a better team than we have been in the past and we've really grown as a team. This has been the best season ever and I think we're just getting started."

"The Bandimeres are such a great family. I started coming here as a kid. My dad raced up here, I'm a Division 5 guy, so I ran the divisional race here a lot and got to know the Bandimeres really well."

*On Wish Kid Porter Johnson:*

"It speaks volumes of our whole program and what Doug Chandler is doing. Make-A-Wish is such a great organization and he funds this team and gives it away to raise awareness for that organization. We have Wish Kids out every Saturday and to see Porter come out today and also to see the sponsors get involved – that was a Mopar/Dodge decision to have a Make-A-Wish Kid as the honorary race starter – and it was cool to see everyone get behind this. It's obvious what a great foundation Make-A-Wish is and all of the great things they do for the kids, so to be a part of it is very humbling."

##### **Leah Pritchett, Mopar Dodge 1320 Top Fuel Dragster**

##### **(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.761 ET)**

Rd.1: (.080-second reaction time, 3.877 seconds at 310.98 mph) beat No. 15 Terry Totten (.202/4.052/296.05)  
Rd.2: (.059/3.988/260.71) lost to No. 7 Clay Millican (.058/3.861/320.13)

"We came into the Dodge Mile-High NHRA Nationals with a hard, heavy charge up the hill. We felt good about making three good runs in qualifying and picking up those valuable points. Unfortunately, we had real high clutch wear at mid-track in that race with Clay Millican and it just started dropping cylinders. Our plan is to take this momentum we've created here on Thunder Mountain straight to Sonoma.

"Overall, representing Dodge and Mopar at this event in front of all of these great fans is a highlight of our season. I'm really impressed with the team's preparation for this weekend. It proves we are the team that everyone expects us to be, and we're looking to show it the rest of the way."

#### **Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car**

##### **(No. 4 Qualifier – 4.005 ET)**

Rd.1: (.105-second reaction time, 4.078 seconds at 309.91 mph) beat No. 13 Todd Simpson (.089/4.356/269.94)  
Rd.2: (.083/5.597/130.49) lost to No. 5 Bob Tasca III (.079/4.097/313.29)

"This is such a hard place to do well at, and when you do go to the final round like we did last year, you feel that much better about conquering this mountain. It's that tough racing here at Bandimere. We had a great first round and didn't want to beat ourselves and unfortunately, we lost lane choice to (Bob) Tasca for the quarterfinals. But, the lane wasn't an issue, the clutch might have grabbed the motor a little more than Tobler wanted it to, and you can't make a mistake against a team that's as good as Tasca is right now. We're going to Sonoma, and that's maybe my favorite track, and I can't wait."

#### **Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car**

##### **(No. 10 Qualifier – 4.099 ET)**

Rd.1: (.090-second reaction time, 4.084 seconds at 316.23 mph) beat No. 7 Matt Hagan (.075/4.177/239.27)  
Rd.2: (.087/4.092/316.30) lost to No. 2 Tommy Johnson, Jr. (.076/4.059/316.01)

"It's kind of the story of our year. When we lose, our run is usually good enough to win the other races in that round, but you are not going to survive on woulda, coulda, shoulda. We are still top-five in points. We have been a strong car throughout the year. We've had our ups and downs, but I feel like we are sorting this thing out. Denver is always an anomaly. Sometimes great cars do terrible up here and vice versa, just because it's so hard to tune here. We did okay. We need to do better."

#### **Matt Hagan, Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody Funny Car**

##### **(No. 7 Qualifier – 4.054 ET)**

Rd.1: (.070-second reaction time, 3.958 seconds at 326.24 mph) lost to No. 10 Jack Beckman (.060/4.016/322.04)

"It's always a challenge up here on the mountain. You always have to change things up to make the cars run up here, and we struggled a little bit with our fuel curve this weekend. I think going back down to Sonoma we'll be in good shape. Once we get off the mountain, we tend to do well. But, we made a lot of progress up here. We had a good race car first round. Our new Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Widebody was running really good early, we just had a pan pressure issue. We'll dive into it and figure it out. I was feeling like we were going to win that one, and it's just a helpless feeling when that thing goes silent, and you can hear him drive around you. I'm looking forward to Sonoma and Seattle and turning some more win lights on."

#### **Up Next: NHRA Sonoma Nationals**

The Western Swing continues next week with the 32nd NHRA Sonoma Nationals, scheduled for July 26-28 at Sonoma Raceway in Sonoma, Calif. Capps leads the Dodge//SRT Mopar contingent back into action looking for his fifth career triumph at the track.

#### **2019 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 14 of 24**

(Season Wins in Parentheses)

#### **NHRA Funny Car**

1. Robert Hight (4) – 1159

**2. Tommy Johnson, Jr., Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat (2) –1010**

3. John Force – 958

**4. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat (2) – 927**

**5. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat – 904**

6. Bob Tasca III (1) – 865

7. J.R. Todd (1) – 857

**8. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat (2) – 794**

9. Tim Wilkerson – 724

10. Shawn Langdon (1) – 727

**NHRA Top Fuel**

1. Steve Torrence (8) – 1407

2. Brittany Force (1) – 852

3. Antron Brown – 839

4. Doug Kalitta (1) - 831

5. Clay Millican – 813

6. Mike Salinas (2) – 763

**7. Leah Pritchett, Mopar HEMI – 714**

8. Richie Crampton (1) – 666

9. Scott Palmer - 613

10. Terry McMillen – 607

**About Dodge**

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**

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARTs) is the service, parts and customer-care brand for FCA vehicles around the globe. 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 care and authentic performance for owners and enthusiasts worldwide.

Mopar made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era, with Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use, and expanded to include technical service and customer support. Today, the Mopar brand's global reach distributes more than 500,000 parts and accessories in more than 150 markets. With more than 50 parts distribution centers and 25 customer-contact centers globally, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Complete information on the Mopar brand is available at [www.mopar.com](http://www.mopar.com). Mopar is part of the portfolio of brands offered by global automaker Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. For more information regarding FCA (NYSE: FCAU/ MTA: FCA), please visit [www.fcagroup.com](http://www.fcagroup.com).

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