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Tommy Johnson Jr. Earns NHRA Arizona Nationals Win in All-Mopar Dodge//SRT Funny Car Final Round Battle

- Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Funny Car driver Tommy Johnson Jr. earns National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Arizona Nationals title win aboard MD Anderson Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat
- All-Mopar Dodge//SRT Funny Car final round sees Johnson Jr. defeat DSR teammate Jack Beckman at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park near Phoenix
- Defending Arizona Nationals winner Matt Hagan and his Mopar Dodge//SRT Charger Hellcat Funny Car earn second consecutive No.1 qualifier of the 2020 season but fall short of a chance to repeat with a first round loss
- All four DSR Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat sit top-five in Funny Car championship points
- Top Fuel DSR driver Leah Pruett qualifies her Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster third for second consecutive race and earns a quarterfinal appearance

February 23, 2020, Phoenix, Arizona - It was an all-Mopar Dodge //SRT Funny Car final round showdown at the Arizona Nationals with Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Tommy Johnson Jr. earning his first victory of the 2020 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Mello Yello Series season over his teammate, Jack Beckman.

From his No. 4 qualifier position, Johnson drove his MD Anderson Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat past Paul Lee and Bob Tasca, then used a holeshot win over DSR teammate Ron Capps to set up a final elimination battle against Beckman. Johnson powered past his DSR opponent, who lost traction early, to make his way to the winner's circle in the second event of the season.

With the win, Johnson collected his 18th career Funny Car national event Wally trophy, his second at Phoenix's Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park and his first final round victory over Beckman in five final-elimination encounters.

The early season win provided some relief for Johnson and his team, who were looking to recover quickly from a difficult 2019 Countdown to the Championship that followed a promising regular season.

"We had such a good car last year and we didn't finish well at all, so to come out strong and get that out of the way right off the bat and know how good a car you have right now is great," said Johnson, who jumps four spots into second place in the Funny Car championship standings with his efforts this weekend.

"Now we just shift to maintaining it and learn from the mistakes you make. I think we learned really well what we did wrong last year and what we needed to do to fix it. It's nice to be able to know that you did fix it."

In the final against Johnson, Beckman initially had the advantage as they launched off the starting line but lost traction in his Infinite Hero Foundation Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat and, while he made efforts to pedal it, was unable to recover control quickly enough.

Coming off consecutive wins in both the 2019 season finale and the 2020 season opening national event at Pomona, Beckman's runner-up finish to his teammate keeps him atop the Funny Car championship standings with 220 points.

The defending Arizona Nationals title winner, Matt Hagan, drove his Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to the provisional pole position with Friday's second qualifying run and an elapsed time pass of 3.859 seconds at 331.61 mph. That time stood through Saturday's qualifying session, shortened to just one run due to rain, to give him his second No.1 qualifier of the year, the 38th of his career and his second at Wild Horse Pass Motorsports Park.

In eliminations, Hagan beat his first round challenger, Jeff Diehl, off the starting line but as he began to power down the lane his HEMI®-powered ride began to pull toward the centerline where it clipped a timing block to disqualify the run and bring his race day to a premature end. Despite the quick exit, Hagan remains fifth in points.

After qualifying eighth, Capps drove his Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat through the eliminations ladder with a win over J.R. Todd in the first round, followed by a quarterfinal victory against Jeff Diehl. That quarterfinal victory earned Capps a 750th career round win since making his professional debut in 1995 at this track while racing Top Fuel and earning his first round win against Joe Amato.

Capps then faced-off against his DSR teammate and eventual event winner Johnson in the semifinals for a solid side-by-side battle to the stripe. While he didn't get the win, the result propelled Capps to the fourth spot in the Funny Car points standings.

In Top Fuel action, for a second consecutive national event, Leah Pruett drove her DSR Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster to the third spot on the eliminations ladder to put herself in a good position to have a solid race-day showing. Bolstered by the memory of her first career Top Fuel victory at Phoenix in 2016, a No. 1 qualifier position in 2017 and runner-up finish last season in 2019, Pruett made quick work of getting through the first round and past Doug Foley with a solid 3.654-second run to make her way to the quarterfinals to face Billy Torrance. Once again, Pruett made another solid run with a 3.688-second elapsed time run but it wasn't quite enough to beat her opponent to move further through elimination rounds. Pruett remains third in the Top Fuel standings.

With DSR Mopar Dodge//SRT entries top-five in championship points and looking to continue to build on the momentum generated from two back-to-back Funny Car wins and No.1 qualifier positions to open the season, they now prepare to head to the East Coast for the third of 24 events on the 2020 NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series schedule, the NHRA Gatornationals in Gainesville, Florida, March 13–15.

NOTES and QUOTES:

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Foundation Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat (No. 6 Qualifier – 3.889 seconds at 329.42 mph)

Round 1: (.090-second reaction time, 4.051 seconds at 318.02 mph) beat No. 11 Cruz Pedregon (.065/ 6.254 sec/109.34 mph)

Round 2: (0.095/3.895/329.42) beat No. 14 Jim Campbell (0.088/8.959/70.61)

Round 3: (0.076/3.882/329.91) beat No. 2 John Force (0.068/3.917/326.63)

Round 4: (0.030/6.156 /119.31) loss to No. 4 Tommy Johnson Jr. (0.065/3.883/326.40)

"How do you hang your head? We still have the best car and the points are showing that. We didn't have the best car here this weekend. We actually struggled a little bit but it goes to show you great teams pull out all the stops on race day and figure out how to make it happen. I'm happy for my teammate and his MD Anderson car. We didn't give it to them. They earned it. But we're going to be tough to beat the entire rest of the year."

Matt Hagan, Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car (No. 1 Qualifier – 3.859 seconds at 331.61 mph)

Round 1: (.0103-second reaction time, 9.999 seconds at no speed) lost to No. 16 Jeff Diehl (0.138 No Time)

"My guys did a heck of a job today; the car was on a really good run. It was just one of those deals where it got inside on me and I couldn't get it back. I thought I lifted soon enough not to hit anything but a header brushed a timing block and that DQ'd us. But a heck of a job for this Mopar team to run such a good number like that on race day. We were No. 1 qualifier, have such a good race car, and I hate that I let my team down like that. It's race day; I was just trying to get to the finish line first. All in all, we've got a great car, things are going in the right direction, the guys are working hard, the parts and pieces are working well, and it's all coming together."

Tommy Johnson Jr., MD Anderson Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car (No. 4 Qualifier – 3.868 seconds at 323.81 mph)

Round 1: (0.058-second reaction time, 3.878 seconds at 325.85 mph) beat No. 13 Paul Lee (0.111/3.898/320.05)

Round 2: (0.075/3.864/323.74) beat No. 5 Bob Tasca (-0.053/3.918/331.77)

Round 3: (0.079 /3.871/319.98) beat No. 8 Ron Capps (0.089/3.864/328.06)

Round 4: (0.065/3.883/326.40) beat No. 6 Jack Beckman (0.030/6.156 /119.31)

"We had a good car the last qualifying run and it showed us that we had a solid car. Coming up here today we had a lot of confidence. To go out there first round and lay down a solid number, really happy with that. We weren't low e.t. first round but we were real close and to come out second round and set low e.t., so we knew we had a solid car. As a driver, going into each round knowing you've got a car that's going to perform, it makes your job a little easier and gives you a little less stress. The guys did a great job. I mean, even in Pomona we had a good car and just dropped a cylinder second round. We even had a little issue with that in qualifying here and they worked hard to fix that and now it's running really well and consistent. They did their homework over the off-season."

On how satisfying it is to get that first win so early in the season:

"Yes. Especially since we weren't happy with the way finished last year so it is (satisfying). I was actually very relieved when I turned the corner down there and it felt like it was a little bit of pressure relief. We had such a good car last year and we didn't finish well at all so to come out strong and get that out of the way right off the bat and know how good a car you have right now. Now we just shift to maintaining it and learning from the mistakes you make. You try to learn from them. I think we learned really well what we did wrong last year, and what we needed to do to fix it. It's nice to be able to know that you did fix it."

**Ron Capps, NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car
(No. 8 Qualifier – 3.896 seconds at 327.66mph)**

Round 1: (0.070-second reaction time, 3.905 seconds at 329.02 mph) beat No. 9 J.R. Todd (0.097/6.383/103.46)

Round 2: (0.100/4.184/232.19) beat No. 16 Jeff Diehl (-0.005/8.236 /82.57)

Round 3: (0.089/3.864/328.06) lost to No. 4 Tommy Johnson Jr. (0.079 /3.871/319.98)

"For this team, considering where we were and how few runs we had coming in here, we've made huge strides for Rahn Tobler. Even though we lost that close race in the semifinals, he was ecstatic and it really feels like we have his race car back and that makes everyone around here feel good. We had a really large clutch wear problem that we've been fighting and he finally got it down to where he was comfortable and when he does that, the car goes out and runs 3.80s like that. Just a close drag race. I accidentally went in and lit the pre-stage and stage lights against TJ and just kind of sat there. Him and I have raced and been teammates for a long time. He gave me a second before he went in. It was just letting two cars do the talking. The good thing was it was a DSR car going into the final against our teammate (Jack Beckman). Unfortunately, we lost a close one. But, I feel really comfortable and good and Rahn Tobler is happy and excited to get to Gainesville."

**Leah Pruett, Mopar Dodge//SRT Top Fuel Dragster
(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.680 seconds at 328.06 mph)**

Round 1: (0.081-second reaction time, 3.654 seconds at 331.12 mph) beat No. 14 Doug Foley (0.087/5.328/127.81)

Round 2: (0.205/3.688/324.20) lost to No. 6 Billy Torrance (0.100/3.703/328.78)

"We closed out our Sunday much earlier in the afternoon than we had wanted. Phenomenal performance by the Mopar team in E1 with that 65. I'm disappointed in myself with what happened in E2. Putting that double-bulb on, that was unintentional. I got antsy and I two-stepped it and was late on the tree. On the return of that, I can guarantee, Gainesville will be nothing but 'heads down,' and I've got two cars to run. It would be amazing to put them both in the winner's circle, but the car and the team are doing a phenomenal job. I'm trying to perfect my weaponry – my driving perspective, and I didn't conquer that this weekend in the second round of eliminations, but one thing is for sure, I guarantee you that I will."

NHRA Championship Points Standings:

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses):

1. **Jack Beckman (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 220 (1)**
2. **Tommy Johnson Jr. (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 175 (1)**
3. John Force – 173
4. **Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 128**
5. **Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 124**
6. Tim Wilkerson – 107
7. Robert Hight – 100

8. Alexis DeJoria – 99
9. Bob Tasca III – 87
10. Paul Lee – 65
- J.R. Todd – 65

TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses):

1. Doug Kalitta – 212 (1)
2. Brittany Force – 153
- 3. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 137**
4. Austin Prock – 131
5. Steve Torrance – 121 (1)
6. Justin Ashley – 108
7. Antron Brown – 103
8. Shawn Langdon – 91
9. Clay Millican – 85
10. Shawn Reed – 82

DodgeGarage: Digital Hub for Drag Racing News

Fans can follow all the NHRA's 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 Mello Yello 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.

Official Driving School of Dodge//SRT

Dodge is the official sponsor of the Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Chandler, Arizona, where guests get behind the wheels of the fastest street-legal cars in the world with professional instruction and time on the track. Customers who buy a new SRT model receive one full-day session as part of the Dodge//SRT Package and have the opportunity to learn how to get the optimum performance from their new vehicles in a controlled environment. For more information, visit dodgegarage.com/track-experience.

Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOrtor 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. 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.

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+ 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 June 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). Dodge 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.

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