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## **Runner-up Performance by Pedregon and his Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat at NHRA Carolina Nationals**

- Cruz Pedregon drove the Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to a fourth final round appearance of the 2021 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World series season at the Carolina Nationals at zMAX Dragway
- After qualifying No.3 Cruz Pedregon Racing's runner-up finish moved them up two spots from seventh to fifth place in the Funny Car championship points standings
- Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) drivers Ron Capps and Matt Hagan sit 1-2 atop the Funny Car standings after solid performances this weekend at the second of seven NHRA "Countdown to the Championship" playoff series events
- DSR driver Leah Pruett and her Okuma Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster remains fifth in the Top Fuel championship battle after qualifying No.11 and an early exit at the Carolina Nationals

September 19, 2021, Concord, North Carolina - Cruz Pedregon drove the Snap-On Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to their fourth final round appearance of the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World series season at the 13th annual Carolina Nationals, the second of seven "Countdown to the Championship" playoff events. Pedregon finished runner-up at zMAX Dragway after securing the No. 3 position with his Friday evening 3.879-second elapsed time qualifying run at 323.58 mph marking the 12th time this season the Cruz Pedregon Racing team started from the top half of the eliminations ladder.

With round wins over Dave Richards, J.R. Todd, and Alexis DeJoria, Pedregon advanced to the final and lined up his HEMI®-powered Snap-on Tools "socket to breast cancer" machine, dressed in pink for breast cancer awareness, next to No. 8 seed Tim Wilkerson. It was a close side-by side battle from start to finish as Pedregon launched with a 0.063-second reaction time and ran a stout 3.947 sec./325.53 mph only to be edged out by Wilkerson 's 0.061-second r.t. and 3.927 sec./331.36 mph winning run. This weekend's performance moves Pedregon and his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat from seventh to fifth place in the Funny Car championship standings with five races remaining.

Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) veteran driver Ron Capps arrived at the Carolina Nationals third in the Funny Car championship hunt and put the NAPA AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat in the No. 5 starting position on the strength of his final qualifying run which put them second on the Q3 timing sheets, adding two valuable bonus points to his tally. Capps kicked off race day with a win over Jim Campbell to set up a quarterfinal Dodge versus Dodge battle against DSR teammate Matt Hagan, who returned to competition following a two-week absence to recover from COVID-19.

Capps was quicker on the draw and turned win lights on with a 3.949-second run at 315.71 mph for the holeshot victory over Hagan's hard charging 3.938 sec./327.74 mph pass to advance to the semifinals. It was there that he faced-off against No. 8 seed Tim Wilkerson, to whom he finished runner-up in a close final at the Dodge//SRT U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis to close out the regular season. While a good start and solid run by the HEMI-powered DSR machine at 3.939 sec./319.07 mph wasn't quite enough to overtake Wilkerson's 3.909 sec./315.42 mph pass, Capps' performance was enough to put him back atop the Funny Car leaderboard where he had started his playoff drive.

Defending Funny Car world champion Hagan wasted no time getting back to form by putting his Shelor Motor Mile Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat fourth on the eliminations ladder after powering to the quickest runs in both Saturday qualifying sessions. That added six bonus points to his team's total which had been bolstered with a win by

Tommy Johnson Jr. who filled in for Hagan at last weekend's Mopar Express Lane Nationals Presented by Pennzoil in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Hagan won his opening round match-up against No. 13 seed Tony Jurado to advance to the quarterfinals where his DSR teammate Capps used a holeshot to end his day prematurely. Despite the early exit, Hagan is second in the Funny Car championship standings just five markers behind his teammate and current points leader, Capps.

In contention for the Top Fuel world championship for a sixth consecutive season, DSR pilot Leah Pruett took her Okuma Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster for a solid qualifying run at 3.804 sec. and 321.50 mph which put her third on the Q2 timing sheets, gave her one bonus point for her efforts, and had her No. 11 on the ladder to set up an opening round match-up against No. 6 seed Justin Ashley.

The pair had identical 0.046-second launches, but a dropped cylinder hampered Pruett's efforts and a 3.890 second pass at 303.78 mph wasn't enough to beat Ashley's quickest run of the weekend with a 3.731 sec./327.59 mph lap. The result keeps Pruett and her Mopar Dodge//SRT dragster fifth in the Top Fuel standings.

The "Countdown to the Championship" continues next weekend at the NHRA Midwest Nationals, the third of seven NHRA playoff series events, at World Wide Technology Raceway near St. Louis on Sept. 24-26.

## **ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES**

### **FUNNY CAR:**

#### **Matt Hagan, DSR Shelor Motor Mile Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat**

**(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.891 seconds at 330.55 mph)**

**Round 1:** (0.059-second reaction time, 3.929 seconds at 327.43 mph) defeats No. 13 Tony Jurado (0.083/8.875/82.84)

**Round 2:** (0.092/3.938/327.74) loss to No. 5 Ron Capps (0.069/3.949/315.71xfi)

"I'm glad to be back, but I got beat on a holeshot in E2, and that's not ideal or what we were looking for. (Crew Chief) Dickie Venables and this entire Shelor/Mopar team are doing a great job. We have a great race car. We were low E.T. of that round and both qualifying sessions on Saturday, and we picked up six bonus points in qualifying. I just need to do my job on the starting line. That's uncharacteristic. I've been through a lot the past few weeks and need to bounce back next weekend at St. Louis. But, I feel really good about things. I've never won in St. Louis, so why not this year? Capps is a great driver and that's a great time, and we came up a little short. It happens. It's just not ideal during the Countdown. I have five races to redeem myself."

#### **Ron Capps, DSR NAPA AUTO PARTS Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat**

**(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.895 seconds at 326.00 mph)**

**Round 1:** (0.076-second reaction time, 3.901 seconds at 328.46) defeats No. 12 Jim Campbell (0.087/4.066/311.13)

**Round 2:** (0.069/3.949/315.71) defeats No. 4 Matt Hagan (0.092/3.938/327.74)

**Round 3:** (0.067/3.939/319.07) loss to No. 8 Tim Wilkerson (0.059/3.909/315.42)

"Here in a couple of hours we'll sit back and realize we had a great weekend. It's heartbreaking to have a chance at winning another race and extending the points lead. I really love the journey every weekend with these NAPA guys. Anytime you go somewhere and you have a great time on a trip, it is the journey you remember, and we have that almost every weekend. I love it when things are thrown at the team and the way the NAPA guys diagnose it, attack it and fix it. The next thing you know, we're back in the points lead and when you wake up Sunday morning you hope to have a great day, but you just don't know. It's that feeling like 'do we have what it takes' and the next thing you know, you're having a great weekend with a chance to win and we were close today. Another great weekend by the NAPA AutoCare team. Just great calls with taking first pair of the first round. (Crew chiefs) 'Guido' (Dean Antonelli) and (John) Medlen, they made great calls all day.

"It's going to be fun from here on out. We keep saying that, and there's a great article in National DRAGSTER that editor Phil Burgess did on how many times the points have changed hands this year, which tells you how great this category is right now and it really shows what these teams are going through. We can't wait to get to World Wide Technology Raceway at Gateway. We've had a lot of success in the past there and we'll need every bit of that mojo

to hang on to the points lead.”

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

**(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.879 seconds at 323.58 mph)**

**Round 1:** (0.104-second reaction time, 3.903 seconds at 325.77 mph) defeats No. 14 Dave Richards (0.112/11.830/80.81)

**Round 2:** (0.081/3.962/324.20) defeats No. 6 J.R. Todd (0.043/7.389/110.11)

**Round 3:** (0.091/3.959/326.24) defeats No. 7 Alexis DeJoria (0.047/11.519/68.13)

**Round 4:** (0.063/3.947/325.53) loss to No. 8 Tim Wilkerson (0.61/3.927/331.36)

“Today was a really a great day overall. I mean, to go to the final round in a countdown race with the Snap-on tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat was really a great top to bottom. Qualifying third with each run being spot on, the team has been doing a great job, answering the bell and we’ve been solid and consistent with every run. We did push the envelope in the last session (Q3) and spun the tires but it’s like the old saying, if you don’t take a chance, you don’t really have one.

“The final round was a close race and could have gone either way. Tim (Wilkerson) ran a great 331 mph to our two or 325, so that made the difference there. It was a close race, 3.92 to a 3.95 second runs and our reaction times were very close. Overall, I’m going to just say our second race into the countdown is solid. We moved up two spots to fifth and we really are in the mix for the championship. That’s a big deal for us. We’re not even half a round out of fourth place. It would’ve been nice to get that win, but man, these rounds are tough. Everyone’s really geared up at this time of year to really try to win and everybody’s giving you their best shot. There’s five races left and so a lot of opportunities there and a lot of great race tracks. It’s going to start to cool off as Fall is upon us as we head to St. Louis where last year I think it was in the 60s degree range and the track was super-fast.”

#### **TOP FUEL:**

##### **Leah Pruett, DSR Okuma Mopar Dodge//SRT Dragster**

**(No. 11 Qualifier – 3.804 seconds at 321.50 mph)**

**Round 1:** (0.046-second reaction time, 3.890 seconds at 303.78 mph) loss No. 6 Justin Ashley (0.046/3.731/327.59)

“As the Countdown to the Championship continues, we’re leaving the second playoff race with a disheartening finish with that first-round exit, but it hasn’t demoralized the team. We’re definitely down on power and trying to find out where we’re missing about 500-horsepower in our combination. We’re gaining clarity on that right now and feel confident we’ll get that sorted out before St. Louis. Our Okuma team had a runner-up finish in Sonoma, and that first-round exit here in Charlotte at their headquarters is not ideal. I hate that for all of their wonderful customers and employees that came out here to root our Okuma team on. This team has so much potential, and there is enough time left in the season for us to live up to it, and execute, and that’s exactly what we plan to do. But, to say that this was one of our favorite days, it definitely was not. As a driver, running up against Justin Ashley, I think I’ve raced against him more than anyone else this year. I’m impressed with myself for being able to leave the line with him. Our team has been doing a phenomenal job but, unfortunately, we have a current missing link and we’re doing everything we can to fix that. There’s still a lot of racing left, and we’re focused on gaining wins before the season ends.”

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

*Following the DeWalt Carolina Nationals Presented at zMax Dragway*

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

**1. Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,233 (1)**

**2. Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,228 (2/1-TJ Johnson Jr.)**

3. John Force – 2,208 (3)

4. J.R. Todd – 2,187 (1)

**5. Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 2,181 (1)**

6. Robert Hight – 2,161 (2)

6. Tim Wilkerson – 2,161 (1)

8. Alexis DeJoria – 2,136

9. Bob Tasca III – 2,130 (2)
10. Blake Alexander – 2,064

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

1. Brittany Force – 2,274 (1)
2. Steve Torrance – 2,253 (8)
3. Justin Ashley – 2,200 (1)
4. Billy Torrence – 2,192 (2)

#### **5. Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 2,146 (1)**

6. Mike Salinas – 2,138
7. Antron Brown – 2,136 (1)
8. Shawn Langdon – 2,133
9. Clay Millican – 2,126
10. Doug Kalitta – 2,064

#### **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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