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Second Consecutive Semifinal Performance for Hagan and Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car in NHRA 'Countdown to the Championship'

- No. 2 Qualifier Matt Hagan of Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) drove his Shelor Motor Mile Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car to the semifinals at the Betway Carolina Nationals, the second of six National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) "Countdown to the Championship" playoff series events
- Hagan's second semifinal performance of the playoffs keeps him in the Funny Car championship hunt just 60 points behind the category leader Robert Hight
- TSR Top Fuel pilot Leah Pruett qualified her Code 3 Associates Dodge//SRT dragster 13th for eliminations at the Charlotte, North Carolina, area dragstrip but saw her day shortened by a first round exit
- Funny Car driver Cruz Pedregon qualified his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat No. 10 for eliminations but had an opening round loss that dropped him to ninth place in the championship battle

September 25, 2022, Concord, North Carolina - Funny Car driver Matt Hagan drove his Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat from the No. 2 qualifier position to his second straight semifinal performance in the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) "Countdown to the Championship" at the Betway NHRA Carolina Nationals at zMAX Dragway, the second of six playoff series events.

Sporting the colors of Shelor Motor Mile, his family-owned car dealership, Hagan, a two-time winner (2011,2014) at the Carolina Nationals, earned the second spot on the eliminations ladder with a 3.861-second elapsed time run at 329.99 mph and earned two valuable bonus points for his efforts. He drove his HEMI®-powered Dodge to a first round win against No. 13 seed John Smith and then had a second round bye-run to advance to a semifinal match-up against No. 9 seed Alexis DeJoria.

Hagan had the quicker launch with a 0.068-second reaction time to DeJoria's 0.072-second start and the lead past the 330-foot mark before seeing his opponent next to him at the 600-foot marker. While Hagan drove his Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat to a solid 3.893 sec./334.07 mph run, DeJoria was able to edge him at the stripe recording a 3.887/332.02 pass to steal the round win with a margin of victory of 0.0028 seconds.

The pair of semifinal performances to start the playoffs put Hagan within 60 points of the category leader Robert Hight, and while he drops to third place in the standings behind Carolina Nationals winner Ron Capps, only 33 markers separate them as the battle for top spot tightens up with four events remaining in the fight for the Funny Car crown.

TSR Top Fuel driver Leah Pruett had her Dodge//SRT dragster dressed up in the Code 3 Associates paint scheme in support of the organization specializing in animal rescue and recovery in disaster areas and started off the Carolina Nationals weekend with a good run at 3.758 seconds at 316.82 mph, the eighth quickest pass of Friday's qualifying session. That elapsed time run ultimately put her 13th on the eliminations ladder and paired her with No. 4 seed Mike Salinas for Sunday's opening round.

Pruett's 11-thousand horsepower Dodge//SRT dragster had a clean elapsed time run at 3.796-second, but at 314 mph, she didn't quite have the speed to beat Salinas' 3.696 sec./331.20 mph pass. With back-to-back first round exits, Pruett drops two positions in the Top Fuel championship standings to find herself battling for the championship from tenth place, 178 points behind leader Justin Ashley.

Funny Car driver Cruz Pedregon, qualified his Snap-on Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat 10th for Sunday's

eliminations with a best run of 3.903 seconds at 326.00 mph to draw No. 5 seed Bob Tasca III for his first round opponent. Pedregon made a good pass with a 3.945-second/ 320.05 mph effort but it wasn't quite enough to challenge Tasca's 3.882/330.80 pass and advance further. Unfortunately, the first round loss drops Pedregon to ninth place in the Funny Car playoff rankings, 178 markers behind the category leader.

The NHRA "Countdown to the Championship" moves on to the Midwest Nationals at World Wide Technology Raceway near St. Louis, Sept. 30-Oct. 2, for the third of six playoff series events. FS1 will present qualifying highlights on Sunday, Oct. 2, at 12:30 p.m. ET with race day coverage beginning at 2 p.m. ET.

ADDITIONAL NOTES and QUOTES:

Leah Pruett, Code 3 Associates Dodge//SRT Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 13 Qualifier – 3.758 seconds at 316.82 mph)

Round 1: (0.077-second reaction time, 3.796-second elapsed time run at 314.39 mph) loss to No. 4 Mike Salinas (0.068/3.696/331.20)

"I wish we had better results to report, but I think the biggest frustration for us other than not going past the first round was that this Code 3 Associates team made bigger moves to the racecar than we've made all year. We asked it to have quicker speed earlier and it was just extremely unresponsive. We went to some extreme levels from a tune-up standpoint. We were the most tuned-up we've been all season long. It's not necessarily that the weather conditions called for that. We needed to find our ground zero again. We dropped a hole first round 250 feet out. It didn't quite give us a fighting chance against (Mike) Salinas because he really threw down with the 0.69. For us, we've had to recalibrate. You would think over the course of the season, you would just continue to build on what you have. For us, there's been a horsepower thief somewhere running rampant through our pit. Our parts look great, but the car hasn't been responsive. The highlight is finally in the first round, we did make some mile-an-hour moves early, which we were looking for. We are a full orbit away from where we need to be. We don't have the understanding quite yet of why, but we know what the car is asking for. The car is asking to be shoved and we're going to have to find where that cliff is and shove it off the cliff. Our parts came back healthy, even having a cylinder out, which shows we can put some more tune-up in it. Those have been our efforts. Going into St. Louis, it's literally going to be everything we have, and parts being ready for everything that they can give."

Matt Hagan, Shelor Motor Mile Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.861 seconds at 329.99 mph)

Round 1: (0.086-second reaction time, 3.929 seconds at 315.71 mph) defeats No. 13 John Smith (0.078/4.369/217.70)

Round 2: (0.103/10.423/77.63) bye-run

Round 3: (0.068/3.893/334.07) loss to No. 9 Alexis DeJoria (0.072/3.887/332.02)

"All in all, we had a pretty decent weekend. We were the No. 2 qualifier, which helped being on the top side of the ladder and gave us the bye after Round 1 into the semifinals. Unfortunately, we're on the back side of good drag racing lately and that was the case today going up against Alexis (DeJoria). We came up a little short in Indy and here in Charlotte. It stinks because I know we're running good. It always comes down to the last race in the Countdown. We need to just keep digging hard and being aggressive going down the racetrack. We can always look back and say we should've done something differently, but you go up there thinking you're doing the right things and it just wasn't quite enough today."

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

(No. 10 Qualifier – 3.903 seconds at 326.00 mph)

Round 1: (0.119-second reaction time, 3.945 second elapsed time run at 320.05 mph) loss to No. 5 Bob Tasca (0.078/3.882/330.80)

"After two rounds in the NHRA 'Countdown to the Championship', we have some work to do. It was a tough day for us here at Charlotte. We lost first round to Bob Tasca after we didn't qualify as well as we would've liked. We ran a 3.90 at 326 mph to take position No. 10 but ideally you want to be in the top five or six like we were earlier in the year. We know what we have to do. We just have to make some more power and get the car more consistent. That's gonna be key moving forward. We'll go on to St. Louis and try to get things dialed in more there. We had a good team

meeting with the guys and they're all upbeat and still excited. There's still four races to go so we still have some great races left and some great momentum we can build. We just have to get better. We have to get the car to go faster, quicker, and we're going to work on that."

NHRA CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS STANDINGS:

Following the Betway NHRA Carolina Nationals at zMAX Dragway

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Robert Hight 2283 (7)
2. Ron Capps: 2256 (4)
- 3. Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat): 2223 (3)**
4. John Force: 2209 (1)
5. Bob Tasca III: 2179 (3)
6. Alexis DeJoria: 2154
7. J.R. Todd: 2133
8. Tim Wilkerson: 2121
- 9. Cruz Pedregon (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat): 2105**
10. Jim Campbell: 2054
11. Blake Alexander: 2032

TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)

1. Justin Ashley: 2272 (2)
2. Antron Brown 2229 (3)
3. Brittany Force: 2200 (4)
4. Mike Salinas: 2218(4)
5. Steve Torrence: 2167 (1)
6. Doug Kalitta: 2140
7. Josh Hart: 2139 (1)
8. Austin Prock: 2129 (1)
9. Clay Millican: 2125
- 10. Leah Pruett (Dodge Power Brokers): 2094 (1)**
11. Shawn Langdon: 2084
12. Tony Schumacher: 2064 (1)

@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.

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 a lineup that delivers unrivaled performance in each of the segments in which the brand competes while moving forward to a future that includes electrified muscle in the form of the next-generation, all-new Dodge Charger.

The next-generation Dodge Charger electrifies a legend, with the Charger retaining its title as the world's quickest and most powerful muscle car led by the all-new, all-electric 2024 Dodge Charger Daytona Scat Pack. The all-new Dodge Charger will also offer performance choices via multi-energy powertrain options, including the 550-horsepower Dodge Charger SIXPACK H.O., powered by the 3.0L Twin Turbo Hurricane High Output engine.

Dodge also keeps its foot on the gas as a pure performance brand with the 710-horsepower Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat, the most powerful SUV ever, and best-in-class standard performance in the compact utility vehicle segment with the Dodge Hornet.

In 2022, the Dodge brand ranked No. 1 in the [J.D. Power APEAL Study](#) (mass market), making it the only domestic brand ever to do so three years in a row. 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).

Fans can follow all the NHRA action this season at [DodgeGarage](#), the one-stop portal for Dodge//SRT and Mopar drag-racing news, including daily updates and access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads and merchandise. Dodge is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider [Stellantis](#) (NYSE: STLA).

Mopar

Mopar is the global name for Stellantis genuine parts and authentic accessories.

A simple combination of the words MOrtor and PARts, Mopar offers exceptional service, parts and customer-care. Born in 1937 as the name of a line of antifreeze products, Mopar has evolved over more than 85 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, Mopar expanded to include technical service and customer support, and today integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Complete information on Mopar is available at www.mopar.com and the newly redesigned Mopar blog at www.blog.mopar.com.

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