

Mopar Driver Hagan Follows No. 1, National Record with Final at NHRA Brainerd

- Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T carries No. 1 qualifier Matt Hagan to Brainerd final round
- Final round is fourth of season for Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Hagan, 12th of year for Team Mopar Funny Car campaigners
- DSR driver Ron Capps declared No. 1 seed in NHRA's Countdown to the Championship
- DSR Mopar Top Fuel driver Leah Pritchett keeps hold of spot in critical top 10
- Mopar Performance Dodge Dart Pro Stock pilot Erica Enders takes HEMI® to semifinals
- More Mopar drivers clinch spots in NHRA's 2016 Countdown to the Championship
- Mopar's 2016 Funny Car statistics to date
- What's next on NHRA's 2016 Mello Yello Drag Racing Series tour

August 21, 2016, Brainerd, Minnesota - Matt Hagan had quite a weekend in the Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car at the NHRA Nationals at Brainerd International Raceway. Hagan, racing out of the Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) pits, blasted to a national record setting run in the final round of qualifying on Saturday to nab the pole, and on Sunday, he carried that Mopar momentum all the way to the final round. The final was the fourth of the year for Hagan and the 12th of the season for the Mopar-powered DSR Funny Cars.

"We had a great weekend here at B.I.R.," said Hagan. "We qualified No. 1 and set a national record. The car was on a string pretty much all day long, we just came up a little short in the final. All in all, it was a good points day for us, and I'm sure we helped ourselves a little bit there."

Hagan certainly had his work cut out for him in Brainerd – the last time a Funny Car No. 1 qualifier won the event was in 2005 – but he had a powerful racecar beneath him with his trusty Dickie Venables-tuned Mopar Dodge Charger. In the first round of eliminations, Hagan made a terrific run, a 3.899-second pass at a whopping 324.59 mph, to defeat John Bojce's slowing 4.368/204.23.

The second round set the two-time Funny Car world champ up for a head-to-head meeting with Robert Hight, and the two put on a good show for the fans as they left nearly in sync and were side-by-side down the racetrack. Ultimately, though, it was Hagan's Mopar HEMI® for the win on a killer 3.869/332.34 that got the nod by five-hundredths of a second over his challenger's 3.915/321.35.

Hagan drew a familiar foe for the semifinals in DSR teammate Ron Capps, who secured the rain-delayed Seattle win in Saturday qualifying at Brainerd International Raceway and locked in as the No. 1 seed in the six-race NHRA Countdown to the Championship playoffs that will begin following the U.S. Nationals. The lock-down means Capps will start the Countdown with a 30-point lead over the second-ranked driver when the championship points are reset following the race in Indianapolis.

Both drivers were remarkable at the starting line in their respective Dodge Charger Funny Cars in the Brainerd semifinals, but Capps' .040-second reaction time to Hagan's nearly as impressive .054 was simply not enough. At the finish line stripe, Hagan was ahead by approximately 8 feet to seal the deal with a 3.893/331.20 to 3.923/319.29. The powerful run came with lane choice in the final, and the driver in the opposite lane was none other than Del Worsham – the same opponent that Capps bested in the Saturday final.

Hagan had him at the line, launching first with a .055 to a .063, but an immediate and very ugly dose of tire shake ended Hagan's quest for a third title this season. Worsham won, 3.908/327.27 to 8.095/71.33.

With the final round performance and exceptional qualifying effort, Hagan moved up to No. 5 in the Funny Car standings. Next on the to-do list for the Mopar Funny Car competitors is the highly anticipated nitro test session at Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis in preparation for the U.S. Nationals.

"I'm looking forward to the Indy test and trying some things there to get ready for that big race," said Hagan. "I've never won Indy, and it would be great to check that one off the list. I think the karma with this team is coming back around. You feel like you have to wait your turn sometimes to win, so I think our turn is coming right around. We're right where we need to be."

Notably, Jack Beckman and the Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T, fielded out of the Don Schumacher Racing stable by sponsor and philanthropist Terry Chandler, recorded low elapsed time of raceday in the first round of eliminations. No. 4 qualifier Beckman utilized a crisp 3.859/330.15 to handily dispose of Cruz Pedregon, who recorded a 4.838/163.45. Tommy Johnson Jr., whose Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger is also funded by Chandler, won a coasting battle over Dale Creasy Jr. in the first round. Both Beckman and Johnson were stopped in round two.

Mopar Top Fuel

Mopar Top Fuel dragster driver Leah Pritchett came to Brainerd with every intention of protecting her position in the top 10, and although she suffered a first-round loss, the DSR driver was fortunate enough to have a teammate come to her defense to ensure she didn't forfeit any footing in the big race. Pritchett has been in a battle for the No. 10 spot in the Top Fuel standings that would ensure a chance to chase the 2016 NHRA championship trophy for the first time in her career, but competitor Terry McMillen has been chomping at the bit to knock her out of contention. McMillen was No. 11 entering the Brainerd race, and when he won his first-round match, he tied the score with Pritchett. In round two, however, DSR driver Tony Schumacher, piloting the Mopar-powered U.S. Army Top Fuel rail, took him out with a swift blow. Schumacher made excellent use of his powerful HEMI and wheeled his way to a 3.753/322.34 win over a 4.221/205.10.

"There isn't anything better for the fans than a good fight at the 11th hour, and that's what Indy will be for us," said Pritchett, who will arrive at the U.S. Nationals in Indianapolis tied with McMillen for the No. 10 in the standings. Each point at Indy will count as a point and a half. "It will come down to preparation, perseverance, dedication, and focus. This team has that. Everything that has happened this year has prepared us for this. We will be ready."

Schumacher went on to the semifinals, where he was turned away by DSR teammate Antron Brown, 3.726/322.58 to 3.754/326.16.

Mopar in Pro Stock

Erica Enders had one of her best raceday outings of 2016 in her Mopar Performance Dodge Dart Pro Stocker. In a great showing, Enders powered her way to the semifinals for the first time since Las Vegas and 25th time in her career. Enders won her first-round meeting with Shane Gray on a holeshot, and in the second round, she knocked out friend and fellow Mopar-runner Allen Johnson with her quickest HEMI-powered pass of the weekend, a 6.656/207.40 to a 6.732/189.34. The win sent Enders around Mopar teammate Jeg Coughlin Jr., who bowed out in the first round, to the No. 9 position in the Pro Stock points. In the semifinals, Enders was first off the starting line by a bunch and kept ahead almost the entire length of the quarter-mile racetrack. She narrowly missed defeating points leader Jason Line, missing the win light by a slim .001-second.

"We tried, and we made strides in the right direction on Sunday," said Enders. "I did not do my job against Jason – all it would have taken would be .022 to win that round, and that makes me mad because I'm better than that 97 percent of the time I let the clutch out. But it's got to be your day. To have a turnaround weekend like we did, to make up ground on Alex [Laughlin, No. 11 in the points], to solidify our spot in the Countdown is extremely important to me. It was an exciting day. It was definitely a fun weekend, and we'll try to continue to spread the gap. Game on, come Charlotte."

Countdown to the Championship Positions Secured

Only the top 10 drivers in each of the four Mello Yello Series professional classes will get a ticket to race for the 2016 NHRA world championship. The six-race Countdown to the Championship playoffs will begin in Charlotte, and with

just a single race remaining before the fields are set, the available spots are dwindling. Mopar drivers currently locked into the Countdown to the Championship are Tony Schumacher (Top Fuel); Ron Capps, Jack Beckman, Matt Hagan, and Tommy Johnson Jr. (Funny Car); and Allen Johnson (Pro Stock). Leah Pritchett in Top Fuel and Erica Enders and Jeg Coughlin Jr. in Pro Stock are still in the hunt to secure their birth in the championship chase.

Mopar Round-Up

The 2016 season of NHRA's Mello Yello Drag Racing Series has so far netted nine victories for drivers piloting the quick Don Schumacher Racing Dodge Charger R/T Funny Cars. In all, Team Mopar has had at least one Funny Car in the final round at 12 of the first 17 events this year. There have been six all-Mopar final rounds in the category this season to date, and a Mopar Dodge is leading the points with Ron Capps at the wheel. The Funny Car pole has belonged to Mopar at 10 NHRA events so far this season.

What's Next

The 62nd annual U.S. Nationals at Indianapolis will take place at Lucas Oil Raceway August 31 – September 5, 2016. The lauded event will mark the conclusion of the regular season, where final positions for NHRA's 2016 Countdown to the Championship six-race playoffs will be secured. Tickets are available at NHRA.com.

2016 NHRA Championship Point Standings

(Following the NHRA Brainerd event)

(season wins in parentheses)

*clinched berth in NHRA Mello Yello Countdown to the Championship

**clinched No. 1 position in Countdown to the Championship

Pro Stock

1. Jason Line (7) – 1,761*
2. Greg Anderrson (7) – 1,683*
3. Bo Butner – 1,207*
- 4. Allen Johnson (1), Mopar Dodge Dart – 1,054***
5. Vincent Nobile – 1,004*
6. Drew Skillman (1) – 953*
7. Shane Gray – 825
8. Chris McGaha – 802
- 9. Erica Enders, Mopar Performance Dodge Dart – 742**
- 10. Jeg Coughlin Jr., Dodge Dart – 729**

Funny Car

- 1. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T (5) – 1,413****
2. Courtney Force (1) – 1,198*
3. Del Worsham (1) – 1,192*
- 4. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger R/T (1) – 1,146***
- 5. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T (2) – 1,115***
6. Robert Hight (1) – 1,040*
7. John Force (2) – 1,003*
- 8. Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T (1) – 999***
9. Tim Wilkerson (2) – 815*
10. Alexis DeJoria (1) – 765

Top Fuel

1. Antron Brown (4) – 1,424*
2. Doug Kalitta (3) – 1,257*
3. Steve Torrence (2) – 1,216*
4. Brittany Force (3) – 1,161*
- 5. Tony Schumacher, Mopar HEMI (1) – 1,117***
6. J.R. Todd (1) – 998*
7. Shawn Langdon (2) – 968*

8. Richie Crampton – 840*

9. Clay Millican – 822

10t. Leah Pritchett, Mopar HEMI (1) – 637

10t. Terry McMillen – 637

About Mopar Motorsports

The Mopar brand's commitment to professional motorsports competition was established in the 1950s when a partnership ignited with drag racing pioneer Don Garlits, resulting in the breaking of numerous speed and performance barriers in HEMI®-powered vehicles over the next several decades. In 2016, Mopar will look to once again vie for a NHRA World Championship title in both Pro Stock and Funny Car categories. While Mopar remains involved in a various professional motorsports series, it continues to honor its roots by being a proud supporter of Sportsman racing within the NHRA with its sponsorship of the HEMI Challenge and Mopar's Tom Hoover Sportsman Challenge.

Mopar

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

A simple combination of the words MOtor 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.

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