

Schumacher Gives Mopar Third Consecutive Top Fuel Victory to Start 2017 at NHRA Gatornationals

- Mopar-powered Tony Schumacher wins 83rd career Top Fuel event, fifth at Gatornationals
- Mopar and Dodge continue early season success with third consecutive Top Fuel win and No. 1 spot to start 2017 season
- Matt Hagan in Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car, Make-A-Wish Mopar Dodge driver Tommy Johnson Jr. run to semifinals
- Mopar and Dodge hold three of top four positions in Funny Car points, top two in Top Fuel
- Mike Volkman advances to Super Stock final round with 2000 Chrysler Sebring, claims Dodge Top Finisher honors
- Geoffrey Turk qualifies for first Factory Stock Showdown of the year in 2015 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak

March 19, 2017, Gainesville, Fla. - The streak continues. A Mopar-powered Top Fuel dragster raced to the winner's circle for the third consecutive NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series event to start 2017, as eight-time champion Tony Schumacher won the prestigious NHRA Gatornationals for the fifth time in his career.

The win is Schumacher's 83rd overall. His Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster defeated Antron Brown from the left lane in the final round with a pass of 3.703 seconds at 329.26 mph after a reaction time of .066. Brown turned in a lap of 3.764 seconds at 322.65 mph paired with a .034 reaction time to keep the race in doubt until Schumacher turned on the win light. Schumacher started from the No. 1 position after setting an elapsed-time track record during round two of qualifying on Friday with a pass of 3.682 seconds at 328.22 mph.

Schumacher defeated Smax Smith in the first round and took down Clay Millican in the second to set up a showdown with Steve Torrence in the semifinals. Torrence overpowered the track and slowed, allowing Schumacher to reach the final round.

Meanwhile, two Mopar HEMI®-powered Dodge Charger R/T Funny Cars advanced to the semifinals. Matt Hagan, already a two-time race winner in 2017, defeated Dave Richards in the first round to earn the right to face his DSR teammate Ron Capps in the second. Hagan beat Capps for the third time this season after the 2016 Funny Car champion was disqualified for a wild ride in which he crossed the center line. Hagan went on to face young driver Jonnie Lindberg, where he smoked the tires mid-track.

Tommy Johnson Jr. bested Cruz Pedregon in the first round in his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T, then defeated fellow Dodge driver Jim Campbell in the second round even as he struggled to find traction. Johnson ultimately lost to eventual event winner John Force after smoking his tires again. Fellow DSR teammate Jack Beckman just edged Tim Wilkerson in round one, before being bested by John Force after Beckman's Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T went up in smoke during the second round of eliminations.

Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil Top Fuel driver Leah Pritchett's bid to become the first Top Fuel driver to start a season with three consecutive wins in the class was ended by veteran Doug Kalitta. Pritchett lost to Kalitta by just .0007 seconds on a holeshot in the second round. A mechanical issue forced Scott Palmer to shut off at the starting line in the first round, where Pritchett began her day from the No. 7 qualifier position. It was the first time this season that Pritchett hadn't qualified in the top spot.

Mopar/Dodge Notes & Quotes

Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar) FCA – Global

"Congratulations to Tony Schumacher on winning the 48th Annual NHRA Gatornationals in his U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster. We are proud to be associated with Don Schumacher Racing, and it's great to see the team's Mopar-powered Top Fuel squads achieving so much success throughout the spring."

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster (No. 1 Qualifier)

Rd. 1: (.073 reaction time, 3.724 seconds at 321.27 mph) defeated No. 16 Smax Smith (red light)
Rd. 2: (.077/3.751/326.64) defeated No. 8 Clay Millican (.079/3.776/322.42)
Semis: (.098/3.715/326.40) defeated No. 5 Steve Torrence (.070/4.069/266.64)
Finals: (.066/3.703/329.66) defeated No. 3 Antron Brown (.034/3.764/322.65)

"Everything went right today. That final round with Antron was an absolute battle. He has had my number here for a while. I know he's won more than I have and that pushes me to be better. Going against him makes me step up. Going against their team makes my U.S. Army guys step up. And to go out and win the Gatornationals for the fifth time is special. Over the years, I've been fortunate to be put on a list with "Big Daddy" Don Garlits and Joe Amato. Those guys are legends. And throw in Larry Dixon, who is just a tough competitor that I battled with for so long and had a true rivalry with for a long time. To do something that no one else has done is a huge accomplishment."

"We are in the fight every race. And it's going to be a fun year. We are already in the Traxxas Shootout, so you can take that pressure away... let's go out and win some races. "

Matt Hagan, Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car (No. 3 Qualifier)

Rd. 1: (.085 reaction time, 3.898 seconds at 331.94 mph), defeated No. 14 Dave Richards (.078/4.054/287.05)
Rd. 2: (.053/4.212/229.98) defeated No. 6 Ron Capps (DQ – crossed center line)
Semis: (.082/3.948/324.98) lost to No. 10 Jonnie Lindberg (.082/3.948/324.98)

"We just got stuck over in the right lane, and we had to keep backing it down and backing it down to make sure we got down the racetrack. It's just one of those things where it's a one-lane race track, and that's really tough when you don't have lane choice."

"This Mopar car has been running strong. We've won two races and went to the semis here and got some separation in our points lead over Capps. All in all a pretty good day, but obviously we would have wanted to hold the Wally (trophy) at the end, but it isn't going to happen. We'll focus on Vegas. We've got a weekend off, and we're going to regroup and rest a little bit, do some farm work (at his cattle ranch), and then roll back into Vegas and try to get it done out there."

Leah Pritchett, Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil Top Fuel Dragster (No. 7 Qualifier)

Rd. 1: (.108 reaction time, 3.716 seconds at 323.12 mph) defeated No. 10 Scott Palmer (no time)
Rd. 2: (.083/3.738/323.97) lost to No. 2 Doug Kalitta (holeshot win) (.067/3.754/325.13)

"We had a nice, lucky break in the first round. We knew that Scott Palmer was running really, really well and that we just would have to go to A to B and we did. We ran a .71 and we actually probably had a little bit more. I would say that Doug (Kalitta) is one of the most intimidating cars right now. That car is incredibly intimidating and we brought everything we had to that party and at the end of the day our streak ended with me, and I'll take the hit on that. But it's not like I'm getting super, super down about it."

"I did the best job that I thought that I could do and the car is obviously there. So I'm personally taking all of my notes of still how to be a really good race car driver with a lot of stuff going on. But I think hands down we had the best race car this week and I feel especially good that we had the best race car in that round. So I feel good about Vegas."

Tommy Johnson Jr., Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car (No. 5 Qualifier)

Rd. 1: (.085 reaction time, 3.863 seconds at 328.46 mph) defeated No. 12 Cruz Pedregon (.061/12.342/71.413)
Rd. 2: (.096/6.019/177.37) defeated No. 13 Jim Campbell (.112/8.841/109.74)
Semis: (.065/5.544/134.32) lost to No. 1 John Force (.041/3.955/324.05)

"When we started out the day, running I think it was second quick of the first round, I was really confident. Then it threw us a curveball in second round, and we got a little lucky, got the win but we smoked the tires. We'll have to look to see why because we smoked the tires again in the semis and we shouldn't have with all the changes we made from the second round to the semis. So we'll have to look at it real good. But still, overall another semifinal round and it's a really good points day. So I'm happy with the way the weekend went. I'm happy with the way we're headed; it's just a matter of time now."

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car – (No. 6 Qualifier)

Rd 1: (.105 reaction time, 3.895 seconds at 330.96 mph) defeated No. 11 Alexis DeJoria (.086/3.925/328.46)
Rd. 2: (DQ – crossed center line) lost to No. 3 Matt Hagan (.053/4.212/229.98)

"This is a big race. They're all big, but this is one of the most historic ones we go to. I've been lucky enough to win here three times in the past, and every time you win this race, you're in the winner's circle and you look back on the day, and you realize how difficult it is to win this race.

"To make it into second round like we did, we just had a great car. The guys worked hard with our aerodynamics to help it become more drivable this season. The car went out there, and this time it spun the tires against Hagan. We're teammates, but sometimes we like to beat each other more than we do any other team. The thing turned sideways on me, and thank God I was able to catch it and not go into Matt's lane further and run into him. It (the car) was a handful. But it's moments like that, I'm sick to my stomach over it because I think I should have caught it quicker, but it's those moments that really make you enjoy the moments we have had in the winner's circle."

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car (No. 8 Qualifier)

Rd 1: (.064 reaction time, 3.899 seconds at 329.83 mph) defeated No. 9 Tim Wilkerson (.079/3.906/327.66)
Rd. 2: (.065/8.835/82.48) lost to No. 1 John Force (.048/3.916/328.14)

"That was one of those odd rounds where so many cars smoked the tires that you start thinking there's a track issue. But here's the thing, we aren't going to make any excuses. Our job is to figure out how to make our way down the racetrack, no matter what the conditions. Trust me when I tell you we will pick away at this data, and figure out if we get in this situation again, what we would do different to make sure we make a good race out of it.

"It's upsetting to not win, but we're philosophical. They're 10,000 horsepower race cars and hard to harness, and we have a bunch more races coming up. I think that the more data you give a team like us, the more we are going to excel, simply because we are newer than most of the teams. We've changed more stuff probably than the average team, so every one run we make proportionally, we're getting a bigger percentage of data than them."

Mopar/Dodge NHRA Sportsman Spotlight

In the always-competitive NHRA Sportsman ranks, the Dodge Top Finisher award went to Gary Robillard of Walker, Louisiana, in Stock Eliminator, while Campobello, South Carolina's Michael Volkman won the award in the Super Stock class. The Dodge Top Finisher award goes to the highest finishing Dodge or Plymouth vehicle in both Stock and Super Stock competition at all 24 NHRA national events. It pays \$500 to the award winner in each class.

Mike Volkman and his 2000 Chrysler Sebring in the GT/LA class battled through intense competition in the Super Stock ranks to score a runner-up finish and claim the Dodge Top Finisher honors. Volkman, a Mopar-powered drag racer for decades who works in the automotive service industry, qualified 27th in Super Stock and advanced through five rounds to reach the finals, beating Kevin Riner and his '98 Camaro in the semis.

Out of the 76 Stockers competing at the NHRA Gatornationals, Gary Robillard qualified his 2009 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak running in FS/G in the 18th spot and began to march through the elimination rounds with a string of consistent reaction times and dial-ins. He advanced to the quarterfinals but "pushed" the Christmas tree a little too far and was disqualified on a redlight foul.

Wes Leopold of Bethel Park, Pennsylvania, also advanced to the finals of Competition Eliminator, driving his A/SMA 2005 Dodge to a runner-up finish. Geoffrey Turk of Yorkville, Illinois, qualified his 2015 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak sixth in the field of eight during the first of this season's five Factory Stock Showdowns before making a first-round exit.

Next Event

The NHRA returns to the West Coast on March 31 – April 2 for the NHRA Nationals at The Strip at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Tony Schumacher has won at the track eight times in Top Fuel, while Ron Capps has five wins in the Funny Car class. The NHRA Nationals will be broadcast on FS1, with Sunday's elimination rounds airing live on the network at 6 p.m. ET.

For more information on Mopar and Dodge in NHRA, check out the Mopar brand's official blog, <http://blog.mopar.com>.

2017 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 3 of 24

(Season Wins in Parentheses)

NHRA Funny Car

- 1. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T (2) – 308**
2. John Force (1) – 238
- 3. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T – 235**
- 4. Tommy Johnson Jr. Dodge Charger R/T – 209**
5. Courtney Force – 177
6. Robert Hight – 150
- 7. Jim Campbell Dodge Charger R/T – 148**
- 8. Jack Beckman Dodge Charger R/T – 144**
9. J.R. Todd – 138
10. Tim Wilkerson – 117

NHRA Top Fuel

- 1. Leah Pritchett, Mopar HEMI (2) – 300**
- 2. Tony Schumacher, Mopar HEMI (1) – 279**
3. Antron Brown – 243
4. Doug Kalitta – 220
5. Brittany Force – 202
6. Steve Torrence – 185
7. Troy Coughlin Jr. – 143
8. Shawn Reed – 136
9. Clay Millican – 133
10. Scott Palmer – 116

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, thanks to Don Schumacher Racing driver Ron Capps, Mopar captured its fourth NHRA Funny Car World Championship in the last six years. As Mopar celebrates 80 years as a brand in 2017, it will focus its NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series efforts on NHRA Funny Car and, with rising star Leah Pritchett, NHRA Top Fuel Dragster. Mopar will also bolster its commitment to NHRA Sportsman racing with new contingency rewards, factory support and at-track technical advice and guidance.

Mopar-First Features

During the brand's 80 years, Mopar has introduced numerous industry-first features including:

- Vehicle-information apps: first to introduce smartphone vehicle-information applications, a new channel of communication with consumers
- wiADVISOR: first to incorporate a tablet-based service lane tool
- Electronic Vehicle Tracking System (EVTs): first to market with a new interactive vehicle tracking device that sends owner a text when vehicle is driven too fast or too far based on pre-set parameters
- Wi-Fi: first to offer customers the ability to make their vehicle a wireless hot spot
- Electronic owner manuals: first to introduce traditional owner manuals in a DVD and brief user-guide format

Mopar

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

A simple combination of the words MOfor 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 Mopar blog at www.blog.mopar.com. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit www.stellantis.com.

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