

## **Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak Driver Pritchett Begins Factory Stock Championship Title Defense at Historic NHRA Gatornationals**

- Leah Pritchett kicks off Factory Stock Showdown (FSS) title defense in HEMI®-engine-powered Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak at Gainesville Raceway
- Former Pro Stock champion Allen Johnson and Mark Pawuk join Pritchett as Drag Pak entries in the Gatornationals FSS field
- Pritchett pulling double duty by competing in Top Fuel, looking to become just third woman to win Gatornationals Top Fuel Wally
- Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car driver Matt Hagan aiming for back-to-back wins after Phoenix victory
- Jack Beckman seeks a second consecutive Gatornationals triumph aboard his Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat NHRA Funny Car
- Lynn Prudhomme to be recognized with 2019 Pat Garlits Memorial Award Presented by Mopar at International Drag Racing Hall of Fame ceremony

March 13, 2019, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Leah Pritchett will lead a star-studded group of Dodge//SRT Mopar drivers into one of the marquee events of the 2019 NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing season, this weekend's 50th annual NHRA Gatornationals at Gainesville (Florida) Raceway. Pritchett will pull double duty, chasing both her first Top Fuel Gatornationals triumph as well as making her first start as reigning SAM Tech NHRA Factory Stock Showdown (FSS) world champion.

Pritchett raced her 354-cubic-inch HEMI®-engine-powered Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak to last year's overall FSS championship with three consecutive season-ending wins to put an exclamation point on her campaign. The turning point in her title run came during the prestigious U.S. Nationals in Indy where she defeated her Don Schumacher Motorsports (DSM) teammate Mark Pawuk in the final. It was all win lights from there in the class for the Redlands, California, driver.

She'll defend her title driving a Drag Pak carrying unique Mopar and Dodge//SRT "Angry Bee"-themed livery, designed by motorsports lifestyle brand Hoonigan and chosen by a fan vote on the brand's website. Pritchett carries a 12-round winning streak into action against an extremely deep field that will not only include Pawuk in a Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, but also 2012 NHRA Pro Stock world champion and two-time Gatornationals champion Allen Johnson campaigning in a Drag Pak with additional vehicle preparation and support provided by DSM and Dodge//SRT Mopar engineers.

The goal is for Pritchett to make the maximum passes in Gainesville, not only in her Drag Pak with specially-designed Hoonigan livery, but also in her Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) Mopar Dodge Top Fuel dragster. She reached her 14th career final in the NHRA Arizona Nationals at Wild Horse Motorsports Pass near Phoenix on February 24 and currently ranks third in the Top Fuel championship standings. Pritchett would like to add a Gatornationals Wally to her trophy case and join Shirley Muldowney and Brittany Force as female Top Fuel winners in Gainesville.

"Competing at the Gatornationals alone is always prestigious, no less gunning for two Wallys at the 50th anniversary," said Pritchett. "I remember attending the 50th anniversary of the Pomona Finals and Winternationals as a fan, and to now be a strong contender at the Gators in its golden hour is something that excites my soul. We have a great race car and team that I know is excited about putting on an incredible show for a sell-out crowd, as well as bringing home two truly golden wins to DSR. History will be made there, and we intend on giving it everything we've got to be the fastest part of it."

### **Back-to-Back Theme for Beckman, Hagan in NHRA Funny Car**

Winning NHRA Funny Car event titles is extremely difficult and the ratio for winning consecutive events is tough to match, but for Mopar-powered Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat DSR drivers Jack Beckman and Matt Hagan, the odds are in their favor.

Beckman raced his DSR Dodge Funny Car to his first Gatornationals triumph over Hagan last March. Hagan, driver of the Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat, is coming off the first-ever victory for the Hellcat body at the NHRA Arizona Nationals and is chasing his first Gatornationals victory.

Ron Capps, pilot of the DSR NAPA Auto Parts Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat, will pursue a fourth Gatornationals win. Tommy Johnson Jr. will join his DSR teammates, as well as 1998 Gatornationals winner Cruz Pedregon and Jim Campbell, as six Mopar-powered Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Cars battle for spots in the eliminations field on Sunday.

### **Prudhomme, Lewis and Schumacher Honored**

Lynn Prudhomme will be recognized with the 2019 Pat Garlits Memorial Award Presented by Mopar on Thursday, March 14, during the 28th Annual banquet and induction ceremony for the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame. Lynn, wife of drag racing superstar Don "The Snake" Prudhomme, has been at the forefront of efforts to help racing families in need. She was one of the driving forces behind the formation of DRAW (Drag Racing Association of Women), an organization that has supported families of drag racers who have been injured in racing accidents, helping to defray some expenses, since 1985.

The award is named for longtime Dodge and Mopar driver Don Garlits' late wife, Pat. Don Garlits is a four-time Gatornationals winner and one of the sport's most iconic personalities. The Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing and International Drag Racing Hall of Fame is located in Ocala.

Don Schumacher Racing's Senior Vice President, Mike Lewis, will be part of the 2019 class inducted to the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame during the Thursday night ceremony. Lewis' honor comes just two days after team owner Don Schumacher's induction into the prestigious Motorsports Hall of Fame of America in Daytona Beach, Florida.

### **About Dodge**

Dodge//SRT offers a complete lineup of performance vehicles that stand out in their own segments. Dodge is America's mainstream performance brand and SRT is positioned as the ultimate performance halo of the Dodge brand, together creating a complete and balanced performance brand with one vision and one voice.

For more than 100 years, the Dodge brand has carried on the spirit of brothers John and Horace Dodge, who founded the brand in 1914. Their influence continues today. New for 2019, the Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat Redeye is possessed by the Demon. Its 797-horsepower supercharged HEMI® high-output engine makes it the most powerful, quickest and fastest muscle car reaching 0-60 miles per hour (mph) in 3.4 seconds and the fastest GT production car with a ¼-mile elapsed time (ET) of 10.8 seconds at 131 mph. It also reaches a new top speed of 203 mph. Joining the Challenger SRT Hellcat Redeye is the 2019 Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat with its more powerful 717-horsepower engine, the Challenger R/T Scat Pack Widebody, which features fender flares from the SRT Hellcat Widebody and adds 3.5 inches of width to Scat Pack's footprint, as well as and the new Challenger R/T Scat Pack 1320. Infused with exclusive drag strip technology from the iconic Dodge Challenger SRT Demon, the Challenger R/T Scat Pack 1320 is a drag-oriented, street-legal muscle car and a blank canvas for the serious grassroots drag racer. The 2019 Dodge Durango SRT, America's fastest, most powerful and most capable three-row SUV with a best-in-class tow rating of 8,700 lbs. fills out the brands' performance lineup. These visceral performance models join a 2019 brand lineup that includes the Durango, Grand Caravan, Journey, Charger and Challenger — a showroom that offers performance at every price point.

### **Mopar**

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

A simple combination of the words MOTO 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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