

Contact: Tom Blattler  
Darren Jacobs  
Dan Reid

## **Dodge//SRT and Mopar Light the Tree in Gainesville for the 2023 National Hot Rod Association Camping World Drag Racing Series**

- Dodge//SRT and Mopar competitors open the 2023 NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series this weekend (March 9-12) at the famed Gainesville Raceway in Florida with the 54th running of the Amalie Motor Oil Gatornationals, marking the NHRA's first season-opening event in Florida
- The NHRA Amalie Gatornationals marks the one-year anniversary of Dodge//SRT and Mopar partnering with Tony Stewart Racing (TSR), which fields driving stars Leah Pruett in Top Fuel and Matt Hagan in Funny Car, who both scored national event victories last season with their Direct Connection and Dodge Power Brokers branded nitro-powered machines
- Three-time NHRA Funny Car World Champion Hagan returns to Gainesville as the Funny Car champion after scoring the first Wally trophy for the TSR organization last March with the Dickie Venables-tuned Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat
- Pruett, a 10-time NHRA Top Fuel national event winner, brings the potent Direct Connection Top Fuel dragster to Gainesville for TSR after impressive testing runs in recent weeks in Florida
- Both TSR nitro-burning machines will sport new Sublime Green liveries
- Direct Connection performance parts offerings will be on display in the NHRA Manufacturers Midway throughout the season, including this weekend, which features race simulators for race fans to test their skills or experience a run in the Matt Hagan Funny Car simulator
- All 21 NHRA national events will air on FOX or FS1 and will stream live on NHRA.TV
- For more information on Dodge and the 24-month "Dodge Never Lift" campaign, visit [Dodge.com](https://www.Dodge.com) or [DodgeGarage.com](https://www.DodgeGarage.com)

March 9, 2023, Auburn Hills, Mich. - The excitement of the opening round of the 2023 National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Camping World Drag Racing Series hits a 11,000-horsepower pitch this weekend (March 9-12) at the legendary Gainesville Raceway in Florida as Dodge//SRT and Mopar competitors are staged to kick off the new season with another winning performance in the 54th annual NHRA Amalie Motor Oil Gatornationals.

Led by the Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) nitro team, Dodge//SRT and Mopar racers Leah Pruett (Top Fuel) and Matt Hagan (Funny Car) bring their strong Direct Connection entries to the 2023 season opening event, the first of 21 rounds for the coveted NHRA Camping World World Championships.

The Dodge//SRT and Mopar duo enter their second campaign under the TSR banner, and Hagan returns as the event's defending Funny Car champion with his nitro-burning Direct Connection Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat. The 2022 Gatornationals Funny Car triumph for Hagan was the first win for the TSR squad. Hagan recorded three additional NHRA national event victories in the team's initial season.

Pruett also scored a 2022 NHRA Top Fuel title for TSR at the Dodge Power Brokers NHRA Mile High Nationals last July in Morrison, Colorado.

"After an outstanding opening season with Tony Stewart Racing, we are excited for the 2023 NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series as Leah and Matt are primed to put the Dodge Power Brokers and Direct Connection machines back in the winner's circle," said Tim Kuniskis, Dodge brand CEO - Stellantis. "Our Dodge//SRT performance

enthusiasts also have the opportunity to get a close-up view of Direct Connection factory-backed performance products at our Manufacturers Midway display. It should be a spectacular season opener for the Dodge//SRT programs at Gainesville this weekend.”

The Direct Connection performance parts brand – only available through the Dodge Power Brokers dealer network – is the exclusive source of the Dodge brand’s factory-backed performance parts and straight-from-the-manufacturer technical information. Complete information on Direct Connection is available at [DCPerformance.com](https://www.dodgeperformance.com).

For the first time in the 54 years of the NHRA Amalie Motor Oil Gatornationals, the Florida event will serve as the season-opening race on the NHRA Camping World Drag Racing Series schedule after many decades beginning with the NHRA Winternationals in Pomona, California. The on-track action begins Friday, March 10, with two qualifying sessions for the professional divisions, followed by two nitro sessions on Saturday with final eliminations set for Sunday at 10 a.m. EST. In addition, the Top Fuel ranks will feature the Pep Boy’s All-Star Top Fuel Callout on Saturday.

TSR team owner Tony Stewart, whose nitro operation recorded five NHRA national event wins in 2022, brings added enthusiasm for the Gainesville opener, as well as the upcoming 2023 season.

“We’re looking forward to getting the NHRA season started in Gainesville,” said Stewart, who’ll drive an Alcohol dragster for the full 2023 tour. “It’s a special track because it’s where Leah (Pruett) and I had our first date, and it’s where we got our first TSR team win last year with Matt Hagan. We retained all our team members, so I know we’re going to continue to build off last year’s success. The crews mesh very well together and are extremely talented. Both teams were able to test during the off-season to dial-in their setups and get ready for competition. We can’t thank Dodge enough for their support and continued partnership.”

Hagan, a three-time (2011, 2014, 2020) NHRA Funny Car World Champion, comes to Gainesville after a strong finish where he placed third in the 2022 Funny Car points with his Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat and ran his career-win total to 43. The Virginia driver has produced top-three national point finishes nine times during his legendary career.

Still working with famed crew chief Dickie Venables, Hagan quickly gave the new TSR organization immediate respect with the 2022 Gatornationals Funny Car in the Dodge Power Brokers and Direct Connection livery. While he successfully began the new chapter in his career with his new team and Direct Connection as his primary livery, Hagan is set for another strong Gatornationals performance after a stellar pre-season testing.

“I’m pumped to be returning to Gainesville as the defending champion,” said Hagan. “Knowing we’re starting the season at the Gatornationals, and it was the track we got TSR’s first win last year is special. It was also my first win at Gainesville too. I can’t wait to climb into this Sublime Green Dodge Direct Connection Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car. Let’s light the pipes and get another win!

Pruett, a former Nostalgia Funny Car World Champion and NHRA SAMTech Factory Stock Showdown Champion, will campaign in her 11th year in drag racing’s ultimate division, Top Fuel, and again work with crew chief Neal Strausbaugh and the TSR crew at the NHRA Gatornationals this weekend. The 34-year-old California native begins the 2023 NHRA campaign with one of the best NHRA elapsed time in series history at 3.631 seconds.

“I can’t remember a time I’ve ever looked more forward to the Gatornationals than this race in our Sublime Green Dodge Direct Connection Top Fuel Dragster,” said Pruett. “It’s the overall season opener, not just on the East Coast. Teams also got extensive testing at this track in the last month, which means the competition is going to be ultra-thick. I believe the fans are in for a memorable event.”

Also entered at Gainesville Raceway for the Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat nitro-burning contingent will be two-time world champion Cruz Pedregon in his Snap-On Tools Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car and young Alex Laughlin in the Havoline Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car for Jim Dunn.

Pedregon brings his Cruz Pedregon Racing team to Gainesville after a 2022 season-ending Funny Car victory at the NHRA Finals last November and seeks to add to his 38-career Funny Car win total this weekend, while Laughlin

moves into the Funny Car division this year after stints in Pro Stock and Top Fuel. Team owner Dunn is a legendary figure in NHRA drag racing dating back to his Funny Car driving in the early 1970s.â€

#### **@DodgeMoparMotorsports on Instagram**

Theâ€@DodgeMoparMotorsportsâ€ 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.

#### **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, visitâ€[www.dodgegarage.com](http://www.dodgegarage.com).â€

#### **Dodge//SRT and Mopar Manufacturers Midway Exhibit**

Fans in attendance at NHRA Camping World national events in 2023 are invited to visit Dodge//SRT and Mopar's massive 4,800-square-foot display, one of the largest exhibits in the NHRA's Manufacturers Midway. At the Dodge//SRT and Mopar display, they can meet their favorite Dodge//SRT drivers for autographs and check out a selection of Direct Connection performance parts and vehicles. In addition, drag-racing fans can test their virtual skills and experience a nitro pass from the driver's seat of the Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car simulator. The interactive exhibit also features a pair of Dodge Challenger SRT Demon simulators.

#### **Mopar Career Automotive Program (CAP)**

Now entering its fifth season, the Dodge//SRT and Mopar exhibit will also host Mopar Career Automotive Program (CAP) activations at seven NHRA national events, beginning at the NHRA Gatornationals in March. The Mopar CAP program is dedicated to recruiting, training and placing the best service technicians in the industry in Stellantis dealerships. Students are invited to visit the informational booth, which features a subject matter expert, program information, games and giveaways. More information is available atâ€[Moparcap.com](http://Moparcap.com).â€

#### **NHRA on FOX and NHRA.TV**

This season, Dodge//SRT and Mopar brands will continue to partner with NHRA as part of their multi-year full media package, which includes NHRA on FOX commercials and integration. All 21 national events will be broadcast on eitherâ€[FOX or FS1](#). Non-stop track action will also stream live onâ€[NHRA.TV](#).â€

The NHRA Amalie Motor Oil Winternationals television coverage will air on Fox Sports 1 with qualifying highlights 1 on Saturday, March 11 at 10 a.m. Eastern with qualifying highlights 2 on Sunday, March 12 at 9 a.m. Eastern. The Pep Boys Top Fuel Callout finals will be shown at 10:30 a.m. Eastern on Sunday on FS1 with three hours of eliminations set for FOX Network at noon Eastern on Sunday.

#### **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 where they compete.

Dodge drives forward as a pure performance brand, offering SRT Hellcat versions of the Dodge Challenger, Dodge Charger and Dodge Durango, as well as an R/T performance hybrid version of the all-new Dodge Hornet, representing the brand's first-ever electrified performance vehicle. Dodge delivers the dragstrip dominating 807-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Super Stock; the 797-horsepower Dodge Charger SRT Redeye, the most powerful and fastest mass-produced sedan in the world; and 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. Combined, these four muscle vehicles make Dodge the industry's most powerful brand, offering more horsepower than any other American brand across its entire lineup.

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).

Dodge is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider Stellantis. For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), visit [www.stellantis.com](http://www.stellantis.com).

## **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.

Complete information on Mopar is available at [www.mopar.com](http://www.mopar.com) and the Mopar blog at [www.blog.mopar.com](http://www.blog.mopar.com). For more information regarding Stellantis (NYSE: STLA), please visit [www.stellantis.com](http://www.stellantis.com).

## **Follow Mopar and company news and video on:**

Company blog: [blog.stellantisnorthamerica.com](http://blog.stellantisnorthamerica.com)

Media website: [media.stellantisnorthamerica.com](http://media.stellantisnorthamerica.com)

Mopar brand: [www.mopar.com/](http://www.mopar.com/)

Mopar blog: [blog.mopar.com/](http://blog.mopar.com/)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/mopar](http://www.facebook.com/mopar)

Instagram: [www.instagram.com/officialmopar](http://www.instagram.com/officialmopar)

Twitter: [twitter.com/OfficialMOPAR](http://twitter.com/OfficialMOPAR)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/c/mopar](http://www.youtube.com/c/mopar) or [www.youtube.com/StellantisNA](http://www.youtube.com/StellantisNA)

-###-

Additional information and news from Stellantis are available at: <https://media.stellantisnorthamerica.com>