

## **Mopar Caps Championship Season with Win for Tommy Johnson Jr. at NHRA Finals**

- Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car driver Tommy Johnson Jr. scores final win of 2016 Mello Yello Drag Racing Series season
- Mopar locks down top three positions in Funny Car points, all four Funny Cars finish top five
- DSR driver Johnson's win is 15th of his career, third of season in sixth final round
- Johnson's victory is 14th of season for Mopar in Funny Car category
- Mopar reaches 18 final rounds in 24 events in 2016, including nine all-Mopar Funny Car finals to conclude an extraordinary year
- DSR Top Fuel newcomer Leah Pritchett earns first top 10 finish behind the wheel of HEMI®-powered dragster

November 13, 2016, Pomona, California - The 52nd annual NHRA Finals at Auto Club Raceway at Pomona proved to be a time of much celebration for Team Mopar. On Saturday during qualifying for the final event of the 2016 Mello Yello Drag Racing Series season, Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car driver Ron Capps secured his first world championship, and on Sunday, it was his Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) teammate Tommy Johnson Jr. in the spotlight in a Dodge of his own. Johnson wheeled his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger to the 15th victory of his career in a thrilling final round to claim the 14th event win of the season for Team Mopar.

Over the course of the 2016 season, Mopar remained consistently powerful. A total of 16 low qualifier awards complemented the 14 trophies accumulated by four drivers in HEMI®-powered Mopar Dodge Charge R/T Funny Cars. In all, Mopar reached 18 final rounds in 24 events in 2016, including nine all-Mopar Funny Car standoffs for the trophy. Mopar held the points lead for 16 of the 24 races with Capps and ultimately earned the fourth Funny Car world title for the brand in six years. The championship was the sixth for Mopar in six years overall, including two Pro Stock championships.

"It has been a tremendous year for Team Mopar, and ending this season of great performance with a Dodge Charger Funny Car victory for Tommy Johnson Jr. and the NHRA Championship for Ron Capps at the NHRA Finals is the perfect conclusion," said Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar), FCA – Global. "On behalf of all of us at Mopar, we thank each of the drivers and everyone behind-the-scenes at Don Schumacher Racing. We are very proud of the team's remarkable accomplishments that have made this an unforgettable year for Mopar Performance."

The NHRA Finals provided Johnson Jr. the opportunity to make a move up in the standings, and he and his John Collins-led team took full advantage. Johnson entered the event No. 3 in the Funny Car points, but with strong performance from their Dodge Charger and incredible reaction times by Johnson, they wheeled their way through Sunday to claim their third trophy of the season in six final rounds and move up to No. 2 in the points – Johnson's best finish to date.

He began his quest for the title with a first-round meeting with part-timer Dave Richards, and Johnson launched first in his fierce Mopar Funny Car but both cars overpowered the hot and slippery racetrack. Johnson, though, was the victor with a 4.373-second pass at 235.23 mph to a slowing 6.365.

Without lane choice, Johnson was at a disadvantage going into the second stanza but the handicap proved inconsequential as Johnson blasted down the racetrack to the quickest run of raceday, a 3.897/325.37, to stop Robert Hight's 3.921/330.96. On to the semifinals he went, and there Johnson made a stunning move at the starting line, recording a .009-second reaction time to Courtney Force's .079 and shutting the door on his opponent at the finish line with a 3.929/297.09 to beat a quicker but ineffective 3.916/327.74. The holeshot victory sent Johnson ahead to

the 39th final round of his career. There he faced John Force, a driver that he has challenged for the trophy 10 times and only turned up on the winning end on two occasions.

The final was thrilling, with Johnson leaving first on a .041 to a .046 and the two flying down the racetrack side-by-side to trigger identical elapsed times on the scoreboard. Johnson's 3.918/320.51 got the nod over Force's 3.918/321.81 by just five-thousandths of a second. His quicker reaction time to the starting line timing system made the difference.

"Of course we're disappointed we didn't win the championship," said Johnson, who finished No. 3 in the nation in the past two seasons. "But Ron's team did a great job this season. It's so important to do well these last six races, and you really can't make any mistakes. We had a bad race or two towards the middle of the Countdown [to the Championship], and it was a little frustrating coming in here. We knew we were better than that, and we came here third and wanted to get back to second. We knew we could get that. You want to finish strong and show them that you're here to contend. The guys just did a great job. We tested after Vegas and knew we had a great racecar coming in here, and we ran really well all weekend. They're digging hard, so you have to dig hard, too. I gave it everything I had.

"I've always wanted to win this race. I've won the Winternationals here in Pomona, but I've never won the Finals. You do that, and you have two and a half months to celebrate. You want to end the year on a high note because it sets the tone for the off-season. It's just a great day, and a great year for not only our team, but all the DSR Funny Car teams."

The Mopar brand also finished the season with three Dodge Dart Pro Stock cars in the top 10, highlighted by a victory at the Mopar Mile-High Nationals in Denver by Allen Johnson.

In Top Fuel, nitro-newcomer Leah Pritchett made her mark on the class as the newest Don Schumacher Racing driver and earned her first top 10 finish behind the wheel of her Mopar dragster. Pritchett finished No. 7 in the points, while DSR teammate Tony Schumacher was No. 8 in his HEMI-powered U.S. Army Top Fuel dragster.

"We're ending this season with a huge amount of momentum," said Pritchett. "Other teams were looking forward to this race being the end of the season, but this team, we were just ramping up. We had six solid runs here, and that's pretty stout to have that here at this race. I couldn't be more proud of this team and the progress that we've made. We are a championship caliber team, and we're just starting to show that."

The Mopar contingent will return to Pomona for the kick-off of the 2017 Mello Yello Drag Racing Series at the NHRA Winternationals at Auto Club Raceway, Feb. 9-12.

#### **2016 NHRA Championship — Final Point Standings (Season Wins in Parentheses)**

##### **NHRA Funny Car**

- 1. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T (5) – 2,605**
- 2. Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T (3) – 2,553**
- 3. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T (4) – 2,493**
4. John Force (4) – 2,486
- 5. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger R/T (2) – 2,480**
6. Courtney Force (1) – 2,414
7. Del Worsham (1) – 2,406
8. Robert Hight (1) – 2,368
9. Tim Wilkerson (2) – 2,314
10. Alexis DeJoria (1) – 2,184

##### **NHRA Top Fuel**

1. Antron Brown (7) – 2,663
2. Doug Kalitta (4) – 2,533
3. Steve Torrence (3) – 2,482

4. JR Todd (1) – 2,455
5. Shawn Langdon (3) – 2,443
6. Brittany Force (3) – 2,399
- 7. Leah Pritchett, Mopar HEMI (1) – 2,389**
- 8. Tony Schumacher, Mopar HEMI (1) – 2,387**
9. Richie Crampton – 2,279
10. Clay Millican – 2,264

#### **NHRA Pro Stock**

1. Jason Line (8) – 2,639
2. Greg Anderson (8) – 2,636
3. Shane Gray (1) – 2,492
4. Bo Butner – 2,453
5. Vincent Nobile (1) – 2,449
6. Drew Skillman (2) – 2,424
7. Chris McGaha (1) – 2,327
- 8. Allen Johnson (1), Mopar Dodge Dart – 2,277**
- 9. Erica Enders, Mopar Dodge Dart – 2,239**
- 10. Jeg Coughlin Jr., Mopar Dodge Dart – 2,208**

#### **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 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](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).

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