

Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak Driver Pritchett Clinches NHRA Factory Stock Showdown Championship at Dallas, Captures Third Consecutive Win

- Leah Pritchett steers Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak to victory at AAA Texas NHRA Fall Nationals, locks down first NHRA Factory Stock Showdown Championship
- Pritchett's win is fifth in seven NHRA Factory Stock Showdown events by a Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak driver, wrapping up dominant season for the modern-day "package" car
- Mopar Dodge Top Fuel driver Pritchett is fourth in standings with hopes still alive for dual championships in NHRA Nitro and Sportsman classes
- Tommy Johnson Jr. qualifies No. 1 in Make-A-Wish Dodge Funny Car, advances to semifinals, takes fourth spot in standings
- Mopar-powered U.S. Army Top Fuel driver Tony Schumacher runs to semifinals, stays third in points
- Dodge Garage (<http://www.dodgegarage.com/>), a digital content hub for muscle car and race enthusiasts, features highlights from NHRA season

October 7, 2018, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Leah Pritchett clinched the 2018 NHRA Factory Stock Showdown championship in her Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak at the AAA Texas NHRA Fall Nationals near Dallas, racing to her third consecutive win of the season and earning her first championship in her first full year in the class.

The NHRA Factory Stock Showdown title is the third for Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Pritchett, who also captured 2000-2001 Jr. Dragster Division 7 championships and the 2010 NHRA Hot Rod Heritage Racing Series Championship in the Nostalgia Funny Car class.

Pritchett's event win at Dallas was the fifth in the seven-event NHRA Factory Stock Showdown season for the Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, the brand's modern-day "package" car, and also the fifth in a row for a Mopar Dodge Drag Pak driver. The crown was the second earned in less than a month by a Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak driver, following the championship claimed by Geoff Turk in the National Muscle Car Association (NMCA) Factory Super Cars class on September 23.

Pritchett entered competition at the Texas Motorplex facility coming off victories at the NHRA U.S. Nationals in early September and at the NHRA Midwest Nationals two weeks ago, where she became the first NHRA driver in the Factory Stock Showdown class to make a pass in the seven-second range. She qualified No. 10 and posted her quickest pass of the weekend, an 8.079-second elapsed time (ET) at 169.64 mph, to defeat Aaron Stanfield in the opening round of eliminations on Sunday.

After advancing past Randy Taylor in the quarterfinals, Pritchett moved on to a dramatic semifinals grouping that also featured co-points leaders Stephen Bell and Arthur Kohn, with Pritchett trailing each by a single point. She squared off against Bell with her season on the line, leaving first with a clutch .038-second reaction time and recording a winning 8.107/169.00 mark. Kohn was up next, needing to win his semifinals match against Kevin Skinner to extend the championship battle to the final round. Skinner took the win, crowning Pritchett as the 2018 NHRA Factory Stock Showdown Champion. She would add the cherry on top by taking out No. 1 qualifier Skinner in the final with an arrow-straight 8.106/169.02 pass down the track to earn her third consecutive win.

In Top Fuel, Pritchett overcame a No. 9 qualifying spot outside of the top half of the field to defeat the higher-qualified Kebin Kinsley, posting a 3.831/324.20 run en route to leading from start to finish. In the quarterfinals against Clay Millican, the Mopar Dodge Top Fuel driver matched her opponent's .072 reaction but dropped a cylinder right at launch, ending any chance at a deep Dallas run. Pritchett is fourth in the Top Fuel standings with her hopes for two

titles still alive heading into the all-important final three-race stretch.

Tommy Johnson Jr. unleashed a 3.918-second run in the fourth and final qualifying session in his Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to claim the sixteenth No. 1 qualifier spot of his career, his first of 2018 and first at Texas Motorplex. The DSR driver had a big advantage off the starting line in scoring a round one defeat of Terry Haddock, and posted a 3.937 ET — the quickest pass of the quarterfinals — to take out Cruz Pedregon.

In Johnson's sixth semifinal appearance of the last seven events he recorded a clean, solid 3.964/321.58 run but was behind from the start against opponent J.R. Todd and was unable to make up any ground, ending his day. Johnson moved up to fourth in the Countdown playoff standings with his Dallas performance.

After a stellar final qualifying run late Saturday vaulted Tony Schumacher to the No. 3 spot on the elimination ladder, "The Sarge" laid down a smooth and steady opening-round win over No. 14 qualifier Shawn Reed. The Mopar-powered U.S. Army Top Fuel car crossed the finish line in 3.747-seconds at 325.69-mph to Reed's 3.900-second pass. That set up a meeting with teammate Antron Brown. Schumacher was solid and steady once again with a run of 3.817-seconds at 323.89-mph while Brown smoked the tires midway down the track.

Trailing Steve Torrence by 125 points at the start of the day, Schumacher and the U.S. Army team were hoping to turn his playoff momentum in their favor with the chance to leave Texas Motorplex having significantly downsized that deficit. But it was not meant to be as Schumacher hazed the tires at halftrack and had to settle for a run of 4.917-seconds to Torrence's 3.779 seconds pass.

"Fast" Jack Beckman, a two-time runner-up at Dallas, qualified strong in his Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car, collecting the No. 5 spot on his final qualifying attempt. A powerhouse matchup against Courtney Force awaited him in the opening round. The elite pair entered the race deadlocked at 10-10 in previous matchups, and were appropriately enough dead even off the starting tree with identical .082 reaction times, but Beckman was able to claim the early lead and hold off Force in a tight drag race with a winning 3.969/317.27 pass.

In the quarterfinals, the DSR driver faced J.R. Todd. Beckman trailed off the start but quickly reclaimed the lead before putting out a cylinder and veering toward the centerline, forcing him to back off as Todd went down the strip for the win. Beckman, the 2012 NHRA Funny Car champ, leaves Dallas eighth in the standings.

Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car driver Matt Hagan will look to put his weekend at the NHRA FallNationals in the rearview mirror. The two-time Texas Motorplex winner struggled to make a full pass during qualifying, placing Hagan in an uncharacteristic spot — the 15th position — heading into eliminations on Sunday. Hagan, owner of three Funny Car wins in 2018, was able to put together a full 4.058-run in round one, but it was not enough to beat Bob Tasca III to the win stripe. Despite the early exit, two-time NHRA Funny Car World Champion Hagan remains seventh in the Countdown rankings.

Ron Capps placed his Mopar-powered NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car in the top half of the field, uncorking a 3.986/317.12 to earn the No. 7 spot in in the final qualifying session. He faced John Force in a marquee first-round matchup and in the 97th meeting of the two winningest Funny Car drivers. Capps was quicker off the start in his Dodge Charger R/T and held the lead up to the 600-foot mark, when Force began to pull away for the round win. Capps is sixth in the Funny Car standings.

Mopar Dodge//SRT NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series: Notes & Quotes

Steve Beahm, Head of Passenger Cars, Dodge//SRT, Chrysler and FIAT, FCA North America; Head of Parts & Service (Mopar), FCA - North America

"This NHRA Factory Stock Showdown championship is a testament to the drive and commitment of Leah Pritchett and also to the domination of the Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, our modern-day version of the factory-built 'package' car. Leah fought through a hectic schedule to compete in both the Factory Stock Showdown and Top Fuel classes at seven events, and to wrap up the year with the series championship, to go along with three consecutive wins and the first seven-second range pass in the history of the class is truly an amazing accomplishment for her and the Don Schumacher Racing team."

Leah Pritchett, Mopar Dodge Top Fuel Dragster
(No. 9 Qualifier – 3.808 ET)

Rd.1: (.067-second reaction time, 3.831 seconds at 324.20 mph) beat No. 8 Kebin Kinsley (.094/4.548/172.25)
Rd.2: (.072/4.228/201.91) lost to No. 1 Clay Millican (.072/3.783/321.50)

On her Factory Stock Showdown championship win:

“This championship ranks at the top of the list. I might be holding this Wally right now, but 100 percent this is Dodge and Mopar and the technology they pour into this class. I just get to drive the car. For Kevin Helms, Terry Snyder, all of Don Schumacher Racing, powered by Pennzoil of course, this is absolutely incredible. We came in with a chance to win the championship, but our mentality was one round, one burnout, one line at a time and that’s what it took, so thank you to everyone that made this happen. I know I probably speak for the whole class, but a huge thank you to SAMTech for sponsoring the Factory Stock Showdown Series. It’s really become one of the most exciting, grassroots classes out here. I get to hold it, but this Wally is definitely going home to Mopar.”

On her Top Fuel semifinals appearance:

“Some people say the glass is half empty or half full. For us, we think it’s half full. We’ve experienced gremlins we’ve never experienced before in Dallas. We thought we had them completely flushed under after a not really good day of qualifying on Saturday. Were able to fix it and get that first-round win. But, with the boost problems we’d been having, that resulted in a cylinder dropping at the hit in the second round. It would’ve been awesome for everybody, including us, to take out Clay so we could climb higher into the championship chase. This Mopar/U.S. Army team is undoubtedly still in it and we are looking forward to still chasing it and we’re definitely not counting this team or this car or any of the guys out. We have a couple of things to fix and I have confidence in this team that we will turn it around. I’ll tell you what, for the fans and the people who are watching this Countdown, it’s going to get interesting and it’s going to be good and we’re going to give it absolutely everything we have because that’s what we do.”

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster
(No. 3 Qualifier – 3.745 ET)

Rd.1: (.072-second reaction time, 3.747 seconds at 325.69 mph) beat No. 14 Shawn Reed (.072/3.900/322.34)
Rd.2: (.082/3.817/323.89) beat No. 11 Anton Brown (.062/4.151/241.15)
Rd.3: (.049/4.917/166.64) lost to No. 2 Steve Torrence (.057/3.779/321.73)

“We came here in the hunt, even though we may not be leaving here in the hunt, but we finally figured out two dramatic issues with our U.S. Army car. Now we can run at the level we need to run at. We may not win a championship with it because it might be too late. We do have a great car after this weekend. But we’re down to 12 rounds and (Steve) Torrence is a lot of rounds ahead of us. He’s got to go out in the first round at the next three races and we have to win them all. We’ll see if we can get in everybody’s way and earn some points and finish off the season No. 1, 2 or 3 but, realistically, we didn’t have that championship car until this weekend.”

Tommy Johnson Jr., Make-A-Wish Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car
(No. 1 Qualifier – 3.918 ET)

Rd.1: (.037-second reaction time, 3.981 seconds at 324.44 mph) beat No. 16 Terry Haddock (.102/5.079/150.15)
Rd.2: (.073/3.937/322.65) beat No. 8 Cruz Pedregon (.078/4.036/303.78)
Rd.3: (.073/3.964/321.58) lost to No. 4 J.R. Todd (.033/3.952/320.89)

“We’ve got a really good race car now it’s just a matter of putting all together on Sundays. The continuous improvement is great and hopefully we can keep doing that and have a little luck go our way. We feel really good. If a few of the top cars stumble, we’re right there. We’re in the hunt and not out of this championship yet.”

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.968 ET)

Rd.1: (.082-second reaction time, 3.969 seconds at 317.27 mph) beat Courtney Force No. 12 (.082/3.985/318.17)
Rd.2: (.085/4.055/260.36) lost to No. 4 J.R. Todd (.071/3.991/318.69)

“We took our Courtney (Force) first round. Had the ladder we need with J.R. (Todd) second round. We were literally driving away and it put another hole out. It has not wanted to keep eight cylinders to the finish line all weekend and despite that we had an incredibly fast car. We figured out how to make this thing a rocket ship early in the run. We just need to figure out how to keep all the E3 spark plugs lit until the finish line. I'm excited. I think we'll be racing for trophies the rest of the year and that motivates us.”

Matt Hagan, Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Car

(No. 15 Qualifier – 4.169 ET)

Rd.1: (.070-second reaction time, 4.058 seconds at 317.12 mph) lost to No. 2 Bob Tasca III (.051/3.998/319.37)

“We have to work to put out some of the Kalitta and Force cars and we need to step it up and go some rounds to put ourselves in a better position in the championship chase. We're working hard with some new combinations and we have a lot of help from our teammates and we're moving forward. We're going to stay positive and go into Charlotte with a game plan and grow and have a good weekend for Mopar and Pennzoil and DSR.”

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 7 Qualifier – 3.986 ET)

Rd.1: (.062-second reaction time, 4.024 seconds at 314.39 mph) lost to No. 10 John Force (.069/3.986/325.30)

“It was a strange weekend of qualifying here at Dallas for a lot of cars. It was luck of the draw for race day and when you have a team like John Force first round, it's going to be tough. It was a close race. I didn't see him until right at the end Our mentality was to come in here and win the last four races and with points-and-a-half at Pomona, we now have to win the last three races. With the race car we have and the team we have, it's very possible. It can be done. Once again, the NAPA guys game me a great car and we lost a close race. It hurts right now and we're going to shake it off and go to zMAX.”

Up Next: NHRA Carolina Nationals

The Mopar and the Dodge//SRT drivers and teams will be back at it next weekend, October 12-14, returning to the zMAX Dragway in Charlotte, N.C. for the NHRA Carolina Nationals. They head into the second half of the NHRA Countdown to Championship with the fourth of six races on tap. Both Ron Capps and Jack Beckman have Funny Car wins at zMAX Dragway.

Dodge Garage: Digital Hub for Drag Racing News

Fans now have a one-stop destination for Mopar and Dodge drag racing news. Dodge Garage (<http://www.dodgegarage.com>) is a digital content hub and premier destination for drag racing and muscle car enthusiasts.

Fans can view daily updates and get access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads and merchandise. Dodge Garage features include exclusive content, such as the “Chasing the Title” video series, which offers fans a unique, behind-the-scenes glimpse at DSR drivers and teams in action on and off the track.

For information on Mopar on and off the track, check out the Mopar brand's official blog, <http://blog.mopar.com>.

2018 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 21 of 24

(Season Wins in Parentheses)

NHRA Funny Car

1. Robert Hight — 2387
2. J.R. Todd — 2337

3. Tim Wilkerson — 2254
- 4. Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T — 2251**
5. Courtney Force — 2232
- 6. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T (2) — 2215**
- 7. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat (3) — 2175**
- 8. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat (2) — 2172**
9. John Force — 2168
10. Shawn Langdon — 2120

NHRA Top Fuel

1. Steve Torrence — 2468
2. Clay Millican — 2365
- 3. Tony Schumacher, Mopar Dodge HEMI (1) — 2303**
- 4. Leah Pritchett, Mopar Dodge HEMI (2) — 2244**
5. Antron Brown — 2221
6. Terry McMillen — 2189
7. Doug Kalitta — 2169
8. Mike Salinas — 2150
9. Brittany Force — 2140
10. Scott Palmer — 2117

About Dodge//SRT

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.

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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