

## Stewart Makes Top Fuel Debut at 55th Annual NHRA Gatornationals, Defending Champ Hagan Begins Funny Car Title Defense in Dodge//SRT Hellcat

- Tony Stewart makes his highly anticipated Top Fuel start this weekend in the Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Dodge//SRT Direct Connection dragster at the NHRA Gatornationals
- Stewart's first Top Fuel season in the NHRA Mission Drag Racing Series marks his fourth different motorsports discipline after winning titles in NASCAR, IndyCar and USAC
- Reigning NHRA World Funny Car champion Matt Hagan returns to the Gatornationals, seeking his third consecutive event title in Gainesville in the TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT Hellcat
- In 2023, Hagan tied legends Don "Snake" Prudhomme and Kenny Bernstein as four-time NHRA Funny Car World Champions as he scored six NHRA national event wins toward the title
- Teammates Hagan and Stewart will debut new TSR Dodge//SRT Direct Connection red-and-black race car liveries at the Gatornationals
- Stewart takes over the primary driving chores from his wife, Leah Pruett, who placed third in the 2023 NHRA Top Fuel point standings and now plans to start a family with Stewart this year
- Pruett will serve as a strategist and driving coach for the TSR operation
- Follow Dodge in NHRA action at [DodgeGarage](#)

March 4, 2024, Auburn Hills, Mich. - The most anticipated debut of a Top Fuel driver in over a decade takes place on March 8-10 in the 55th annual NHRA Amalie Gatornationals when NASCAR Hall of Fame racer Tony Stewart competes in the Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Dodge//SRT Direct Connection dragster in the opening event of the 21-race NHRA Mission Drag Racing Series.

Stewart, a former series champion in NASCAR, IndyCar and USAC competition, enters his fourth motorsports discipline at the highest level with the Top Fuel division in NHRA, as the Indiana driver makes his Top Fuel "rookie" showing in an 11,000-horsepower Dodge dragster at Gainesville Raceway.

"I'm trying to get through this learning curve right now with the Top Fuel dragster," said Stewart, who takes the wheel of the TSR Dodge//SRT Direct Connection dragster after his wife Leah Pruett made the decision to sit out the 2024 campaign to start a family. Pruett will serve as strategist and driving coach for the TSR team. "This is probably one of the biggest challenges I have ever faced in my racing career. I've been through so many divisions and types of racecars that I have had to learn in my career, and this might be the toughest of all of them. Now just trying to figure these cars will be the most exciting part of it for me.

"I think it's a huge advantage for a rookie in my situation. I have confidence in the team, and I know that they are way stronger at this point of the season than I am. It gives me a big confidence boost. It allows me to literally just work on all the little nuances in learning how to drive a new car. This is way different than anything I've ever done in motorsports in my life. It's not like a NASCAR or IndyCar track where I can go and make 100 laps in a day easily. This is a situation where on a great day, you're going to have four maybe five runs in testing, so every lap that we get is super important right now."

While Stewart makes his initial Top Fuel appearance at Gainesville, his TSR teammate, veteran Matt Hagan, seeks his third consecutive Gatornationals Funny Car win in the nitro-burning TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT Hellcat when qualifying begins on Friday, March 8.

Hagan matched legends Don "Snake" Prudhomme and Kenny Bernstein last year by scoring a fourth NHRA World

Funny Car Championship and the first world title for Tony Stewart Racing. Hagan recorded a season-high six NHRA national event victories in 2023 and now is just one win away from a coveted 50 career triumphs entering the 2024 NHRA Mission Drag Racing Series.

"It would be really unbelievable to win Gainesville a third time," said Hagan. "It's so hard to win any of these races and anything can happen. We're going to work really hard to kick the season off well again. Gainesville has been a better track to me the last few years. We have a lot of data to work with from the last two years.

"We have a group that is well-oiled with a lot of chemistry, synergy and energy as we have proven with last year's championship. I'm super confident in everything that my guys do. Tony is going to be learning to drive the dragster this season, so it'll give us an opportunity to help those guys also if they need it. I have confidence in Tony and his TSR dragster team just like my Funny Car squad. I'd love to win Gainesville for a third time."

Hagan and Stewart have tested their respective new TSR Direct Connection Dodge//SRT racecars in recent weeks in preparing for the NHRA Amalie Gatornationals, and will debut brand new 2024 TSR Dodge//SRT Direct Connection red-and-black race car liveries when the pair hit the strip at Gainesville.

Nitro qualifying is scheduled for Friday, March 8, at 3 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. EST. Saturday qualifying takes place at 1:20 p.m. and 4 p.m. EST with Sunday's final eliminations set for 10:30 a.m. EDT.

### **@DodgeMoparMotorsports on Instagram**

The [@DodgeMoparMotorsports](#) 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.

### **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 in which the brand competes while moving forward to a future that includes electrified muscle in the form of the next-generation, all-new Dodge Charger.

The next-generation Dodge Charger electrifies a legend, with the Charger retaining its title as the world's quickest and most powerful muscle car led by the all-new, all-electric 2024 Dodge Charger Daytona Scat Pack. The all-new Dodge Charger will also offer performance choices via multi-energy powertrain options, including the 550-horsepower Dodge Charger SIXPACK H.O., powered by the 3.0L Twin Turbo Hurricane High Output engine.

Dodge also keeps its foot on the gas as a pure performance brand with 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.

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).

Fans can follow all the NHRA action this season at [DodgeGarage](#), the one-stop portal for Dodge//SRT and Mopar drag-racing news, including daily updates and access to an online racing HQ, news, events, galleries, available downloads and merchandise. Dodge is part of the portfolio of brands offered by leading global automaker and mobility provider [Stellantis](#) (NYSE: STLA).

### **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 newly redesigned Mopar blog at [www.blog.mopar.com](http://www.blog.mopar.com).

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