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Mopar Dodge//SRT Ready and Set for 2020 Edition of 'The Big Go'

- Mopar Dodge//SRT racers ready to head to the staging lanes for this weekend's 66th annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway near Indianapolis
- Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) set to reach milestone 350 NHRA national event wins at the U.S. Nationals
- Matt Hagan and Jack Beckman rain-delayed Indy 2 Funny Car final to take place during third qualifying session on Saturday afternoon
- Three HEMI-powered drivers with opportunity leave Indy with two Wally Trophies
- Dodge HEMI® Challenge kicks off the weekend for the fleet of Mopar Dodge//SRT brand entrants
- Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye scheme returns to DSR Funny Car and Top Fuel Dragster of Matt Hagan and Leah Pruett, respectively
- Top-four spots in Funny Car championship standings held by DSR Mopar Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat drivers

September 4, 2020, Brownsburg, Ind. - A strong contingent of Mopar and Dodge//SRT entries in both National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) Sportsman and Pro Classes have descended upon Lucas Oil Raceway near Indianapolis, Indiana, and are ready to take part in the oldest and most prestigious of drag-racing events, the 66th annual U.S. Nationals. First contested in 1955 and affectionately known as "the Big Go," the Labor Day weekend staple is expected to be an exciting and memorable one on many fronts.

In his first Funny Car race at the 1970 U.S. Nationals, Don Schumacher, owner of Don Schumacher Racing (DSR), earned his first win at the prestigious event. Now, Fifty years later, at this same venue, he and his team are on the cusp of winning their 350th national event. In fact, DSR is guaranteed to reach that milestone as Matt Hagan and Jack Beckman are set to battle it out in their Dodge Charger SRT Hellcats in the rescheduled (rain-delayed) Indy 2 final round during the third Funny Car qualifying session on Saturday afternoon.

Also of note at this weekend's event is the rare and unusual chance for three HEMI-powered DSR drivers to come away with two Wally trophies. Hagan and Beckman, who will face off in Saturday's Funny Car final (Q3), will have another opportunity to vie for victory in Sunday's eliminations rounds, while Leah Pruett will be competing in both Top Fuel and Factory Stock Showdown for her opportunity to double-up on trophy hardware.

However, before the Nitro Class participants even roll out to the staging lanes for the DENSO Spark Plugs NHRA U.S. Nationals on Friday evening, the spotlight shines on the largest gathering of sportsman racers of the season, nearly 900 on the entry list, for the first two days of competition. Mopar and Dodge//SRT continue to underscore their commitment to sportsman racing, all while embracing their drag-racing roots and the historic nature of the U.S. Nationals, by once again lending support to the Dodge HEMI® Challenge, something the FCA brands have done annually since its inaugural event in 2001.

The 2020 edition of the Dodge HEMI Challenge,a head-to-head competition between vintage 1968 HEMI-powered Dodge Darts and Plymouth Barracudas, kicked off with two rounds of qualifying on Thursday, Sept. 3. The fleet of Darts and 'Cudas competed for coveted spots on the eliminations ladder in the ever-popular annual dedicated Super Stock/A-HEMI (SS/AH) event.

Stephen Yantus earned the No.1 qualifier position aboard his '68 Cuda with a 8.477 second (158.50 mph) hour pass. Meanwhile, four-time defending winner Jimmy Daniels earned the No.2 spot with his '68 Dart with a 8.541 second

(155.94 mph) effort as he works to extend his consecutive win streak of 18-0 round wins while eyeing a possible unprecedented fifth consecutive title.

Four rounds of eliminations will be contested on Friday, with the final Dodge HEMI Challenge showdown scheduled just prior to Nitro evening qualifying. There will also be a parade of participating Darts and Barracudas down Indy's fabled return road, led by special guest of honor Herb "Mr. 4 Speed" McCandless, aboard his own original 1968 Super Stock HEMI Dart in celebration of the classic muscle cars that contributed to Mopar and Dodge brands' legendary reputation and success at the drag strip.

The DSR quartet of Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Funny Cars will then get ready to take their first qualifying passes of the weekend while looking to maintain their top-four positions atop the championship points battle. With elimination of the Countdown to the Championship playoffs due to the pandemic and a reduced schedule, every point earned and every round of racing is crucial.

Points leader Tommy Johnson Jr., who has 11 round wins and a Wally under his belt this year, would like to add a first U.S. Nationals win to pad that lead, while Beckman, the 2015 national event winner, is hot on his heels in second place with a win of his own and 11 round wins as well.

Ranked third in the Funny Car standings with one win this season, Hagan is back behind the wheel of the "Demon-possessed" Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye-themed race car for a third consecutive event. The fierce-looking red, black and chrome paint scheme are in tribute to the unveiling of the new 797-horsepower Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye,the most powerful and fastest mass-produced sedan in the world.

"This is a huge weekend for us going into this U.S. Nationals," says Hagan, who was No. 1 qualifier five times at the U.S. Nationals (2010, 2013-2014, 2016-2017), with a coveted victory earned in 2016 and a runner-up finish in 2018. "We've got two races in one, so we really want to start the weekend off well. As far as points go, we need to win this race because we're right there on (Jack) Beckman's heels (in the points). This could be a big weekend, especially with the chance to come away with two wins in one weekend."

Coming into this weekend fourth in points with a Wally earned at the Dodge NHRA Indy Nationals presented by Pennzoil, Ron Capps, while bolstered by his first win at the Indianapolis drag strip at the previous event, is focused on securing his first U.S. Nationals trophy for what could be his 66th career victory at the 66th edition of the world's most famous drag race.

In Top Fuel competition, DSR's Pruett is ranked third in the category and looks to continue to make some gains aboard her Mopar Dodge SRT Hellcat Redeye Top Fuel Dragster.

"It only makes sense to have our most fierce paint scheme yet make its encore appearance at the largest race of the year, the U.S. Nats," says Pruett, who has taken that same Redeye dragster to two semi-finals appearances prior to this weekend. "The fans have absolutely loved this Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat Redeye, both the race car and the street version, and we love giving the fans what they want, especially during these times. But what we really need right now is a win and we have the car, the team, and the consistency for that. We know where we left room for improvement on the table at the last Indy race, and we have a solution for it. I believe that Friday night qualifying is going to set the tone for the weekend and we have a strong setup sheet for that."

Pruett has two chances to go for a win as she will also go to battle in the Factory Stock Showdown Series, which boasts a 32-car qualifying field this weekend.

"My most favorite memory of the U.S. Nationals actually comes from the Factory Stock category," says Pruett. "It's from when I won in my Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak in 2018."

That year, she and teammate Mark Pawuk had a hard fought showdown in an all-DSR Dodge Challenger Mopar Drag Pak final elimination, from which she emerged victorious for the first of three consecutive wins on her way to her championship title. Pawuk followed up that runner-up effort with a No. 1 qualifier position at last year's event.

Fans who can't make it to the 2020 Denso Spark Plugs NHRA U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway in person can catch all the action online via NHRA.TV and its subscription-based, video-on-demand coverage of live racing action

throughout the weekend.

Qualifying highlights will be presented on FS1 this Saturday, September 5 from 2-4 p.m. and 10 p.m. to midnight (EDT). NHRA elimination rounds coverage will begin at 11 a.m. Sunday, September 6 on FS1, then moves to the FOX national network from 1-4 p.m. (EDT), which will include LIVE final round action.

NHRA Championship Points Standings

Following the Dodge NHRA Indy Nationals Presented by Pennzoil:

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. ***Tommy Johnson Jr. (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 416 (1)***
2. ***Jack Beckman (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 403 (1)***
3. ***Matt Hagan (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 388 (1)***
4. ***Ron Capps (Dodge Charger SRT Hellcat) – 314 (1)***
5. Bob Tasca III – 298
6. J.R. Todd – 292
7. Tim Wilkerson – 270
8. Alexis DeJoria – 217
9. Paul Lee – 193
10. Cruz Pedregon – 202

TOP FUEL (season wins in parentheses)

1. Doug Kalitta – 436 (1)
2. Steve Torrance – 353 (2)
3. ***Leah Pruett (Mopar Dodge//SRT) – 347***
4. Billy Torrance – 290 (1)
5. Justin Ashley – 278
6. Terry McMillen – 273
7. Antron Brown – 263
8. Clay Millican – 240
9. Shawn Langdon – 214
10. Brittany Force – 153

DodgeGarage: Digital Hub for Drag Racing News

Fans can follow all the NHRA's 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, visit www.dodgegarage.com.

@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 Mello Yello 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.

Official Driving School of Dodge//SRT

Dodge is the official sponsor of the Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Chandler, Arizona, where guests get behind the wheels of the fastest street-legal cars in the world with professional instruction and time on the track. Customers who buy a new SRT model receive one full-day session as part of the Dodge//SRT Package and have the opportunity to learn how to get the optimum performance from their new vehicles in a controlled environment. For more information, visit dodgegarage.com/track-experience.

Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARts) is the service, parts and customer-care brand for FCA vehicles around the globe. Born in 1937 as the name of a line of antifreeze products, the Mopar brand has evolved over more than 80 years to represent both complete care and authentic performance for owners and enthusiasts worldwide.

Mopar made its mark in the 1960s during the muscle-car era, with Mopar Performance Parts to enhance speed and handling for both road and racing use, and expanded to include technical service and customer support. Today, the Mopar brand's global reach distributes more than 500,000 parts and accessories in more than 150 markets. With more than 50 parts distribution centers and 25 customer-contact centers globally, Mopar integrates service, parts and customer-care operations in order to enhance customer and dealer support worldwide.

Complete information on the Mopar brand is available at www.mopar.com. Mopar is part of the portfolio of brands offered by global automaker Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. For more information regarding FCA (NYSE: FCAU/ MTA: FCA), please visit www.fcagroup.com.

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 muscle cars and SUVs that deliver unrivaled performance in each of the segments where they compete.

2021 marks the year that Dodge is distilled into a pure performance brand, offering Hellcat-powered, 700+ horsepower SRT versions of every model across the lineup. For the 2021 model year, Dodge delivers the drag-strip dominating 807-horsepower Dodge Challenger SRT Super Stock, the new 797-horsepower Dodge Charger SRT Redeye, the most powerful and fastest mass-produced sedan in the world, and the new 710-horsepower Dodge Durango SRT Hellcat, the most powerful SUV ever. Combined, these three muscle cars make Dodge the industry's most powerful brand, offering more horsepower than any other American brand across its entire lineup.

In June 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 global automaker Fiat Chrysler Automobiles. For more information regarding FCA (NYSE: FCAU/ MTA: FCA), please visit www.fcagroup.com.

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