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Top Qualifier Hagan Advances Dodge//SRT Hellcat to Winternationals Funny Car Final Before Rain Halts Action, Stewart Exits in Top Fuel First Round

- Defending NHRA Winternationals Funny Car champion Matt Hagan drove his Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) Johnson Horsepowered Garage Dodge//SRT Hellcat to the final round Sunday
- Qualifying No. 1 Saturday at 3.893, Hagan seeks his second straight NHRA Winternationals title with victories over Buddy Hull, Jeff Diehl and J.R. Todd before rain postponed the final round
- The four-time NHRA World Champion will now face legendary John Force in the Winternationals final round set at the Arizona Nationals in Chandler, Ariz., on April 5-7
- Hagan seeks his 50th NHRA career national event win in the Winternationals final round
- Racing legend Tony Stewart suffered a first-round loss to four-time World Champion Steve Torrence Sunday in his TSR Mobil 1/Dodge//SRT HEMI® engine-powered Top Fuel dragster
- Stewart had an unusual weekend at the Winternationals as he looked to have qualified third Saturday with a 3.737 run but the time was not allowed due to a clock malfunction
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March 25, 2024, Auburn Hills, Mich. - Defending NHRA Lucas Oil Winternationals champion Matt Hagan drove his Johnson Horsepowered Garage Dodge//SRT Hellcat Funny Car to the final round Sunday before rain and hailstorms halted the championship rounds at the In-N-Out Pomona Dragstrip.

Hagan, the defending NHRA Winternationals champion, was seeking his second consecutive title in a battle against the legendary John Force when storms forced NHRA officials to postpone all final round competition to the April 5-7 Arizona Nationals in Chandler, Ariz.

The four-time NHRA Mission Funny Car World Champion qualified first in the 16-car starting lineup with a 3.893 run at 330.15 miles per hour Saturday and entered Sunday's eliminations as the favorite with his HEMI engine-powered nitro-burning machine after two rain-shortened qualifying attempts.

In the three rounds of competition Sunday before the storms hit the Pomona, Calif., area, Hagan defeated Buddy Hull, Jeff Diehl and J.R. Todd to advance to the final against Force. The Dickie Venables-tuned machine recorded strong runs of 3.909, 3.899 and 3.939 in those three rounds.

"We didn't leave here a loser today, so that's a good thing," said Hagan. "It will be challenging going into the Pomona final at Phoenix now. We had set up the car for the Pomona track and will have to make adjustments at Phoenix to race Force for the Winternationals title. But that's what we're going to do. The weather made things difficult to finish in Pomona, so I understand the NHRA's decision. We will go to Phoenix and hopefully get a few runs under our belt and put forth our best effort to win the race there and do well in qualifying. It'll be a lot going on for the team, and I'm looking forward to it."

In the Top Fuel category at the NHRA Winternationals, racing legend Tony Stewart, in his second NHRA Top Fuel national event, battled the strange weather conditions and faulty timing at the Winternationals in his TSR Mobil 1/Dodge//SRT HEMI engine-powered Top Fuel dragster.

After weather conditions delayed qualifying, the multi-time auto racing champion drove his Mobil 1/Dodge//SRT Top Fueler to an impressive 3.737 run on Saturday afternoon to secure the third spot. However, NHRA officials disallowed the run due to a timing system glitch which then moved Stewart to 13th in the Top Fuel field.

In Sunday's first round of competition, Stewart went up against four-time World Champion Steve Torrence. Stewart's dragster lost traction off the starting line and Torrence took the win.

"This was one of those weekends where anything that could go wrong, went wrong," said Stewart. "We had some track issues on Friday. It was really hard to get down the racetrack. A lot of cars struggled. Saturday's qualifying session was really the elephant in the room for us. We had a solid pass. But there was some kind of a glitch in the timing and scoring system, so NHRA had to unfortunately throw our run out. The way that lined us up in the bracket, we went against Steve Torrence on race day. Steve is a strong competitor and his CAPCO team with proven performance.

"Unfortunately, we smoked the tires about 100 feet out. I think we're experiencing growing pains right now. I'm 50 to 55 pounds heavier than my wife (Leah Pruett, former team driver) and there are a couple other variables that are different with this chassis. It's a tough challenge for Neal (Strausbaugh – crew chief) and Mike (Domagala – co-crew chief) right now. As far as the driving side goes, I'm getting more and more comfortable and gaining more confidence. I wish I could have taken them further through the day on Sunday."

At the NHRA Arizona Nationals, Hagan and Stewart are set for the nitro qualifying on Friday, April 5, at 4:30 p.m. PDT with two more qualifying rounds scheduled for Saturday, March 23, at 12 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. PDT with Sunday's final eliminations set for 11 a.m. PDT.

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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).

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