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Capps Drives Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car to NHRA U.S. Nationals Runner-up Finish

Larry Gilley wins Stock Eliminator, Kevin Helms triumphs in Super Stock

- Ron Capps puts Mopar HEMI®-powered Dodge Charger R/T in final round of 63rd annual NHRA U.S. Nationals at Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis
- Larry Gilley wins all-Mopar Stock Eliminator final round in 1969 Dodge Dart, Kevin Helms drives 2010 Mopar Dodge Challenger Drag Pak to Super Stock victory
- Mopar Dodge Funny Cars from Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) have appeared in 16 of 18 final rounds this season, winning 12 times
- Two Mopar Dodge Charger R/T Funny Cars from DSR appear in U.S. Nationals semifinals
- Tony Schumacher and Leah Pritchett drive Mopar-powered Top Fuel cars from DSR into semis
- Mopar occupies four of top five points positions in Funny Car, third and fourth in Top Fuel standings as Countdown to the Championship begins
- Mopar Sportsman drivers collect 14 class wins
- Gilley is Dodge Top Finisher in Stock, Helms wins award in Super Stock

September 4, 2017, Brownsburg, Ind. - Ron Capps came as close as he ever had to winning the NHRA U.S. Nationals on Monday afternoon. Capps put his Mopar HEMI®-powered Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car in the final round for the first time in the ultra-prestigious event at Lucas Oil Raceway at Indianapolis, but in the end he finished just shy of checking off the biggest item remaining on the to-do-list in his storied career.

Mopar still had a very successful U.S. Nationals, however, with Larry Gilley winning the Stock Eliminator category in his 1969 Dodge Dart, while Kevin Helms took home the Wally trophy in Super Stock with a victory in his 2010 Dodge Challenger Drag Pak.

Although Capps was bested by J.R. Todd in the final round of the 63rd annual event known as "The Big Go," his appearance represented the 16th final for Mopar Dodge Funny Car drivers from Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) on the NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series schedule in 2017. They have won 12 times. Additionally, Capps will enter the Countdown to the Championship playoffs as the No. 1 seed on the strength of six victories and a staggering 39-12 won-loss record. The point standings re-set for the top ten after the Indianapolis event, putting Capps in prime position to defend his series title from 2016.

In Monday's final, Capps turned in a very solid 3.949-second pass at 325.53 mph, but still was defeated by Todd's 3.923 at 325.61. Capps left the starting line with a .057-second reaction time, while Todd left after .054.

Capps first drove his Dodge Charger R/T from DSR past Alexis DeJoria, then powered past fellow Dodge competitor Jim Campbell in the second round as Campbell smoked his tires. Capps next took down Mopar DSR teammate Jack Beckman and the Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T team in a clean, side-by-side race to reach the final round.

Beckman had narrowly bested teammate Tommy Johnson Jr.'s Mopar-powered Riley Hospital for Children team in the first round, ending Johnson's bid to go to his third straight final. He then defeated a smoking Del Worsham to match up with teammate Capps, where his day came to an end. Beckman and team didn't walk away from the U.S. Nationals empty-handed though, as they took the \$100,000 victory in the Traxxas Funny Car Nitro Shootout all-star event on Sunday.

Matt Hagan meanwhile qualified his Mopar 80th/Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T from DSR No. 1 with both ends of the track record, but was upset by Campbell in round one. Hagan's car shook as he struggled off the line and could never rebound, ending his bid to go back-to-back in the event.

In the Top Fuel ranks, Leah Pritchett opened her day by driving her Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil dragster past Wayne Newby on a clean run while Newby smoked the tires and backfired as he left the starting line. Pritchett then defeated Pat Dakin on another strong pass while Dakin's car went up in flames. Pritchett finally was bested in the semis by eventual winner Steve Torrence as Pritchett smoked the tires at the initial hit of the throttle.

Ten-time and defending event winner Tony Schumacher and the Mopar-powered U.S. Army team knocked out Terry McMillen in the first round on a clean pass as McMillen dropped cylinders. Schumacher next took out Doug Kalitta in a heavyweight battle to take on No. 16 qualifier Kebin Kinsley, who upset Schumacher to advance to the final round.

The 63rd annual NHRA U.S. Nationals featured thousands of passes across all classes over six days of competition. Several track records fell during prime conditions for qualifying on Friday and Saturday evening, while Sunday's qualifying sessions and Monday eliminations saw warm temperatures and a hot track. "The Big Go" also set the field for the NHRA Countdown to the Championship playoffs, where each champion will be decided on their performance in the season's final six races.

Mopar/Dodge Notes & Quotes

Pietro Gorlier, Head of Parts and Service (Mopar) FCA – Global

"Every racer dreams of winning the NHRA U.S. Nationals, and it is thrilling to see Mopar power in the winner's circle at such an incredible event. Congratulations to Larry Gilley in Stock Eliminator, Kevin Helms in Super Stock, and their entire teams on these historic victories."

Ron Capps, NAPA Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 8 Qualifier – 3.871 seconds at 330.55 mph)

Rd. 1: (.074-second reaction time, 3.880 seconds at 328.54 mph) defeated No. 9 Alexis DeJoria (.092/3.901/331.94)

Rd. 2: (.065/3.939/300.60) defeated No. 16 Jim Campbell (.156/6.609/100.03)

Semis: (.057/3.949/325.53) lost to No. 6 J.R. Todd (.054/3.923/325.61)

"This race is such a big deal. Leaving here as the regular season points leader going into the Countdown to the Championship in Charlotte is the silver lining on a cloud right now. We're just a little disappointed. We had a shot at winning Indy and it comes once a year. You get so involved in this historic race and to get up that far and lose a close race like we did hurts a little more than most races. But I've never been so happy so quickly after a loss like that because I know going into the Countdown we've got our race car back. We really sort of struggled through the West Coast Swing, but then found a few things that I think are going to help us in the championship run."

Leah Pritchett, Papa John's Pizza/Mopar Pennzoil Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 2 Qualifier – 3.667 seconds at 329.50 mph)

Rd. 1: (.069-second reaction time, 3.711 seconds at 323.97 mph) defeated No. 15 Wayne Newby (no time – mechanical)

Rd. 2: (.056/3.732/320.97) defeated No. 10 Pat Dakin (.070/4.071/221.45)

Semis: (.117/9.779/81.04) lost to No. 3 Steve Torrence (.047/3.765/324.05)

"We had a lot of momentum coming into this race and we kept it going as long as possible. We experienced some rather unusual circumstances in the semifinal and it slowed our momentum, but it definitely didn't stop it. This race is actually a turning point for us. It's something that we really needed. We hadn't been able to get a grip on the warmer track tune-up from a fuel and clutch standpoint and this race made us dig deep and figure it out."

"Our heads are not hung low. To go to the semifinals at the U.S. Nationals is farther than I've ever been at this race in any category. It's something to be proud of."

Matt Hagan, Mopar 80th/Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 1 Qualifier – 3.799 seconds at 338.77 mph)

Rd. 1: (.091-second reaction time, 10.951 seconds at 77.59 mph) lost to No. 16 Jim Campbell (.104/5.008/164.63)

"Little gremlins are eating us alive right now. We'll probably take a hit in the points because of it, going out first round two races in a row. The car's qualified great, it runs great. The last two races we've qualified one and two. It's just hard to take these kinds of hits and not be upset about it. We all care, we all get frustrated, but we've got to get ready to run for a championship. That means getting these little bugs and things out of the way and making things happen for these next six races. There are no do-overs."

Jack Beckman, Infinite Hero Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 5 Qualifier – 3.859 seconds at 333.16 mph)

Rd. 1: (.073-second reaction time, 3.890 seconds at 327.03 mph) defeated No. 12 Tommy Johnson Jr. (.057/3.925/329.34)

Rd. 2: (.080/3.878/327.35) defeated No. 13 Del Worsham (.081/4.132/252.90)

Semis: (.062/3.948/322.81) lost to No. 8 Ron Capps (.049/3.940/324.75)

"We came within two win lights of having the most perfect drag racing weekend you can have. It's always frustrating to not close the deal, we just barely lost to our teammate out there and that's a tough loss coming off a day like we had and a car like we have. But that is our silver lining. This car has been fantastic, we're making good tune-up calls; I feel comfortable in the cockpit. Now when they re-set the points we are right on (Ron Capps') rear bumper and I like our odds of winning the championship."

Tommy Johnson Jr., Riley Hospital for Children Dodge Charger R/T Funny Car

(No. 12 Qualifier – 3.988 seconds at 324.20 mph)

Rd. 1: (.057-second reaction time, 3.925 seconds at 329.34 mph) lost to No. 5 Jack Beckman (.073/3.890/327.03)

"Indy was really frustrating, very disappointing. We came in here on a really hot streak, tested well and felt confident in our chances for this weekend. We had a problem the first three runs of qualifying that set us back and put us in a hole. We did our best to climb out of it, but it was just too big of a task."

"It's the biggest drag race of the year and one of our biggest disappointments of the year. Hopefully it builds a fire under us and we come out swinging at Charlotte."

Tony Schumacher, U.S. Army Top Fuel Dragster

(No. 4 Qualifier – 3.680 seconds at 330.31 mph)

Rd. 1: (.066.-second reaction time, 3.735 seconds at 319.98 mph) defeated No. 13 Terry McMillen (.101/3.797/318.84)

Rd. 2: (.075/3.734/328.78) defeated No. 5 Doug Kalitta (.072/3.757/325.30)

Semis: (.071/3.801/324.59) lost to No. 16 Kebin Kinsley (.070/3.772/316.30)

"We had a really good car, and that was just a rough way to end our Indy. I sometimes dislike racing against cars that on paper you should beat. You line up against the Kalitta team or any of our DSR teams and we rarely have any issues. When you have to rise the occasion, it just seems like we do better. It's crazy to think that we get beat more often by teams that we probably shouldn't. I'm not making any excuses. We just got beat. I don't want to take anything away from Kebin (Kinsley). They are all good people over there with that team."

Mopar/Dodge NHRA Sportsman Spotlight

Over 750 cars were entered across all categories in the 63rd annual NHRA U.S. Nationals, each with dreams of hoisting a Wally trophy during "The World's Biggest Drag Race."

Incredibly, the two finalists and three of the four semifinal participants in Stock Eliminator featured Mopar power, a noteworthy accomplishment as the field was pared down from 128 qualifiers and 162 entrants who made qualifying runs. Larry Gilley and Darrell Steiger matched up in the final, with Hilmar, California's Gilley taking the win on a holeshot. Gilley and his E/SA 1969 Dodge Dart Swinger powered by a 340 cubic-inch, four-barrel engine defeated the

E/SA 1970 Dodge Challenger T/A 340 Six-Pack driven by Steiger from Clayton, Indiana. In the heads-up race, Gilley turned in a pass of 10.622 seconds at 123.07 mph, while Steiger made a lap of 10.619 at 123.54. However, Gilley left the starting line with a .022-second reaction time, while Steiger's reaction time was .032.

In Super Stock, legendary Mopar Sportsman racer Kevin Helms of Plant City, Florida, took down yet another win, driving his FSS/E 2010 Dodge Challenger Drag Pak to the Lucas Oil Raceway winner's circle. Helms won with an E.T. of 9.122 on a 9.10 dial-in, reaching a speed of 137.86. His reaction time was .028. His opponent, Marion Stephenson, turned in a 9.737 on a 9.71 dial-in, with a speed of 129.98 after a .051 reaction time. The win, which Helms called "a dream come true," was his 27th national event win, his third in the U.S. Nationals, and first in Super Stock at the event.

For their efforts, Gilley and Helms were each named the Dodge Top Finisher. The award provides \$500 to the Stock Eliminator and Super Stock competitors who advance the farthest driving a Dodge or Plymouth vehicle. The program is in place at all 24 national events in 2017 and is part of Mopar's deep contingency program for Sportsman racers.

Class eliminations also took place during the event, with more than a dozen Mopar-powered drivers walking away with wins at the legendary track.

In Stock Eliminator, three Dodges and five Plymouths took home class victories. On the Dodge side, Steiger took the E/SA victory driving his '70 Challenger, Marcus Widuch from Mount Juliet, Tennessee, won M/SA in a '79 Aspen, and Bristow, Indiana's Luke Ubelhor won FS/G in an '09 Challenger.

As for the Plymouth contingent, Steve Wann of Modesto, California, took A/SA in a '62 Fury, Chuck Beach from Delaware, Ohio, drove his '68 Barracuda to the F/SA win, Rougemount, North Carolina's Mitch Kight won G/SA in a '67 Barracuda, Van Buren, Arkansas' Jim Hale took down the K/SA victory behind the wheel of his '66 Belvedere, and Mark Madison of Seaside, California, claimed the Combo-Auto victory with a '65 Belvedere.

The Super Stock category also saw a number of Mopar-powered class winners. Helms won FSS/E in his '10 Dodge Challenger Drag Pak, Houma, Louisiana's James Caro took the FSS/K trophy in a '10 Challenger, Carl Weisinger from Orlando turned on the FSS/L win light in an '09 Challenger, Flushing, Ohio's Al Ross took FGT/L in a classic '72 Challenger, and Mark Nowicki from Gaylord, Michigan, claimed Combo-FS in an FGT/I '96 Dodge Avenger.

College student Jimmy Daniels from Yardley, Pennsylvania, also won the Mopar HEMI Challenge in an SS/AH '68 Dodge Dart on Friday evening for the second straight year.

Up Next: NHRA Carolina Nationals

In two weeks, the NHRA Mello Yello Countdown to the Championship begins at zMAX Dragway outside of Charlotte. Last year Mopar Funny Car driver Tommy Johnson Jr. finished as the event runner-up in the Carolina Nationals. Jack Beckman and Matt Hagan have each won at the Charlotte-area track three times, while Ron Capps has visited the winner's circle there twice. Mopar-powered Tony Schumacher has also won at the facility twice in Top Fuel.

The 10th annual Carolina Nationals are slated for September 15–17. FOX Sports 1 will provide qualifying coverage throughout the weekend, with the elimination rounds airing LIVE on FS1 at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, September 17.

For more information on Mopar and Dodge in NHRA, check out the Mopar brand's official blog, <http://blog.mopar.com>.

2017 NHRA Championship — Point Standings After Round 18 of 24

(Re-set for Countdown to the Championship, Season Wins in Parentheses)

NHRA Funny Car

- 1. Ron Capps, Dodge Charger R/T (6) – 2,100**
2. Robert Hight (2) – 2,080
- 3. Matt Hagan, Dodge Charger R/T (3) – 2,070**
- 4. Jack Beckman, Dodge Charger R/T (2) – 2,060**
- 5. Tommy Johnson Jr., Dodge Charger R/T (1) – 2,050**
6. Courtney Force – 2,040

7. John Force (1) – 2,030
8. J.R. Todd (2) – 2,020
9. Tim Wilkerson – 2,010
10. Cruz Pedregon – 2,000

NHRA Top Fuel

1. Steve Torrence (7) – 2,100
2. Antron Brown (4) – 2,080
- 3. Leah Pritchett, Mopar HEMI (4) – 2,070**
- 4. Tony Schumacher, Mopar HEMI (1) – 2,060**
5. Doug Kalitta – 2,050
6. Brittany Force (1) – 2,040
7. Clay Millican (1) – 2,030
8. Terry McMillen – 2,020
9. Scott Palmer – 2,010
10. Shawn Langdon – 2,000

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, thanks to Don Schumacher Racing driver Ron Capps, Mopar captured its fourth NHRA Funny Car World Championship in the last six years. As Mopar celebrates 80 years as a brand in 2017, it will focus its NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series efforts on NHRA Funny Car and, with rising star Leah Pritchett, NHRA Top Fuel Dragster. Mopar will also bolster its commitment to NHRA Sportsman racing with new contingency rewards, factory support and at-track technical advice and guidance.

Mopar-First Features

During the brand's 80 years, Mopar has introduced numerous industry-first features including:

- Vehicle-information apps: first to introduce smartphone vehicle-information applications, a new channel of communication with consumers
- wiADVISOR: first to incorporate a tablet-based service lane tool
- Electronic Vehicle Tracking System (EVTS): first to market with a new interactive vehicle tracking device that sends owner a text when vehicle is driven too fast or too far based on pre-set parameters
- Wi-Fi: first to offer customers the ability to make their vehicle a wireless hot spot
- Electronic owner manuals: first to introduce traditional owner manuals on a smartphone app

80 Years of Mopar

Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARTs) was born on August 1, 1937, as the name of a line of antifreeze products. Mopar has since evolved over 80 years to serve as the total service, parts and customer-care brand of all FCA vehicles around the globe.

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 over 150 markets around the world. 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.

Mopar is the source for genuine parts and accessories for all FCA US LLC vehicle brands. Mopar parts are engineered together with the same teams that create factory-authorized specifications for FCA vehicles, offering a direct connection that no other aftermarket parts company can provide. Complete information on the Mopar brand is available at www.mopar.com.

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Additional information and news from FCA US LLC is available at: <http://media.fcanorthamerica.com>

