

Mopar, DSR Earn Back-to-Back Funny Car Titles with Capps Victory at NHRA New England Nationals

- DSR's Ron Capps drives Mopar to winner's circle at 2nd Annual NHRA New England Nationals
- Capps' Funny Car title win at New England Dragway gives Mopar and DSR consecutive wins in last two NHRA national events
- Allen Johnson is top Mopar finisher after he takes Dodge Dart to Pro Stock semifinal appearance

June 22, 2014, Epping, New Hampshire - Don Schumacher Racing (DSR) driver Ron Capps drove his Dodge Charger R/T from a tenth place qualifying position to a Funny Car title victory at the 2nd annual National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) New England Nationals earning a 42nd career win, his first of the season, and enabling him to move up into fourth place in the championship standings.

Capps' efforts at New England Dragway also gave DSR and Mopar back-to-back victories after teammate Tommy Johnson Jr.'s scored the team's first win of the 2014 Mello Yello Drag Racing series season last weekend at Bristol Dragway.

"Congratulations to Ron Capps from everyone at Mopar on the win at the New England Nationals," said Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO of Mopar, Chrysler Group LLC's service, parts and customer-care brand. "It's wonderful to see the HEMI-powered Dodge Charger R/T package in the winner's circle at consecutive events, and we appreciate Ron and the Don Schumacher Racing team's continuing efforts to contend for wins and a championship to celebrate the 50 year legacy of the 426 Race HEMI."

"The guys have been working so hard and we struggled on race day at Bristol and (crew chief) (Rahn) Tobler was real upset with himself after qualifying here yesterday and he stayed here late with Eric (Lane) until they got it sorted out in what they wanted to do today," said Capps who knew his Mopar was back in the hunt after laying down a 4.064-second run in the first round for a hole shot win over Tim Wilkerson.

Capps chased down Cruz Pedregon and beat Courtney Force to advance to his first the final round showdown of the season to face Alexis DeJoria. He led the race from start to finish to earn his first Wally since the Brainerd national event in 2013.

"This is a car that will go down the return road if we have to," Capps said of the confidence he has in his Dodge Charger R/T's ability to adapt to race track conditions, "and it's going to be a lot of fun the next few races."

While Capps carried the banner for DSR through the elimination rounds, his teammates didn't fair quite as well.

After beating Bob Tasca III, loss of traction in the second round of eliminations ended Tommy Johnson Jr.'s hopes of repeating his winning performance from last weekend. He sits fifth in points right behind Capps.

In a marquis first round match-up, Matt Hagan who qualified his Mopar Express Lane Dodge Charger R/T eighth, posted a 4.119-second pass with a .062 second reaction time only to lose to John Force who beat him on a hole shot with a 4.129-second lap and a .048-second reaction.

"He (Force) was in deep and it comes up on the board as a hole shot loss but the reality is that they just out ran us a little bit and that's how it goes," said Hagan who finished runner-up to Force in the 2013 NHRA championship but currently sits tenth in points. "It was a close drag race but that's how it falls sometimes. We'll just regroup and get ready for the next one. There's no doubt that we have a good car, a good team but we just need to get some round

wins and get our season turned around."

Mopar teammate Jack Beckman similarly missed out on advancing past the first round with a hole shot loss (.094 to 0.74 sec. reaction time) to Del Worsham with an e.t. of 4.123-seconds to his competitor's 4.127-seconds.

Defending Pro Stock title winner, Allen Johnson, had a rough road through qualifying to find himself 12th on the eliminations ladder, his lowest starting position in three years, and pitted against his HEMI[®]-powered teammate Jeg Coughlin Jr. for the first round of competition at New England Dragway. While Coughlin's JEGS.com Dodge Dart had the starting line advantage, Johnson's "Magneti Marelli Offered by Mopar" Dodge Dart crossed the finish line first with a 6.551 elapsed time run at 213.43 mph after his teammate's car broke a clutch finger while transitioning between fourth and fifth gear to run a 6.563 at 208.59mph.

After his Mopar made a move towards centerline in a second round match-up against Shane Tucker, Johnson benefitted when his opponent had a problem of his own, giving him a chance to get back on the throttle for the round win to set up a semifinal match-up against Jonathan Gray. Johnson would lose to Gray on a hole shot but finds himself within 13 points of his second place Mopar teammate, Coughlin, in the Pro Stock standings.

"It wasn't our greatest weekend but we had a little luck here and there today and made a good run on that last one," said Johnson of his 6.525 second (213.60 mph) pass in a losing effort after posting a .074 second reaction time to Gray's .006 light and 6.583-second e.t. "I just made a mental mistake on the starting line, had to reposition my foot on the gas pedal and the yellow was already on. That's totally on me but we'll take this semifinal finish to the next two and hopefully get our Dodge Dart back on target and in the winner's circle."

While V. Gaines and his HEMI-powered Dodge Dart did not advance past the first round, he remains eighth in the standings. The New England Nationals Pro Stock title was won by Dave Connolly.

The next stop for Mopar teams will be the 17th annual Route 66 NHRA Nationals on June 26-29 in Joliet, Illinois, near Chicago, the third of four consecutive Mello Yello Drag Racing national events in as many weeks.

2014 NHRA Points Standings

(Following NHRA New England Nationals Race Final)

PRO STOCK (season wins in parentheses)

1. Erica Enders Stevens – 972 (3)
2. **Jeg Coughlin Jr. – Dodge Dart – 789 (2)**
3. **Allen Johnson – Dodge Dart – 776 (3)**
4. Jason Line – 733 (1)
5. Shane Gray – 713
6. Dave Connolly – 709
7. Vincent Nobile – 671
8. **V. Gaines – Dodge Dart – 520**
9. Chris McGaha – 492
10. Jonathan Gray – 400

FUNNY CAR (season wins in parentheses)

1. Robert Hight – 970 (4)
2. Alexis DeJoria – 716 (2)
3. John Force – 713 (1)
4. **Ron Capps – Dodge Charger R/T – 683 (1)**
5. **Tommy Johnson Jr. – Dodge Charger R/T – 682 (1)**
6. Courtney Force – 658
7. Del Worsham – 645
8. Cruz Pedregon – 599 (1)
9. Tim Wilkerson – 569
10. **Matt Hagan – Dodge Charger R/T – 564**

11. Jack Beckman – Dodge Charger R/T– 547

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