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## **Dodge HEMI® Challenge Returns to the 'Big Go' for its 21st Edition**

- NHRA's longest-running specialty race showcases Super Stock 1968 Dodge Darts and Plymouth Barracudas in head-to-head battles at Lucas Oil Indianapolis Raceway Park
- Dodge HEMI® Challenge Grand Marshal and renowned Direct Connection drag racer Paul Rossi campaigned one of the original Hurst-built '68 HEMI Barracuda Super Stock cars
- Winner will be awarded \$15,000 and a new-look, custom-made Dodge HEMI Challenge trophy created by local artist and former NHRA fabricator Tom Patsis
- Defending winner Steve Comella and four-time winner and last year's runner-up Jim Daniels Jr., as well as inaugural winner Bucky Hess II, return to compete in this year's Dodge HEMI Challenge

August 29, 2022, Auburn Hills, Mich. - The 21st edition of the longest-running, continuous, specialty race in National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) history, the Dodge HEMI® Challenge, will take center stage at the 68th annual Dodge Power Brokers U.S. Nationals September 1-2 at Lucas Oil Indianapolis Raceway Park. The fan-favorite event features heads-up, wheel /\*-standing, side-by-side racing of vintage HEMI-powered 1968 Dodge Dart and Plymouth Barracuda "package cars" that dominated the NHRA Super Stock (SS/AH) class for more than five decades.

Paul Rossi, renowned Mopar drag racer, engine builder, development engineer, team owner and innovator, has been named grand marshal as acknowledgement of his contributions in the 1970s, '80s and '90s to the development of high-performance products in the Dodge family, which includes building and driving a 1970 Challenger R/T powered by a 440 Six Pack, backed by Direct Connection when the performance brand first launched in 1974, that dominated the Super Stock class for years. Rossi is excited to be called up to lead the parade of iconic HEMI muscle cars along Indianapolis' fabled return road for this year's event.

"I'm so honored to be called upon as grand marshal," said Rossi, who campaigned one of the original Hurst-built '68 HEMI (B029) Barracuda Super Stock cars. "I completely understand the appeal of the Dodge HEMI Challenge. There's nostalgia there and fans like to see them going fast. It's just fantastic to have a category that calls these classic muscle cars back out of the garage. I really love that.

"I had an original HEMI 'Cuda and took it to the Super Stock (SS/AA) 1975 NHRA World Finals (Ontario, California) and while I finished runner-up, I was the last standing Mopar and fastest HEMI in the country. I guess I'm now the face of the Direct Connection old guard. I'm happy to see the brand continue with this new generation of clean performance and happy to have Dodge still value their history with the HEMI Challenge and continue to build their legend at the event. My first U.S. Nationals was in 1963 aboard a brand new Plymouth Ramcharger A/FX (Factory Experimental class similar to the Factory Stock Showdown), the first Mopar to enter the class, and coming here to Indy was just the biggest thrill. As a competitor or a fan, it still has that appeal."

The racing legend, who in addition to his many successes in NHRA also won multiple IMSA championships and Pike's Peak endurance races, will join Direct Connection spokesperson Chuck Spieser for a question-and-answer session with performance enthusiasts on Saturday, Sept. 3, at 3:30 p.m. at the Dodge//SRT and Mopar exhibit in the NHRA's Manufacturers' Midway.

This year's Dodge HEMI Challenge victor will be awarded \$15,000 and a new-look, custom-made Dodge HEMI Challenge trophy created by Tom Patsis of Cold Hard Art, a local Brownsburg, Indiana-based artist, former NHRA welder-fabricator and winner of the 2021 Netflix competition series "Metal Shop Masters."

More than 20 entrants are expected to vie for the new trophy and bragging rights this year. Among them will be defending winner Steve Comella who had a dominant performance in his HEMI Barracuda driving from No.1 qualifier to the winner's circle as a follow up to his runner-up finish in 2020. Four-time Dodge HEMI Challenge winner Jim Daniels Jr. (2016-2019) will also be back to compete aboard his vintage HEMI-powered '68 Dodge Dart after finishing runner-up to Comella in last year's close and exciting [final elimination battle](#).

A number of the legendary staples competing in the long-standing event include the winner of the first Dodge HEMI Challenge, Bucky Hess II (2001), aboard his '68 Plymouth Barracuda, Jim Pancake and his '68 Dodge Dart, and Joe Teuton at the wheel of his '68 'Cuda.

The Dodge HEMI Challenge will be streamed live on NHRA.TV with subscription-based video-on-demand coverage of qualifying on Thursday, Sept. 1, and elimination rounds on Friday, Sept. 2, with highlights of the parade and final eliminations expected to be part of the FS1 qualifying show on Sunday, Sept. 4, from 1 to 3 p.m. ET.

#### **@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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