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## **Comella Captures Second Consecutive Dodge HEMI® Challenge Victory at 68th Annual Dodge Power Brokers NHRA U.S. Nationals**

- No. 1 Qualifier Steve Comella repeats as Dodge HEMI® Challenge winner at the specialty race showcasing vintage 1968 Plymouth Barracudas and Dodge Darts in head-to-head battles at the 68th annual Dodge Power Brokers National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) U.S. Nationals
- Comella's classic '68 'Cuda defeated Eldon Baum Jr.'s '68 Dodge Dart to earn his second victory in three consecutive final round appearances on Lucas Oil Indianapolis Raceway Park's quarter-mile dragstrip
- With the win Comella takes home a \$15,000 cash prize and a new-look, unique custom-made Dodge HEMI Challenge trophy
- Highlights of the Dodge HEMI Challenge parade and elimination rounds will be featured in FS1's qualifying show on Sunday, Sept. 4, from 1-3 p.m. ET.

September 2, 2022, Indianapolis, Indiana - Steve Comella and his vintage 1968 Plymouth Barracuda dominated the Dodge HEMI® Challenge by once again powering from the No. 1 qualifier position through eliminations to repeat as winner at the fan-favorite specialty race that showcases classic Super Stock 1968 Mopar "package" cars in head-to-head battles at the 68th Dodge Power Brokers National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) U.S. Nationals.

Comella's drive to the winner's circle at Lucas Oil Indianapolis Raceway Park began by edging out Wednesday's provisional pole sitter Jim Pancake's '68 Dodge Dart with his final qualifying run of 8.421-second at 158.80 mph on the quarter mile track, beating his rival's (8.491 sec./157.89 mph) quickest lap, to earn his second consecutive No. 1 qualifier position in the 21st year of the longest-running, continuous, specialty race in NHRA history.

After round wins over Tony DePillo, Richard Locker, Jim Daniels Jr., Comella was paired with No. 8 seed Eldon Baum Jr. in the final eliminations. Baum advanced to his first appearance in a Dodge HEMI Challenge final by turning on winlights against Doug Fazzolare, Benjamin Kimberly, and Gary Wolkwitz.

In the final showdown, Comella took his '68 'Cuda for the quickest run of the event with a 8.407-second lap while his opponent launched his '68 Dodge Dart too quickly and triggered a red-light start that thwarted the attempt to dethrone the defending winner.

A two-time finalist in traditional NHRA Super Stock competition, Comella was the 2020 Dodge HEMI Challenge runner-up to Stephen Yantus in an all-Cuda final round. In 2021 he followed up that performance with a pole position and his first Dodge HEMI Challenge win, an exciting head-to-head battle against four-time winner Jim Daniels Jr. (2016-2019), but felt that this year's showing was a bit more satisfying.

"I didn't feel like last year was a very representative year, even though [the car] was really fast and we won," said Comella. "I just wanted to come in this year and kind of run the table and keep it smooth and relaxed. It was important for us to do this this year, to repeat. With these cars there's always an element of throwing a dice against the wall. I was very comfortable all week with the car. I felt like we had a handle on it. I felt like that before and then it won't go down the track. So I was cautiously optimistic all week."

"It's right up there," said Comella when asked how he ranked his second Dodge HEMI Challenge victory in three consecutive final round appearances in terms of career highlights. "I tried to play it cool like it was just okay to compete, but [winning] was something I really wanted to do really bad."

While Comella relished defending his HEMI-powered win, he was especially pleased with the competition he encountered through nine consecutive rounds to earn it, particularly his head-to-head battles with Daniels. Friday's semifinal pairing with Daniels was a rematch of last year's exciting final and saw Comella lay down a solid 8.443-second lap to better Daniels' 8.527-second effort.

"I thoroughly enjoy racing him and his old man [2010 event winner Jim Daniels Sr.]," said Comella. "They are our friends and there is nothing better than racing him. I absolutely love it and I can't say enough nice things about him. I think he's a fantastic racer."

In addition to bragging rights as a two-time winner, Comella takes home a \$15,000 cash prize and a new-look, unique custom-made Dodge HEMI Challenge trophy created by Cold Hard Art's Tom Patsis.

Highlights of the Dodge HEMI Challenge parade and elimination rounds will be featured in FS1's Dodge Power Brokers U.S. Nationals qualifying show on Sunday, Sept. 4, from 1-3 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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