



Custer Leaves Daytona with 37th-Place Finish

Haas Automation Driver's First Daytona 500 Ends Early

Date: Feb. 16-17, 2020
Event: 62nd Daytona 500
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway (2.5-mile oval)
Format: 200 laps, broken into three stages (65 laps/65 laps/70 laps)
Start/Finish: 12th/37th (Mechanical, completed 174 of 209 laps)
Note I: Rain 20 laps into the Daytona 500 postponed the remainder of the race to Monday.
Note II: Race extended nine laps past its scheduled 200-lap distance due to a green-white-checkered finish.

Race Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 1 Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-65):

- Cole Custer started his first Daytona 500 from the 12th position and ended it in 22nd.
- On lap 12 the Haas Automation driver reported his Mustang was tight while he ran in the 20th position.
- The Haas Automation driver reported his Ford was starting to get snappy loose on lap 17 while he remained in the top-20.
- After the race was postponed due to rain, Custer restarted in 20th on Monday and visited pit road for fuel and four tires before the green flag.
- On lap 43, he took over the third spot.
- Just before lap 50 the California native remained in the top-20.
- Under caution on lap 60 the Ford driver pitted for fuel, four tires and adjustments, then restarted 15th.
- Custer ended Stage 1 in 22nd and did not pit.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 66-130):

- Custer started Stage 2 in the second position and completed it 28th.
- Caution was called on lap 91 after Custer narrowly missed the No. 00 spinning in front of him.
- He pitted twice under caution on lap 91 and restarted 30th with four fresh tires and fuel.
- On lap 100, Custer reported the Mustang felt like it was on and off the racetrack really hard.
- The Haas Automation driver reported the car was "feeling pretty good" on lap 123.
- The No. 41 pitted during the Stage 2 break for fuel and four tires before coming back down to top off with fuel.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 131-209):

- Custer began final stage from 21st and ended the race 37th.
- On lap 145, the Ford driver was in the 30th position working with his teammates in a secondary pack.
- "It's getting a little tight, but not bad," Custer relayed to the crew on lap 151.
- The Haas Automation driver made a scheduled green-flag pit stop on lap 169 for two right-side tires and fuel.
- Custer reported smoke in the cockpit on lap 171. Shortly thereafter, he came down pit road for the Haas crew to assess the issue.
- The crew lifted the hood and sent the No. 41 machine to the garage with an irreparable issue to end his day prematurely.

Notes:

- Denny Hamlin won his second-straight Daytona 500. It was his third victory in the Great American Race and his 38th career NASCAR Cup Series victory.
- Hamlin is now tied with Bobby Allison, Dale Jarrett and Jeff Gordon for third-most on the all-time Daytona 500 win list.
- Hamlin's margin of victory over second-place Ryan Blaney was .014 of a second, the second-closest victory in Daytona 500 history.
- There were nine caution periods for a total of 39 laps.
- Only 17 of the 40 drivers in the Daytona 500 finished on the lead lap.
- Hamlin leaves Daytona as the championship leader with a seven-point advantage over second-place Blaney.

Cole Custer, driver of the No. 41 Haas Automation Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

“It looks like we had a problem with a gear. Those things are usually pretty bulletproof. I don’t know. It’s tough because we just rode around all day to position ourselves for the end and it just didn’t work out. We had a good car. I think we probably were going to be in contention for a top 10 there, but it just doesn’t always work out sometimes.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Las Vegas 400 on Sunday, Feb. 23, at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. The race starts at 3:30 p.m. EST with live coverage provided by FOX and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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