



## Custer Finishes 18<sup>th</sup> at Auto Club 400

### Ford Driver Completes First Cup Start at Home Track

**Date:** March 1, 2020  
**Event:** Auto Club 400  
**Series:** NASCAR Cup Series  
**Location:** Auto Club Speedway in Fontana, California (2-mile oval)  
**Format:** 200 laps, broken into three stages (60 laps/60 laps/80 laps)  
**Start/Finish:** 18<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> (Running, completed 199 of 200 laps)  
**Point Standing:** 26<sup>th</sup> with 44 points, 78 out of first

**Race Winner:** Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)  
**Stage 1 Winner:** Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)  
**Stage 2 Winner:** Ryan Blaney of Team Penske (Ford)

#### Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-60):

- Cole Custer started 18<sup>th</sup> and ended the stage 21<sup>st</sup>.
- On lap five, Custer reported his Mustang “fired off a tick loose.”
- The California native’s first pit stop of the day from 25<sup>th</sup> was on lap 28 for fuel, four tires and adjustments.
- During the Stage 1 break, the Haas Automation driver reported that his No. 41 machine was too loose at the end of the run to race the line against the wall.

#### Stage 2 Recap (Laps 61-120):

- Custer started Stage 2 in 21<sup>st</sup> and completed it 19<sup>th</sup>.
- On lap 80, the 22-year-old reported his Mustang was too tight in the center while running 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Custer made a scheduled pit stop on lap 90 for fuel, four tires and adjustments to help with the tight condition.
- The caution was displayed on lap 93, and the Ford driver came down pit road for fuel, four tires and more adjustments. He restarted 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Custer came down pit road during the Stage 2 break for fuel, four tires and adjustments to help with his tight-handling No. 41 Ford Mustang.

#### Final Stage Recap (Laps 121-200):

- Custer began the final stage from 17<sup>th</sup> and ended the race 18<sup>th</sup>.
- After a long green-flag run, the Ford driver made a scheduled green-flag pit stop from the 20<sup>th</sup> spot for four tires, fuel and adjustments.
- With 20 laps to go, Custer remained in the 20<sup>th</sup> spot.
- The final stage remained under green, and the Haas Automation/Production Alliance Group driver ended the day in 18<sup>th</sup>.

#### Notes:

- This is Custer’s second straight top-20. He finished 19<sup>th</sup> in the series’ last race at Las Vegas.
- Alex Bowman won the Auto Club 400 to score his second career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his first of the season and his first at Fontana. His margin of victory over second-place Kyle Busch was 8.904 seconds.
- There were three caution periods for a total of 13 laps.
- Only 17 of the 38 drivers in the Auto Club 400 finished on the lead lap.
- Ryan Blaney remains the championship leader after Fontana with an 11-point advantage over second-place Joey Logano.

#### Cole Custer, driver of the No. 41 Haas Automation/Production Alliance Group Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

“My guys did a good job today in the pits. We need to be better, but it was a solid day. We’re still very new to working with each other. I wish I could’ve gotten them a result better than 18<sup>th</sup>, because the car was better than that, but we’ll keep working on it together as a team.”

**Next Up:**

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the FanShield 500k on Sunday, March 8, at Phoenix Raceway. The race starts at 3:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FOX and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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