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Bowyer 22nd in Darlington 500k

No. 14 Rush Truck Centers/Mobil Delvac 1 Ford Wins Two Stages, Leads 71 Laps

Date: May 20, 2020
Event: Darlington 500k
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Darlington (S.C.) Raceway (1.366-mile oval)
Format: 228 laps, broken into three stages (60 laps/65 laps/103 laps)
Note: Race called official 20 laps short of its scheduled 228-lap distance due to rain.
Start/Finish: 4th/22nd (Running, completed 208 of 208 laps)
Point Standing: 9th with 170 points, 88 out of first

Race Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 1 Winner: Clint Bowyer of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 2 Winner: Clint Bowyer of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-60):

- Clint Bowyer started fourth and finished first to earn 10 bonus points and one playoff point.
- The No. 14 Rush Truck Centers/Mobil Delvac 1 Ford Mustang quickly showed it was one of the fastest on the track moving to second by the lap-25 competition caution.
- Bowyer grabbed the lead on the restart logging his 3,000th lap led in the Cup Series.
- Bowyer led the next 30 laps to capture his fourth stage victory of his career.
- Before the stage, Bowyer had led 17 laps in 15 races at Darlington.
- Bowyer reported his car was a little loose, but crew made minimal changes during the stage break.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 61-125):

- Started first, finished first to earn 10 bonus points and one playoff point.
- The No. 14 Rush Truck Centers/Mobil Delvac 1 Ford Mustang stayed at the front through two cautions.
- Bowyer pitted during the stage's third caution and returned to the track in 10th on lap 85.
- The Kansas native wasted no time moving to third by lap 100.
- Bowyer was using his fresher tires to chase down SHR teammate Kevin Harvick for the lead on lap 109 when the seventh caution of the race came out. Fast pit work returned Bowyer to the lead for the lap 111 restart.
- The Ford driver stayed at the front to win the stage. It was the first time he's ever won two stages in a race and the first time in 2020 a driver has won the first two stages of a race.
- During the stage break he told his crew: "this car is pretty fast."
- Two cars stayed on the track on old tires hoping for rain forcing Bowyer to start the final stage in fourth.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 126-208):

- Started fourth, finished 22nd.
- Amid frenetic racing in the opening laps, the No. 14 Rush Truck Centers/Mobil Delvac 1 Ford Mustang dropped to sixth.
- Bowyer climbed to fourth but handling issues for the first time in the race slowed his progress leaving him in third with 60 to go.
- The veteran driver made a routine green-flag stop with 53 laps remaining, but a caution a few laps later dropped Bowyer off the lead lap.
- Bowyer took the wave around to return to the lead lap and restarted sixth with 43 laps remaining.
- Bowyer moved to fourth after the restart despite telling the crew, "I hit the wall pretty good."
- Bowyer cut a right rear tire after wall contact with 34 laps to go damaging the right side of the car and bringing out a caution.
- Bowyer restarted the race in 22nd with 30 laps remaining, but another car hit the No. 14 from behind as cars attempted to avoid a wreck at the front of the field.
- Heavy rain during the caution ended the race with 20 to go.

Notes:

- Bowyer led twice for a race-high 71 laps. Prior to tonight's race, Bowyer had led only 17 laps at Darlington, 16 of which came in the 2007 Southern 500.
- This was the first NASCAR Cup Series race to be held on a Wednesday in 36 years. The last time: July 4, 1984 when Richard Petty scored his 200th career victory at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway.

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- Denny Hamlin won the Darlington 500k to score his 39th career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his second of the season and his third at Darlington.
- There were 11 caution periods for a total of 54 laps.
- Only 23 of the 39 drivers in the Darlington 500k finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Darlington with a 34-point advantage over second-place Joey Logano.

Clint Bowyer, driver of the No. 14 Rush Truck Centers/Mobil Delvac 1 Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

“Very proud of the car the guys brought for me on a short turn around. Fast hot rod. Thing just took off behind two cars racing for lucky dog and smoked the wall and blew our night. The No. 14 Rush Truck Centers/Mobil Delvac 1 Ford was fast. We keep doing that our day will come.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Coca-Cola 600 on Sunday, May 24 at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway. The race starts at 6 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FOX and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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