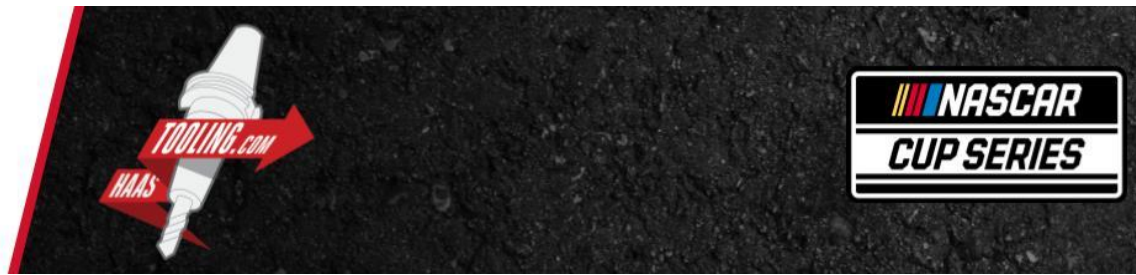


# 41



## Custer Earns 13<sup>th</sup>-Place Finish at Charlotte

### *Rookie Completes Longest Race of the Season*

**Date:** May 24, 2020  
**Event:** Coca-Cola 600  
**Series:** NASCAR Cup Series  
**Location:** Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway (1.5-mile oval)  
**Format:** 400 laps, broken into four stages (100 laps/100 laps/100 laps/100 laps)  
**Start/Finish:** 28<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> (Running, completed 405 of 405 laps)  
**Point Standing:** 22<sup>nd</sup> with 118 points, 171 out of first  
**Note:** Race extended five laps past its scheduled 400-lap distance due to a green-white-checkered finish

**Race Winner:** Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)  
**Stage 1 Winner:** Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)  
**Stage 2 Winner:** Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)  
**Stage 3 Winner:** Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)

#### Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-100):

- Cole Custer started 28<sup>th</sup> and finished 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- Custer pitted from 24<sup>th</sup> during the competition caution for adjustments to help his tight HaasTooling.com Mustang.
- At lap 50 the race was red-flagged for precipitation. When the event resumed, Custer pitted from 30<sup>th</sup> for more adjustments and restarted 24<sup>th</sup> on lap 57.
- As the laps clicked off, Custer reported his Mustang went from loose to tight, and lost all grip in the final 10 laps of the stage.
- During the Stage 1 break the 22-year-old pitted from 23<sup>rd</sup> for a bevy of adjustments, four tires and fuel.

#### Stage 2 Recap (Laps 101-200):

- Custer started 19<sup>th</sup> and finished 21<sup>st</sup>.
- On lap 116 the California native reported his Mustang fired off a tick loose, but had tightened up.
- Custer made a scheduled green-flag pit stop from 24<sup>th</sup> on lap 156 for fuel, four tires and adjustments.
- The rookie driver went one lap down on lap 168 while in the 22<sup>nd</sup> spot.
- Custer pitted from 21<sup>st</sup> during the Stage 2 break for fuel, four tires and adjustments to help with his tight-handling Mustang.

#### Stage 3 Recap (Laps 201-300):

- Custer started 18<sup>th</sup> and finished 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Custer made a scheduled green-flag pit stop on lap 242 from 19<sup>th</sup> for fuel, four tires and adjustments.
- With the caution out on lap 275 he pitted from 20<sup>th</sup> for four tires, fuel and adjustments to help with his tight condition.
- During the Stage 3 break Custer reported his No. 41 Mustang remained tight. He was the beneficiary of the free pass from 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### Final Stage Recap (Laps 301-405):

- Custer started 20<sup>th</sup> and finished 13<sup>th</sup>.
- The Ford driver worked his way up to 18<sup>th</sup> with a tight car. He made a pit stop under caution on lap 350.
- After the pit stop, Custer served an uncontrolled tire penalty and was forced to start at the rear of the field in 20<sup>th</sup>.
- A green-flag run ensued until the caution was displayed with one lap to go. Custer pitted for fuel and four tires after reporting his Mustang was pretty solid during the run.
- The SHR driver restarted 19<sup>th</sup> for overtime and was able to maneuver his way to a 13<sup>th</sup>-place finish.

#### Notes:

- Custer made his 10<sup>th</sup> career NASCAR Cup Series start and his first on the oval at Charlotte.
- Brad Keselowski won the Coca-Cola 600 to score his 31<sup>st</sup> career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his first of the season and his second on the oval at Charlotte. His margin of victory over second-place Jimmie Johnson was .293 of a second.
- This was Ford's 690<sup>th</sup> all-time NASCAR Cup Series victory.
- This was Ford's 31<sup>st</sup> NASCAR Cup Series victory at Charlotte's oval, the most among all manufacturers. The last Ford driver to win the Coca-Cola 600 was Mark Martin in 2002. Ford's first Coca-Cola 600 victory came in 1962 via Nelson Stacy.

- There were eight caution periods for a total of 52 laps.
- Only 20 of the 40 drivers in the Coca-Cola 600 finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after the Coca-Cola 600 with a 22-point advantage over second-place Joey Logano.

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

“Man, definitely a persevering night for the HaasTooling.com Mustang. I could’ve done better at the start of the race. We definitely got the car better throughout the race. We fought hard all night. We fought hard to stay on the lead lap and got our lap back that one time. To finish 13<sup>th</sup> in my first 600 that I’ve run was definitely pretty cool. I got a good restart at the end. We have some things we know we can do better when we come back Wednesday. I can do some things better. I’m looking forward to it. We’re moving in the right direction with this package. We just have to keep grinding through it.”

**Next Up:**

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Alsco Uniforms 500k on Wednesday, May 27 at Charlotte Motor Speedway. The race starts at 8 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

-TSC-