



COLE CUSTER

First Race for Autodesk This Season

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (May 25, 2020) – The No. 41 Autodesk Fusion 360/HaasTooling.com Ford Mustang team for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) with young driver Cole Custer returns to Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway Wednesday for the fourth NASCAR Cup Series race since the COVID-19 pandemic halted the season back on March 9. Wednesday night’s race will be 500 kilometers, or 310 miles – a little more than half of Sunday night’s marathon Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte.

Custer’s Mustang will look a little different for Wednesday’s race with the Autodesk Fusion 360 livery sharing the No. 41 machine with HaasTooling.com. Autodesk is a leader in 3D design, engineering and entertainment software. Autodesk has been integral to SHR and the software has played a vital role in creating personal protective equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. To better support its customers facing the new reality of working remotely, Autodesk has introduced a special [Extended Access Program](#) for several of its cloud collaboration products, including BIM 360 Docs, BIM 360 Design, Fusion 360, Fusion Team, AutoCAD Web and Mobile, and Shotgun. Additionally, during the pandemic, Autodesk’s goal is to connect resources and people looking to help with pressing needs. For projects or resources that could help communities with COVID-19 efforts, [visit here](#).

Sharing the No. 41 Mustang with Autodesk is Gene Haas’ newest holding, HaasTooling.com. [Haas Tooling](#) was launched just weeks ago as a way for CNC machinists to purchase high quality cutting tools at great prices. Haas’ cutting tools are sold exclusively online at HaasTooling.com and shipped directly to end-users.

Sunday’s grueling 600-mile race at Charlotte is annually the longest event on the Cup Series calendar. Custer qualified 28th in the afternoon before climbing into the HaasTooling.com Mustang for his first ever Coca-Cola 600 that night. The Ford driver battled a tight-handling Mustang for the most of the night, and went one lap down at one point during the race. He was able to maneuver his way back onto the lead lap and ultimately finished 12th after gaining multiple positions on the final green-white-checked restart. “We were able to get a solid finish,” Custer said. “We have a lot of good ideas and I learned a lot to come back better on Wednesday.” The finish was the SHR driver’s second top-12 of the 2020 season.

Wednesday’s race marks the 22-year-old Custer’s 11th career Cup Series start. Coming off Sunday’s 600-mile race, he’s looking to hit the reset button and improve in what will be much more like a sprint race. The nature of the current schedule, with weekend and midweek races that are one-day shows with no practice, gives the field the opportunity to run consecutive races at the same venue, which is extremely helpful to a rookie driver like Custer.

SHR has 66 starts at Charlotte with five pole awards and one victory earned by No. 4 Mustang driver Kevin Harvick in 2014. In total, the Kannapolis-based Ford team has eight top-fives and 23 top-10s there, along with 764 laps led.

Haas Automation, founded in 1983 by SHR co-owner Haas, is America’s leading builder of CNC machine tools. The company manufactures a complete line of vertical and horizontal machining centers, turning centers and rotary tables and indexers. All Haas products are constructed in the company’s 1.1-million-square-foot manufacturing facility in Oxnard, California, and distributed through a worldwide network of Haas Factory Outlets.

Even though Custer had a trio of starts in the Cup Series in 2018, 2020 officially marks his Rookie of the Year campaign in NASCAR’s most prestigious series. He’s competing for rookie honors with notables Christopher Bell and Tyler Reddick. The three have battled against each other in the Xfinity Series and are making the full-time transition to the Cup Series together. Custer was the third-highest-finishing rookie at Charlotte Sunday night and looks to improve his position Wednesday evening.

– more –

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

Now that you've completed your first 600-mile race, how do you feel?

“For my first 600 race, I actually thought it was going to feel longer than what it did. It goes by kind of fast when you're constantly thinking about how to get your car better and how the track is going to change, and everything like that. It actually went a lot faster than I thought it would. It was just a night where you had to be there at the end, and we were.”

The bumps in turns three and four were a pretty prevalent topic in the Coke 600. Do you think the track surface has gotten that much worse? Or is it more of something to do with the tires and car setup?

“The track has definitely gotten rougher over the last couple of years. The track was built on a landfill, so it's constantly changing and getting bumpier. I think it's wearing out and getting to the point where you can start slipping and sliding more. It's getting more fun. The bumps in turns three and four are making it more challenging and they jar your head around a lot, and make it hard on the drivers.”

Will Wednesday almost seem like a breeze since it's a shorter race?

“Wednesday will definitely be a faster-paced race compared to the 600, where you're just trying to make it to the end and fight all night. Wednesday's race will probably have some crazier restarts and people being more aggressive. I think people might have a different attitude going from a really long race to a short race. It's going to be different, but we just have to make sure we get a solid finish.”

What are some of the key things you guys will work on for Wednesday?

“Going into Wednesday, there are definitely some things that I can do better. We have some ideas with the car that we can do to get it a little bit better. Hopefully, we can run consistently in the top-15 and get a top-10 out of it. We just need to keep getting solid finishes. Overall, when you run 600 miles, you're going to have some ideas on what you can do better the next time, so it should help us a lot going into Wednesday.”

-TSC-

Contact Lauren Emling with True Speed Communication
(704) 875-3388, ext. 811 or Lauren.Emling@TrueSpeedCommunication.com
www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com • Online Media Kit Available at: www.TrueSpeedMedia.com