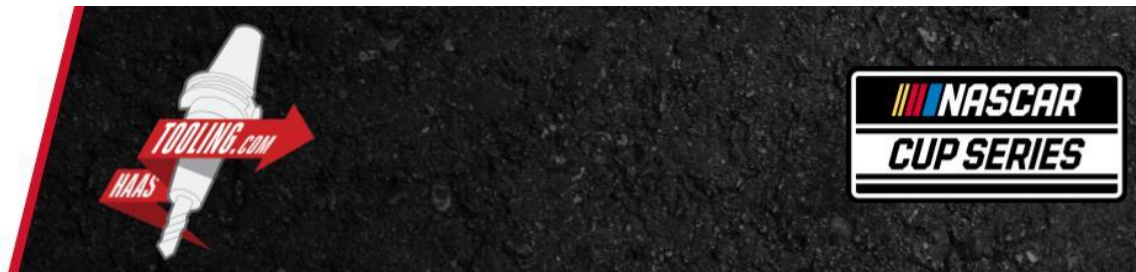


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22nd-Place Result for Custer at Darlington

Ford Driver Completes First Cup Race at South Carolina Track

Date: May 17, 2020
Event: The Real Heroes 400
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Darlington (S.C.) Raceway (1.366-mile oval)
Format: 293 laps, broken into three stages (90 laps/95 laps/108 laps)
Start/Finish: 14th/22nd (Running, completed 293 of 293 laps)
Point Standing: 24th with 88 points, 130 out of first

Race Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: William Byron of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-90):

- Cole Custer started 14th and finished 21st.
- Within the first 10 laps Custer worked his way into the top-10.
- On lap 12 he reported his HaasTooling.com Mustang was tight.
- The Ford driver reached the eighth spot by lap 18.
- During the competition caution on lap 30, Custer reported his Mustang was still too tight while in the ninth position.
- He restarted on lap 39 after a pit stop for fuel, four tires and adjustments.
- Ended Stage 1 in the 21st spot with a tight Ford Mustang. Pitted during the break for fuel, four tires and adjustments to help with his tight condition.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 71-185):

- Custer started 18th and finished 22nd.
- During the lap-110 caution Custer radioed to his crew that his HaasTooling.com Mustang was much better that run, but still a little tight. He pitted from 14th and restarted 15th on lap 116.
- During a caution on lap 125 Custer said his car was tight and pitted from 21st for fuel, four tires and adjustments.
- Restarted 17th on lap 130.
- Caution displayed on lap 156 with Custer in the 22nd position. He reported his Mustang “wasn’t bad” during that run and visited pit road for service.
- Restarted 22nd on lap 161, and was in the 19th spot on lap 165.
- Caution once again on lap 173 and Custer reported his car was decent from the 19th spot. Pitted for fuel, four tires and adjustments, and restarted 21st.
- Custer came down pit road during the Stage 2 break from 22nd for fuel, four tires and adjustments to help loosen his Mustang.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 186-293):

- Custer started 22nd and finished 22nd.
- Caution on lap 211 with the California native in the 22nd position. He reported his HaasTooling.com Mustang was pretty good, but was struggling to pass.
- Restarted 22nd on lap 218 and was 23rd when the next caution was displayed on lap 250.
- Pitted on lap 254 for fuel, four tires and adjustments to loosen up his Ford Mustang. Restarted 22nd on lap 258.
- With 25 laps left, Custer was back in the top-20.
- The Cup Series rookie finished 22nd in his first series start at Darlington.

Notes:

- There were 10 caution periods for a total of 57 laps.
- Only 24 of the 40 drivers in The Real Heroes 400 finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Darlington with a 28-point advantage over second-place Bowman.

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

“Definitely wasn’t the day we wanted at Darlington. We started off the race really good. We were in the top-10 and I was pretty confident with the car, but I think I probably started out too conservative. I didn’t want get the Darlington stripe and ruin our day my first time here in a Cup car. I think I put us too far behind and it was so hard to come back from there. I’m looking forward to Wednesday. I feel like I learned a lot and we’ll be a lot stronger.”

Next Up:

The NASCAR Cup Series returns to Darlington on Wednesday, May 20 for a 500-kilometer race. It starts at 7:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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