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Kyle Busch, No. 18 M&M'S Red, White and Blue Toyota Camry ***Race Recap for Coca-Cola 600***

Date: May 24, 2020
Event: Coca-Cola 600 (Round 7 of 36)
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: 11th/5th (Running, completed 405 of 405 laps)
Point Standing: 9th (207 points, 82 behind leader)
Note: Race extended five laps past its scheduled 400-lap distance due to a green-white-checked finish.

Race Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford) in overtime
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):

- Kyle Busch started 11th and finished sixth.
- The M&M'S Red, White and Blue driver qualified in 11th, but soon after the green flag flew, found he had a very loose racecar.
- Good news for Busch was a competition yellow on lap 20, as he came to pit road for tires and adjustments on lap 22. The M&M'S over-the-wall team did quick work, moving Busch up from 12th to 10th on the ensuing restart.
- Busch held his 10th position when green flag racing resumed, but on lap 48, rain made it to the track and the race was red flagged for over an hour while the track was dried.
- When the race restarted, crew chief Adam Stevens called Busch to pit road for four tires, fuel and adjustment as a strong stop by the M&M'S team vaulted him up to seventh exiting pit road.
- The race restarted on lap 57, and Busch moved up to sixth by lap 79. Busch radioed to Stevens that his M&M'S Red, White, and Blue Camry was a little free on entry and tight off the corner. Busch held the sixth spot and finished stage one in that spot.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 101-200):

- Busch started second and finished third.
- Following the end of the stage, Busch came to pit road for four tires, fuel and adjustments. Yet again, the M&M'S Red, White, and Blue pit crew had a phenomenal pit stops, gaining four spots on pit road to restart stage 2 in the runner-up spot.
- The Las Vegas native settled into third-place and hung there for most of stage 2, as Busch radioed to Stevens that his car starts the run a little bit free but trends to the tighter side as the run goes on.
- Busch came to pit road to take on four tires, fuel, and adjustments on lap 157.
- The M&M'S Red, White, and Blue driver cycled out in third and ended the stage in that same spot.

Stage 3 Recap (Laps 201-300):

- Busch started 19th and finished sixth.
- Busch came to pit road following the end of the stage, taking on four tires, fuel and an air pressure adjustment, gaining one spot on pit road to second. However, Busch was penalized exiting pit road for speeding, sending him to the back of the lead lap in 19th on the lap 208 restart.
- The 2019 NASCAR Cup Series champion moved up to 15th by lap 275, as he came down pit road on lap 277 for four tires, fuel, and an adjustment to loosen up the M&M'S Red, White, and Blue Camry and restarted 13th on lap 282.
- Busch moved up quickly following the restart, as he made it into the top-10 by lap 285 and all the way up to sixth at the end of the stage.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 301-405):

- Busch started fifth and finished fifth.
- Busch came to pit road on lap 303, taking on four tires and fuel, as he gained one spot to restart in the top-five for the restart of the fourth and final stage.
- The M&M'S Red, White, and Blue driver dropped after the restart, as Busch reported that he couldn't get back to the gas, but he couldn't quite figure out what happened to the handling of his car, as he dropped to 11th by lap 337.
- When the caution waved on lap 348, Busch came to pit road on lap 350 for four tires and an air pressure adjustment back out from the previous stop. The M&M'S over-the-wall crew is one of the best on pit road, and they showed it yet again, gaining an incredible five spots on pit road to restart sixth on lap 353.
- On the next restart, Busch continued to struggle with the handling of his M&M'S Toyota, falling to eighth by lap 364 as it appeared he was going to end up in eighth as the laps wound down.
- However, a caution waved with two laps to go for a spin by William Byron. Stevens decided to bring Busch to pit road for two tires.
- Busch restarted in ninth, and over the course of the final two laps, gained four spots to secure what looked like an unlikely top-five finish.

Notes:

- Busch's fifth-place finish was his fourth top-five finish of the season in seven starts.
- The top-five finish was Busch's 14th top-five at Charlotte in 31 career starts at the 1.5-mile oval.

Kyle Busch, driver of the No. 18 M&M'S Red, White and Blue Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing:

“During the middle stages of the race, I thought we were really fast. I feel like we had a great M&M'S Red, White, and Blue Camry and ran up front and got back up front from having to go to the back. But we put tires on it and it was never the same after that from about lap 280 or 290 when we put tires on it and it wasn't the same as it was before that. We were lucky to steal a fifth-place finish out of it today and we'll have to go back to work and figure out some things to make our stuff better for when we come back on Wednesday and get back after it. I certainly want to give a huge shout out and a huge thanks to all the men and women who have served for our country here on Memorial Day weekend, we appreciate you. Everyone be safe tomorrow and have fun.”

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

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