



# KEVIN HARVICK

## Darlington 400

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (May 14, 2020) – It’s been an odd year and now the 2020 NASCAR Cup season gets even odder.

Kevin Harvick finished second in the FanShield 500k on March 8 at Phoenix Raceway. He led 67 laps but couldn’t quite catch winner Joey Logano and finished just .276 of a second behind him. Despite not yet having a win in 2020, Harvick left the mile oval with the points lead.

Then the racing stopped, along with every other sport on March 13 due to the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. Thankfully for drivers and their fans, the TV broadcasts turned to iRacing, which is a premier motorsport racing simulation. NASCAR, FOX and iRacing teamed up to show races on Sunday afternoons.

Now though, it’s time to get back to real racing with Sunday’s Darlington 400 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway. The historic 1.366-mile oval has hosted some of the biggest and most important races in NASCAR history.

None may be more important than this one, though.

There will be no fans in attendance, an extremely limited number of workers in the infield, along with no practice and no qualifying. It’s unlike anything seen before in major-league automobile racing.

Harvick will pilot the No. 4 Busch Light #YOURFACEHERE Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) for the first time since March 8. Fans are what make every sport great, especially NASCAR. But right now, it’s best these events are run without fans in the stands for their safety, as well as the safety of the drivers and teams. Even if fans can’t be there in person, Busch Beer wants them to be there in spirit. So, the company is asking fans to tweet pictures of themselves with a Busch Light logo using the hashtags #YOURFACEHERE and #buschcontest for a chance to be featured on Harvick’s No. 4 car, along with a pair of tickets to a 2021 NASCAR race of their choice.

The upside for Harvick as NASCAR returns to racing is that he has some of the most experience of any driver in the field. This will mark his 687<sup>th</sup> start and his 24<sup>th</sup> at Darlington.

He’s had success at Darlington with one win, three poles, eight top-five finishes, 11 top-10s, and he’s led a total of 581 laps in his 23 career Cup Series starts there. His average start is 14.4, his average finish is 14.3 and he has a lap-completion rate of 96.1 percent, 7,842 of the 8,195 laps available.

Since 2014, the combination of Harvick competing at Darlington in SHR equipment is particularly impressive. In his last six Cup Series starts there – all of which have come with SHR – he has finished inside of the top-10 in each. Five of those were top-fives. He has an average finish of 4.1 during that span. And of the 581 laps Harvick has led at Darlington dating back to his rookie year in 2001, a total of 518, or 89 percent, have come with SHR despite only six, or 27 percent, of his 23 Darlington starts being with SHR.

Perhaps more important than anything is Harvick’s relationship with crew chief Rodney Childers. They’ve been paired together since 2014 and are longest-running current driver-crew chief combination in the garage. And Childers always seems to provide Harvick with a good car, which will be key as there is no practice or qualifying. As the old racing slogan says, “Run what ya brung.”

And that will be the key as Darlington is unlike any other racetrack where NASCAR competes. It’s an egg-shaped oval – the odd shape because the western portion needed a tighter turn radius as founder Harold Brasington promised Sherman Ramsey, who owned a farm next to the property, that he wouldn’t disturb his minnow pond when he built the track in 1949.

The odd shape means that, to find the fastest way around the track, drivers run against the outside walls in each turn, sometimes brushing up against it and thus earning what has affectionately become known as a “Darlington Stripe” on the right side of the car. And the black marks left on the walls by the tires rubbing up against them all race weekend have led to the track’s other nickname – “The Lady in Black.”

While the race is being run, it’s important to never forget the first responders, doctors, nurses and hospital workers who have fought COVID-19 during this pandemic. Those including Dr. Josh Hughes, an emergency medicine physician with the Mid-Atlantic Emergency Medical Associates practice and the assistant director of the emergency department at Novant Health Presbyterian in Charlotte, North Carolina. Hughes was part of a PSA that Harvick did with several athletes for “The Real Heroes Project.”

Hopefully, for a few hours Sunday, NASCAR can give everyone something exciting to watch.

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**KEVIN HARVICK, Driver of the No. 4 Busch Light #YOURFACEHERE Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:**

**How will Darlington change, just in logistics for you?**

“When I go to the racetrack now, I’m going to bring all my own food and I won’t really need a change of clothes because it’s a one-day show, but I’ll bring a change in case it rains. That way, I don’t have any interaction with anybody else. I’ll take my helmet, my shoes and my uniform and I’ll bring it all with me to the car.”

**What are your thoughts on what NASCAR has done and the rule for picking positions?**

“I had many conversations with the folks from NASCAR and global pandemic isn’t in the playbook. As you look to getting back on track, everything is about doing that safely. I think for me, we are leading the points, so we get to pick the first pit box and then draw for one of the first twelve positions. And then 13 to 24 will draw for their positions. And then what happens next week? Because the goal in all of this is to get the teams caught up. They don’t have to overwork to get caught up. They can take one car to the racetrack and we don’t have to worry about crashing in practice and you don’t have to prep it for qualifying so you don’t have to bring all the extra parts and pieces to the racetrack. There is a need to change that rule in this instance, because of the fact we have to catch up on races. We only need to bring one car, but if you keep lining them up by points, pit road is going to look awfully similar, as is the starting grid. If you hit it at Darlington (Sunday), you’ll probably do well in the second Darlington (Wednesday). I think we had to look at coming back safely first and then make it entertaining. I think it’s worked out pretty well and we’ll roll with it and see what happens.”

**How has the break affected you and your family?**

“At this particular point, we’re fighting all the same problems that everyone else is fighting. You can’t go get your hair cut, you can’t go sit in your favorite restaurant, all the things that you normally do.”

**With races the next two Wednesdays, does your body have time to recover as we normally have six days between races?**

“I think for me, there is no exact science to it. When I get done on Sunday, I know how I feel and when I wake up on Monday, I know what I need to concentrate on. Hydration is always there. Just in North Carolina in the last few weeks, on the weekend it’s 85 and then during the week it’s in the high 60s. When we get to Darlington, it’s not like it’s going to be when we’ve gone the last few years, where we start at dusk and you work your way into the evening and into the dark. For us, it’s going to be all in the daylight and maybe a little dark at the end. For me, it’s just about knowing your body and knowing the things you need to do – weather it’s a recovery run or a bike ride. The hyperbolic chamber and some of the stuff I would use during the summer is just not an option at this point because the facility that I use is just not somewhere I’m going to go at this point. Hydration is for sure front and center.”

**What are your thoughts on starting back at historic Darlington Raceway?**

“I think when you look at Darlington, it has such a deep history in our sport. When I first started, we went there twice a year, then we moved the Southern 500 to earlier in the year and it didn’t feel right, and then we did the right thing and moved it back. It’s a fortunate situation for us, to be able to go back to South Carolina to be able to put on this race. To go there twice within three or four days is something that’s unique, but it’s a great way to kick this thing off and get it fired back up.”

**Rodney Childers, Crew Chief of the No. 4 Busch Light #YOURFACEHERE Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing (continued):**

**As of right now, it sounds like you’re going to go through tech and then race immediately. How do you prepare for that? Would this be similar to getting ready for a situation when qualifying and practice are rained out?**

“Honestly, it’s just like any other weekend for us. We try to unload the best we can every week and get ready to race. Sometimes you get to practice and sometimes you don’t.”

**Will Darlington sort of feel like the first race of a new season since it has been several weeks since the last race?**

“It will definitely feel different, but I think everyone is still in the swing of things and ready to keep building on what we have been doing all year. Knocking out consistent top-10 finishes and being up front.”

**Has this time away changed your view of racing?**

“Haha, this is a trick question. It hasn’t on racing, but it has on the world. And just how fragile things can really be.”

**Are you set on the crew roster?**

“With the limitations on our roster, about half of our road crew will not be going to the racetrack. You kind of have to pick and choose who you want to be there. It’s myself and one engineer, and then our car chief going, our interior mechanic and our tire guy. Plus, the truck drivers. That’s a lot different from what we normally do. Our front-end and underneath mechanic will not even be there. Pushing through tech and a lot of stuff we normally think is easy will be more challenging. People are going to be doing stuff they normally don’t have to do. Overall, though, the infield is going to be totally different. To have no fans and no vehicles except for those we drive there will be interesting.”

## Kevin Harvick Darlington Performance Profile:

Year	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2019	Southern 500	11	4	Running, 367/367	0	N/A
2018	Southern 500	22	4	Running, 367/367	0	N/A
2017	Southern 500	1	9	Running, 366/367	22	N/A
2016	Southern 500	1	2	Running, 367/367	114	N/A
2015	Southern 500	3	5	Running, 367/367	44	\$175,190
2014	<b>Southern 500</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Running, 374/374</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>\$328,708</b>
2013	Southern 500	10	5	Running, 367/367	0	\$165,976
2012	×Southern 500	23	16	Running, 368/368	0	\$136,391
2011	×Showtime Southern 500	13	17	Running, 370/370	47	\$141,111
2010	Showtime Southern 500	35	6	Running, 367/367	2	\$151,076
2009	Southern 500	24	11	Running, 367/367	0	\$127,843
2008	Dodge Challenger 500	11	39	Running, 265/367	0	\$116,711
2007	Dodge Avenger 500	9	17	Running, 367/367	0	\$125,886
2006	Dodge Charger 500	14	37	Running, 350/367	0	\$104,036
2005	×Dodge Charger 500	24	14	Running, 370/370	0	\$123,561
2004	Carolina Dodge Dealers 400	23	8	Running, 293/293	0	\$98,743
	Mountain Dew Southern 500	14	32	Running, 354/367	0	\$90,728
2003	Carolina Dodge Dealers 400	33	36	Running, 283/293	0	\$77,843
	Mountain Dew Southern 500	18	2	Running, 367/367	14	\$149,063
2002	Carolina Dodge Dealers 400	16	3	Running, 293/293	0	\$108,443
	Mountain Dew Southern 500	17	40	Accident, 193/367	0	\$88,503
2001	†Carolina Dodge Dealers 400	3	14	Running, 293/293	0	\$81,487
	Mountain Dew Southern 500	5	8	Running, 367/367	0	\$93,727

\* Race cut short due to weather. × Race length extended due to green-white-checkered finish. † Qualifying canceled due to weather, starting position set via car owner points.