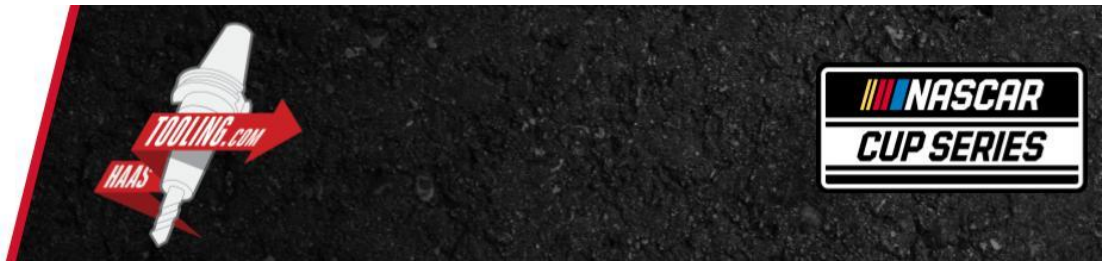


41



COLE CUSTER

First Atlanta Cup Series Start

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (June 3, 2020) – The No. 41 HaasTooling.com Mustang team and driver Cole Custer head southwest of the Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) headquarters to Atlanta Motor Speedway for Sunday’s Folds of Honor 500. Custer will make his first Cup Series start at the Georgia track and his 13th career Cup Series start. The Ford driver heads to Atlanta after a multi-car accident at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway on Sunday ended his day prematurely.

The No. 41 Ford Mustang will once again sport the colors of co-owner Gene Haas’ newest holding, HaasTooling.com, for the 325-lap event. [Haas Tooling](#) was launched a few 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.

Atlanta was originally scheduled for Sunday, March 15, but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Custer has three starts at 1.5-mile tracks this season. The California native spent last week honing his craft at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway for the season’s longest race – May 24th Coca-Cola 600, and the May 28 Alsco Uniforms 500k. His first Cup Series start at the 1.5-mile track netted Custer a 12th-place finish after recovering from falling one lap down earlier in the race. He earned an 18th-place finish in his second start in the 500-kilometer – 310-mile – race after battling a loose-handling No. 41 Mustang. Back in February, Custer started 17th and finished 19th at Las Vegas Motor Speedway after completing all 267 laps.

Custer has three starts at Atlanta in the NASCAR Xfinity Series with two top-10 finishes in three starts. Last year, the Ford driver captured the pole position and finished second to Christopher Bell. He has one Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series start at Atlanta. He started sixth in 2016 and finished 17th.

In his last nine Xfinity Series starts at 1.5-mile tracks, Custer earned two wins, four top-fives, six top-10s and one pole award. The victories were captured at Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Illinois, and Kentucky Speedway in Sparta. He led a total of 410 laps in the nine starts on his way to an average finishing position of 10.4 and an average starting position of 3.2.

The 22-year-old has one other intermediate track start behind the wheel of a Cup Series car. The start occurred at Las Vegas Motor Speedway in March 2018. The young driver started 30th and finished 25th for the No. 51 Rick Ware Racing team.

SHR has two wins at the Georgia track – Kevin Harvick in 2018 and team co-owner Tony Stewart in September 2010. Additionally, the Kannapolis, North Carolina team has amassed four pole awards and a total of nine top-fives and nine top-10s, in 39 starts there.

While the NASCAR season has resumed, the sport also continues to do its part during the COVID-19 pandemic. SHR’s partnership with Novant Health continues to expand. So far, SHR has helped transport and deliver millions of face masks for Novant, in addition to building intensive care unit webcam carts. Now, SHR is now providing 25,000 square feet of property adjacent to its shop in Kannapolis, North Carolina, for Novant’s partnership with Zipline, the world’s only national-scale, on-demand drone logistics service. Zipline will deliver medical supplies via its fleet of drones to Novant Health’s integrated system of physician practices, hospitals and outpatient centers. [Click here to download b-roll of site build, drone delivery and interviews.](#)

Haas Automation, founded by Haas in 1983, 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.

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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.

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

You're heading back to Atlanta, where everything stopped due to COVID-19. Will it kind of be déjà vu with returning to Atlanta this year for the second time, but the first time you'll race?

"It's definitely going to feel a little weird going to back to Atlanta because we went there on a plane in March and had to fly right back. We're going back to a place we were supposed to have raced at already, so it's going to be interesting. Since we flew to Atlanta that day, we've learned a ton as a team. I feel like we'll be better than we would've been on the day we originally went there. We'll see what it brings for us this time."

You have a pretty good track record at Atlanta in the Xfinity Series. You sat on the pole and finished runner-up there last year. Why or what do you like about the track? It seems you have it figured out pretty well.

"It has definitely been a pretty good track to me in the past. I think all of the worn out racetracks have been good for me. Being able to manage tire fall off, and slipping and sliding around, and being able to do a lot of different things with the car. I think those have been good tracks for me. I'm looking forward to it. I've learned a ton about the 550 horsepower package since we've started so I think we can definitely go there and have a strong run.

You're getting your feet under you with mile-and-a-half tracks now. What are your goals and expectations for this weekend?

"We've had a few races with this 550 horsepower package and I think we have a lot better understanding of it from when we started. I feel like we're getting where we want to be with it. Hopefully this is the week we can put it all together and have a strong run, compete for a top-10 and have a good finish. I think we've come a long way and put a lot of work in to it. We'll see what happens this weekend."

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