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COLE CUSTER

Hoping Xfinity Success Translates to Cup Success at Homestead

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (June 11, 2020) – Cole Custer and the No. 41 Jacob Construction/HaasTooling.com Ford Mustang team head to Homestead-Miami Speedway for Sunday’s Homestead 400. Custer will make his first Cup Series start at the mile-and-a-half track and his 15th career Cup Series start.

This weekend, the No. 41 machine will once again sport a Jacob Construction livery in conjunction with HaasTooling.com. Homestead marks the second time this season Jacob Construction has adorned the No. 41 Mustang. Jacob Construction is a multifaceted construction firm with a focus on construction, development, design and technology services. Jacob provides clients with a wide range of services in the design build and construction management sectors of the construction industry. In conjunction with these services, Jacob self performs structural concrete, architectural and structural precast erection.

The most recent Cup Series race was held Wednesday night at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway. Once again, the event was run without practice or qualifying due to the condensed schedule during the COVID-19 pandemic. Custer fought a tight-handling No. 41 Ford Mustang throughout the race, which made for a challenging night. After starting 27th, Custer finished the night 29th in the HaasTooling.com/Jacob Construction Ford Mustang.

Homestead has been a stellar track for Custer in the NASCAR Xfinity Series, in which he has four starts from 2016 through 2019. In his last three outings, he started and finished in the top-two. In November 2017, he captured the victory by a margin of 15.405 seconds. In November 2018, Custer won the pole position with a speed of 165.598 mph and finished runner-up in the Ford EcoBoost 300. In November 2019, he started and finished second. Overall at Homestead, Custer has an average Xfinity Series start of 5.8 and an average finish of 5.5, along with 292 laps led while completing 100 percent of the laps available.

In the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, the young driver has one appearance at the South Florida track. He started second and finished 10th in November 2016.

The No. 41 Ford Mustang will once again share the colors of co-owner Gene Haas’ newest holding, HaasTooling.com, for Sunday’s 400-mile event. [Haas Tooling](https://www.haastooling.com) was launched last month 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.

At mile-and-a-half tracks this season, Custer has finishes of 19th at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and Atlanta Motor Speedway, and 12th and 18th at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway. Homestead will be the fifth intermediate oval the series has run on this year.

One thing that makes this weekend even more unique is that a select group of fans will be able to attend. The track will host 1,000 military members, first responders and their household members in the first step to allowing fans back to a racing venue. Next weekend at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway, 5,000 fans will be allowed in the grandstands, along with select camping spots outside of the facility. All fans will be required to follow all health and safety protocols and procedures.

“I’m really excited about having the fans back,” Custer said. “They’re obviously the ones that really make our sport and create the atmosphere around it. Not having them for the amount of time we haven’t has been very strange. Having them back will bring some of the atmosphere back to normalcy.”

SHR has 35 starts at Homestead, with one pole award by Kevin Harvick in 2016, and wins by team co-owner Tony Stewart in 2011 and Harvick in 2014. In total at Homestead, SHR has eight top-fives and 15 top-10s, along with 391 laps led.

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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 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.

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 Jacob Construction/HaasTooling.com Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

You have a stellar record at Homestead in the Xfinity Series. What makes you like that track so much, or why do you run so well there?

"I think Homestead was always a good track for me because it's a wide track where you have a lot of options. It's also nice having the tire fall-off where you can search around, and have different ideas throughout a run and be able to move around. Being able to do what you want as a driver and be able to have those options is what I've liked about it a lot in the past."

We've seen some drivers really like running up against the wall at Homestead. Do you think you'll run up against the wall? Or what are your plans for the line you'll run?

"For me, the wall has always been something you have to move to later in the race because there's so much speed there. With these cars, it's obviously a little bit different, but it seems like you can make a lot of different lines work. You can work the bottom, you can work one of the seams and you can try and run the fence. You have guys all on different strategies and you have to go with what your car is like at that moment."

Typically, Homestead has been run in November, when the temperature is a little milder. How different is it going to be to run Homestead in the heat of the summer? How much will the heat impact the track and the car?

"I think, in the heat, it's going to make it so there is a lot more tire fall-off and the speeds will be a lot slower at the end of the run. We're going to be slipping and sliding a ton. It was already a track that was really slick and it's going to be even more slick this time around."

Some drivers have come out and said they're big proponents of no practice and qualifying. How do you feel about that?

"I think for me, the practice and qualifying situation isn't exactly what I would want. You really want all of that practice and qualifying to help as a rookie to just get you started for the weekend, and to knock a few of the steps out. You have to make all of the steps and learn as much as you can in the race, now, where if you had some practice and qualifying, you would get a little bit ahead on it. It's definitely challenging, but you try and do as much homework as you can before, get yourself prepared for what to expect, and then adapt to it once you're in the race."

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