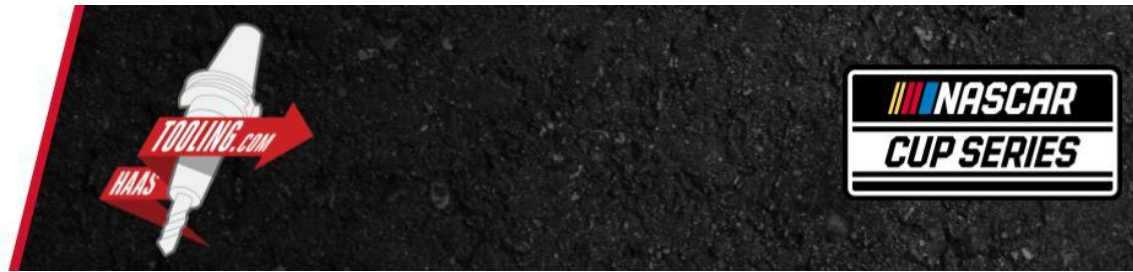


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17th-Place Finish for Custer at Pocono *Rookie Driver Runs in Top-Five at Pennsylvania Track*

Date: June 28, 2020
Event: Pocono 350 (Round 15 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Pocono (Pa.) Raceway (2.5-mile triangle)
Format: 140 laps, broken into three stages (30 laps/55 laps/55 laps)
Start/Finish: 5th/17th (Running, completed 140 of 140 laps)
Point Standing: 26th with 241 points, 340 out of first

Race Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 1 Winner: Kurt Busch of Chip Ganassi Racing (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-30):

- Cole Custer started fifth and finished 10th to earn one bonus point.
- Four laps into the race, Custer was running third in the HaasTooling.com Mustang when the race was halted due to rain.
- Once the event resumed, Custer battled in the top-10 with a loose-handling Mustang.
- The rookie driver ended the stage in 10th and visited pit road for fuel and four tires.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 31-86):

- Custer started in 20th and finished 15th.
- On the lap-39 caution, Custer reported that his Mustang was handling a little bit better. He didn't pit and restarted 12th.
- Under caution once again on lap 46, Custer pitted from 11th for fuel and adjustments to help with his loose condition. Restarted 26th.
- On lap 57, the 22-year-old reported his Mustang was starting to get tight while running 18th.
- By lap 70, Custer was back in the top-15. He pitted under caution from 14th on lap 76 for fuel, four tires and adjustments. Restarted 18th.
- During the stage break, the HaasTooling.com driver stayed on the track.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 87-140):

- Custer started 11th, finished 17th.
- "It's starting to come to me," Custer radioed on lap 111 from eighth about his Ford Mustang.
- The rookie driver made a scheduled green-flag pit stop on lap 115 while running eighth for right-side tires and fuel. Rejoined the field in 25th.
- As the race continued green, Custer kept advancing his position on the track.
- Custer finished the race 17th in the HaasTooling.com Mustang.

Notes:

- Custer was the highest finishing NASCAR Cup Series rookie.
- Denny Hamlin won the Pocono 350 to score his 41st career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his series-leading fourth of the season and his record-tying sixth at Pocono. His margin of victory over second-place Kevin Harvick was 3.068 seconds.
- There were eight caution periods for a total of 31 laps.
- Only 17 of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Pocono with a 52-point advantage over second-place Ryan Blaney.

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

"Thank you so much, guys. We got the car a lot better today. We definitely made gains and got the car better during the race. Well go get them next week."

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Big Machine Hand Sanitizer 400 on Sunday, July 5 at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The race starts at 4 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBC and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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