



Suárez 25th in NASCAR's Return at Darlington

Today. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry Driver Scores Second Consecutive Top-25

Date: May 17, 2020
Event: The Real Heroes 400
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Darlington (S.C.) Raceway (1.366-mile oval)
Format: 293 laps, broken into three stages (90 laps/95 laps/108 laps)
Start/Finish: 37th / 25th (Running, completed 292 of 293 laps)
Point Standing: 31st with 44 points, 174 out of first

Race Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: William Byron of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-90):

- Started 37th, finished 30th.
- Suárez made steady forward progress during the stage with his Today. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry, particularly on restarts. He picked up three spots from his starting position of 37th on the opening lap, during which the caution flag appeared for a one-car accident. On the lap-six restart, he moved from 34th to 31st and was able to pick up another couple of positions to 29th before a competition caution appeared on lap 30.
- The ensuing pit stop on lap 34 enabled the team to make left-side air pressure adjustments and to add tape to the grille to help alleviate a tight condition entering turns three and four and overall grip issues in turns one and two. Suárez restarted 28th.
- A long, green run to the end of the stage saw Suárez's Today. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry gradually get tighter on entry. He dropped a pair of spots and fell off the lead lap just before the end of the stage.
- Suárez pitted on lap 94 for right-rear tire pressure and track bar adjustments in an effort to free up the rear of the car. He was the beneficiary of the Lucky Dog back to the lead lap.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 91-185):

- Started 30th, finished 28th.
- Made steady forward progress during the early laps of the stage, running 28th when the caution flag flew on lap 109, then climbing to 26th before running over debris that flattened his right-rear tire approaching turn two. Suárez spun but was able to keep control of his racecar. He limped the car back to the pits for fresh tires and restarted 31st, the second car one lap down.
- Suárez was running 30th and the first car one lap down when the caution flag appeared for debris on lap 156. Again, he was the beneficiary of the Lucky Dog back to the lead lap and restarted 28th on lap 161.
- He held position to the end of the stage despite grip issues in the rear of the car. The stage break pit stop on lap 188 saw air pressure and wedge adjustments and added tape on the grill of the Today. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry.

Stage 3 Recap (Laps 186-293):

- Started 27th, finished 25th.
- For the first time in the race, Suárez was unable to generate forward momentum on a restart when, after the lap-192 restart, he fell to 30th by the time the caution flag flew once again on lap 212. Even though he said his racecar was the best it had been all day, it got extremely tight in traffic.
- On the next restart, on lap 218, Suárez was able to move from 29th to 26th by lap 237.
- The caution flag flew one final time on lap 253 with Suárez up to 26th but the first car one lap down. For the third time, he was the beneficiary of the Lucky Dog back to the lead lap.
- Suárez restarted 26th on lap 259 and moved into the top-25 with 20 laps to go, on lap 273.
- He held onto that position the rest of the way to take the checkered flag in the top-25 for the second race in a row, albeit 70 days removed from the previous finish of 21st at Phoenix Raceway.

Daniel Suárez, driver of the No. 96 Today. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

“The race was OK. At this point, something that is positive is that we are overachieving. The speed that we have really wasn't good enough to finish (where we did), but the team did a good job making good calls. I felt like we were able to defend our positions well and fight hard on restarts. We were able to get a decent finish. We want to keep getting better, but we are a young team. We are still building in many different areas. We will keep getting better as time goes on. Tomorrow, we are going to go to the shop. The original plan is to bring this car back for Wednesday. We will have to make some adjustments to try to make it better. We will go back to the shop tomorrow and have meetings and make adjustments based on that and come back on Wednesday. Hopefully, we can come back

stronger. That's the goal. Otherwise, it's always good when you can go back to a racetrack, especially when we've been out of racing for over two months. That's definitely a good feeling. The other side – it was very weird, just to show up to a racetrack and not being able to talk to anyone, and just go race and leave. It's a little bit different. It's not something that we want to get used to, but that's what we have to do, for now, to be able to stay safe and to be able to put on a show for all the fans.”

Race Notes:

- Kevin Harvick won Sunday's The Real Heroes 400 for his milestone 50th career victory, his first of the season and his second in 24 career NASCAR Cup Series starts at Darlington.
- Harvick's margin of victory over second-place Alex Bowman was 2.154 seconds.
- There were 10 caution periods for a total of 57 laps.
- Only 24 of the 40 drivers in The Real Heroes 400 finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Darlington with a 28-point advantage over second-place Bowman.

Next Up:

The NASCAR Cup Series returns to Darlington on Wednesday, May 20, for the Toyota 500k. The race starts at 7:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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