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Coca-Cola



Suárez Finishes 31st at Atlanta

Coca-Cola Toyota Loose Early, Tight Late in Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500

Date: June 7, 2020
Event: Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 (Round 10 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Atlanta Motor Speedway (1.54-mile oval)
Format: 325 laps, broken into three stages (105 laps/105 laps/115 laps)
Start/Finish: 37th / 31st (Running, completed 316 of 325 laps)
Point Standing: 32nd with 97 points, 324 out of first

Race Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Martin Truex Jr., of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 2 Winner: Martin Truex Jr., of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-105):

- Started 37th, finished 31st.
- Suárez moved up to 31st by the end of the fifth lap and held that relative position for the rest of the stage.
- He reported the Coca-Cola Toyota was loose throughout the stage and the rear end did not feel completely right. He pitted during the lap-25 competition caution for air pressure adjustments in both rear tires and a track bar adjustment and resumed 29th before falling back to 31st shortly thereafter.
- Green-flag pit stops began on lap 66 and Suárez crept up to 23rd before making his stop on lap 68. Fresh tires, fuel, and more air pressure and track bar adjustments were the call. He resumed 31st.
- The first non-competition caution flag flew on lap 95 for a single-car incident in turn four with Suárez still 31st but two laps down. He and the rear half of the field took the wave-around to gain a lap before pitting. He took fresh tires, fuel, and more air pressure and chassis adjustments.
- The race went back to green on lap 99 with Suárez still 31st and just one lap down. He held that position to the stage break on lap 105 before pitting on lap 109 for tires, fuel and air pressure and track bar adjustments.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 106-210):

- Started 31st, finished 31st.
- The stage went green on lap 112. In the early laps of the initial run, Suárez reported his Coca-Cola Toyota was now too tight and the rear end of the car was not cooperating.
- Suárez continued in 31st and fell a second lap down before pitting under green on lap 156 for tires, fuel and slight air pressure adjustments to both front tires. He said the car was “just way too tight” and that the tires were completely used up during that 44-lap run.
- By lap 197, he was still 31st but now four laps down. He had been reporting that something still did not seem to be right with the rear of his Coca-Cola Toyota Camry. The team planned to continue to the end of the stage 13 laps later and then make a second stop in addition to the normal stop during the break to inspect the rear end.
- The caution flag flew for a single-car spin on lap 202. The team kept Suárez on track to take the wave-around to move to three laps down for the final run to the stage break.
- Suárez held position to the end of the stage and reported his Coca-Cola Toyota Camry was actually feeling a little better as track conditions were cooling off a bit. He pitted before his scheduled service so the team could inspect the rear end, and no obvious problem was detected. He pitted on lap 213 for tires, fuel, air pressure and track bar adjustments.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 211-325):

- Started 31st, finished 31st.
- The green flag flew on lap 217 to start the stage with Suárez the only car three laps down and only two cars ahead of him not on the lead lap, both one lap down. The team planned two scheduled stops during the final stage.
- The first planned stop came on lap 257 from 31st place, five laps down. He took four tires, fuel and air pressure adjustments and resumed.
- The final planned stop came on lap 290 with Suárez still running 31st, five laps down. He took four tires and fuel, air pressure and right-rear track bar adjustments.
- Shortly thereafter, on lap 296, Suárez pitted for another four-tire change after reporting a loose wheel. He resumed still in 31st but nine laps down.
- He held his position the final 29 laps and crossed the finish line 31st, nine laps down.

Daniel Suárez, driver of the No. 96 Coca-Cola Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

“It was obviously not the kind of day we were hoping for. We just have to keep working hard, and believe me, everybody has been working hard since we started this thing. Just keep learning all the things we can learn from every weekend and move on to the next one. Let’s go to Martinsville and see what we can do there.”

Race Notes:

- Kevin Harvick won Sunday’s Folds of Honor QuikTrip 400 to earn his second victory of the season and his third in 30 career NASCAR Cup Series starts at Atlanta. His margin of victory over second-place Kyle Busch was 3.527 seconds.
- There were five caution periods for a total of 24 laps.
- Only 10 of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Atlanta with a 48-point advantage over second-place Joey Logano.

Next Up:

The next NASCAR Cup Series event for Suárez and the Gaunt Brothers Racing team is the Blue-Emu Maximum Pain Relief 500 on Wednesday, June 10 at Martinsville (Va.) Speedway. The race starts at 7 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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