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GAUNT BROTHERS RACING



Suárez Scores Solid Top-20 at Bristol

It's Good To Be Genuine Toyota Survives Eventful Race with 18th-Place Run

Date: May 31, 2020
Event: Supermarket Heroes 500
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway (.533-mile oval)
Format: 500 laps, broken into three stages (125 laps/125 laps/250 laps)
Start/Finish: 37th / 18th (Running, completed 500 of 500 laps)
Point Standing: 31st with 91 points, 279 out of first

Race Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-125):

- Started 37th, finished 34th.
- Suárez got a good launch at the wave of the green flag, moved to 31st on the first lap and to 29th when the first caution appeared on lap seven for a single-car accident. He said the It's Good To Be Genuine Toyota Camry was OK, that he was just getting used to the track.
- From the lap-12 restart to the first of two competition cautions on lap 20, Suárez dropped a position. After briefly debating whether to pit, crew chief Dave Winston opted to pit for just right-side tires and a slight air pressure adjustment. Suárez restarted 23rd when the race went back to green on lap 29.
- Midway to the lap-60 competition caution, Suárez reported his Toyota was getting loose on corner entry and exit and tight in the center. He fell back to 32nd by the time that caution appeared. He pitted for four tires, fuel, a return to the original right-side air pressures, and a track bar adjustment. A short time after getting back on track, Suárez was among seven drivers called for speeding on pit road and there was confusion coming to the restart about getting those seven cars to drop to the rear of the lead-lap competitors.
- Suárez restarted 32nd on lap 69 without the chance to drop to the rear, and was then instructed to serve a drive-through penalty. That dropped him off the lead lap and back to 35th place.
- The race remained green all the way to the lap-125 stage break and Suárez was not able to make any forward progress, saying his Toyota was still loose on entry and exit and tight in the center. He said the loose exit was manageable. He pitted on lap 136 for four tires, fuel, and a wedge adjustment and rejoined in 34th place, two laps down.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 126-250):

- Started 34th, finished 24th.
- From the start of the stage until its first caution on lap 198, Suárez held his ground in 34th but lost another lap to go three down. He said he still needed help with front grip through the center of the corner, and his drive off the corner. He stayed on track to take the wave-around to two laps down.
- Suárez restarted 31st, two laps down, on lap 207 and held position until the caution flag flew again for another single-car incident on lap 211.
- The green flag flew again on lap 216, moments before another yellow for a stalled car on the frontstretch. Suárez pitted, this time, for four tires, fuel and air pressure adjustments. He remained 32nd, two laps down, when the race went back to green on lap 221.
- The caution flag flew yet again on lap 229, this time for a multicar accident on the frontstretch. Suárez had emerged into position as the beneficiary of the Lucky Dog free pass, which moved him up to just one lap down, and still in the Lucky Dog position. The race was red-flagged to clean up the multicar accident on lap 230.
- When the race went green on lap 235 after an 11-minute, 35-second stoppage, Suárez was 25th and just one lap down, and just three laps later, the caution flag flew for a single-car accident that enabled him to cash in another free pass, this time onto the lead lap. He pitted for four tires, fuel and track bar adjustments and restarted 24th on lap 244. He held that position to the caution that ended the stage.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 251-500):

- Started 11th, finished 18th.
- Having stayed on track during the stage break, Suárez took the green flag on lap 261 just outside the top-10.
- The caution flag flew on lap 268, by which time Suárez had slid back to 22nd place. He stayed on track and restarted 20th on lap 277 and held that relative position in the early stages of that run.

- It turned out to be 56 consecutive laps of green, during which time Suárez dropped two positions back to 22nd and fell off the lead lap. He said his racecar was still loose on the extremities – in and out of the corners. He pitted for tires, fuel, air pressure and track bar adjustments. He restarted 21st on lap 234, the first car one lap down.
- The next caution flag flew on lap 354 with Suárez 23rd and one lap down. He pitted during the caution for tires, fuel and right-side air pressure adjustments, going back on the pressure adjustments made the previous stop as Suárez said the car took longer to come to him.
- He restarted 25th on lap 361, one lap down, after dropping to the back of the cars on his lap on the restart for speeding on pit road.
- Suárez made good forward progress in the opening laps of the run, working his way to 22nd. He lost a lap to go down two before the next caution flag flew on lap 433. He stayed out to take the wave-around back to one lap down, restarting 22nd on lap 439.
- Suárez worked his way back into Lucky Dog position by the time the caution flag flew on lap 457, moving him up to the lead lap. He pitted for tires, fuel, right-side air pressure adjustments, and the removal of tape from the brake duct intakes as Suárez reported he was struggling under braking. He restarted 22nd on lap 463.
- A multicar accident brought out the caution flag just one lap into the next run, on lap 464, and Suárez said he had to slide his Toyota sideways to avoid contact. He stayed on track through the caution and restarted 18th on lap 473.
- The 17th and final caution flag of the day flew on lap 489 with Suárez running 19th. Five laps remained when the race went back to green on lap 495, and Suárez held onto 18th place across the finish line.

Daniel Suárez, driver of the No. 96 It's Good To Be Genuine Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

“It was an eventful race. We had a lot of stuff going on. There was some miscommunication in the beginning and we had to do a pass-through, and a pass-through at Bristol is tough to come back from. We went two laps down and it was a struggle from there. But the team never gave up. We worked very hard and we were able to recover and fight back to get our first top-20 (of the season) for the team. The car had decent speed but, obviously, it's never enough. We have to work hard to keep getting better and hopefully we'll be stronger next weekend in Atlanta.”

Race Notes:

- The result was the best for the No. 96 Toyota since Parker Kligerman's 15th-place finish at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway last October, and it was the best finish for the team in three outings at Bristol.
- Brad Keselowski won the Supermarket Heroes 500 to score his 32nd career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his second of the season and his third at Bristol. His margin of victory over second-place Clint Bowyer was .471 of a second.
- There were 17 caution periods for a total of 102 laps.
- Only 22 of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Kevin Harvick remains the championship leader after Bristol with a 24-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 Folds of Honor QuikTrip 500 on Sunday, June 7 at Atlanta Motor Speedway. The race starts at 3 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FOX and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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