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GAUNT BROTHERS RACING



29th-Place Run for Suárez at Coca-Cola 600

Midrace Setbacks Challenge Today. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry Team

Date: May 24, 2020
Event: Coca-Cola 600
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway (1.5-mile oval)
Format: 400 laps, broken into four stages (100 laps/100 laps/100 laps/100 laps)
Start/Finish: 37th / 29th (Running, completed 399 of 405 laps)
Point Standing: 31st with 63 points, 228 out of first
Note: Race extended five laps past its scheduled 400-lap distance due to a green-white-checked finish.
Race Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Alex Bowman of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 3 Winner: Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-100):

- Started 37th, finished 29th.
- Suárez had a solid launch when the green flag waved, powering his way up to 27th by lap three, but then settled in at 31st from lap five until the competition caution on lap 20. He reported the Today. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry (Stars & Stripes Edition) was free in turns one and two, tight in three and four. Crew chief Dave Winston made slight air pressure adjustments in both rear tires on the lap-22 pit stop. Suárez rejoined 29th, but NASCAR ruled a crew member was over the wall too early, forcing him to the rear of the lead-lap cars on the lap-27 restart, where he took the green flag 33rd.
- Suárez slid forward two positions shortly after the restart and settled in at 31st until the caution flew for rain on lap 48. The race was red-flagged on lap 50 for 68 minutes.
- When pace laps resumed, Suárez pitted from 31st for four tires, fuel and a track bar adjustment and resumed 28th, from where he restarted on lap 57.
- By lap 60, Suárez had worked his way up to 22nd, but then reported his Toyota was starting to get tight.
- On lap 69, still running 22nd, Suárez reported the car began slipping out of gear. He dropped back to 30th while dealing with the issue.
- The caution flag flew for a single-car accident on lap 97, three laps before the scheduled stage break. Suárez was running 30th at the time, just having become the first car running one lap down, but he was the beneficiary of the free pass back onto the lead lap.
- Suárez pitted on lap 103 during the stage break caution for four tires, fuel and another track bar adjustment and rejoined 28th.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 101-200):

- Started 28th, finished 29th.
- The segment restarted on lap 106 and Suárez held his relative position, reporting he was losing more and more grip in turns three and four.
- Suárez made his fuel last until lap 169, when he was one of the last cars to pit, having moved into the top-10 under the green-flag sequence of stops. A lug nut issue cost valuable time in the pits and Suárez rejoined in 29th, two laps down. He dropped another lap by the end of the stage, which he finished 29th.
- The stage break pit stop came on lap 204, and the Toyota. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry took four tires, fuel, air pressure and track bar adjustments.

Stage 3 Recap (Laps 201-300):

- Started 29th, finished 29th.
- Like Stage 2, this one remained caution-free and Suárez made his fuel last until lap 267, when he pitted for four tires, fuel, air pressure, wedge and track bar adjustments. He then was penalized for speeding in the first segment of pit lane and had to serve a drive-through penalty on the ensuing lap.
- A single-car accident on lap 276 brought out the caution flag for something other than a segment break since the closing laps of Stage 1. Suárez stayed on track in 29th and took the wave-around to put him at five laps down.
- The team elected to stay out on track during the stage break to take the wave-around and move up to four laps down.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 301-400):

- Started 29th, finished 29th.

- Suárez brought his Today. Tomorrow. Toyota Camry down pit road on lap 339 for a final scheduled stop – fuel, tires and a wedge adjustment. He resumed in 29th, six laps down.
- A lap-347 caution for a single-car incident allowed Suárez to stay on track and take the wave-around to move from six to five laps down in 29th place.
- Another single-car incident two laps from the scheduled finish brought out the caution flag and set up a green-white-checkered finish with Suárez in 29th, six laps down.
- Suárez held his ground in overtime and crossed the finish line 29th.

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

“I think this Today. Tomorrow. Toyota has much more potential. We all just have to get better – everybody. In general, it was rough. In qualifying, we had big issues with the splitter – we barely made a lap. The splitter was hitting the ground so hard. We made adjustments going into the race and the car was much better, but it was extremely rough through the bumps in corners three and four. It was a long day. We made it better. I felt like the car had potential to be strong, but we struggled. I felt like we did a very good job on restarts. I felt like we could get to the top-20 and stay there, but we had some big issues on pit road. We had one stop that was extremely long and it was under the green flag. Anyway, we have to keep working. We’ll come back on Wednesday.”

Race Notes:

- Brad Keselowski won the Coca-Cola 600 to score his 31st career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his first of the season and his second on the oval at Charlotte. His margin of victory over second-place Jimmie Johnson was .293 of a second.
- There were eight caution periods for a total of 52 laps.
- Only 20 of the 40 drivers in the Coca-Cola 600 finished on the lead lap.
- Kevin Harvick remains the championship leader after the Coca-Cola 600 with a 22-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 Alsco Uniforms 500k on Wednesday, May 27 at Charlotte Motor Speedway. The race starts at 8 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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