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Suárez Races to 27th Under the Martinsville Lights

CommScope Toyota Driver Survives Extreme Cockpit Temps in 500-Lap Event

Date: June 10, 2020
Event: Blue-Emu Maximum Pain Relief 500 (Round 11 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Martinsville (Va.) Speedway (.526-mile oval)
Format: 500 laps, broken into three stages (130 laps/130 laps/240 laps)
Start/Finish: 37th / 27th (Running, completed 494 of 500 laps)
Point Standing: 32nd with 107 points

Race Winner: Martin Truex Jr., of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 1 Winner: Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 2 Winner: Jimmie Johnson of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-130):

- Started 37th, finished 27th.
- Suárez moved up to 31st by the time the caution flag waved on lap four for a spinning car in turns three and four, and picked up another spot to 30th, but one lap down, by the time the field reached the scheduled competition caution on lap 60.
- He reported the CommScope Toyota was decent at the start but gradually got more and more loose on corner entry and exit and tight through the center. He pitted on lap 64 for tires, fuel, air pressure and a right-rear wedge adjustment. He restarted 26th when the race went back to green on lap 68.
- Suárez drove up to 24th by lap 80, and 22nd by lap 100, and dropped one spot to 23rd by the time the caution flag flew on lap 112 for a stalled car on pit road. He reported issues similar to his opening run of the race but stayed on track and restarted 23rd on lap 120.
- He dropped four spots by the stage break and pitted on lap 135 for four tires, fuel, air pressure and left-rear wedge adjustments.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 131-260):

- Started 29th, finished 31st.
- The stage went green on lap 140 and stayed that way to its finish on lap 260. Suárez dropped a pair of positions and two more laps off the pace to go three down. He said his CommScope Toyota was free on entry, very tight through the center and had no drive off the corner.
- He pitted on lap 265 for tires, fuel, air pressure, wedge and packer adjustments.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 261-500):

- Started 30th, finished 27th.
- The green flag flew on lap 271 to start the stage with Suárez the first car three laps down in 30th.
- He held his position until the caution flag flew on lap 325 for a single-car incident. Suárez stayed on track to take the wave-around and moved up to two laps back when the race went back to green on lap 332.
- The caution flag flew on lap 397 with Suárez holding down 29th place, four laps down. He pitted on lap 400 for tires, fuel and another packer adjustment, and restarted 29th and the only car four laps down on lap 402. It was the last planned pit stop of the night.
- The race went green the rest of the way and Suárez crossed the finish line 27th, six laps down.

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

“That was rough. I had a hard time there, and I understand it was that way for just about everybody. The temperatures were so high – the air, the pedals were hot, the shifter, it seemed like everything. The CommScope Toyota was pretty decent at the start, but it kept getting more and more loose on entry and exit and very tight in the center. The last part of the race, it actually felt really good, so Dave (Winston, crew chief) and the guys did a good job giving me a good car for the finish. We just need to keep working hard to try and keep finding more speed.”

Race Notes:

- Martin Truex Jr. won the Blue-Emu Maximum Pain Relief 500 to score his 27th career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his first of the season and his second at Martinsville. His margin of victory over second-place Ryan Blaney was 4.705 seconds.
- There were seven caution periods for a total of 52 laps.
- Only 14 of the 39 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Kevin Harvick remains the championship leader after Martinsville with a 28-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 Dixie Vodka 400 on Sunday, June 14 at Homestead-Miami Speedway. The race starts at 3:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FOX and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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