

96

COMMSCOPE®



DANIEL SUÁREZ

CommScope Toyota Driver Ready for Historic Martinsville Night Race

MOORESVILLE, North Carolina (June 8, 2020) – The NASCAR Cup Series had gone 36 years without a Wednesday race on its schedule before hitting the track May 20 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway in the series' second race back from a 70-day hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Wednesday, Daniel Suárez, driver of the No. 96 CommScope Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing (GBR), joins his fellow Cup Series competitors for the third scheduled Wednesday-night race in a four-week span – Darlington and the following week at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway being the first two, although rain forced the latter event to be run the next day.

This week, they'll take to the half-mile, paperclip-shaped Martinsville (Va.) Speedway oval for the Blue-Emu Maximum Pain Relief 500, and once again they'll be making history in the process. Wednesday night's race will be the first Cup Series event under the lights at the historic track, which has been hosting NASCAR races since 1949 but did not install stadium lighting until 2017.

The 500-lap race will be the second short-track event in the last three stops on the reconfigured Cup Series tour and a welcome one for Suárez, who's in his first year with the one-car GBR team that is tackling the full 36-race schedule for the first time in its 10-year history. Two Sundays ago, Suárez drove to an 18th-place finish on the half-mile Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway bullring for his best result in the No. 96 GBR Toyota thus far.

Martinsville is a track where Suárez feels very much at home, with its close-quarters racing that's reminiscent of several tracks he competed on in his native country from 2009 through 2014. He became the eighth-winningest driver in the history of the NASCAR Peak Mexico Series in that time, racing on a variety of tracks, from road courses, to intermediate ovals, to half-mile flat tracks like the Autodromo de Potosino, where he raced 11 times and qualified on the pole twice. There's also the .625-mile El Dorado Speedway in Chihuahua, where he won from the pole in 2013 for one of his 10 Mexico Series victories in 76 starts. And there are the three-quarter-mile short tracks at Chiapas and Queretaro, where he also hoisted first-place trophies and led laps en masse.

Wednesday night's race will be the seventh Cup Series outing for Suárez at Martinsville, where he has a best start of eighth and a best finish of ninth, both while driving the No. 19 Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing in October 2018. He qualified ninth in both of his outings there since, driving the No. 41 Stewart-Haas Racing entry to finishes of 10th and 31st, respectively, in the spring and fall 2019 races. His average Martinsville start is 13.8 and average finish is 19.2.

With the old-school feel of bumping and grinding with 39 other stock cars, under the lights on a short track in the middle of the week, Suárez and his fellow competitors are excited to give their television audience quite the show.

DANIEL SUÁREZ, Driver of the No. 96 CommScope Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

Your thoughts about racing at Martinsville Wednesday night, including under the lights for the first time there?

"I love going to Martinsville. It's just a different atmosphere and they have things so unique to them – the trophy, the style of track, etc. Martinsville is cool because it's one of the old-school tracks that we go to. I drive back and forth from home and it's a unique place. It reminds me kind of like a Late Model race, where it's just a different environment from the big tracks we usually go to. And now we get to race there at night, with the lights and everything for the first time. It will be a little strange to be racing like that, on a Wednesday night, on an old-school track, with no fans in the stands. But the people watching on TV are going to love it."

Everyone says Martinsville requires a totally different approach as a driver. How would you describe that?

"It's one of those tracks where you have to go slow in order to make yourself fast. You have to back up the corner and go slow going into it, then you really get your speed coming off of it to pass people. There's a lot of beating and banging between all of us on the track and it's something really fun to watch. You have to move guys out of the way to pass, usually, and it's just so different."

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Wednesday night's race will be your seventh in the last 25 days, and you'll have another race just four days later at Homestead-Miami Speedway. What do you do to stay in the physical shape you need to be in for a schedule like that?

"I have been into the fitness or workout programs since I was about 15 years old. I just like to be in good shape and I like to feel good. I feel like when you get a good workout in, you have a good feeling the rest of the day. I like the high-intensity programs in the workout room or on the bike. The bike has been something that I have enjoyed a lot for the last couple of years. I have been working out high-intensity, high heart rate, for a while now. I just feel like it's a lot of fun. I have always liked to push myself a lot and I feel like it helps you physically a lot, but the most important part is mentally. I feel like you get used to pushing yourself harder and harder, and you do that in the workout room or the bike and you learn how to do that, as well, in many other places like the racetrack."

DANIEL SUÁREZ'S MARTINSVILLE PERFORMANCE PROFILE

| Year | Date | Event | Start | Finish | Status/Laps | Laps Led | Earnings |
|-------------|-------|----------------|-------|--------|------------------|----------|----------|
| 2019 | 10/27 | First Data 500 | 9 | 31 | Running, 488/500 | 0 | N/A |
| | 3/24 | STP 500 | 9 | 10 | Running, 500/500 | 0 | N/A |
| 2018 | 10/28 | First Data 500 | 8 | 9 | Running, 500/500 | 0 | N/A |
| | 3/26 | STP 500 | 23 | 18 | Running, 497/500 | 0 | N/A |
| 2017 | 10/29 | First Data 500 | 15 | 15 | Running, 505/505 | 0 | N/A |
| | 4/2 | STP 500 | 19 | 32 | Running, 489/500 | 0 | N/A |

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