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## DANIEL SUÁREZ

### Twice Is Nice at Pocono

MOORESVILLE, North Carolina (June 24, 2020) – For a driver and organization with goals as ambitious as those of Daniel Suárez and the No. 96 CommScope Toyota Camry team for Gaunt Brothers Racing (GBR), one of the most valuable commodities is track time. As they say, ask and ye shall receive, as Suárez, GBR and their fellow NASCAR Cup Series competitors head to Pocono (Pa.) Raceway for not one, but two races this weekend.

Between Saturday's Pocono Organics 325 and Sunday's Pocono 350 on the unique, 2.5-mile triangle in the Pocono Mountains, Suárez and his team relish the opportunity to have a scheduled 675 miles of track time to try and move their single-car operation, which is undertaking the full Cup Series schedule for the first time in its 10-year history, a giant step further along in its development.

Since NASCAR's return to racing May 17 after a 10-week hiatus due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, track time has been limited to the nine races that have been run thus far, with the exception of a single-lap qualifying session for the Memorial Day-weekend Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway. No practice, no other qualifying, and the only opportunity allowed to work on the racecars once at the track occurring between the green flag that starts the race and the checkered flag at race's end.

For this weekend's Pocono doubleheader, in which the same car must be used both days, teams will again race their cars as they unload from the hauler in Saturday's 325-mile event. But, they'll be allowed to work on their cars for a total of nine hours before the start of Sunday's 350-miler – four and one-half hours after Saturday's race, and four and one-half hours prior to tech inspection Sunday.

Suárez is looking forward to this weekend's return to the track where he scored his first Cup Series pole and best career Cup Series finish of second in the July 2018 race. He led the opening 21 laps in his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota that day and eight more before race's end for a total of 29, and crossed the finish line 1.7 seconds behind his then-teammate Kyle Busch. He's scored another pair of top-10 finishes at Pocono – seventh in his Gibbs Toyota in the July 2017 race, and eighth in his Stewart-Haas Racing entry last June – and another pair of top-10 finishes in his only NASCAR Xfinity Series races there in 2016 and 2017.

It may be the first weekend doubleheader in the modern era of NASCAR Cup Series racing, but Saturday and Sunday at Pocono will be the third time since the season resumed May 17 that back-to-back races will take place at the same track. Sunday races were followed by scheduled Wednesday-night races at both Darlington (S.C.) Raceway and Charlotte – although Charlotte's second race was run Thursday after getting rained out Wednesday.

But this weekend, teams will have to turn around and race again in less than 24 hours rather than the scheduled three days between events at Darlington at Charlotte. For Suárez and his CommScope Toyota team, they certainly welcome the challenge. And, most certainly, they welcome the track time.

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

**You're returning with your new team to Pocono, where you had success over the years. Your thoughts?**

"It was cool to get the pole there two years ago and almost win the race. Of course, it always helps to have a good starting spot. You really have to capitalize on a good starting position like that and we were able to do that and finish second. Pocono is a track where you can't make mistakes on the track, and you can't have mistakes on pit road. Everyone has to do their part to execute perfectly. I really feel like we keep making progress each week with our CommScope Toyota, even though they are baby steps, like I keep saying. Sometimes the results may not exactly show it, but my guys are doing a great job and they never give up."

**What do you feel is most important to be successful at Pocono?**

"Track position is extremely important every weekend, but it's especially important at Pocono. We don't have the opportunity to qualify, so we are starting the Saturday race from our usual 37<sup>th</sup> spot, being the best non-chartered team. That makes it challenging every time we have to do that, so obviously it will be important to get a strong start. Track position has always been important wherever we go, but it's more important than ever. And if we make a mistake, it takes so much longer and is so much harder to recover from. The good thing about Sunday's race is that they'll line the cars up based on Saturday's finishing positions (with Saturday's lead-lap finishers inverted), and we'll have a chance to work on our CommScope Toyota to make whatever changes we need to. It's going to be fun."

**You and your fellow competitors are tackling a weekend doubleheader for the first time at Pocono. What kind of new challenges does that present for you and the CommScope Toyota team?**

“Right now, the big thing is we’ve gotten into a routine where we’ve taken one car to the track, unloaded it, raced it, and put it back on the truck. Now, with the addition of having to prepare a backup car, we have the opportunity to make changes between races. It’ll feel a lot like we’re getting back toward a normal race weekend, where we practice, qualify, race, etc. This weekend, the first race will be like practice, getting us ready for second race. We can take more equipment, we can take two more people for any repairs and changes we’ll be making between Saturday and Sunday. At Darlington and Charlotte, we did the same thing but three days apart. We brought the car back to the shop – some people used the same car, some didn’t, we did. We tried to make improvements to our setups and go back and do better the second time. But the weather conditions were different from one race to the next, which made it a challenge. Hopefully, Saturday and Sunday at Pocono we’ll have the same weather for both races. It should be good for us. I love Pocono, I love going there and I love racing there, so I’m really looking forward to it.”

**How will you approach the two races? You mentioned Saturday’s race will be like practice for Sunday’s race.**

“Because we don’t have a notebook to rely on between Daniel and I – he has his path there and knows what to expect, and I have my own path there based on the past. We don’t know exactly how tight or loose our car needs to be, how the attitude of the car needs to be because we haven’t been able to spend a lot of time in the wind tunnel, so we have to be on the right track as to where to put the car. Ideally, we’re not giving up on the first day, by any means. We’re going there to be the best we can be on Saturday, knowing that we’ll have another shot at it come Sunday. Unless we run really, really well on Saturday, I would expect several changes for Sunday. It’s a brand new car we’ll be taking there, so hopefully we unload well and the weekend moves in a positive direction as we go. Daniel’s taken really, really good care of our racecars, and hopefully he doesn’t get caught up in something out of his control. We’ll look to finish in a great spot on Saturday, end up in a great starting spot for Sunday, and give it everything we can.”

## DANIEL SUÁREZ’S POCONO PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2019	7/28	Gander RV 400	7	24	Running, 163/163	0	N/A
	6/2	Pocono 400	9	8	Running, 160/160	9	N/A
2018	7/29	Gander Outdoors 400	1	2	Running, 164/164	29	N/A
	6/3	Pocono 400	18	24	Running, 160/160	0	N/A
2017	7/30	Overton’s 400	8	7	Running, 160/160	0	N/A
	6/11	Axalta 400	14	15	Running, 160/160	1	N/A

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