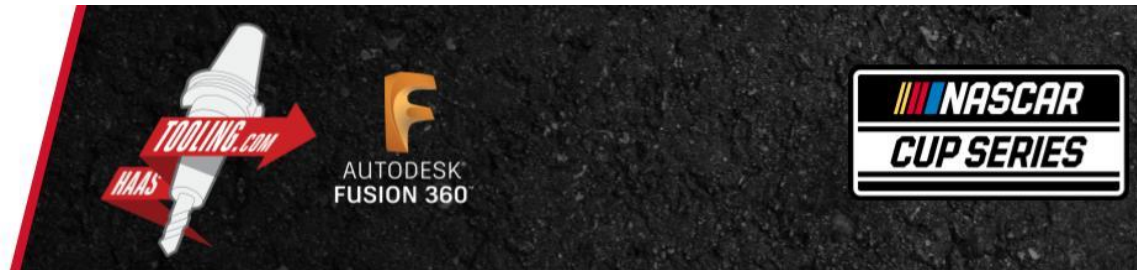


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Custer Earns Career Best Cup Finish at Indianapolis

Ford Drivers Captures Fifth-Place in First Indianapolis Cup Start

Date: July 5, 2020
Event: Big Machine Hand Sanitizer 400 (Round 16 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Indianapolis Motor Speedway (2.5-mile oval)
Format: 160 laps, broken into three stages (50 laps/50 laps/60 laps)
Start/Finish: 30th/5th (Running, completed 161 of 161 laps)
Point Standing: 25th with 273 points, 364 out of first
Note: Race extended one lap past its scheduled 160-lap distance due to a green-white-checkered finish.

Race Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: William Byron of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-50):

- Cole Custer started 30th and finished 14th.
- During the lap-12 competition caution Custer reported his No. 41 HaasTooling.com/Autodesk Fusion 360 Ford was just a tick loose while running 21st.
- On lap 38, Custer picked up a piece of trash on the grille, but was able to continue on.
- The California native reported his Mustang was starting to get tight while running 16th on lap 40.
- The rookie driver ended the stage in 14th and reported his Mustang was, “a little tighter off,” but didn’t visit pit road.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 51-100):

- Custer started in 10th and finished 13th.
- On the lap-74 caution, Custer pitted from 13th and restarted 14th on lap 83.
- With two cautions in a short span, Custer didn’t pit and ultimately restarted 16th on lap 91.
- By lap 97, Custer worked his way back up to 13th, where he ultimately ended the stage.
- During the Stage break, Custer pitted for fuel, four tires and adjustments to free his Mustang up a little bit.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 101-161):

- Custer started 16th, finished fifth.
- As the front of the field began to make scheduled green-flag pit stop, Custer stayed out on the track allowing him to gain positions.
- “It’s starting to get too tight,” Custer radioed on lap 128 from fifth about his Ford Mustang.
- Under caution on lap 134, Custer pitted from the fourth position for fuel and four tires and restarted sixth.
- Custer was able to work his way back into the top-five just after the restart, and ran as high as fourth, before getting passed by teammate Aric Almirola on lap 145.
- On lap 154, the caution came and moved Custer in to the fourth position.
- On the only attempt of a green-white-checkered finish, Custer lined up fourth behind teammate and leader Kevin Harvick.
- Custer nudged the rear of Harvick’s No. 4 machine to help push him to the lead on the restart and Custer ultimately finished fifth.

Notes:

- Custer’s fifth-place finish was his best result in 19 career NASCAR Cup Series starts, and it came in his first Cup Series start at Indianapolis.
- This was Custer’s first top-five and second top-10 of the season.
- Custer was the highest finishing NASCAR Cup Series rookie.
- Harvick’s margin of victory over second-place Matt Kenseth was .743 of a second.
- There were nine caution periods for a total of 43 laps.
- Only 19 of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Indianapolis with an 85-point advantage over second-place Chase Elliott.

Cole Custer, driver of the No. 41 HaasTooling.com/Autodesk Fusion 360 Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

“It is awesome to have all of SHR running well here at Indy. It is Tony’s (Stewart) backyard so it is a huge race for us. For us, our team, this package has been exactly the opposite of what I am used to driving. For it to all come together today means a lot. Thanks to all of the guys at SHR for bringing great race cars. HaasTooling.com went national this week, so check them out. I am psyched. I am really happy we finally had it all come together.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Kentucky 400 on Sunday, July 12 at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta. The race starts at 2:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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