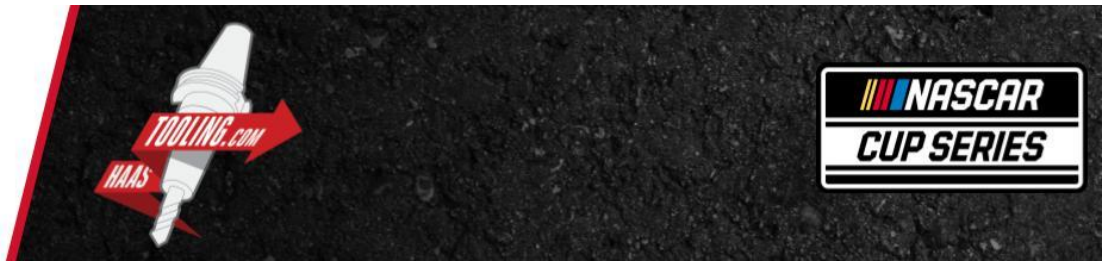


# 41



## COLE CUSTER

### Making First Cup Start at Kansas

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (July 21, 2020) – With the NASCAR Cup Series season in the middle of the summer stretch, Cole Custer and the No. 41 HaasTooling.com team will race Thursday night at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City. The Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) driver will pilot the No. 41 HaasTooling.com Ford Mustang for the 400-mile event in his 22<sup>nd</sup> Cup Series start.

Last Sunday at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, Custer started 19<sup>th</sup> and ran in the top-15 before his day ended prematurely after being caught up in a multicar accident on lap 219. It was a disappointing finish for the rookie driver who secured his first Cup Series win in only his 20<sup>th</sup> start the week prior at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta. “I mean, it’s always one of the most humbling sports you can be a part of – winning one week and being part of a wreck the following week,” Custer said.

Team co-owner Gene Haas’ newest holding, [Haas Tooling](#), was launched as a way for CNC machinists to purchase high quality cutting tools at great prices. Haas’ cutting tools are sold exclusively online at HaasTooling.com and shipped directly to end users. Beginning July 1, HaasTooling.com products became available nationally. The cutting tools available for purchase at HaasTooling.com are even more important during the current COVID-19 pandemic as CNC machines have become vital to producing personal protective equipment.

There are eight races left in the regular season before the playoffs start Sept. 6 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway, and Custer’s win at Kentucky earned him one of the coveted playoff spots.

The win also put Custer in a category with 33 other drivers who have won in all three NASCAR national series. All of Custer’s SHR teammates have won in all three national series. “Being in this spot so fast, I couldn’t even think of it coming into this year,” Custer said. The young driver has also won in NASCAR’s ARCA and K&N Pro Series. Additionally, 122 drivers have won in their first 20 starts. Before Custer’s win at Kentucky, the last five drivers to win in 20 starts or less are Trevor Bayne, Justin Hayley, Brad Keselowski, Joey Logano and Juan Pablo Montoya.

Kansas is the third consecutive mile-and-a-half track in as many weeks for the Cup Series. In his last seven starts at intermediate tracks, Custer has the Kentucky win, and an average starting position of 24.0, an average finishing position of 18.6 and he’s completed 94.4 percent of all possible laps.

Custer has four Kansas appearances in the NASCAR Xfinity Series with a best finish of 11<sup>th</sup>, an average starting position of 10.2, an average finishing position of 22.8, and 85 laps led.

In the Gander RV & Outdoor Truck Series at Kansas, the Ford driver’s lone appearance was in May 2016 when he started fourth and finished seventh.

In 66 starts at Kansas, SHR has three wins – team co-owner Tony Stewart in October 2009, and Kevin Harvick with a pair of wins in October 2016 and May 2018. In total at Kansas, SHR has 12 top-fives, 24 top-10s and 828 laps led.

Haas Automation, founded by Haas in 1983, is America’s leading builder of CNC machine tools. The company manufactures a complete line of vertical and horizontal machining centers, turning centers and rotary tables and indexers. All Haas products are constructed in the company’s 1.1-million-square-foot manufacturing facility in Oxnard, California, and distributed through a worldwide network of Haas Factory Outlets.

Even though Custer had a trio of starts in the Cup Series in 2018, 2020 officially marks his Rookie of the Year campaign in NASCAR's most prestigious series. He's competing for rookie honors with notables Christopher Bell and Tyler Reddick. The three have battled against each other in the Xfinity Series and are making the full-time transition to the Cup Series together. Custer is the first of the 2020 rookie class to earn a win this season.

***Cole Custer, Driver of the No. 41 HaasTooling.com Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:***

**You were the youngest winner in the Truck Series at 16 years old. Do you feel more comfortable winning now that you're a little older and in the Cup Series?**

"Definitely never felt really comfortable in that role at 16. It was kind of strange. I was always kind of the quieter kid and winning that race when I was 16, I was doing interviews with big media outlets and didn't really know what I was doing. It was cool but you have to keep winning races to make it and I've been lucky enough to drive some good cars. Hopefully, we can have more wins here in the future."

**How much can you carry over from one 1.5-mile track to another?**

"Every single track is different. You can't bring the same thing to them, but I think we have a really good idea on what we need to bring to the mile-and-a-half tracks. We should be pretty good on them obviously after Kentucky, but we are still making our best educated guess because we don't have practice or anything to work our cars in. You just have to hope you hit it right."

**Without practice and qualifying, how much are you relying on your crew chief Mike Shiplett and your engineer Davin Restivo to get you comfortable in the car?**

"A lot. It's been cool to work with Mike and Davin because I worked with them last year in the Xfinity Series. We all have a little bit to learn in the Cup Series, but it's nice to already have our communication down and know what each other is looking for in the cars. It's been good, it's just a matter of perfecting these cars and getting better each time we are out there."

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