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Cole Custer Finishes Seventh in First Kansas Start

Ford Rookie Notches Fourth Top-10 This Season

Date: July 23, 2020
Event: Super Start Batteries 400 (Round 19 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Kansas Speedway in Kansas City (1.5-mile oval)
Format: 267 laps, broken into three stages (80 laps/80 laps/107 laps)
Start/Finish: 24th/7th (Running, completed 267 of 267 laps)
Point Standing: 19th with 352 points, 411 out of first

Race Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Winner: Kyle Busch of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 2 Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-80):

- Cole Custer started 24th and finished 19th.
- On lap 20, Custer reported his HaasTooling.com Mustang was “too free on entry and exit,” while running 17th.
- During the lap-25 competition caution, Custer pitted from 16th for fuel, four tires and adjustments.
- Custer restarted 28th on lap 30, and on lap 48 he reported his Ford Mustang was still too loose in the 19th spot.
- During the Stage 1 break, Custer pitted from 19th for fuel, four tires and adjustments.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 81-160):

- Custer started in 16th and finished 24th.
- On lap 91, Custer was in the 13th position.
- Under caution on lap 99, the California native pitted from 12th for fuel, four tires and adjustments to help with his loose condition.
- On lap 110, Custer reported his HaasTooling.com Mustang was “too tight on the bottom,” and slipped back to 18th.
- Another caution on lap 144 and Custer pitted from 17th after reporting his Mustang’s handling got worse that run. Restarted 19th.
- As the handling went away in the final laps of Stage 2, Custer fell to 24th.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 161-267):

- Custer started 22nd, finished seventh.
- Custer was running 17th when the caution was displayed on lap 171.
- Despite several cautions, Custer continued to work his way forward and reached the ninth position on lap 183.
- Custer reported his Mustang was too tight on lap 194 while running 11th under caution. He pitted and restarted 13th on lap 199.
- Pitted on lap 234 from 13th for fuel, four tires and adjustments. Restarted 12th on lap 240.
- Another caution occurred on lap 243 with Custer in the 10th position and he didn’t pit.
- As the laps clicked off, Custer continued to work his way forward and ultimately finished seventh.

Notes:

- Custer earned his fourth top-10 of the season and it came in his first career NASCAR Cup Series start at Kansas.
- Custer was the highest finishing NASCAR Cup Series rookie.
- Custer made four career NASCAR Xfinity Series starts at Kansas prior to moving to the NASCAR Cup Series this year. His best finish was 11th, earned last October.
- Denny Hamlin won the Super Start Batteries 400 to score his 42nd career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his fifth of the season and his third at Kansas. His margin of victory over second-place Brad Keselowski was .510 of a second.
- There were 11 caution periods for a total of 47 laps.
- Only 18 of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Kevin Harvick remains the championship leader after Kansas with a 97-point advantage over second-place Keselowski.

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

“Thanks to the guys for fighting all day. It definitely wasn’t the prettiest day, but we made something of it. Right there at the end was the best I had been in the top groove all day. It feels good to get another top-10 and take a few days off before we go to New Hampshire next weekend.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Foxwoods Resort Casino 301 on Sunday, Aug. 2 at New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon. The race starts at 3 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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