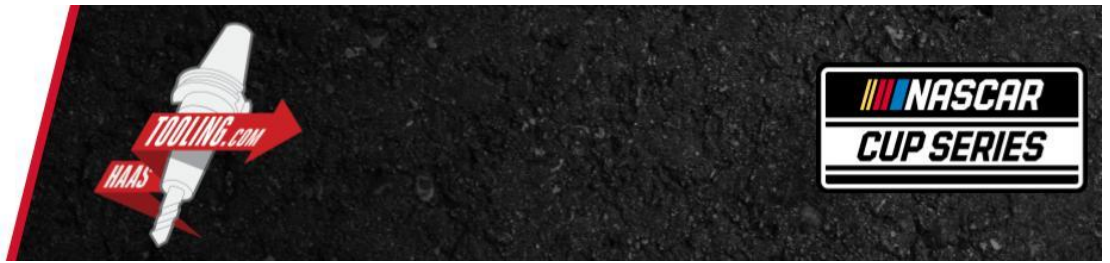


# 41



## COLE CUSTER

### First Cup Series Start at Kentucky

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (July 7, 2020) – Cole Custer and the No. 41 HaasTooling.com Mustang team head to Kentucky Speedway in Sparta for Sunday’s Kentucky 400. Sunday’s start is Custer’s 20<sup>th</sup> career Cup Series start and his first endeavor in the series at the 1.5-mile oval in the Bluegrass State.

The No. 41 machine will sport the HaasTooling.com livery for Sunday’s 267-lap race. Team co-owner Gene Haas’ newest holding, [Haas Tooling](http://HaasTooling.com) was launched last month 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 on HaasTooling.com are even more important during the current COVID-19 pandemic as CNC machines have become vital to producing personal protective equipment.

Custer heads to Kentucky coming off his best career Cup Series finish captured last Sunday at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. After starting 30<sup>th</sup> the rookie driver was able to work his way forward and run in the top-five before ultimately finishing fifth. The result was captured in Custer’s first Cup Series start at the iconic 2.5-mile oval. The finish wrapped up a stellar weekend for SHR at Indianapolis. SHR’s Xfinity Series driver Chase Briscoe won Saturday’s NASCAR Xfinity Series race on the infield road course. SHR’s Kevin Harvick won the Brickyard 400 for back-to-back wins in the crown jewel event. SHR’s Aric Almirola finished third, just ahead of Custer in the top-five.

In Custer’s last five Cup Series starts at 1.5-mile tracks, he has a best finish of 12<sup>th</sup> earned May 24 at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway and a best starting position of ninth in the May 28 return to Charlotte.

“Kentucky is an interesting track because it’s a repave, which makes it really fast and you’re carrying a lot of throttle,” Custer said. “It’s also cool at times because you’re able to work a few different lanes and stuff like that. It’s a fast racetrack, that’s for sure, and I think that’s the fun part of it.”

The California native has five NASCAR Xfinity Series starts at Kentucky. He has one pole award earned in July 2018 with a pole speed of 181.458 mph. He also earned one win at Kentucky last year with a margin of victory of 1.651 seconds over Christopher Bell. Overall at Kentucky, Custer has an average Xfinity Series start of 5.0 and an average finish of 10.8. He’s led 151 laps and has finished on the lead lap in four out of five Xfinity Series starts.

“I think some things apply from the Xfinity Series to the Cup Series at Kentucky,” the HaasTooling.com driver said. “It’s the same racetrack and it’s the same feel. It’s just getting used to what’s different in the Cup car. The two cars are a good amount different, and you have to figure out those differences to make this car as good as you can. The track has the same characteristics, it’s just getting the car down.”

Custer’s first career Cup Series win would catapult him into the NASCAR All-Star Race rescheduled for Wednesday, July 15 at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway. However, the 22-year-old could earn the No. 41 Ford Mustang a spot in the race by winning the All-Star Fan Vote. [Voting is open](#) for one vote per person, per day.

SHR is still looking for its first win at Kentucky Speedway. The Sparta track is the only venue on the Cup Series schedule where the championship organization hasn’t notched a win.

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.

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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 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.

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

**What has been the biggest adjustment for you moving up to the Cup Series?**

“The biggest thing has been getting used to the cars. They are obviously quite a bit different. When you don't have practice time, it's hard to get a really good feel for them, and know how hard you can push things in the corner. It's been a lot of learning, and it has been hard. Also, the competition level, you're racing against the best in the world and the field is super competitive, so you can't make any mistakes.”

**What kind of track is Kentucky compared to the others?**

“Kentucky is fast. You're going about wide open around there and can carry so much speed in the corner. It's a fun track to go to and I'm looking forward to it. One of the biggest things I've done to prepare is to watch as many videos as I can. I've gone into the simulator to try and get a feel for it. The simulator doesn't give you the feel of real life, but it's a head start.”

**What does success look like for you in your rookie season?”**

“I think as many top-10 runs as we can get will help us. It's obviously not been an easy season for a rookie, but it's something we're getting through. Having those good runs are important for confidence. Just try and work at it one step at a time and try and get better and better, and those runs will come. The competition level is so much higher here in the Cup Series. You have a lot more competitive cars than you have in the Xfinity Series, so any wrong move can really set you back a lot more in the Cup Series.”

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Contact Lauren Emling with True Speed Communication  
(704) 875-3388, ext. 811 or [Lauren.Emling@TrueSpeedCommunication.com](mailto:Lauren.Emling@TrueSpeedCommunication.com)  
[www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com](http://www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com) • Online Media Kit Available at: [www.TrueSpeedMedia.com](http://www.TrueSpeedMedia.com)