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GBR
GAUNT BROTHERS RACING



DANIEL SUÁREZ

'Open' Season at Bristol for It's Good To Be Genuine Toyota Driver

MOORESVILLE, North Carolina (July 14, 2020) – It's All-Star Week for Daniel Suárez and his No. 96 It's Good To Be Genuine Parts & Service Toyota for Gaunt Brothers Racing (GBR), and that brings the excitement of short-track racing under the lights as the NASCAR Cup Series takes its annual non-points All-Star Open and All-Star Race to a brand new location Wednesday night for the first time in 33 years – Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway.

All-Star festivities have been held on the 1.5-mile Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway oval every year but one since the event's inception in 1985 – the lone exception being 1986, when it was held at its sister 1.5-mile oval, Atlanta Motor Speedway. With no championship points on the line and a \$1 million first prize, All-Star events typically showcase some of the wildest racing to be witnessed each season.

Now that it's set to take place in the tighter confines of the .533-mile, high-banked concrete oval at Bristol for the first time Wednesday night, the level of excitement just might approach unprecedented levels.

The 28-year-old Suárez will be making his fourth appearance in the All-Star Open and his first with the single-car No. 96 GBR Toyota team, and he'll be on a mission to advance to the All-Star Race for the third time by winning one of its three stages, the first two of which are 35 laps, followed by a final 15-lap sprint to the finish. He won the Open on his very first try in 2017, taking the lead with three laps to go in his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota at Charlotte and beating Austin Dillon across the finish line by 1.039 seconds. He was subsequently eliminated after the second segment of the All-Star Race. The following year, he advanced to the All-Star Race by winning Stage 2 of the Open, then went on to finish second to Kevin Harvick by a .325-of-a-second margin in the feature race. Last year, a midrace accident during the Open ended Suárez's evening early in his Stewart-Haas Racing entry.

Wednesday night's event brings Suárez and his No. 96 It's Good To Be Genuine Parts & Service Toyota back to the scene of their best finish of the season on May 31. In was only their ninth race together and began from what has become their customary starting position of 37th – first of the non-chartered Cup Series competitors – since the series returned from a 10-week shutdown due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It ended with an 18th-place, lead-lap finish as Suárez avoided trouble throughout the 500-lap event.

With only 85 laps to work with this time and a starting spot of 19th after Monday night's qualifying draw, Suárez, his crew chief Dave Winston and his GBR pit crew know they will have to once again avoid the expected mayhem on track and get creative with their strategy. One new wrinkle NASCAR is experimenting with Wednesday night is the "choose cone" rule, which allows all competitors to pick either the inside or outside line on restarts, not just the first-place driver as is the case during points-paying races. It will allow drivers willing to risk taking the non-preferred line the chance to gain potentially numerous positions just before the race goes back to green.

In another new wrinkle, NASCAR is also experimenting Wednesday night with a paint scheme format in which the car number typically centered on the side door panels is moved back toward the rear wheel. It's designed to allow more prime real estate for primary sponsor graphics on the sides of the car.

But even with a new venue, a new rule, and a new look for the racecars, Suárez and his It's Good To Be Genuine Parts & Service Toyota teammates are ready to put on the typically exciting show fans have come to expect from the annual All-Star event.

DANIEL SUÁREZ, Driver of the No. 96 It's Good To Be Genuine Parts & Service Toyota for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

The NASCAR All-Star Open and All-Star Race are at Bristol for the first time this year. How do you think it will affect the kind of racing we typically see in those events?

"I think it's going to be challenging, for sure, because it's such a short race compared to the 500 laps we usually race at Bristol. I feel like it's going to be difficult for everyone to make passes, so you're going to have to move people out of the way to make something happen. It sounds like fun, but really it's not going to be much more fun because you have to get so much done in such a short amount of time. The goal for us will be like it is every week, and that is to keep our car in one piece. If we have a shot at it, we'll take it. But I won't wreck the It's Good To Be Genuine Toyota for fifth place. We just have to do the same as we do every weekend and be smart – aggressive, of course, but smart."

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You posted the team's best finish of the season at Bristol at the end of May. Does that make you and the team feel confident about your chances Wednesday night?

"It was a 500-lap race and we had a lot of time to get the job done, and we were able to stay away from all the trouble. Wednesday night, it's two 35-lap segments and a 15-lap segment. Thirty-five laps at Bristol is not a lot at all. It's like 12 laps at Charlotte. My advantage at Bristol in May was long-run speed, and that won't be a factor on Wednesday night. It's a very short race, but it is what it is. I feel like it's going to be a difficult test. Not impossible, but we will have to have a lot of things go our way."

What are your thoughts about the new "choose cone" rule on restarts that will be in effect Wednesday night? Do you feel you'll be willing to take the chance to gain a huge number of positions in the non-preferred lane?

"I've never raced under the choose cone rule, so I don't know too much about it. I think we will all learn about it together. The race is so short that I'm not sure the track is going to have time for a second racing groove to develop enough to where it's going to be worth the risk. But we'll know we can try to take advantage of the rule if the opportunity presents itself and the situation is right."

DANIEL SUÁREZ'S ALL-STAR PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2019	5/18	Monster Energy Open	4	12	Running, 62/62	1	N/A
2018	5/19	Monster Energy Open	7	20	Running, 40/50	18	N/A
	5/19	Monster Energy All-Star Race	19	2	Running, 93/93	0	N/A
2017	5/20	Monster Energy Open	6	1	Running, 50/50	9	N/A
		Monster Energy All-Star Race	19	15	Running, 60/70	0	N/A

DANIEL SUÁREZ'S BRISTOL PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2020	5/31	Supermarket Heroes 500	37	18	Running, 500/500	0	N/A
2019	8/17	Bass Pro Shops NRA Night Race	18	8	Running, 499/500	0	N/A
	4/7	Food City 500	20	8	Running, 500/500	0	N/A
2018	8/18	Bass Pro Shops 500	21	18	Running, 499/500	0	N/A
	4/16	Food City 500	12	11	Running, 500/500	5	N/A
2017	8/19	Bass Pro Shops NRA Night Race	12	15	Running, 500/500	0	N/A
	4/24	†Food City 500	23	18	Running, 498/500	0	N/A

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