



## Suárez Just Misses Fifth Top-25 at Kentucky

*Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Team Perseveres for Lead-Lap Finish of 26<sup>th</sup>*

**Date:** July 12, 2020  
**Event:** Quaker State 400 (Round 17 of 36)  
**Series:** NASCAR Cup Series  
**Location:** Kentucky Speedway in Sparta (1.5-mile oval)  
**Format:** 267 laps, broken into three stages (80 laps/80 laps/107 laps)  
**Start/Finish:** 37<sup>th</sup> / 26<sup>th</sup> (Running, completed 267 of 267 laps)  
**Point Standing:** 31<sup>st</sup> with 170 points  
**Race Winner:** Cole Custer of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)  
**Stage 1 Winner:** Aric Almirola of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)  
**Stage 2 Winner:** Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)

### Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-80):

- Started 37<sup>th</sup>, finished 31<sup>st</sup>.
- From his 37<sup>th</sup> starting position, Suárez was up to 32<sup>nd</sup> by lap four and held that position in his Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Camry until the lap-25 competition caution. He reported the left-front was bouncing more than normal during the run, and that the alternator light was acting up. He pitted for four tires, fuel, a left-front air pressure adjustment, and added tape on the grille. He pitted a second time to check under the hood, and the team discovered the alternator fan was broken, connections melted.
- Suárez restarted 33<sup>rd</sup> on lap 30 and moved up to 31<sup>st</sup> within three laps.
- The No. 96 Toyota improved gradually during the course of the run to the end of the stage, including the left-front bouncing issue. Suárez pitted during the break for four tires, fuel, air pressure adjustments to both fronts, and a track bar adjustments. He pitted a second and third time to replace the failed alternator fan.

### Stage 2 Recap (Laps 81-160):

- Started 30<sup>th</sup>, finished 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Suárez dropped a spot on the lap-87 green flag to start the stage and held 31<sup>st</sup> throughout the initial run. He reported the alternator was not working from that point forward, so he kept a close eye on the two batteries of his Toyota as their voltage readings steadily declined.
- The caution flag flew for a single-car incident on lap 154 with Suárez having made his way up to 24<sup>th</sup> and the second car one lap down. He pitted for fuel, tires, air pressure adjustments to both fronts and the track bar before restarting 26<sup>th</sup> with one lap to go before the break. He picked up one spot before the caution flag flew to end the stage.
- Suárez pitted to top off the fuel tank during the break.

### Final Stage Recap (Laps 161-267):

- Started 27<sup>th</sup>, finished 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Suárez held his relative ground with his Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Camry, sitting in the 25<sup>th</sup> position and one lap down when the first caution flag of the segment flew on lap 229 for a single-car incident. He said his racecar struggled for the opening 10 to 15 laps of the run but gradually improved over the long haul.
- He pitted during the caution for tires, fuel and air pressure adjustments all around and restarted 25<sup>th</sup> on lap 237.
- Suárez dropped a position when the caution flag flew again for a single-car incident on lap 244. He said he still struggled on the restart but his Toyota would typically improve in 12 to 15 laps. He restarted 26<sup>th</sup> and the second car one lap down when the race went back to green on lap 248, then moved into the Lucky Dog position when the caution flag flew for another incident before the lap was completed.
- The caution flag flew on lap 260 for a single-car incident with Suárez still running 26<sup>th</sup> but now back on the lead lap as the beneficiary of the free pass. He restarted 26<sup>th</sup> and on the lead lap and took the checkered flag in that position, just missing the team's fifth top-25 of the season.

### Daniel Suárez, driver of the No. 96 Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

“Wow, that was a good job by the guys and everybody to get us a lead-lap finish like that. I want to thank everyone for not giving up because we had several issues today, starting on lap one. Our Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Camry struggled for the first 10 to 15 laps every run, but then it always managed to get better and better as the run went along. We have to keep working, keep fighting, to just keep making everything better.”

### Race Notes:

- Suárez's lead-lap finish was the single-car team's third of the season.
- Since the accident that ended his season-opening Daytona 500 bid during his Duel qualifying race, he's driven the No. 96 Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Camry to the checkered flag in 16 consecutive races.
- Rookie Cole Custer won today's Quaker State 400 for his first career NASCAR Cup Series victory in his first Cup Series start at Kentucky. His margin of victory over second-place Martin Truex Jr., was .271 of a second.
- There were eight caution periods for a total of 42 laps.
- Twenty-six of the 38 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Kevin Harvick remains the championship leader after Kentucky with an 88-point advantage over second-place Brad Keselowski.

#### **Next Up:**

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule for Suárez and the Gaunt Brothers Racing team is the non-points NASCAR All-Star Open on Wednesday, July 15 at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway. The race starts at 7 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by FS1 and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio. With a win in either of the race's three stages, or by winning the [NASCAR Fan Vote](#), Suárez can advance to the NASCAR All-Star Race that begins at 8:30 p.m. for the third time in the last four seasons.

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