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GBR
GAUNT BROTHERS RACING



DANIEL SUÁREZ

Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Camry Team Ready for Texas

MOORESVILLE, North Carolina (July 16, 2020) – One of the more well-worn but still extremely relevant clichés in motor racing goes something like this: “To finish first, you must first finish.”

For Daniel Suárez and his still relatively young No. 96 Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Camry team for Gaunt Brothers Racing (GBR), the “finish first” part might not be a weekly expectation just yet, but they’ve shown so far in their first season together they’ve got the “you must first finish” part down pat.

As the 2020 NASCAR Cup Series season reaches its midpoint at Sunday’s O’Reilly Auto Parts 500 at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, Suárez and his non-chartered, single-car team have certainly made the most of the extremely limited track time available – literally – since the series returned May 17 from its 10-week shutdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After the disappointment of having to miss the season-opening Daytona 500 thanks to a midrace accident in the No. 96 GBR Toyota’s Duel qualifying race, Suárez has run the table in the statistical category known as “running at finish” in the 16 races since. The 28-year-old native of Monterrey, Mexico is one of only three full-time drivers who have completed every race in which they’ve competed this year – points leader Kevin Harvick and Matt DiBenedetto being the other two. Four other drivers whose only DNF (did not finish) this season came at the Daytona 500 – Brad Keselowski, Joey Logano, Kurt Busch and William Byron – have also finished every race since.

They may not be race wins, but for a young, single-car team with the goal of competing week-to-week with the big, multicar operations, regularly bringing home its modest stable of Toyotas unscathed is a victory in itself and facilitates the team’s evolution. Suárez, the fourth-year Cup Series regular, has completed 4,339 of the 4,378 – 99.1 percent – laps available in the 16 races since the Daytona 500, ranking him 16th among all drivers in laps completed, even without the 209 laps that would have been available to him had he made the Daytona 500 field. A lead-lap finish at Daytona would have put Suárez in the top-six among all Cup Series regulars.

The finishing streak and laps completed are a testament to the steady focus on the big picture by Suárez, his crew chief Dave Winston, and the entire GBR crew race after race. On top of the fact that the current norm involves lining up to race without the benefit of practice or qualifying, being a non-chartered team allows Suárez and his No. 96 Toyota to line up no better than 37th when the starting grid is determined by blind draw. That typically puts the team behind the eight-ball even before the green flag flies.

No matter, Suárez, Winston and all of GBR have remained upbeat under the leadership of team owner Marty Gaunt. They know the process takes time and they’ve bought in on the importance of paying the price, doing the work, taking baby steps in the here and now.

Come Sunday on the fast, 1.5-mile oval at Texas, where Suárez finished third in both of last year’s races in his Stewart-Haas Racing entry, the cool-headed driver and the patient but tenacious racing team behind him look to move their ambitious program just a little bit further along.

DANIEL SUÁREZ, Driver of the No. 96 Toyota Certified Used Vehicles Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

You had a good couple of runs at Texas last year, finishing third in both the spring and fall races. What’s your mindset as you return with your No. 96 Toyota team?

“Texas is such a fast mile-and-a-half where a lot can happen. I had very good cars for both races there last year and it’s always great when you can be fighting near the front all the way to the end of the race. This year, we’re working hard to develop our mile-and-a-half program, especially since most of the tracks we race at are mile-and-a-half tracks. We’re getting there little by little. Each week is a learning experience and we hope to be better Sunday than we were at the last race.”

You had some issues on the mile-and-a-half track at Kentucky last Sunday but the team seemed to be pretty positive about almost earning your fifth top-25 of the season. Do you agree?

“We struggled early on with the balance of our Toyota at Kentucky, which we were able to improve. But then we struggled with alternator issues the whole race. That made things tough without being able to run (cooling) fans, without anything. The team was able to make good adjustments to make the car go faster and that’s something positive, as well as finishing on the lead lap. It was definitely something to build on and we are working hard to try and come back stronger for Texas.”

Sunday's race marks the midpoint of the season. How would you assess the work you and the team have been able to get done so far?

“Gaunt Brothers Racing is a team that we essentially began building from zero, and obviously we have a lot of work to do. But we know where we’re going and I feel that in the long term we are going to be able to win races and contend for championships. But you have to take the first steps, right? So the first steps have involved building this team, to work hard for this team, and also to have the right people around us. And that is continuing with a good manufacturer that is Toyota, and great sponsors like Coca-Cola and CommScope. We have great people around us and we obviously have high expectations for the long run but, for now, we just have to keep managing our expectations and keep working hard to build this team.”

DANIEL SUÁREZ’S TEXAS PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2019	11/3	AAA Texas 500	7	3	Running, 334/334	37	N/A
	3/31	O’Reilly Auto Parts 500	4	3	Running, 334/334	9	N/A
2018	11/4	AAA Texas 500	19	28	Running, 332/337	0	N/A
	4/8	O’Reilly Auto Parts 500	14	29	Accident, 290/334	0	N/A
2017	11/5	AAA Texas 500	6	14	Running, 334/334	0	N/A
	4/9	O’Reilly Auto Parts 500	20	19	Running. 334/334	0	N/A

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