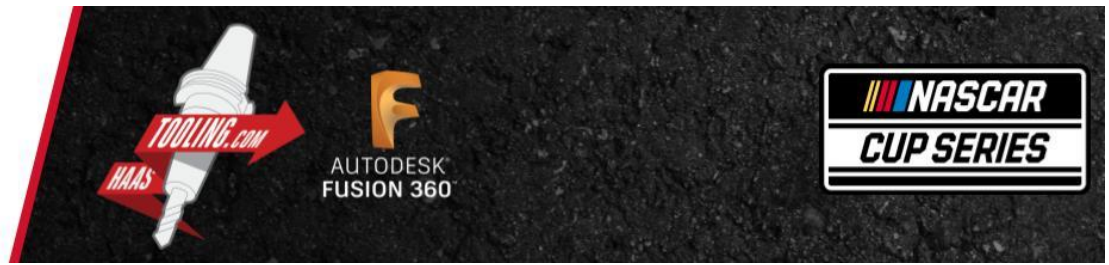


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COLE CUSTER

Ready for Final Regular-Season Race

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Aug. 25, 2020) – Cole Custer and the No. 41 HaasTooling.com/Autodesk Fusion 360 team with Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) head back to Florida for the final time this season for Saturday night's 400-mile NASCAR Cup Series race at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway. The Coke Zero Sugar 400 marks Custer's 29th career start in the series.

While a superspeedway is always intense with all of the unknowns it presents, this weekend's race comes with especially high levels of stress among many of the competitors who still have hopes of making the 10-race, 16-driver playoffs that begin next week. Typically, the season's second Daytona race was held around the Fourth of July. This season, however, the event was moved to late August in order to make it the final race of the regular season. Superspeedway races are always a wildcard as drivers often can't control their own destiny and there are often large accidents that take out many cars at a time. Fortunately, Custer can breathe a sigh of relief headed to Daytona as he's already locked into the playoffs. He joins SHR teammates Kevin Harvick and Aric Almirola, who also have clinched playoff spots, while teammate Clint Bowyer can make it a clean playoff-clinching sweep for SHR by finishing 34th or better Saturday night. Additionally, SHR's NASCAR Xfinity Series driver Chase Briscoe has already clinched his playoff spot in that series.

HaasTooling.com will share Custer's No. 41 livery this weekend with Autodesk Fusion 360. Autodesk is a leading designer and supplier of software for the architecture, engineering, construction, media and entertainment, and manufacturing industries. [Autodesk's Fusion 360](#) cloud-based 3D CAD, CAM, CAE, and PCB software brings enterprise-grade capabilities, data services, and a support network to teams of any size, uniting people, products, and processes across the product development process. The company empowers customers, like SHR, to push their boundaries and shape a thriving future.

During last weekend's doubleheader at Dover (Del.) International Speedway, Custer finished 11th Saturday and 10th Sunday. He was the highest finishing rookie in both events and he now has six top-10 finishes this season. Custer stayed at Dover to participate in the testing of NASCAR's 2022 Next Gen car, wrapping up his duties Tuesday evening at the concrete mile oval.

In Custer's two superspeedway starts earlier this year, his Daytona 500 ended prematurely with a mechanical issue and his June Talladega start resulted in a 22nd-place finish.

In the Xfinity Series at Daytona, the California native has six starts and has led eight laps, but he's still looking for his first top-10. In the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series at Daytona, Custer has one outing, in which he finished 24th.

So far this season, the Mustang has won 14 races for Ford. Custer and his SHR teammate Kevin Harvick have both earned wins for the Blue Oval this season and have accounted for a total of eight victories. Harvick scored the win in Sunday's race at Dover to give Ford its milestone 700th win in the Cup Series. Ford captured its first victory on June 25, 1950.

With Custer's Cup Series win July 12 at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta, he became one of 10 drivers who have won in each of NASCAR's top three national series, as well as in ARCA and one of NASCAR's developmental series.

Team co-owner Gene Haas' newest holding, [Haas Tooling](#), was launched 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 at HaasTooling.com are even more important during the current COVID-19 pandemic as CNC machines have become vital to producing personal protective equipment.

SHR has three wins on the 2.5-mile superspeedway at Daytona. Team co-owner Tony Stewart won the July races in 2009 and 2012, and former SHR driver Kurt Busch captured the 2017 Daytona 500. In total, SHR has led 372 laps and has 13 top-fives and 20 top-10s at Daytona.

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.

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 Christopher 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. Custer is the first of the 2020 rookie class to earn a win this season.

Cole Custer, Driver of the No. 41 HaasTooling.com/Autodesk Fusion 360 Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

Daytona is a wildcard race and it's the last race before the playoffs this year. Do you expect it to feel a little bit different because of what is on the line?

"This Daytona race is going to be pretty nerve-racking, The playoff cutoff line is there so that adds a lot of tension. It's a really crazy, unpredictable race anyway, so it might be tough for some guys to go into it with their head screwed on straight, if you will."

Does this Daytona race carry a sense of desperation, where drivers might look for opportunities that aren't there simply because the clock is up?

"Yeah, there are going to be a lot of people on different agendas, I feel like. You're going to have some guys who are going for all the stage points, and they're going to race as hard as they can. You're going to have some guys who are trying to play the safe approach and just make it to the end. So, it's going to be a strange race to figure out who is on what agenda."

What's the feeling around SHR in general now that it looks like all four cars should make the playoffs?

"Honestly, it's unbelievable. I think that's every organization's dream to have all four cars in the playoffs, so it's a huge deal. Everybody at SHR has worked extremely hard. I mean, even from last year I think everybody wanted to see us run a little bit better with the 550 package. I think they did a great job of figuring it out and trying to find ways to make us better and get us going in the right direction. So, it's just a testament to everybody at the shop and all the hard work everybody has put in. Now we just have to take advantage of the opportunity."

You are the only rookie in the playoffs right now. If no other rookie makes it in, you'll be the rookie of the year. How does it feel to be in this position?

"It's really cool. Honestly, I think it is cool to have the rookie battle this year. We had a lot of good guys in there with me, Tyler (Reddick), Christopher (Bell) and John Hunter (Nemechek). It is a really good rookie class. It's still not over because obviously somebody else could make the playoffs, but it would be really cool to have that title. But overall, you've still got to find ways to make yourself better. There are some days Christopher is the fastest rookie, some days Tyler is and some days I am. John Hunter has done a really good job in their stuff, too, so you've got to find ways every single race to try to make yourself better."

How much has team morale grown since the Kentucky win?

"Honestly, it's been pretty game-changing. The start of the year was pretty rough for me, especially. I was just trying to get a feel for the cars and, to come home with that win, it just took so much pressure off. I think it brought the morale up in our team. We need to be fully focused going into the playoffs, and make sure we're 100 percent and try to make a run at it. We don't just want to be a part of the playoffs, we want to be competitive."

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