

41



COLE CUSTER

Tackling the Monster Mile

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina (Aug. 19, 2020) – This weekend, Cole Custer and the No. 41 HaasTooling.com/Jacob Construction team with Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) will head up to Dover (Del.) International Speedway for the final NASCAR Cup Series doubleheader of the season. The events will mark the 26th and 27th career Cup Series starts for the 22-year-old Custer.

Last weekend in the inaugural race on the road course at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway, Custer started 26th and had contact early in the event. The No. 41 team was able to repair the damage under caution but restarting at the rear of the field proved to be a challenge to Custer's progress. However, the rookie driver was able to eventually work his way up to the top-16 during the final stage and ended the day 22nd after late-race contact. "I think the Daytona road course would be fun to keep racing at," Custer said. "I think the fans really enjoy it because there's a little more chaos with the road courses. They're usually a little more unpredictable type of race."

After Custer tackles Dover's Monster Mile for two consecutive races this weekend in his No. 41 Ford Mustang, he'll stick around Monday and Tuesday to test the 2022 Next Gen car for NASCAR on the high-banked, concrete oval.

While Saturday and Sunday will be his first career Cup Series races at Dover, Custer has six career starts there in the NASCAR Xfinity Series, with one pole award earned in May 2019 at a speed of 157.329 mph. In the October 2019 Xfinity Series race, the Ford driver captured the win by a one-second margin of victory over a second-place Justin Allgaier. Custer has led 224 Xfinity Series laps at Dover and has four top-five finishes and five top-10s.

In the NASCAR Gander RV & Outdoors Truck Series, Custer has a trio of starts at the Delaware track. He's led 67 laps and has a best finish of fifth.

So far this season, the Mustang has won 13 races for Ford. Custer and his SHR teammate Harvick have both earned wins for the Blue Oval this season and have accounted for a total of seven victories. Ford currently sits at 699 wins in the Cup Series and 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.

Sharing the No. 41 machine this weekend with Haas Tooling, is Jacob Construction. Jacob is a multifaceted firm with a focus on construction, development, design and technology services. Jacob provides clients with a wide range of services in the design build and construction management sectors of the construction industry. In conjunction with these services, Jacob self performs structural concrete, architectural and structural precast erection.

Team co-owner Gene Haas' newest holding, [Haas Tooling](https://www.haastooling.com), 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.

There are three races left in the regular season before the playoffs start Sept. 6 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway, and Custer's win at Kentucky earned him one of the coveted 16 playoff spots. Harvick also owns a playoff spot after six wins this season.

SHR has three wins at Dover – one by team co-owner Tony Stewart in June 2013 and two by Harvick in October 2015 and May 2015. The championship organization has led 1,469 laps there.

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/Jacob Construction Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

Dover is known as a “self cleaning” racetrack when it comes to accidents. Do you think drivers will keep that in mind when it comes to how aggressively they’ll make moves on Saturday, hoping to ensure they don’t have to use a backup car on Sunday?

“Dover is one of those tracks where it’s hard to start deep in the field. It’s hard to pass at times and you can get caught up in wrecks easily. They call it a self-cleaning racetrack for a reason. When cars wreck, they go down the track and collect a lot of other ones, so it’s one of those places you want to start toward the front.”

The Monster trophy is probably one of the more unique trophies on the circuit. Do you have yours from the Xfinity Series win in a special place since it’s a unique trophy and it’s so difficult to win at Dover?

“The Dover trophy that I won last year in the Xfinity Series is in my room. It’s a trophy that I think everybody wants. I wanted it for a long time and to be able to see it every day is pretty awesome. It’s the gold one so I think it’s one that everyone wanted even more.”

A lot of drivers either love or hate Dover. What are your feelings on it?

“I’ve been a fan of Dover. It’s a really aggressive track that you have to attack a lot. At the same time, it’s really a finesse track with how you run your line, and how you work the gas and how you get around the corners. It’s definitely a track that took me some time to learn in the Xfinity Series.”

You’re testing the Next Gen car on Monday and Tuesday at Dover. Any thoughts on that?

“I’m excited for the Next Gen test. It’s nice to be part of something new and it’ll be a challenge. I think it’s going to be a lot different and I think I’ll have to ease into things at Dover. It’s a really fast racetrack with a lot of load and things hurt when you hit, so you want to be a little bit careful when you first get going. It’ll be interesting because it’ll be a lot different from the cars we run now. It’ll take a lot of getting used to but it will be fun to have that challenge.”

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