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Custer Earns 25th-Place Finish at Michigan Rookie Driver Completes Second Cup Race at Two-Mile Track

Date: Aug. 9, 2020
Event: Consumers Energy 400 (Round 22 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn (2-mile oval)
Format: 156 laps, broken into three stages (40 laps/45 laps/71 laps)
Start/Finish: 34th/25th (Running, completed 156 of 156 laps)
Point Standing: 21st with 396 points, 520 out of first

Race Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Clint Bowyer of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 2 Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-40):

- Cole Custer started 34th and finished 24th.
- With 10 laps complete Custer was up to 23rd after starting in the rear due to a backup car and reported he was loose in and off.
- The entire stage ran under green and Custer ended it in 24th.
- During the Stage break, Custer reported he was a “tick too tight in the last few laps,” of the stage and pitted.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 41-85):

- Custer started in 25th and finished 23rd.
- With 50 laps complete, Custer was 28th in the HaasTooling.com/Jacob Construction Mustang.
- On lap 72 Custer reported his Mustang was “too tight in the center and loose on entry” as he ran 26th.
- The California native ended the stage 23rd and pitted for fuel, four tires and adjustments to help with his tight condition.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 86-156):

- Custer started 24th, finished 25th.
- During the lap-95 caution, Custer reported his Mustang was still too tight while running 25th, and he pitted for service. Before the field returned to green, NASCAR served the No. 41 team with a safety violation penalty which sent them to the rear of the field for the restart.
- On lap 100 Custer was in the 29th spot.
- During the lap-104 caution, the No. 41 driver pitted and restarted in the top-20.
- On lap 130 the rookie driver was in the 13th position.
- During the last caution on lap 137, Custer didn’t pit and restarted 12th.
- Unfortunately, in the closing laps, Custer reported his Mustang lost its ability to turn and he slipped back several positions.
- Custer finished 25th as he battled the handling in the closing laps of Sunday’s event.

Notes:

- Custer made his 25th career NASCAR Cup Series start and his second at Michigan.
- Custer’s 25th-place result bettered his previous best finish at Michigan – 34th, earned in Saturday’s FireKeepers Casino 400.
- Kevin Harvick’s margin of victory over second-place Denny Hamlin was .093 of a second.
- There were five caution periods for a total of 24 laps.
- Twenty-eight of the 39 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Michigan with a 137-point advantage over second-place Brad Keselowski.
- Harvick’s victory in the Consumers Energy 400 marked the 83rd overall win for SHR. It was the organization’s 62nd points-paying NASCAR Cup Series victory, its seventh of the season and its sixth at Michigan.
- Today’s victory gave SHR a sweep of the Michigan races in 2020, as Harvick also won Saturday’s FireKeepers Casino 400.
- SHR has now won five of the past six races at Michigan. In addition to Harvick’s win on Saturday, he also won at the track in August 2018 and August 2019 while Clint Bowyer won in June 2018. SHR scored its first Michigan win via former driver Kurt Busch in June 2015.
- This was SHR’s 26th NASCAR Cup Series victory with Ford. The team won its first race with Ford when Busch captured the 2017 Daytona 500.

- This was Ford's series-leading 13th NASCAR Cup Series win of the season and its 699th all-time Cup Series victory.
- This was Ford's series-leading 41st NASCAR Cup Series victory at Michigan and its sixth straight. In addition to Harvick's wins (August 2018, August 2019, Saturday's FireKeepers Casino 400 and today's Consumers Energy 400) and Bowyer's win in June 2018, Joey Logano won in June 2019. This is Ford's longest win streak at Michigan, beating its previous streak of five when Rusty Wallace and Dale Jarrett combined to sweep in 1996 and then Ernie Irvan and Mark Martin did the same in 1997. Martin capped the streak with his second straight Michigan win in June 1998.
- Today's victory keeps the Michigan Heritage Trophy in Ford's hands for a third straight year. The Michigan Heritage Trophy recognizes the winning manufacturer after each NASCAR Cup Series win at the track. The trophy signifies the tradition, excellence and manufacturer rivalry in the racing community.

Cole Custer, driver of the No. 41 HaasTooling.com/Jacob Construction Ford Mustang for Stewart-Haas Racing:

"We got the car handling better throughout the race, but at the end all of the sudden it wouldn't turn. That dropped us back quite a few spots, but I think we learned a lot today. We had to overcome some adversity with starting in the back and then getting the pit road penalty, but we're growing as a team and we'll move forward to the Daytona road course next week."

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Go Bowling 235 on Sunday, Aug. 16 on the road course at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway. The race begins at 3 p.m. EDT with coverage on NBC and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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