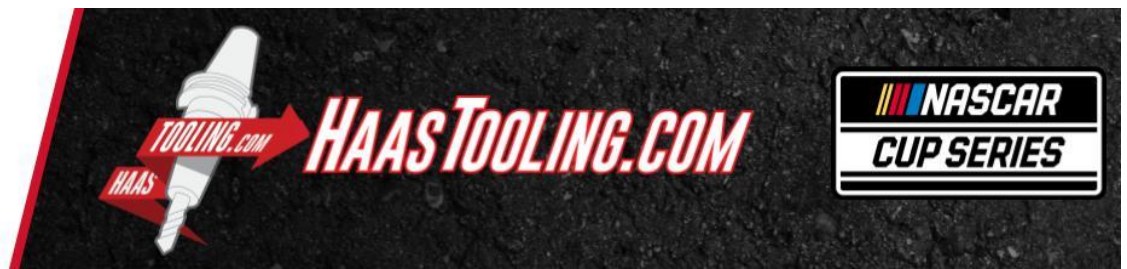


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Custer Eighth in First Cup Start at New Hampshire Ford Rookie Earns Fourth Top-10 in Five Races

Date: Aug. 2, 2020
Event: Foxwoods Resort Casino 301 (Round 20 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: New Hampshire Motor Speedway in Loudon (1.058-mile oval)
Format: 301 laps, broken into three stages (75 laps/110 laps/116 laps)
Start/Finish: 14th/8th (Running, completed 301 of 301 laps)
Point Standing: 19th with 381 points, 422 out of first

Race Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 2 Winner: Brad Keselowski of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-75):

- Cole Custer started 14th and finished 16th.
- During the caution on lap 16, Custer told the HaasTooling.com crew that he was too tight overall. He didn't pit and restarted fifth.
- On the lap-30 competition caution, Custer pitted from 10th for fuel, four tires and adjustments. He restarted 21st.
- Custer was 16th on the lap-63 caution and didn't pit in an effort to try and gain stage points. He restarted third with eight laps to go in the stage.
- The rookie driver slipped back to 16th where he finished Stage 1 and pitted for fuel, four tires and adjustments.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 76-185):

- Custer started in 24th and finished 13th.
- On lap 92, the caution came out for rain and Custer reported he could be freed up a little bit while in the 16th spot. He pitted and restarted 17th.
- On lap 141 Custer reported his Mustang felt "way tighter" while running 20th.
- Under caution on lap 172, the California native continued to report his car was tight and he pitted from 13th. Custer restarted 15th.
- In a sprint to finish Stage 2 after a caution, Custer restarted 14th and finished 13th.
- Custer didn't pit during the Stage break.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 186-301):

- Custer started 12th, finished eighth.
- On lap 196 under caution, Custer told the HaasTooling.com crew that his No. 41 Ford Mustang was really good on the bottom groove. He was running 14th, didn't pit and restarted 13th.
- Custer was ninth when the caution came out on lap 204. He pitted and restarted 16th after varying pit strategies.
- Another caution on lap 213 and Custer didn't pit and restarted 11th.
- On lap 225, Custer was in the eighth position and remained quiet on the radio.
- Custer was ninth on lap 267 but eventually regained the eighth position after passing Jimmie Johnson.
- The remainder of the race ran under green and Custer secured an eighth-place finish.

Notes:

- Custer earned his fifth top-10 of the season and it came in his first career NASCAR Cup Series start at New Hampshire.
- This was Custer's second straight top-10. He finished seventh in the series' last race at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City.
- Custer was the highest finishing NASCAR Cup Series rookie.
- Custer made three career NASCAR Xfinity Series starts at New Hampshire prior to moving to the NASCAR Cup Series this year. He finished in the top-10 every time with a best finish of second, earned last year.
- Custer scored first career NASCAR Truck Series victory on Sept. 20, 2014 at New Hampshire – and he did it from the pole. At 16 years, 7 months and 28 days, he became the youngest race winner in NASCAR national series history.
- Brad Keselowski won the Foxwoods Resort Casino 301 to score his 33rd career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his third of the season and his second at New Hampshire. His margin of victory over second-place Denny Hamlin was 1.647 seconds.
- This was Ford's series-leading 11th NASCAR Cup Series win of the season and its 697th all-time Cup Series victory.

- This was Ford's 15th NASCAR Cup Series victory at New Hampshire and its third straight. Kevin Harvick won the past two races at New Hampshire (2018 and 2019).
- There were 11 caution periods for a total of 52 laps.
- Twenty of the 38 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after New Hampshire with an 81-point advantage over second-place Keselowski.

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

“Today was definitely the run we needed. If we can keep being this consistent, we’ll have something for the playoffs.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is a doubleheader Aug. 8-9 at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn. The FireKeepers Casino 400 starts at 4 p.m. EDT on Saturday, Aug. 8 and the Consumers Energy 400 begins at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Aug. 9. Live coverage of both will be provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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