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Suárez Finishes 27th on the Daytona Road Course

CommScope Driver Praised His Toyota's Handling, 'Just Lacked Forward Bite'

Date: Aug. 16, 2020
Event: Inaugural Go Bowling 235 (Round 23 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway (14-turn, 3.61-mile road course)
Format: 65 laps, broken into three stages (15 laps/15 laps/35 laps)
Start/Finish: 31st / 27th (Running, completed 65 of 65 laps)
Point Standing: 31st with 248 points
Race Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 1 Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-15):

- Started 31st, finished 17th.
- Suárez picked up five positions on the opening lap and held down 26th place for a majority of the stage. He crept forward as roughly half the field pitted just before the end of the stage, and he crossed the line 17th.
- He reported his CommScope Toyota had good balance overall, but grip was an issue throughout. He pitted during the break for tires, fuel, air pressure adjustments all the way around, and tape off the grille.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 16-30):

- Started 29th, finished 35th.
- From the lap-17 green flag, Suárez worked his way up to 25th by the time he pitted on lap 26, four before the stage break. He took four tires and fuel with further air pressure adjustments, as well as tape removed from the brake ducts on both sides of his CommScope Toyota after having reported the brakes were fading midway through the stage.
- Suárez resumed 35th and held that position to the end of the stage. He pitted again during the break to remove additional brake duct tape and to top off the fuel tank.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 31-65):

- Started 27th, finished 27th.
- Suárez picked up a pair of positions by the time the caution flag waved for lightning on lap 35. The race was red-flagged for 30 minutes on lap 37 to wait out the lightning delay. When the all-clear was given, Suárez pitted under caution on lap 38 for four tires and to top off the fuel tank and resumed 25th when the race went back to green on lap 39.
- The final planned stop of the day for Suárez came under green on lap 46. It was a fuel-only stop. He was 26th when he pitted and resumed 29th.
- The caution flag flew on lap 60 for a single-car incident with Suárez running 26th. He reported he was struggling with forward bite and his CommScope Toyota was getting too tight as the run progressed, so the team called him to pit road for tires and a splash of fuel for the final laps.
- Suárez restarted 29th when the race went back to green on lap 62 and he picked up a pair of positions on his way to the checkered flag.

Daniel Suárez, driver of the No. 96 CommScope Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

“There was some good mixed with some things our CommScope Toyota struggled with on the road course today. We did the best we could. I thought the balance of the car was pretty good. We just couldn't find the forward bite we needed to be a little more competitive. Our brakes got pretty hot there in the middle part of the race and that hurt us, too. Overall, I think it was a good learning experience for when we go to the 'roval' at Charlotte in a couple of months.”

Race Notes:

- Today's result was the 22nd in a row with Suárez and his No. 96 Toyota running at the finish, and it was the team's seventh lead-lap finish of the season and fifth in the last seven points-paying races.
- Chase Elliott won the inaugural Go Bowling 235 to score his eighth career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his second of the season and his fourth on a road course. His margin of victory over second-place Denny Hamlin was .202 of a second.
- There were four caution periods for a total of seven laps.
- Thirty-two of the 39 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Kevin Harvick remains the championship leader after Daytona with a 118-point advantage over second-place Hamlin.

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule for Suárez and Gaunt Brothers Racing is a doubleheader Aug. 22 and 23 at Dover (Del.) International Speedway. Each race is 311 laps around the concrete mile oval with a start time of 4 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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