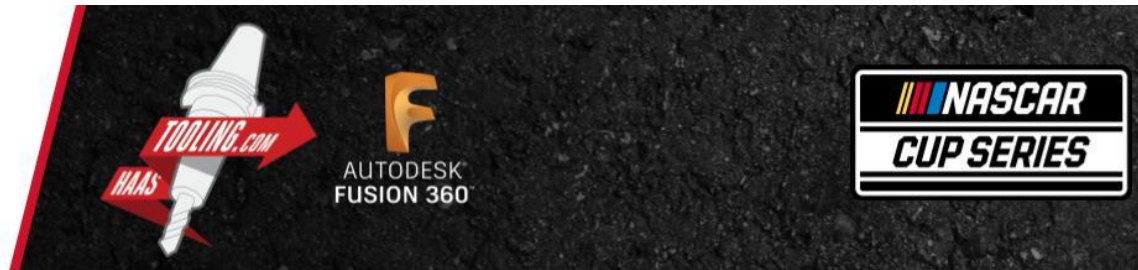


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Custer Finishes 24th in Bristol Night Race Rookie Misses Advancing to Playoffs Round of 12

Date: Sept. 19, 2020
Event: Bass Pro Shops Night Race (Round 29 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway (.533-mile, concrete oval)
Format: 500 laps, broken into three stages (125 laps/125 laps/250 laps)
Start/Finish: 12th/23rd (Running, completed 497 of 500 laps)
Point Standing: 13th with 2,067 points, 28 points below top-12 cutoff

Race Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Kyle Busch of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-125):

- Cole Custer started 12th and finished 24th.
- At the lap-30 competition caution, Custer pitted from 14th for adjustments to help with his tight-handling Mustang.
- The HaasTooling.com/Autodesk Fusion 360 Mustang jumped from 15th to 11th on the restart.
- The handling issues returned and dropped Custer to 24th by lap 90.
- During the stage break Custer pitted for more adjustments.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 126-250):

- Custer started 23rd and finished 21st.
- The stage opened up with a long green-flag run that saw Custer fall a lap down to the leaders on lap 218.
- Custer took the wave-around on lap 232 to get back on the lead lap.
- Custer finished 21st in a sprint to end the stage and visited pit road twice during the break.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 251-500):

- Custer started 23rd, finished 23rd.
- Just after the restart, Custer received significant nose damage to the No. 41 Ford Mustang.
- The stage remained under green until lap 407 and Custer pitted multiple times for damage repair to his Mustang's nose and regular pit service. He restarted 23rd, three laps down.
- With 30 laps to go in the event, the Ford driver was 24th and with 10 laps to go he was 23rd.
- Custer ultimately finished 23rd and missed advancing to the next round of playoffs by 28 points.

Notes:

- Custer's 23rd-place result bettered his previous best finish at Bristol – 35th, earned in his first NASCAR Cup Series start at the track in May.
- Custer has six starts at Bristol in the NASCAR Xfinity Series. He scored two top-fives and four top-10s.
- Kevin Harvick's victory in the Bass Pro Shops Night Race marked the 88th overall win for SHR. It was the organization's 65th points-paying NASCAR Cup Series victory, its 10th of the season and its third at Bristol.
- SHR scored its first Bristol win in August 2016 with Harvick. The team's second win came in August 2018 with former driver Kurt Busch.
- This was SHR's 29th NASCAR Cup Series victory with Ford. The team won its first race with Ford when former driver Busch captured the 2017 Daytona 500.
- Harvick has now won 23 NASCAR Cup Series races with Ford, which makes him one of only 13 drivers to win 20 or more races with the manufacturer. He is currently tied with Rusty Wallace, Carl Edwards and Joey Logano for 10th all time.
- This was Ford's series-leading 17th NASCAR Cup Series win of the season and its 703rd all-time Cup Series victory.
- This was Ford's 39th NASCAR Cup Series victory at Bristol and its second straight. Ford's previous win at the track came with Brad Keselowski in the series' last race at the track in May. Its first Bristol win came on March 31, 1963 with NASCAR Hall of Famer Fireball Roberts.
- Harvick's margin of victory over second-place Kyle Busch was .310 of a second.

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- There were five caution periods for a total of 50 laps.
- Only six of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Bristol with a 19-point advantage over second-place Denny Hamlin.

Playoff Standings to Begin Round of 12:

1. Kevin Harvick (3,067 points)
2. Denny Hamlin (3,048 points) -19
3. Brad Keselowski (3,035 points) -32
4. Joey Logano (3,022 points) -45
5. Chase Elliott (3,021 points) -46
6. Martin Truex Jr. (3,016 points) -51
7. Alex Bowman (3,009 points) -58
8. Austin Dillon (3,005 points) -62
9. Aric Almirola (3,005 points) -62
10. Kyle Busch (3,004 points) -63
11. Clint Bowyer (3,004 points) -63
12. Kurt Busch (3,001 points) -66

Failed to Advance to Round of 12:

13. Cole Custer (2,067 points)
14. William Byron (2,062 points)
15. Ryan Blaney (2,058 points)
16. Matt DiBenedetto (2,054 points)

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

“We’ve just struggled here at Bristol. I think we can hold our heads high on what we’ve done this year. From where we started this year and where I was at, we’ve come a long way and these guys have really helped me grow. It’s about the people at SHR and sponsor support from HaasTooling.com and Autodesk, I can’t thank them enough.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the South Point 400 on Sunday, Sept. 27 at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. It is the fourth race of the 10-race playoffs and the first race in the Round of 12. It starts at 7 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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