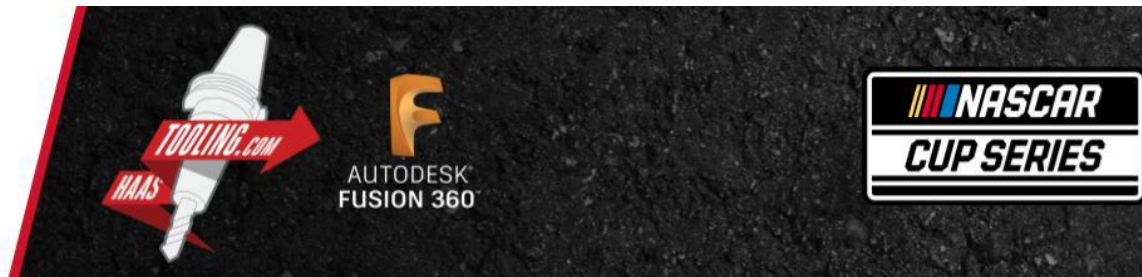


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Custer's Daytona Race Ends in Accident Ford Rookie Enters Playoffs 11th in Standings

Date: Aug. 29, 2020
Event: Coke Zero Sugar 400 (Round 26 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway (2.5-mile oval)
Format: 160 laps, broken into three stages (50 laps/50 laps/60 laps)
Note: Race extended four laps past its scheduled 160-lap distance due to a green-white-checked finish.
Start/Finish: 16th/30th (Accident, completed 158 of 164 laps)
Point Standing: 21st with 476 points, 582 out of first – IN THE PLAYOFFS

Race Winner: William Byron of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 1 Winner: Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 2 Winner: Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-50):

- Cole Custer started 16th and finished 27th.
- During the competition caution on lap 20, Custer reported his Mustang was a little bit tight. He pitted from third for fuel and right-side tires. He restarted 12th.
- After shuffling positions for the remainder of the stage, Custer finished 27th.
- During the stage break, the California native reported his No. 41 Ford Mustang fired off tight once again. He pitted for fuel, four tires and adjustments, and then came down pit road once again to top off with fuel.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 51-100):

- Custer started in 27th and finished 26th.
- On lap 67, Custer was back in the top-10.
- Topping off for fuel during the stage break allowed Custer to go the duration of the stage without making a pit stop.
- With varying strategies, Custer ended the stage 26th and pitted for service.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 101-158):

- Custer started 22nd, finished 30th.
- On lap 127 Custer reported his Mustang was tight while running 13th at the superspeedway.
- On lap 132 the rookie driver made a scheduled green-flag pit stop with teammate Kevin Harvick for fuel only.
- With 25 laps to go, Custer was in the 25th position biding his time to avoid the “big one” accident.
- A caution came out on lap 142 and Custer pitted for service from 28th, and restarted 25th with 13 laps to go.
- With seven laps to go, Custer avoided a multi-car accident and the red flag was displayed for several minutes.
- Once the race resumed, he restarted 19th and worked his way forward.
- Custer's race ended with two laps to go as he was caught up in a multi-car accident.
- The accident left him with a 30th-place finish.

Notes:

- Custer made his 29th career NASCAR Cup Series start and his second at Daytona.
- SHR is the only four-car team to have its entire driver lineup in the NASCAR Playoffs.
- Custer qualified for the playoffs by winning July 12 at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta.
- Custer takes five bonus points into the playoffs care of his win at Kentucky.
- As the only rookie to qualify for the playoffs, Custer clinched the 2020 NASCAR Rookie of the Year award.
- William Byron won the Coke Zero Sugar 400 to score his first career NASCAR Cup Series victory. His margin of victory over second-place Chase Elliott was .119 of a second.
- There were six caution periods for a total of 21 laps.
- Only 20 of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.

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Playoff Standings:

1. Kevin Harvick (2,057 points)
2. Denny Hamlin (2,047 points, -10)
3. Brad Keselowski (2,029 points, -28)
4. Joey Logano (2,022 points, -35)
5. Chase Elliott (2,020 points, -37)
6. Martin Truex, Jr. (2,014 points, -43)
7. Ryan Blaney (2,013 points, -44)
8. Alex Bowman (2,009 points, -48)
9. William Byron (2,007 points, -50)
10. Austin Dillon (2,005 points, -52)
- 11. Cole Custer (2,005 points, -52)**
12. Aric Almirola (2,005 points, -52)
13. Clint Bowyer (2,004 points, -53)
14. Kyle Busch (2,003 points, -54)
15. Kurt Busch (2,001 points, -56)
16. Matt DiBenedetto (2,000 points, -57)

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

“It was a solid night for us. We ran up front for some of the race. We worked well with our teammates and had good strategies. The HaasTooling.com guys have done a great job getting me to this point. It’s disappointing we got caught up in an accident, but we’re looking forward to the playoffs starting this week.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Cook Out Southern 500 on Sunday, Sept. 6 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway. The first race in the 10-race NASCAR Playoffs starts at 6 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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