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Kyle Busch, No. 18 M&M'S 2004 Throwback Toyota Camry *Race Recap for the Cook Out Southern 500*

Date: Sept. 6, 2020
Event: Cook Out Southern 500 (Round 27 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Darlington (S.C.) Raceway (1.366-mile, egg-shaped oval)
Format: 367 laps, broken into three stages (115 laps/115 laps/137 laps)

Start/Finish: 15th/7th (Running, completed 367 of 367 laps)
Point Standing: 10th with 2,040 points (7 points ahead of the top-12 cutoff)

Race Winner: Kevin Harvick of Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Martin Truex Jr. of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 2 Winner: Martin Truex Jr. of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-115):

- Kyle Busch started 15th and finished ninth, earning two bonus points.
- The M&M'S Throwback driver started 15th, and worked his way up to 13th when the competition caution waved on lap 27.
- Busch restarted 13th and moved up into the top-10 by lap 52, but dropped back to 12th by the time the yellow waved on lap 82 he reported to crew chief Adam Stevens that he was still too loose.
- Busch came to pit road on lap 83, with a trackbar adjustment hoping to tighten up a loose M&M'S Camry.
- Busch restarted 15th on lap 86, but moved back up quickly into the top-10, as he found himself ninth at the end of Stage 1.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 116-230):

- Busch started sixth and finished sixth, earning five bonus points.
- Stevens called Busch to pit road on lap 118, as Busch reported his car was now a little too tight. Quick work by the M&M'S over-the-wall team gained Busch three spots as he started Stage 2 in the sixth position.
- Busch fell to eighth by the time the caution waved on lap 180, he came to pit road two laps later to take on four tires, fuel and adjustments, as yet again the M&M'S team gained two spots on pit road to help Busch restart back up in sixth-place.
- The M&M'S Throwback driver reported to Stevens that he was still tight on the long run, but overall the handling was much improved from earlier in the race, as he finished Stage 2 in the same sixth-place spot he started the stage in.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 230-367):

- Busch started fifth and finished seventh.
- Busch came to pit road on lap 232 following the completion of Stage 2, taking on four tires, fuel and adjustments, as his M&M'S team gained another spot on pit road to help Busch started fifth for the final stage.
- The caution waved on lap 245 and Busch came to pit road for four tires, fuel, and adjustments, as the M&M'S over-the-wall crew completed yet another fast stop, vaulting Busch up into third-place coming off pit road for the ensuing restart.
- Busch was called to pit road on lap 307 to take on four tires, fuel, and final adjustments for the run to the finish.
- The caution waved for debris on lap 320, as Busch had cycled up to sixth. However, the caution hurt his strategy as he would have likely cycled back to second when everyone had pitted.
- Busch came to pit road on lap 323, but lost three spots and restarted back in ninth on lap 326.
- The M&M'S Throwback driver was able to gain a few spots, but the untimely caution thwarted what looked to be a shot at the race win.

Notes:

- Busch's seventh-place finish is his 12th top-10 finish in 18 career starts at Darlington.
- Busch now has 14th top-10 finishes in 2020.

Kyle Busch, driver of the No. 18 M&M'S Throwback Toyota Camry for Joe Gibbs Racing:

Was traffic the biggest challenge for you tonight versus the speed you had when you were running up front with your teammates?

"Traffic was definitely our detriment, there was just nothing I could do to try to find clean air in order to make up any speed back in traffic, so I just got mired wherever the heck I was and that was it. Being out front in clean air, I was able to run with Martin (Truex Jr.) and had a fast M&M's Camry and could really show how fast our car was when we drove away from the field by a couple seconds there until that caution that NASCAR flew."

Are you able to pull any momentum from tonight's race going into the next two Playoff races of this round?

“There's a little bit of momentum. It certainly was nice to see that if we could get up towards the front that we could be fast up front, but I would have liked to have finished it out and gotten the finish that we all were working towards and our finish that we deserved as a team. Even if it wouldn't have been a win, it would have been a second, which would have been a shot in the arm for us. We go to Richmond just trying to win Richmond.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Federated Auto Parts 400 on Saturday, Sept. 12 at Richmond (Va.) Raceway. It is the second race in the 10-race NASCAR Playoffs starts and it starts at 7:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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