

96

GBR
GAUNT BROTHERS RACING



DANIEL SUÁREZ

Toyota Driver Motivated To Post Solid Run for Team USA, Local Cancer Hero

MOORESVILLE, North Carolina (Sept. 23, 2020) – It may be an Olympic year without an Olympic Games, but Daniel Suárez and his No. 96 Team USA Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing (GBR) will be competing with the Olympic spirit during Sunday's South Point 400 NASCAR Cup Series race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway.

While the COVID-19 pandemic forced the postponement of Tokyo's XXXII Olympiad and the 16th Summer Paralympic Games until 2021, Toyota is showcasing its proud partnership of Team USA during this weekend's Cup Series race. The Olympic-themed paint scheme on Suárez's Toyota features logos on the deck lid of 17 U.S. national governing bodies and high performance management organizations, whose journeys to the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo and beyond have been extended by a year.

As Suárez and his single-car No. 96 Team USA Toyota team return to the scene of their very first points-paying race together last February, they'll also be paying tribute to the memory of a young cancer victim as part of this year's Nominate a Cancer Hero program in partnership with the Martin Truex Jr., Foundation and the NASCAR Foundation. The name of 13-year-old Annie Jo Williams of Henderson, Nevada, will replace Suárez's above the driver-side door of the No. 96 Team USA Toyota. Williams lost her battle with liver cancer on Aug. 21. She will be remembered by family and friends as a brave young girl and a forever hero.

"Daniel Suárez was her favorite driver," said her father, Derek Brennan. "The last three races at Las Vegas Motor Speedway, she had us bring him gifts and cards from her. He was always gracious and happy to receive her presents from us. It made her so happy. We can't thank him enough for the memories. This is a wonderful way to remember her. She would just love it."

Suárez hopes to deliver a solid result in this weekend's 400-mile race on the 1.5-mile Las Vegas oval, where he recorded a 30th-place finish from the 35th starting position in February. It will be the seventh race on a mile-and-a-half track since then, and the team running its first full Cup Series schedule since joining NASCAR's top ranks as a part-time team in 2017 has shown incremental improvement along the way. Suárez posted finishes of 26th, 23rd and 18th in his last three races on the 1.5-mile ovals at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta, Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, and Kansas Speedway in Kansas City. The latter finish is tied with the 18th-place finish at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway in July for the young team's best of the season.

With the men and women of Team USA riding along in spirit, and the loving memory of a young cancer hero who left an impression on so many people, Suárez and the No. 96 Toyota team for GBR are sure to leave nothing on the table in the Nevada desert in their quest to post their best finish of the season.

DANIEL SUÁREZ, Driver of the No. 96 Team USA Toyota Camry for Gaunt Brothers Racing:

You return to Las Vegas after your and the team's results on the 1.5-mile ovals have shown gradual improvement since you raced there in February. Your thoughts?

"Every race this year has been a learning process, like we've been saying all along. It's constant give and take because you're always trying new things to improve. Sometimes they work, sometimes they don't. But we have shown overall improvement on the mile-and-a-half tracks. I think this weekend in Las Vegas should show that. In February, it was our first actual race together and everything was still quite new for us as a group, so it was still just the beginning of our learning process. We had an issue with the ECU box in the beginning of the race. We couldn't figure out what was going on, but it put us into a hole and it was difficult to get out of the hole. I felt like we could have finished somewhere in the top-25, maybe even better than that. We had to fight hard. We learned a lot of different things in just that one race, and it was good to get that first race in. We left knowing what we had to work on and we've gone out there and have kept digging ever since."

You're sporting a Team USA Olympic theme on your Toyota for the first time this weekend. If you didn't drive racecars for a living, what Olympic sport might you have liked to pursue as an athlete?

"I love soccer a lot. Obviously, I am a big fan of the El Tigres from my hometown. I also like Real Madrid from Spain, and Cristiano Ronaldo is probably my favorite player. I also like the LAFC (Los Angeles Football Club) in the MLS (Major League Soccer). So, with all of that, I think it would be unbelievable to play for your country in the Olympics."

How do you remain so calm before a race?

“I’m extremely relaxed on the morning of the race, but about one hour before it starts, if you come and talk to me, I’m most likely going to forget what you told me. I’m busy thinking about the race at that time, pit stops and trying to go over the race in my head. When I go into race mode, I stay there until it’s over.”

DANIEL SUÁREZ’S LAS VEGAS PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2020	2/23	Pennzoil 400	35	30	Running, 263/267	0	N/A
2019	9/15	South Point 400	2	20	Running, 266/267	29	N/A
	3/3	Pennzoil 400	22	17	Running, 267/267	12	N/A
2018	9/16	South Point 400	19	8	Running, 272/272	0	N/A
	3/4	Las Vegas 400	18	26	Running, 263/267	0	N/A
2017	3/12	Kobalt 400	11	20	Running, 267/267	0	N/A

-TSC-

Contact Laz Denes with True Speed Communication

(704) 875-3388, ext. 806 or Laz.Denes@TrueSpeedCommunication.com

www.TrueSpeedCommunication.com • Online Media Kit Available at: www.TrueSpeedMedia.com