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GAUNT BROTHERS RACING



Suárez Rolls to a 29th-Place Finish at Las Vegas

Team USA Toyota Driver Battles Tight Handling Early, Avoids Late Wrecks

Date: Sept. 27, 2020
Event: South Point 400 (Round 30 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Las Vegas Motor Speedway (1.5-mile oval)
Format: 267 laps, broken into three stages (80 laps/80 laps/107 laps)
Start/Finish: 29th / 29th (Running, completed 265 of 268 laps)
Point Standing: 31st with 314 points
Note: Race extended one lap past its scheduled 267-lap distance due to a green-white-checked finish.
Race Winner: Kurt Busch of Chip Ganassi Racing (Chevrolet)
Stage 1 Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)
Stage 2 Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-80):

- Started 29th, finished 30th.
- Suárez and his Team USA Toyota dropped a pair of positions during the opening run to the lap-25 competition caution. He pitted from 31st for tires and fuel, packer added to both fronts and track bar adjustments across the rear in an effort to elevate the front end. He resumed 29th when the race went back to green on lap 30.
- The stage went green from there to the end with Suárez crossing the line 30th. He said the front-end height seemed to feel right over the long run, that his Team USA Toyota needed work on the balance as he was too tight all around the track and the rear end felt unstable. He pitted during the break for packer added to the left front, track bar and air pressure adjustments in the rear.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 81-160):

- Started 32nd, finished 31st.
- Suárez reported his Team USA Toyota continued to be tight all around the track and the front-end contact with the track also continued during the initial parts of the run.
- He pitted under green on lap 129 from 29th place for tires, fuel and air pressure adjustments and resumed 32nd.
- Again, the stage went without an incident-related caution from start to finish. Suárez was 31st when the caution flag flew to end the stage. He reported his racecar felt a little more free, which was good for the balance, but just needed more grip and speed. He pitted during the break to remove packer across the front, and for air pressure adjustments.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 161-268):

- Started 31st, finished 29th.
- The first incident-related caution flag of the race flew on lap 190 with Suárez running 31st. He stayed on track to take the wave-around, and restarted 31st when the race went back to green on lap 196.
- Suárez made his final scheduled pit stop of the race under green on lap 229 while running 30th. He said the balance of his Team USA Toyota was “pretty good,” so it was a four-tires-and-fuel stop with no adjustments. He resumed in 30th.
- The caution flag flew on lap 235 for debris with Suárez running 30th. He stayed on track and resumed 30th when the race went back to green on lap 242.
- The caution flag flew again for a multicar incident on lap 250 with Suárez still in the 30th position. He pitted for fresh tires for the short run to the finish and resumed 29th when the race went back to green on lap 255.
- Suárez narrowly avoided a multicar accident ahead of him on lap 260. He stayed on track during the ensuing caution and restarted 29th when the race went back to green on lap 266.
- He held position over the final two laps and crossed the finish line 29th when the checkered flag flew on lap 268.

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

“Obviously not the most exciting race we’ve had this year, except for the end where we missed those wrecks. Our Team USA Camry was pretty tight in the beginning, and we had issues with the front end on restarts and in the short run. But we got it where the handling was pretty good. We just needed to work on getting more grip and more speed. I’m looking forward to next week. We had a pretty strong race at Daytona last month, so we hope we can go even better at Talladega.”

Race Notes:

- Kurt Busch won the South Point 400 to score his 32nd career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his first of the season and his first at Las Vegas. His margin of victory over second-place Matt DiBenedetto was .148 of a second.
- There were seven caution periods for a total of 36 laps.

- Twenty-five of the 39 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Kevin Harvick remains the championship leader after Las Vegas with a three-point advantage over second-place Denny Hamlin.

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule for Suárez and Gaunt Brothers Racing is the YellaWood 500 on Sunday, Oct. 4 at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway. It starts at 2 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBC and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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