

# 96

**GBR**  
GAUNT BROTHERS RACING



## DANIEL SUÁREZ

### Team USA Toyota Driver Welcomes Superspeedway Run at Talladega

MOORESVILLE, North Carolina (Sept. 29, 2020) – Even before the start of this year’s NASCAR Cup Series season, Sunday’s YellaWood 500 at Talladega (Ala.) Superspeedway was one of the races circled on the calendar of Daniel Suárez, driver of the No. 96 Team USA Toyota for Gaunt Brothers Racing (GBR).

And after his and the team’s performance at Talladega’s sister track Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway at last month’s Coke Zero Sugar 400, safe to say Suárez and his GBR teammates went back and circled this weekend’s race date a second time, rightfully so.

The superspeedways at Daytona and Talladega have been the strongest suit for the single-car GBR Toyota team since it joined the elite Cup Series ranks as a part-time team in 2017 and this year took on the full, 36-race schedule with Suárez for the first time. In the team’s 67 races since its maiden Cup Series voyage at the hands of Canadian driver D.J. Kennington in the 2017 Daytona 500, four of its best six finishes have come on the two iconic superspeedway ovals.

Kennington’s 13<sup>th</sup>-place run in the 2018 Coke Zero Sugar 400 at Daytona ranks best, followed by a pair of 15<sup>th</sup>-place finishes by Parker Kligerman in last year’s Daytona 500 and fall Talladega races, respectively. Kennington scored another top-20 finish in the No. 96 GBR Toyota at the spring 2018 Talladega race, which ranks sixth-best for the team.

Sandwiched between those superspeedway results at the top of the GBR Cup Series performance chart are Suárez’s pair of 18<sup>th</sup>-place finishes this year at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway the last day of May and at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City in mid-July.

As they head to the high-banked, 2.66-mile Talladega oval for Sunday’s 500-mile race, Suárez and his GBR teammates are buoyed by their strong run at Daytona five weekends ago. In the team’s best outing of the season, its 28-year-old, fourth-year Cup Series driver from Monterrey, Mexico raced at or near the front of the pack for a majority of the night before getting caught up in a multicar accident five laps from the finish. He drove to the front during the middle stages of the race and led 19 laps, fourth-most in the race and the first green-flag laps led by GBR in the Cup Series. Suárez also scored his highest marks of the season in most every statistical category, including an average running position of 17.44, 51 laps running in the top-15, 239 green-flag passes, and 77 quality passes.

So it should come as no surprise Suárez and his GBR brethren have eagerly anticipated the season’s final superspeedway event at Talladega. As they did last weekend on the 1.5-mile Las Vegas Motor Speedway oval, where they finished 29<sup>th</sup>, they’ll sport an Olympic theme showcasing Toyota’s proud partnership of Team USA, with logos on the racecar’s 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 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Suárez and company certainly plan on putting forth an Olympian effort Sunday with another competitive superspeedway outing.

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

**Safe to say you’ve had this weekend’s Talladega race circled on your calendar since the regular-season finale on the Daytona oval five races ago?**

“The last Daytona race was our best race of the year so, yes, we’ve had our eye on this weekend at Talladega ever since then. We had a really good car that night. We were really looking forward to that race, too, and it was a lot of fun while it lasted. I was able to drive to the front in the middle part of the race and led laps for a while before we needed to save fuel. Then, the wrecks started happening, and we were able to get through the first one without any major damage, but there was just no way to avoid the second one. It was a shame because we had a really good racecar. I was proud of everybody who was involved in getting us ready for that race. We ran up front, so that felt really good. I think that gives us some good momentum to take to Talladega this weekend with our Team USA Toyota.”

**How about your first race at Talladega this year back in June? Your thoughts on that outing, and will it help you this weekend?**

“We did a good job of staying out of trouble and that’s always a good thing at Talladega. Our Toyota didn’t feel too good at the start of the race, mostly in the rear. But, by the middle of the race, we made it better and I was able to drive it. We had some good moments on pit stops and we had great track position at one point. I think that race, and especially our last race at Daytona, will help us at Talladega

this weekend. We'll definitely need to stay out of trouble, first of all, and put ourselves in position to be there at the end. You never know what's going to happen at Talladega, so you just do what you can control and hope for the best."

**Racing at Talladega for a single-car team, how important is it to find people to work with in that race?**

"Obviously, teammates are very important to being successful at Talladega. No matter what, when you go to a superspeedway, teammates are always important. We may be a one-car team with our Team USA Toyota, but we are very much a part of Team Toyota, and together we can be very strong. We worked very well together at Daytona. Unfortunately, we just got caught up in a mess at the end of the race."

**You're sporting a Team USA Olympic theme on your Toyota for the second weekend in a row. 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."

## DANIEL SUÁREZ'S TALLADEGA PERFORMANCE PROFILE

Year	Date	Event	Start	Finish	Status/Laps	Laps Led	Earnings
2020	6/22	×Geico 500	37	28	Running, 190/191	0	N/A
2019	10/14	1000Bulbs.com 500	19	32	Accident, 168/188	0	N/A
	4/28	Geico 500	16	12	Running, 188/188	0	N/A
2018	10/14	1000Bulbs.com 500	13	16	Running, 193/193	0	N/A
	4/29	Geico 500	14	10	Running, 188/188	1	N/A
2017	10/15	Alabama 500	14	15	Accident, 184/188	11	N/A
	5/7	×Geico 500	7	19	Running, 191/191	0	N/A

× Race length extended due teen-white-checkered finish

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Contact Laz Denes with True Speed Communication

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

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