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Custer Earns 14th-Place Finish at Kansas Overcomes Late Speeding Penalty

Date: Oct. 18, 2020
Event: Hollywood Casino 400 (Round 33 of 36)
Series: NASCAR Cup Series
Location: Kansas Speedway in Kansas City (1.5-mile oval)
Format: 267 laps, broken into three stages (80 laps/80 laps/107 laps)
Start/Finish: 13th/14th (Running, completed 267 of 267 laps)
Point Standing: 16th with 2,146 points

Race Winner: Joey Logano of Team Penske (Ford)
Stage 1 Winner: Chase Elliott of Hendrick Motorsports (Chevrolet)
Stage 2 Winner: Denny Hamlin of Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota)

Stage 1 Recap (Laps 1-80):

- Cole Custer started 13th and finished 18th.
- During the lap-25 competition caution, Custer reported his HaasTooling.com Mustang had good speed but needed to improve the handling. He pitted from 21st and restarted 17th.
- For a majority of the stage, Custer was in the top-15 before slipping back to 18th.
- He pitted during the stage break for fuel, four tires and adjustments, including adding tape to the grille to help his Mustang move around the racing grooves.

Stage 2 Recap (Laps 81-160):

- Custer started 16th and finished 20th.
- On lap 89 Custer was up to the 10th spot.
- On lap 102 the Ford driver relayed to the HaasTooling.com crew that he needed his entry and exit to be a little tighter while running 11th.
- The rookie remained in the top-15 and made a scheduled green-flag pit stop on lap 129.
- A caution on lap 145 caught Custer one lap down in the pit sequence. He waved-around and restarted 21st on lap 149.
- In a sprint to end of the stage, Custer ended up 20th and visited pit road for service.

Final Stage Recap (Laps 161-267):

- Custer started 18th, finished 14th.
- By lap 190 Custer worked his way up to the 12th position.
- The next caution was displayed on lap 198 and the California native was in the 11th spot looking for a fine tune on his Mustang.
- Unfortunately, Custer received a speeding penalty during his pit stop forcing him to restart at the rear of the field.
- By lap 219 he was up to 15th when the caution was displayed on lap 220. He pitted for service and restarted 22nd.
- On lap 245 Custer was in the 14th position. He remained in the top-15 throughout the duration of the race and ultimately finished 14th.

Notes:

- Custer earned his 12th top-15 of the season and his second top-15 in two career NASCAR Cup Series starts at Kansas.
- Joey Logano won the Hollywood Casino 400 to score his 26th career NASCAR Cup Series victory, his third of the season and his third at Kansas. His margin of victory over second-place Kevin Harvick was .312 of a second.
- This was Ford's series-leading 18th NASCAR Cup Series win of the season and its 704th all-time Cup Series victory.
- This was Ford's ninth NASCAR Cup Series victory at Kansas. Ford won its first race on Oct. 5, 2005 with Mark Martin. Its previous win came in May 2019 with Brad Keselowski.
- There were six caution periods for a total of 31 laps.
- Twenty-three of the 40 drivers in the race finished on the lead lap.
- Harvick remains the championship leader after Kansas with a 21-point advantage over second-place Denny Hamlin.

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

“We had good speed in the car and once we got the handling dialed in, it was really good. I got a spending penalty in the final stage which sent us to the rear. Man, we had such a good car and it’s frustrating to have that happen.”

Next Up:

The next event on the NASCAR Cup Series schedule is the Autotrader EchoPark Automotive 500 on Sunday, Oct. 25 at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth. It is the eighth race of the 10-race playoffs and the second race in the Round of 8. It starts at 3:30 p.m. EDT with live coverage provided by NBCSN and SiriusXM NASCAR Radio.

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